

Tips for effective #scicomm

The SPIICE of Science

Social

Structure & networks

Think about the place science occupies within society and how people feel about that, how science shapes and is shaped by the ways society is organised and run.

Economic

Funding & sources

Think about how different sources of funding for science, from taxpayers, donors or profits, shapes the research and its perception.

Political

Power

Think about how political imperatives from governments constrain or enable science, but also how micro-inequalities influence your science and how you communicate.

Cultural

Habits & Values

Think about what expectations each party carries about how communication will proceed, the language used and the roles people will play.

5I's How audience expectations shape reception of message

Identities

How do ideas about scientists shape reception? Are scientists scary, fearless, altruistic? Diverse or one kind of person? How might the impression you make intersect with preconceptions?

Institutions

How might varying levels of trust accorded to universities, government departments, private sector or community groups impact your communications?

Ideologies

What value do you or your audience place on values like objectivity or reductionism? Do you have a goal to convert your audience? Is this helping or hindering?

Issues

Is your topic already controversial? What opinions has your audience already formed about it?

Each of these could play a part before you even get to

Information

W-H-ere to begin?
Consider these basics of effective communication

doi: 10.1080/21548455.2011.611627
10.1080/21548455.2015.1113573

Who?

Consider what your audience knows already & build trust

Why?

Define your aim & know your audience's aim

What?

Select relevant content for audience

How?

Pick medium appropriate to content, aims, audience

When? Where?

Tailor your message to place & time

Which

expectations (5Is) & contextual factors (SPIICE) are key?

Benefits of effective science communication AEIOU

For scientists

Acknowledgment of your contribution & of your partners

Exchange of ideas that strengthens your work

Influence on policy, decision-making & public action

Opportunities for new research ideas or funding avenues

Uptake of research in applied and practical contexts

For public

Awareness of science

Enjoyment of science

Interest in topic of research

Opinions of issues

Understanding of questions and findings

doi: 10.1177/09636625030122004

Institutional

Organisation

Think about how the aims, constraints and purpose of different institutions undertaking science shape scientific research and public perceptions.

Ideological

Beliefs & commitments

Think about what ideological values shape science (in general and for you) and your audience's expectations, as well as how social ideologies (e.g. competition) impact science & its reception.