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COMMUNICATING THE VALUE OF RESEARCH

PRESENTED AT THE
ANNUAL MEETING
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA
MAY 17, 2008

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Communication Matters

Communicating the Value of Research



NCHRP REPORT 610

National Cooperative Highway Research Program

TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD

OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

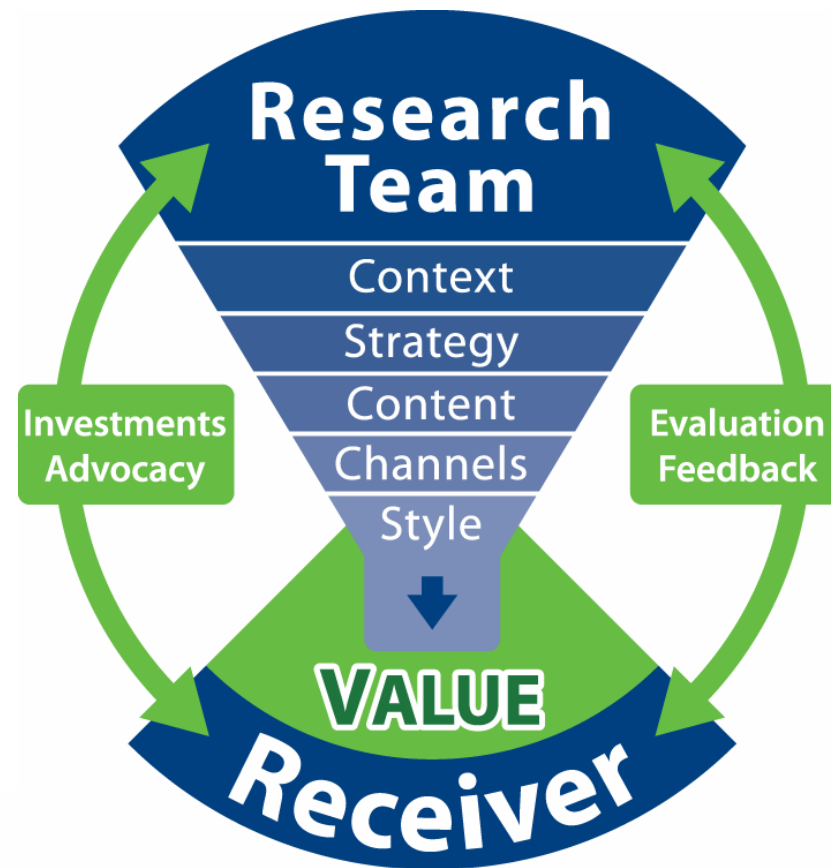
Purpose

- **Develop a practical guide for researchers on successfully communicating the value of research**
 - Based on case studies of successful transportation research projects
 - Reviews of best practices in other fields
- **Authors**
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Taking Communication Seriously

- Integral part of research process
- Bringing decision makers and other stakeholders into research process
- Building relationships that last beyond single project
- Drawing on support of communication professionals
- Building communication skills of researchers
- Providing resources to support and enhance communication capacity of research team

Establishing and Communicating Value is a Process





Context Situation Analysis

- **Recognize that context matters**
- **Define relevant issue or need**
- **Connect interests of audience with the research**
- **Case study examples:**
 - Seismic Bridge Retrofit
 - Mileage-based Fee Program



Strategy

How, What and for Whom

- **Define the “strategic space”**
- **Understand value profile**
- **Case study examples:**
 - ACS Lite
 - Fiber Reinforced Polymer Bridge Deck



Content

What to Include

- **Develop accurate & appropriate messages**
- **Use multiple messaging tactics**
- **Identify “sticky” messages**
- **Case study example:**
 - New Bridge Steel



Channels Means of Communication

- **Consider audience**
- **Tailor message and style to channel**
- **Case study examples:**
 - Komen
 - Mileage-based Fee Program
 - Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies



Style

Look and Feel

- **Packaging matters**
- **Consider non-graphic attributes**
- **Build brand value**
- **Case study examples:**
 - Median Cable Barriers
 - Komen
 - St. Jude



Putting It All Together: NCFRP Example

- **Context**
 - Globalization, Congestion, Safety
- **Strategy**
 - Build a coalition of freight interests (Freight Stakeholders Coalition)
 - Work with champion -- AASHTO
- **Content**
 - Focused on issues of broad, current national interest
- **Channels**
 - In-Person (key stakeholder support)
 - Print (engaging summaries)
- **Style**
 - Straightforward presentation of information (key points; benefits; attractive one-pagers)

Evaluation and Feedback

- **Critical for refining your communication**
- **Formal Evaluation (surveys, focus groups, pre- and post-tests)**
- **Informal Evaluation (peer review or small pre-test with audience members)**

7 Signs of Good Practice

- **Understand the audience**
- **Demonstrate a tangible benefit**
- **Build a two-way relationship with audience**
- **Recognize that timing is relevant**
- **Build coalitions**
- **Involve communication professionals**
- **Tailor packaging**

Additional Guidance

- **Guidebook on Communicating the Value of Research available from NCHRP in Fall 2008**
- **Guidebook Overview**
- **Internet-based Training Modules**

Thank you!

**We welcome your feedback and
comments on this presentation**

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