

Framing & Messaging Tips

Framing

- A **frame** is a mental structure or shortcut that shapes how we see the world.
- Think about the **positive frames** you want to evoke in people's minds. One example of a frame is: "Palestinians are engaged in a struggle for freedom." Choose images and messages that evoke that frame in order to bring it to life.
- When you negate a negative frame, you evoke that frame in the audience's mind. For example, when you say, "don't think of an elephant," the first image that comes to mind is an elephant. Instead, **use positive frames** that make the same point indirectly.
- For example here is a **negative frame**: "The BDS movement is not an anti-Semitic movement. "Instead, this can be **reframed** as: "The BDS movement for Palestinian rights draws inspiration from the South African anti-Apartheid struggle, as well as the US Civil Rights Movement. Boycotts are constitutionally protected activity that utilize peaceful tactics to bring about change."

Messaging: General Tips

- Messages give life to your frame.
- It's the language you use to describe your issue and why it matters.
- Each message should be simple, conveyed in a sentence or two.
- Messages must be defining, differentiating, compelling and memorable.

Messaging: Best Practices

- **Tell stories** – they are more memorable than facts and they get people to care.
- **Use statistics** – they lend credibility to your message.
- **Quote well-regarded people and organizations** – they also lend credibility to your message.
- **Include real life examples** and other details – they bring your message to life.

- **Unpack unfamiliar terms** – don't take for granted that your audience understands basic terminology such as settlements or apartheid. Explain in simple, clear terms.
- **Make comparisons to the familiar** – comparisons are shortcuts that can help people understand what you're talking about. For example, "1.8 million Palestinians in Gaza are densely packed into the tiny territory, which is roughly the size of Detroit."

Interview Tips

When a journalist asks you for an interview:

- Respond **immediately**, thank them for their email, ask them for their **deadline**.
- If possible, ask the reporter **who else they've spoken with** on this issue, or are planning to, so you can prepare accordingly.
- **Google** the journalist to familiarize yourself with their work.
- If you decide to proceed, **let them know** as soon as possible so you can arrange a time.

When preparing for an interview:

- Identify your **3 key messages** prior to your interview.
- **Anticipate** hard questions, be prepared with ways to **pivot back** to the key messages.
- **Practice** responding to questions with a friend.

When giving an interview:

- **Use examples** when possible. Stories are more likely to be remembered than facts alone.
- **Speak to your audience:** Who is your audience? What do they care about? What language, examples, can you use that will most likely resonate with them?
- Be sure to **convey your vision**. Say what you're for, not just what you're against.
- **Use accessible language**. Avoid using overly academic or activist language.
- Be **concise** and **clear**. Remain **calm** and **confident**.
- Speak more **slowly** than usual.
- Remember that every "um" or "like" is magnified, so **relax**, breathe and ground yourself.
- Don't be afraid to **repeat or restate your key message**.

When choosing language:

Your words should be **clear** and **accessible** to everyone, **regardless of their level of education or exposure** to the issues. If you only have an interview soundbite or 140-character tweet and you decide to use a term that is not widely-understood, chances are the following may happen:

- Your audience will tune out your whole message.
- Some may decide to look up the term; you'll be stuck with **Google defining** the term.
- The opposition can more easily **distort your message**.

Flagging

Flagging: Use “flags” to signal something the audience should hear/remember with phrases like:

- “The key issue is ...”
- “The important thing to remember is...”

Bridging:

Bridging: Use the question as a bridge to what you want to say when a question diverts you from your message. Example bridging statements can include:

- “What’s important here is...”
- “The real problem is...”
- “It would be more accurate to say...”
- “Let me emphasize again...”

Control the interview:

- You are the news source. They need you for the story.
- It’s your job to tell your story and deliver your messages, no matter what you’re asked.

Interviews with hostile media:

- Request an interview via email.
- If being interviewed on the phone, you may request permission to record the conversation. Never record an interview without permission.
- If an interview doesn’t go well, you can prepare a letter to the editor that you can send in when the article is published
- Make sure you know when the article runs so you can follow up with requests for any misinformation or misquoting.

Responding to bad coverage:

- Email the reporter right away and request a clarification or correction.
- If the reporter doesn’t respond, email their editor or the applicable section editor.
- If it’s a pattern, consider setting up an editorial board meeting.
- Write a letter to the editor.
- Write an op-ed.
- Take back your voice, and make you own media.

Press Releases: Best Practices & Template

Press releases are used to advise the media of a newsworthy event or development that has happened or will happen, or to respond to a development that has occurred.

Important considerations:

- Your email **subject line** should be concise, timely and compelling. It will determine whether or not your press release gets opened.
- Your **headline** should be as timely and relevant to the news cycle as possible. Include any eye-catching names or impressive numbers. Use a sub-header if you need more space to convey the most interesting information. After your subject line, your headline is the next bit of text journalists will scan before deciding whether to read on.
- **The lede** (opening paragraph) should convey the main idea of the story.
- Include **quotes** that bring the story or campaign to life.
- Make sure your press release is **timely**. Today's news media reports on stories quickly, and they also move on to the next story in a flash.

Press Release Template

INSERT LOGO HERE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Month Day, Year]

Media Contact:

[Name]

[Email | Phone]

HEADLINE

[City, State where press release originating from, i.e. New York, NY] - **LEAD PARAGRAPH:** Put the most important information first. Write 1-2 sentences on how this event or issue is important and timely in the context of current events. Always remember to hyperlink to sources when possible, such as news stories.

NEWS HOOK: Put the most important information first. Write 1-2 sentences on how this event or issue is important and timely news in the context of current events. Always remember to hyperlink to sources when possible, such as news stories.

DETAILS & QUOTE: Write 2-3 sentences that give more details about the issue/event/guest speaker. Try to use a quote from someone directly involved in the issue/event. If it's a speaker, quote them directly.

BACKGROUND: In a couple of paragraphs, add information about your organization and any other important information that helps convey the news story. Remember to keep it brief and on point. You should aim to keep your press release to one page or less.

[After body of press release, include organization's boilerplate description if available.]

[Hyperlink to the press release online if it has been posted, or say that it will be posted later that day on a particular website.]

Tools for Making Your Own Media

Timelines

- [Timeline](http://timeline.knightlab.com) (interactive timelines): timeline.knightlab.com

Video editing

- [WeVideo](http://www.wevideo.com) (free trial option): www.wevideo.com
- [Lumify](http://lumify.me): lumify.me
- [Vee for Video](http://veeforvideo.com) (via itunes): veeforvideo.com

Visual Storytelling

- [Storymap](http://storymap.knightlab.com): storymap.knightlab.com

Infographics

- [Piktochart](http://piktochart.com): piktochart.com
- [Easel.ly](http://easel.ly): easel.ly

Graphic Design

- [Canva](http://canva.com) (infographics/banners/flyers/social media graphics): canva.com