Water Words That Work

Make a splash with your communications!

Short Version
Water Words That Work

Make a splash with your communications!

Short Version
How Many Are We?

Somewhere between 250,000 and 500,000 individuals
How Many Are They?

Approx 99.9% of Americans do *not* work for a conservation organization. They are *not* our peers.
12,000 Participants!
What's the X Factor?

Group A: 47%
Group B: 27%

Reminded others to be environmentally conscious
What’s the X Factor?

- Group A: 32%
- Group B: 17%

Voted for the candidate with the best environmental record
What’s the X Factor?

Group A: 30% Recently donated to environmental causes

Group B: 18% Recently donated to environmental causes
Group B agrees with this statement:

“The actions of a single person like me won’t make any difference…”
If you can convince your audience that their actions do make a difference -- and that others will do their part, too -- then they are about twice as likely to adopt a pro-environmental behavior than otherwise.
Agenda

• **Leadership and encouragement** produce more action for conservation than education, information, or "awareness."
• The public thinks clean water is the most important environmental issue.
• But **our poor communications** excludes most citizens, and saps their confidence in themselves.
• You can use an **Environmental Message Method** to improve your communications -- inserting leadership and encouragement into your information.
I'm going to read you a list of environmental problems. As I read each one, please tell me if you personally worry about this problem a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or not at all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Problem</th>
<th>% Great deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pollution of drinking water</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contamination of soil and water by toxic waste</td>
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Water is a High Priority

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<th>Top concern</th>
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Our poor communications saps citizens’ confidence in themselves, and this holds them back.
American Jobs *Are* Sailing Away . . .

Stop Reflagging!

Support *YOUR* U.S. Merchant Marine
Entering Chesapeake Bay Watershed

Please Treasure the Chesapeake
What’s A Watershed?

Press *6 to mute or unmute your line
What’s A Watershed?
What’s A Watershed?

It’s a drain pool!
What's A Watershed?
What’s a Watershed

I don’t Know
What’s A Watershed?

Where you go to the bathroom?
Discussion Exercise #1:

Schuylkill Project

Our Schuylkill River project is an effort to describe stream water quality throughout the 1900-square mile Schuylkill River basin in southeastern Pennsylvania. We assess stream condition by sampling the macroinvertebrates (mostly insects, crustaceans, mollusks and worms) that live on the stream bottom. The presence of particular types as well as their relative abundances are combined with knowledge of the ability of the various types to withstand pollution to come up with a water quality "score" for each site. Water quality scores identify poor quality streams in need of mitigation, high quality streams worthy of special protection, and fair quality streams that may deserve intervention to prevent them from becoming poor quality streams.

This website presents the results of 12 years of study from 1996 to 2007. Included are data from 19 long-term study sites on major tributaries that are sampled each year. These sites provide a current and long-term assessment of watershed health throughout the basin. An additional 129 sites, located upstream from the original 19 sites and sampled in one year only, provide a more complete picture of conditions within the major tributaries within the Schuylkill basin. Throughout this website, sampling sites are color coded to indicate water quality conditions, with blue signifying "good", yellow "fair" and red "poor".

The site is organized into pages as follows:

- Introduction presents general information about the Schuylkill River, its location, history and importance to the area, as well as background on the use of macroinvertebrates in stream water quality monitoring.
- Sampling Methods gives background information on the study sites as well as details on sample collection and processing.
- Data Interpretation gives specific information on what sort of data are generated and how they are analyzed.
- Sampling Sites presents an overview of the basin, the location of our 19 long-term monitoring sites, and the various sub-basins for which we have additional data. This page also includes an alphabetical list of all 148 sites, with links to their pages and sub-basins. Six detailed pages on the side bar beneath the Sampling Sites heading show detailed site locations, chart water quality scores and provide links to pages for individual sites within the following categories or sub-basins:

Read the description of the "Schuylkill Project" and the summaries of four "everyday citizens." How do you imagine these citizens would react to the Schuylkill Project piece?
Environmental Message Method

A step-by-step process for translating professional conservation materials into words and pictures that motivate everyday citizens to action.
Environmental Message Method

- Step One: Begin With Behavior
- Step Two: Foolproof Photos
- Step Three: Swap Shop Talk
- Step Four: Words That Work
- Step Five: Tempting Testimonials
- Step Six: Review Readability

Make a splash with your communication! Browse our catalog of services here.
The Due Diligence Test Panel

A research tool that measures how everyday citizens will react to a message from you
Step One: Begin with Behavior

Environmental awareness — that’s often the goal of the communications efforts of the conservation community. We imagine a world where enlightened individuals consider how all of their daily choices affect the natural world.

But how do we get there? One step at a time — so we should organize all our environmental communications around promoting that next step for our audience. Consider the two photos below. At first glance, they’re similar. But the sign on the left is better environmental communication because it has a call to action — and then conveys an important fact to support the request. The sign on the right conveys only a fact, but leaves the reader to draw their own conclusion about what to do.
Step One: Begin with Behavior

1. **Personal Behavior**: Scooping the poop, new lawn care habits, household water and energy conservation, etc.

2. **Political Behavior**: Boycotting a bad company, signing a petition, attending a hearing, writing an official, etc.

3. **Charitable Behavior**: Donating time or money, writing a group into their will, participating in a walk-a-thon or other charity event.
Step One: Begin with Behavior

5. Please rate the following statements about the desired outcome.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The piece makes it clear what I can do</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident others would do their part</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident my action would make a difference</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Please elaborate on your answer to the last statement about "making a difference:"
Step One: Begin with Behavior

Press *6 to mute or unmute your line
• There was so much garbage shown and the damage was so big that it gave me pause. Would what I could do really help stop all that horrible waste?
• I think I'm to avoid runoff of some sort but am not clear on what I can do that actually closes a beach or makes a fish sneeze.
• The actions of one person alone do not really add up to much...

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)
Step One:
Begin with Behavior

Press *6 to mute or unmute your line
• If I contribute by planting a tree or just doing small things, I can make a difference in my community and decrease the affect on water pollution.
• One person's actions make a difference in the total pollution problem. If one person's actions are multiplied by the actions of many people, then together they can make a huge difference in the total pollution problem.
• Knowing that small actions can make a big difference is very motivational. And the video provides ways for someone to easily do that.
Education vs. Action

Every 20 minutes a new case of autism is diagnosed.
Click here to donate to Easter Seals.

Goal: $500.00
Achieved: $0.00
July 21, 2008, 5:35 pm

Protest at Radio Station Over Autism Comments

By SEWELL CHAN

Todd Shapiro, right, took part in a protest outside WOR's office in Lower Manhattan over Michael Savage's comments about autism. Councilmen David I. Weprin, left, and Eric N. Gioia, center, also demonstrated.

(Photo: Patrick Andrade for The New York Times)
Education vs. Action

Is my child Autistic? ...

Watch for Red flags of Autism in your child
The following red flags may indicate a child is at risk for atypical development, and is in need of an immediate evaluation.

- No big smiles or other warm, joyful expressions by 6 months
- No back-and-forth sharing of sounds, smiles, or other facial expressions by 9 months
- No babbling by 12 months
- Avoids eye contact
- Trouble forming relationships
- Difficulty using language
- Doesn’t respond to emotional signals
Discussion/Exercise #2

Read the article highlighted on the right.

Come up with some examples of:
- Personal Behaviors
- Charitable Behaviors
- Political Behaviors

That are relevant to this piece.
Step Two: Find Foolproof Photos

Environmental advertisements, websites, and outreach materials typically use photographs in an unbalanced way — too much nature photography, and not enough faces and photographic examples of the behavior you want. Because a picture is worth a thousand words — you should focus your attention on good environmental photos before you focus on your environmental writing.

Here are four categories of photos that are foolproof — they’ll help you get the response you want:

Faces

Humans automatically behave in more socially conscious ways when they detect a visual pattern resembling a gaze.

That’s how the Washington Post summarized an article about effective advertising and communication that appeared in the Journal of Human Nature. You should act on this finding by putting at least one picture of a face — big enough to see the eyes — on every page. Humans are better than other mammals. Mammals are better than birds. Birds are better than fish, reptiles, amphibians, and bugs — but fish, reptiles, amphibians and bugs are better than nothing.
Step Two:
Find Foolproof Photos

7. Please rate the following statements about the images. *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The images get my attention</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The images demonstrate what I can do</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The images show how my actions make a difference</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Please elaborate on your thoughts about the images in this piece: *


Low Scores for Step Two

• Showing a couple of pictures of fish and a bald eagle doesn't really tell me much about how my efforts would make a difference.

• Two men shaking hands and what looks like a woman hiding behind a tree. Not impressed. Let's see some action!

• I actually had to go back and look at the pictures since I didn't remember a thing about them- so they really weren't attention grabbing.

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)
High Scores for Step Two

• I think the **photos** are relevant and appealing but **should be larger**, **cut down the text a bit to make room**.

• It shows the causes of pollution and also what I can do as a citizen. **It wouldn't hurt to put another picture.**

• The images show how people of all ages and skills can help save the river, from children to skilled workers and experts who pitch in and get their hands dirty

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)
Faces
Good Pictures!
Bad Pictures!
Jane Goodall Knows

“Monkey See, Monkey Do”
Monkey See, Monkey Do
Monkey See, Monkey Do
A Common Mistake

All the soap, scum, and oily grit runs along the curb. Then into a storm drain and directly into our lakes, rivers, and streams. And that causes pollution which is unhealthy for everyone. So how do you avoid this whole mess? Easy! Wash your car on the grass or gravel instead of the street. Or better yet, take it to a car wash where the water gets treated or recycled.
Foolproof Photos
Discussion/Exercise #3

If you could replace some of the images on the right, what would you replace them with?
Step Three: Swap Shop Talk

When it comes to raising environmental awareness among everyday citizens, professional vocabulary like "riparian," "watershed," and "impermeable surface" is an obstacle. The more you throw words like these at everyday citizens, the less confident and comfortable they will feel about their ability to make a difference.

Trying to use environmental advertisements and outreach materials to teach new vocabulary is generally a bad idea. Adults learn, on average, less than one new word per week. When presented with a vocabulary lesson, many will perceive that as a situation that makes them feel stupid and that they want to avoid.

Step three of the Water Words That Work message method is to swap out your shop talk and replace it with plain English. You'll give up some nuance and precision — but you'll also get more agreement, action, and cooperation — and that leads to environmental awareness.

And here are some examples of nature protection and pollution control "shop talk." The more you use them, the more people you will exclude from the conversation. Click the link for citations on the shortcomings of these terms.

If you are wondering about a term that is not on the list below, put it to the shop talk test — could your mother define the term for a stranger without your help? If yes, you can leave the word in. If not, take it out and replace it with something easier to understand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Try Substituting...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>Clean and safe energy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step Three: Swap the Shoptalk

9. Please rate the following statements about the message. *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The piece has a clear message</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could explain this piece to others without showing it to them</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The piece was prepared with the general public in mind</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. How would you describe the audience this piece is intended for? *
Low Scores for Step Three

• it is written for... someone a lot smarter than I
• ...it is not written in an interesting or easy to understand manner for the general public.
• It gives the facts in a dry and clear way but it is not exciting...

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)
High Scores for Step Three

• This piece is intended for everyone. It is a simple piece with impact-full text and pictures showing how the average person can make a difference.
• This piece was clearly intended for a general audience. It was easy to read and informative. It clearly spelled out what we can do to help and offered a template and a way to actually support the plan of action.
• It's for people who will write letters, sign petitions, get out and get involved

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)
Step Three: Swap the Shoptalk

The Grandmother Test: Can you imagine your grandmother using this term correctly in conversation? If not, it’s shoptalk. Swap it out!
A: Watershed management

B: Land and water conservation
A: Open Space

B: Natural Area
A: Polluted Runoff

B: Stormwater
A: Clean water

B: Water Quality
Swap this shoptalk:
• Benthic macroinvertebrates
• Watershed health assessment
• Stream mitigation
Step Four: Words That Work

Synthesizing years of experience and a pile of social research, here is a list of two dozen “words that work.” These are the words that you should use heavily in your environmental writing, social marketing campaigns, and other outreach efforts. Everyday Americans understand these terms, respond well to them — and most importantly for the purpose of general environmental awareness — feel comfortable using them among their friends and family.

Click on the terms to see citations.

Use these Words to Introduce Your Work!
1. Nature protection
2. Pollution control
3. Enough Clean Water
4. Wildlife Conservation
5. Future Generations
6. Healthy
7. Family & Children
8. Safe
9. Trust

Use these Words to Explain the Importance!
10. Make a Difference
11. Doing My/Your/Their Part
12. It affects you

Recent Posts
- EPA Updates its Outreach Toolbox
- Free Webinar: “Your Website Doesn’t Matter. Why Email Still Rules Fundraising”
- When Words Become The Pictures: Environmental Communication and Campaign Job in NC
- Short Video on the Power of Words
- Environmental Writing Resources: Carnival of the Blue
- How to Talk About Polluted Streamwater Runoff…
- Environmental Communication Jobs in VA, RI
- Coming Up: The Website “Sprint”
- Environmental Message Method: Revised!

Comments
- Environmental Issue Surveys: What Are They Telling Us?
- Eco-Friendly Living: A+ Environment vs. Economy: What Does the Public Really Believe?
- Clouds + Central Indiana Watersheds: On When Words Become The Pictures
- Lynne Richard on When Words Become The Pictures
- Carlson Krueger on Environmental Communication and Campaign Job in NC
- Sandra Diaz on Environmental Communication and Campaign Job in NC

Categories

Archive
Select Month

Select Category
Step Four: Words That Work

11. Please rate the following statements about the issue generally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The issue is important to society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is urgent to address this issue now</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues like this affect me or my family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Please elaborate on your thoughts about the last statement, "issues like this affect me or my family."
High Scores for Step Four

• Anything that affects water and quality of the land effects me, my family and everyone else.
• Making sure there is an adequate water supply for our present and future needs affects nearly everyone.
• If we want to make the world better for future generations we need to address these issues and work together to fix them.

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)
High Scores for Step Four

- Anything that affects water and quality of the land effects me, my family and everyone else.
- Making sure there is an adequate water supply for our present and future needs affects nearly everyone.
- If we want to make the world better for future generations we need to address these issues and work together to fix them.

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)
Discussion/Exercise #5

Rewrite the first paragraph of this piece.

Begin with Behavior:
Add a call to action.

Swap the shoptalk.

Insert the words that work.
About 1% of the words in your piece should come from the "Words That Work" list.

Use them in Titles, headlines, photo captions, quotes, and other high profile areas.
Try It Yourself!

Use the Due Diligence Test Panel to improve your next draft!
Just $199 for nonprofits, just $249 for everybody else.
Sign up online at http://waterwordsthatwork.com
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Approx 99.9% of Americans do *not* work for a conservation organization. They are *not* our peers.
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Top concern</th>
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<tr>
<td>2008 Mar 6-9</td>
<td>Pollution of drinking water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 Mar 11-14</td>
<td>Pollution of drinking water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 Mar 13-16</td>
<td>Pollution of drinking water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 Mar 8-11</td>
<td>Pollution of drinking water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 Mar 3-5</td>
<td>Pollution of drinking water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 Mar 4-7</td>
<td>Pollution of drinking water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 Mar 5-7</td>
<td>Pollution of drinking water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 Apr 3-9</td>
<td>Pollution of drinking water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 Apr 13-14</td>
<td>Pollution of drinking water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991 Apr 11-14</td>
<td>Pollution of drinking water / Pollution of rivers, lakes and reservoirs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990 Apr 5-8</td>
<td>Pollution of drinking water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989 May 4-7</td>
<td>Pollution of rivers, lakes and reservoirs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GALLUP POLL
Our poor communications saps citizens’ confidence in themselves, and this holds them back.
American Jobs Are Sailing Away... Stop Reflagging!
Support YOUR U.S. Merchant Marine
Entering Chesapeake Bay Watershed

Please Treasure the Chesapeake
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Press *6 to mute or unmute your line
What's A Watershed?
What’s A Watershed?

It’s a drain pool!
What’s A Watershed?

Water...Shed..?
What's a Watershed

I don't Know
What’s A Watershed?

Where you go to the bathroom?
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Step Six: Review Readability
The Due Diligence Test Panel

A research tool that measures how everyday citizens will react to a message from you.
Step One: Begin With Behavior

Environmental awareness — that’s often the goal of the communications efforts of the conservation community. We imagine a world where enlightened individuals consider how all of their daily choices affect the natural world.

But how do we get there? One step at a time — so we should organize all our environmental communications around promoting that next step for our audience. Consider the two photos below. At first glance, they’re similar. But the sign on the left is better environmental communication because it has a call to action — and then conveys an important fact to support the request. The sign on the right conveys only a fact, but leaves the reader to draw their own conclusion about what to do.
Step One: Begin with Behavior

1. **Personal Behavior**: Scooping the poop, new lawn care habits, household water and energy conservation, etc.

2. **Political Behavior**: Boycotting a bad company, signing a petition, attending a hearing, writing an official, etc.

3. **Charitable Behavior**: Donating time or money, writing a group into their will, participating in a walk-a-thon or other charity event.
Step One: Begin with Behavior

5. Please rate the following statements about the desired outcome.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The piece makes it clear what I can do</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident others would do their part</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident my action would make a difference</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Please elaborate on your answer to the last statement about "making a difference:"
Step One:
Begin with Behavior

Press *6 to mute or unmute your line
Low Scores for Step One

- There was so much garbage shown and the damage was so big that it gave me pause. **Would what I could do really help stop all that horrible waste?**
- I think I'm to avoid runoff of some sort but am not clear on what I can do that actually closes a beach or makes a fish sneeze.
- **The actions of one person alone do not really add up to much...**

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)
Step One: Begin with Behavior

Press *6 to mute or unmute your line
• If i contribute by planting a tree or just doing small things i can make a difference in my community and decrease the affect on water pollution.
• One person's actions make a difference in the total pollution problem. If one person's actions are multiplied by the actions of many people, then together they can make a huge difference in the total pollution problem.
• Knowing that small actions can make a big difference is very motivational. And the video provides ways for someone to easily do that.
Education vs. Action

Every 20 minutes a new case of autism is diagnosed.

Click here to donate to Easter Seals

Goal: $500.00
Achieved: $0.00
Education vs. Action

Protest at Radio Station Over Autism Comments

By SEWELL CHAN

Todd Shapiro, right, took part in a protest outside WOR's office in Lower Manhattan over Michael Savage's comments about autism. Councilmen David I. Weprin, left, and Eric N. Gioia, center, also demonstrated. (Photo: Patrick Andrade for The New York Times)
Education vs. Action

Is my child Autistic? ...

Watch for Red flags of Autism in your child
The following red flags may indicate a child is at risk for atypical development, and is in need of an immediate evaluation.

- No big smiles or other warm, joyful expressions by 6 months
- No back-and-forth sharing of sounds, smiles, or other facial expressions by 9 months
- No babbling by 12 months
- Avoids eye contact
- Trouble forming relationships
- Difficulty using language
- Doesn’t respond to emotional signals
Discussion/Exercise #2

Read the article highlighted on the right.

Come up with some examples of:
• Personal Behaviors
• Charitable Behaviors
• Political Behaviors

That are relevant to this piece.
Step Two: Find Foolproof Photos

Environmental advertisements, websites, and outreach materials typically use photographs in an unbalanced way — too much nature photography, and not enough faces and photographic examples of the behavior you want. Because a picture is worth a thousand words — you should focus your attention on good environmental photos before you focus on your environmental writing.

Here are four categories of photos that are foolproof — they'll help you get the response you want:

Faces

Humans automatically behave in more socially conscious ways when they detect a visual pattern resembling a gaze.

That's how the Washington Post summarized an article about effective advertising and communication that appeared in the Journal of Human Nature. You should act on this finding by putting at least one picture of a face — big enough to see the eyes — on every page. Humans are better than other mammals. Mammals are better than birds. Birds are better than fish, reptiles, amphibians, and bugs — but fish, reptiles, amphibians and bugs are better than nothing.
Step Two:
Find Foolproof Photos

7. Please rate the following statements about the images.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The images get my attention</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The images demonstrate what I can do</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The images show how my actions make a difference</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Please elaborate on your thoughts about the images in this piece:*
Low Scores for Step Two

• Showing a couple of pictures of fish and a bald eagle doesn't really tell me much about how my efforts would make a difference.
• Two men shaking hands and what looks like a woman hiding behind a tree. Not impressed. Let's see some action!
• I actually had to go back and look at the pictures since I didn't remember a thing about them-so they really weren't attention grabbing.

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)
High Scores for Step Two

• I think the photos are relevant and appealing but should be larger, cut down the text a bit to make room.
• It shows the causes of pollution and also what I can do as a citizen. It wouldn't hurt to put another picture.
• The images show how people of all ages and skills can help save the river, from children to skilled workers and experts who pitch in and get their hands dirty

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)
Good Pictures!

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Community Assistance
Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program

Want to connect your community to nature? We can help.

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program specialists can help you to:
- Connect with partners
- Assess ideas and options
- Create workable plans
- Locate funding
- Achieve your vision!

We’ve helped in hundreds of communities nationwide, where neighbors are working together to create greener, healthier communities for the future.

To find out whether we can help you make a difference where you live, just get in touch:
202-354-6900
nps_rta@nps.gov
www.nps.gov/rta

If you want to protect your local river, save an unspoiled landscapes, or build trails to help everyone enjoy nature, the National Park Service can help.
Bad Pictures!
Jane Goodall Knows

“Monkey See, Monkey Do”
Monkey See, Monkey Do
Monkey See, Monkey Do
A Common Mistake

All the soap, scum, and oily grit runs along the curb. Then into a storm drain and directly into our lakes, rivers, and streams. And that causes pollution which is unhealthy for everyone. So how do you avoid this whole mess? Easy! Wash your car on the grass or gravel instead of the street. Or better yet, take it to a car wash where the water gets treated or recycled.
Foolproof Photos
Discussion/Exercise #3

Schuylkill Project

Our Schuylkill River project is an effort to describe stream water quality throughout the 1900-square-mile Schuylkill River basin in southeastern Pennsylvania. We assess stream condition by sampling the macroinvertebrates (mostly insects, crustaceans, mollusks and worms) that live on the stream bottom. The presence of particular types as well as their relative abundances are combined with knowledge of the ability of the various types to withstand pollution to come up with a water quality “score” for each site. Water quality scores identify poor quality streams in need of mitigation, high quality streams worthy of special protection, and fair quality streams that may deserve intervention to prevent them from becoming poor quality streams.

This web site presents the results of 12 years of study, from 1996 to 2007. Included are data from 19 long-term study sites on major tributaries that are sampled each year. These sites provide a current and long-term assessment of watershed health throughout the basin. An additional 120 sites, located upstream from the original 19 sites and sampled in one year only, provide a more complete picture of conditions within the major tributaries within the Schuylkill basin. Throughout this web site, sampling sites are color coded to indicate water quality conditions, with blue signifying “good”, yellow “fair” and red “poor”.

The site is organized into pages as follows.

- **Introduction** presents general information about the Schuylkill River, its location, history and importance to the area, as well as background on the use macroinvertebrates in stream water quality monitoring.
- **Sampling Methods** gives background information on the study sites as well as details on sample collection and processing.
- **Data Interpretation** gives specific information on what sort of data are generated and how they are analyzed.
- **Sampling Sites** presents and overview of the basin, the location of our 19 long-term monitoring sites, and the various sub-basins for which we have additional data. This page also includes an alphabetical list of all 146 sites, with links to their pages and sub-basins. Six bulleted pages on the side bar beneath the Sampling Sites heading show detailed site locations, chart water quality scores and provide links to pages for individual sites within the following categories or sub-basins.

If you could replace some of the images on the right, what would you replace them with?
Step Three: Swap the Shoptalk

Step Three: Swap Shop Talk

When it comes to raising environmental awareness among everyday citizens, professional vocabulary like "riparian," "watershed," and "impermeable surface" is an obstacle. The more you throw words like these at everyday citizens, the less confident and comfortable they will feel about their ability to make a difference.

Trying to use environmental advertisements and outreach materials to teach new vocabulary is generally a bad idea. Adults learn, on average, less than one new word per week. When presented with a vocabulary lesson, many will perceive that as a situation that makes them feel stupid and that they want to avoid.

Step three of the Water Words That Work message method is to swap out your shop talk and replace it with plain English. You’ll give up some nuance and precision — but you’ll also get more agreement, action, and cooperation — and that leads to environmental awareness.

And here are some examples of nature protection and pollution control “shop talk.” The more you use them, the more people you will exclude from the conversation. Click the link for citations on the shortcomings of these terms.

If you are wondering about a term that is not on the list below, put it to the shop talk test — could your mother define the term for a stranger without your help? If yes, you can leave the word in. If not, take it out and replace it with something easier to understand.

Words With Documented Shortcomings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Try Substituting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>Clean and safe energy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step Three: Swap the Shoptalk

9. Please rate the following statements about the message. *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The piece has a clear message</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could explain this piece to others without showing it to them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The piece was prepared with the general public in mind</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. How would you describe the audience this piece is intended for? *
Low Scores for Step Three

• it is written for... someone a lot smarter than i
• ...it is not written in an interesting or easy to understand manner for the general public.
• It gives the facts in a dry and clear way but it is not exciting...

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)
High Scores for Step Three

• This piece is intended for everyone. It is a simple piece with impact-full text and pictures showing how the average person can make a difference.
• This piece was clearly intended for a general audience. It was easy to read and informative. It clearly spelled out what we can do to help and offered a template and a way to actually support the plan of action.
• It's for people who will write letters, sign petitions, get out and get involved

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)
Step Three: Swap the Shoptalk

The Grandmother Test: Can you imagine your grandmother using this term correctly in conversation?

If not, it’s shoptalk. Swap it out!
A: Watershed management

B: Land and water conservation
A: Open Space

B: Natural Area
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A: Polluted Runoff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B: Stormwater</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A: Clean water

B: Water Quality
Discussion/Exercise #4

Swap this shoptalk:
• Benthic macroinvertebrates
• Watershed health assessment
• Stream mitigation

Schuylkill Project
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Step Four: Words That Work

Synthesizing years of experience and a pile of social research, here is a list of two dozen “words that work.” These are the words that you should use heavily in your environmental writing, social marketing campaigns, and other outreach efforts. Everyday Americans understand these terms, respond well to them — and most importantly for the purpose of general environmental awareness — feel comfortable using them among their friends and family.

Click on the terms to see citations.

Use these Words to Introduce Your Work!
1. Nature protection
2. Pollution control
3. Enough Clean Water
4. Wildlife Conservation

Use these Words to Explain the Importance!
5. Future Generations
6. Healthy
7. Family & Children
8. Safe
9. Transit

Use these Words to Encourage them to Act!
10. Make a Difference
11. Doing My/Your/Their Part
12. It affects you
Step Four: Words That Work

11. Please rate the following statements about the issue generally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The issue is important to society</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is urgent to address this issue now</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues like this affect me or my family</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Please elaborate on your thoughts about the last statement, "issues like this affect me or my family."
High Scores for Step Four

• Anything that affects water and quality of the land effects me, my family and everyone else.
• Making sure there is an adequate water supply for our present and future needs affects nearly everyone.
• If we want to make the world better for future generations we need to address these issues and work together to fix them.

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)
High Scores for Step Four

- Anything that affects water and quality of the land affects me, my family and everyone else.
- Making sure there is an adequate water supply for our present and future needs affects nearly everyone.
- If we want to make the world better for future generations we need to address these issues and work together to fix them.

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)
Rewrite the first paragraph of this piece.

Begin with Behavior:
Add a call to action.

Swap the shoptalk.

Insert the words that work.
About 1% of the words in your piece should come from the "Words That Work" list.

Use them in Titles, headlines, photo captions, quotes, and other high profile areas.
Use the Due Diligence Test Panel to improve your next draft!
Just $199 for nonprofits, just $249 for everybody else.
Sign up online at http://waterwordsthatwork.com