



CENTER for
INDUSTRIAL
PROGRESS

PRO-HUMAN, WHOLE- PICTURE ENERGY COMMUNICATIONS

Strategy, Messaging, and Training

By Alex Epstein

Introduction

For the last several years we have worked on creating the most effective messaging strategies, content, and training to 1) neutralize attackers, turn 2) non-supporters into supporters, and 3) turn supporters into champions.

After working with dozens of companies and other organizations and studying many more, and testing/refining our approach in every medium imaginable with the general public, I am confident that we have developed a system that, if widely adopted in the industry, would transform it from a national thought follower to a national thought leader in the energy debate.

-Alex Epstein



The foundation: the pro-human, whole-picture framework

The core of our approach can be summarized in two words: *pro-human, whole-picture*—and the core of the contrasting approaches can be summarized as anti-impact or positive picture.

Anti-impact vs. pro-human

Anti-impact

Traditional messaging approaches concede the popular but anti-human moral goal of *minimizing human impact*.

This prevents companies from “arguing to 100”—championing their activities as bringing us toward an inspiring moral goal—because the fossil fuel industry is a high-impact industry.

Instead, companies “argue to 0”—meekly claiming that their impact is less significant and less bad than it used to be—while fossil fuel opponents “argue to 100.”

Pro-human

We advocate the inspiring pro-human moral goal of maximizing human flourishing—including environmental quality.

We reject the idea that environmental concern means being anti-impact; human beings have massively *improved* the natural environment by transforming it to meet human needs.

Thus, we are always able to “argue to 100”—that developing more fossil fuels will advance human flourishing—and force our opponents to “argue to 0,” meekly claiming that they are not as anti-impact and anti-human as they seem.

Whole picture vs. positive picture

Positive picture

Traditional messaging approaches, accepting the false equivalent of environmental quality and minimum impact and unable to deal with environmental concerns such as CO₂ levels, tend to *avoid* discussing environmental concerns (especially CO₂) and only focus on the *positive picture*.

But focusing on the positive picture actually encourages negative opinions, because it makes the industry look like it has something to hide. Opponents call them “climate change deniers” and they have little or no response—except to buy into the anti-impact framework and hypocritically claim to believe in massive new fossil fuel development combined with massive CO2 reductions.

Whole picture

We advocate the common-sense decision-making tool of *whole-picture thinking*. We stand for carefully looking at the positives and negatives, the whole picture, of all our alternatives.

We repeatedly call out bias, such as only looking at the negatives of fossil fuels and only the positives of solar.

We repeatedly call out vagueness and sloppiness, such as equating *some* warming impact of increasing CO2 levels (highly likely, consistent with the fundamental physics of greenhouse gasses) vs. catastrophic warming impact of increasing CO2 levels (wild speculation based on failed climate models).

And we repeatedly encourage the freedom to innovate with existing and new forms of energy, criticizing environmentalists for their near-destruction of the arguable huge future potential of nuclear power.

Thus, we are always able to claim the logical and scientific high ground, because we are both unbiased and careful in our analysis.

Combining pro-human and whole picture

By combining the pro-human and whole-picture approaches we can create constructive conversations with people from many different starting points, including those predominantly concerned about energy abundance and those predominantly concerned about CO2 levels.

For example, in nearly every conversation I have, whether with a San Francisco liberal or a Dallas conservative, I will frame the discussion with two questions:

- Would you agree that the best decision is the one that leads to the best outcome for human beings now and in the future?
- Would you agree that to come to the best decision we need to look carefully at both the positives and negatives of all the alternatives?

This will inevitably lead to a highly constructive conversation in which the person sees fossil fuels in a very different light—as a crucial means to human flourishing for many decades to come.

All communications should be framed around pro-human and whole-picture. That's the right thing to do and the effective thing to do.

With that as a core framework, we have developed a system to help companies in the four fundamental areas of communication: strategy, external communications, internal communications, and executive thought leadership.

Fundamentals of Communications Strategy

In order for the pro-human, whole-picture message to be used effectively, it must be part of a broader strategy—a *results-based* communications strategy based on *clear metrics* and proven methods of persuasion.

Too often, organizations use *hope-based communications strategies* with little/no ROI-related measurement using traditional, ineffectual messages and methods of persuasion. For example, it is common practice to delegate the task of persuasive energy messaging to agencies *who are not even themselves* convinced of fossil fuels' goodness. It is also common practice to default to television ads instead of looking at far more cost-effective options.

I have found that every strategy must carefully consider a set of questions I call “the 10 Ms”:

1. **Mission:** What exactly are we trying to accomplish?
2. **Metrics:** How will we measure success?
3. **Monkey wrenches:** What are the biggest obstacles to success? What are potential strategies of dealing with them?
4. **Markets:** What markets or audiences are we trying to persuade?
5. **Messages:** What messages will persuade them?
6. **Methods:** What methods of explanation will persuade them?
7. **Messengers:** Which messengers will be most persuasive to them?
8. **Materials:** What form-factors will be most effective?
9. **Media:** What media will the messengers deliver the message through?
10. **Money:** What is your budget, and why?

To assess your communications strategy, fill out our [Stakeholder Strategy Scorecard](#).

Fundamentals of External Communications

Once a Stakeholder Strategy has been formulated a key objective is to create Master Messaging—the an integrated set of messages that accounts for 90+% of the messaging questions you can be expected to face.

To assess your external communications, fill out our [Stakeholder Strategy Scorecard](#), rows 1-5 and 7 and our [Constructive Conversation Scorecard](#).

Fundamentals of Internal Communications

In our experience it is absolutely possible to turn a substantial percentage of employees into proud, persuasive champions.

Traditionally, most employees have no training in the value of what they do or how to communicate it—or employees have superficial training on content and simplistic training on one-on-one persuasion.

Solution: Training in the pro-human, whole-picture case for fossil fuels (including concerns about fossil fuels) and training in a proven system for constructive conversation.

To assess your internal communications, fill out our [Employee Empowerment Scorecard](#) and our [Constructive Conversation Scorecard](#).

Fundamentals of Executive Thought Leadership

We believe that executives can be national thought leaders *if* they strategically leveraging their resources and spheres of influence.

Traditionally, executives are reticent to communicate publicly or appease opponents publicly or come across as unscrupulous publicly—and privately they do not use 1/10 their potential power over their sphere of influence.

To asses your executive thought leadership, begin by filling out row 8 of our [Stakeholder Strategy Scorecard](#).

Conclusion

To discuss how to use pro-human, whole-picture messaging in any or all areas of your company's communication, fill out the relevant scorecards, send them to alex@industrialprogress.net and we can set up a call to discuss your particular objectives and which of our tools, systems, or resources can help you achieve them.