

The Value of Effective Evidence Communication

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OPEN HEALTH



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Picture something you value highly. Why do you value it? Likely reasons could be that the item is expensive, it was hard to obtain, or it is associated with sentimental memories. In each of these cases, you as the owner have some information about the item that causes it to be valuable. That is, that same item would not have as much value to someone who lacked that relevant information. An example: A man catches a foul ball at a professional baseball game. The spectators around him cheer wildly, and he excitedly hands the ball to his 3-year-old daughter. She immediately turns and **throws it**. Why? Because she had no knowledge of the rarity and significance of catching a foul ball at a baseball game. To her, it was just a toy to be tossed!

In our world of health economics and outcomes research (HEOR), we generate knowledge for a specific disease or treatment, which we call evidence. This evidence is communicated to diverse stakeholders for the purpose of inspiring some type of action. To achieve the desired action, we must guide these stakeholders toward understanding and caring about the matter being communicated. In other words, we want them to value the information we have conveyed. Thus, our mission is not simply to communicate knowledge but to communicate value.

Although knowledge is a necessary component of value, it is rarely a *sufficient* one. Insights must accompany the knowledge to facilitate complete understanding. HEOR evidence is often quantitative, requiring numeric literacy (or numeracy) to understand and properly interpret. It is important to note that

numeracy can be difficult for non-scientists; even scientists outside of their areas of expertise may find some quantitative evidence challenging to grasp. To convey understanding versus simply transferring knowledge, efficient presentation of numeric information must include reducing the cognitive effort so that the audience needs to make fewer inferences. That is, the sharing of numeric data must clearly explain what the numbers mean and draw attention to the important information they convey.¹

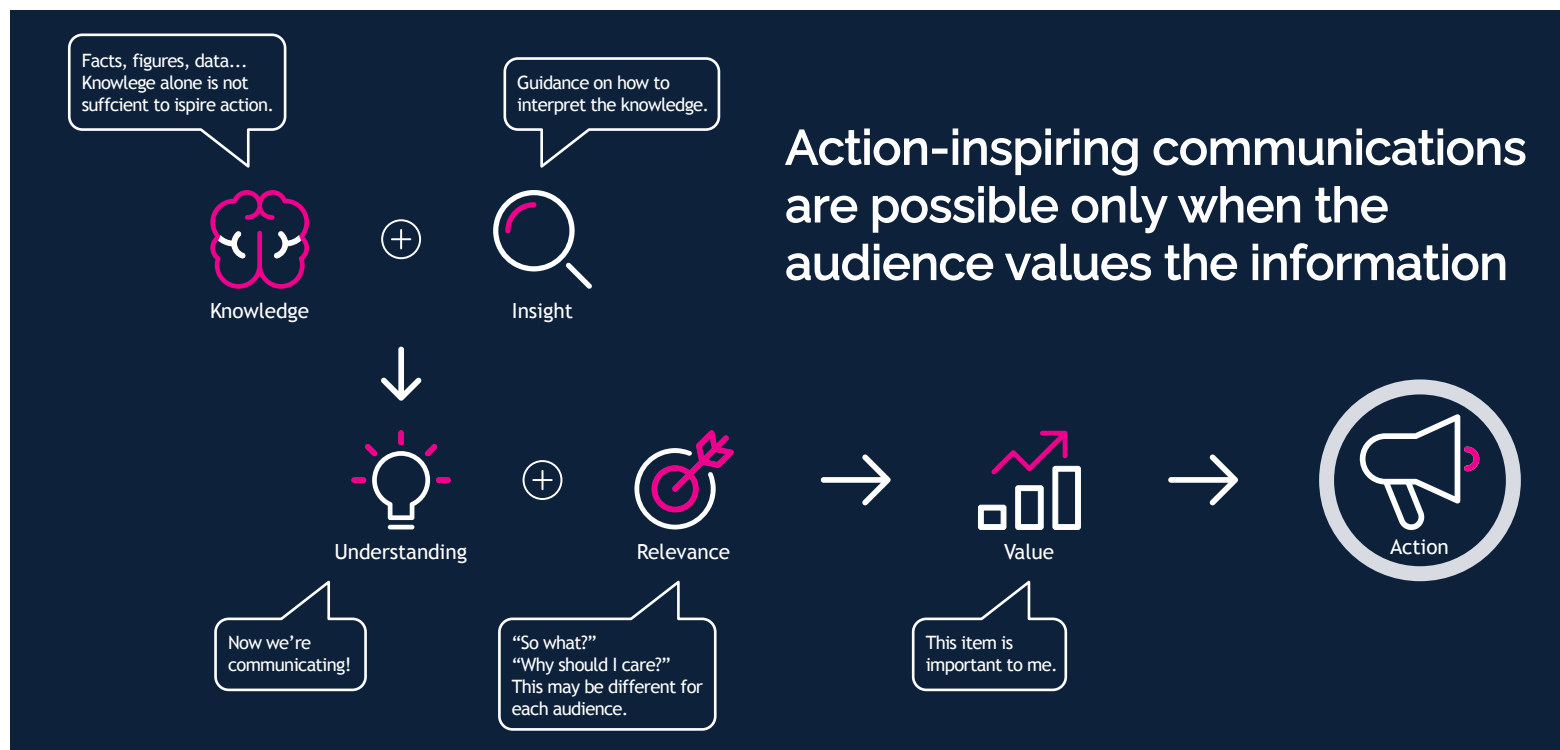


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However important, understanding alone still is not sufficient to inspire action. Think about how many people understand the benefits of a healthy diet and regular exercise yet hold only a lukewarm affinity for them in their own lives. To get someone to the point of action, the relevance must also be communicated. Relevance is the quality or state of being closely connected or appropriate, meaning that the audience must feel connected to the topic and that it has some applicability to his or her life. As one would imagine, the relevance will be different for each audience. Physicians may care about treatment benefits such as ease of monitoring, reduced side effects, and so forth. Patients may also care about these benefits in addition to others, such as dosing frequency. Payers or policy makers will

have yet another set of treatment aspects relevant to them. The key to communicating value is to provide answers to each audience's "So what?" and "Why should I care?" questions along with the information that leads to understanding. Then will your audience be most likely to take the action you want to inspire.

Effective, action-oriented communication conveys both complexity and nuance and does so in a way that the target audience understands and finds useful. Communicators must therefore be responsive to both the need for evidence as well as different audiences' ways of perceiving value, understanding it, and making decisions around it.²



Constructing Effective Communications



Literacy is a relatively recent phenomenon in human history. The earliest humans date back to some 300,000 years ago, but the earliest writings are only 5000 years old. This means that for millennia we have evolved to document and communicate knowledge through stories. Needless to say, it is still the case today that narrative stories are easier to understand *and remember* than a list of facts. They increase audience engagement and the messages they contain are easier to process and remember than a recitation of information. A simple narrative can be constructed with 3 parts: problem, question, and answer. The problem explains what is wrong with the current situation. This is framed in a way that inspires the audience to care about what is being communicated. The question is motivated by the problem and is also framed to the specific audience's perspective. Scientists often call this the "research question" or the "objective." The answer to that question comes next, *then*

is followed by the supporting evidence for that answer. Scientific communications are often constructed to provide the evidence first, followed by the answer, a structure that makes for great journal manuscripts but less than great communications.

Over the product development lifecycle, communication of a product's value must evolve. In earlier phases, evidence communication focuses largely on scientific

information. As the lifecycle proceeds, however, communication becomes increasingly narrative. In later phases, products' value stories are developed for their diverse audiences, which include patient advocacy groups, providers, local pharmaceutical affiliates, field teams, and medical science liaisons, in addition to the traditional payer audience.

“Psychologically privileged”

Our minds treat stories differently than other types of material.

A meta-analysis of 75 studies found that narrative stories were more easily understood and better recalled than essays.²

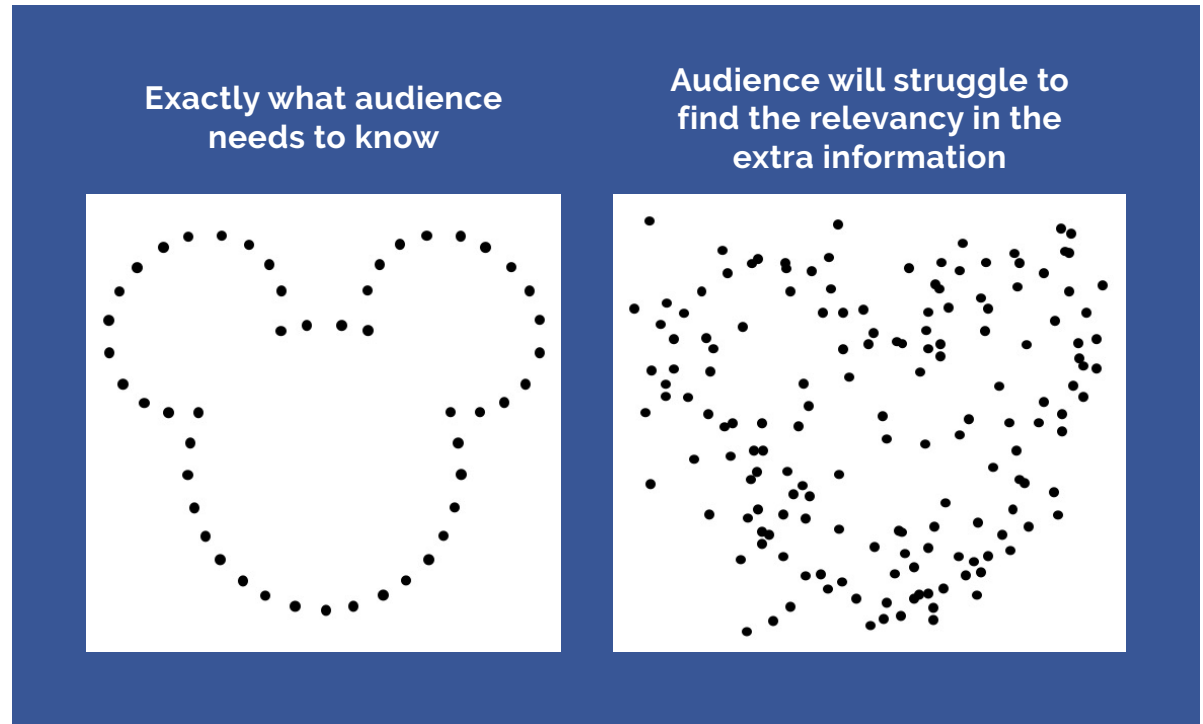


Constructing Effective Communications



Effective communications are simple. They give the audience the exact information necessary to understand the message. A common tendency is to provide a lot of facts and information with the intention that listeners can pick and choose which they want and which they don't so that everyone will walk away with their desired level of understanding. However, this type of information overload (aka "data dump") can backfire. Too much information causes people to struggle to figure out how the extra information fits into the story and how it is relevant. This can be overwhelming. When overwhelmed, audiences may make quick assessments based on the information they already know (ignoring your information) or simply decline to engage at all.

Another common motivation for information overload is the wish for greater transparency. The irony is that too much information is the opposite of transparency; it muddles the key message and confuses the audience!



“Complexity is your enemy. Any fool can make something complicated. It is hard to keep things simple.”

- Sir Richard Branson



Constructing Effective Communications

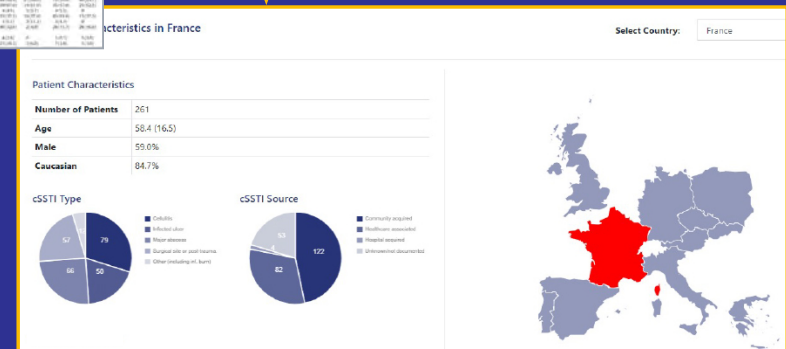


Whenever possible, show the audience what you want them to know. Visuals convey information faster, more effectively, and more convincingly than text or audio. Neuroscientists have discovered that the part of our brains responsible for seeing also has decision-making power,³ which means that humans can make inferences and interpretations quickly without the help from the traditional “higher level” areas of our brains. Visuals are also more persuasive. A group of campers ages 6-12 years was shown a rotating photo of salad in their cafeteria, which resulted in a 90% increase in its consumption.⁴ If a visual of salad can inspire children to eat vegetables, just think of the influence they can have on your audience!

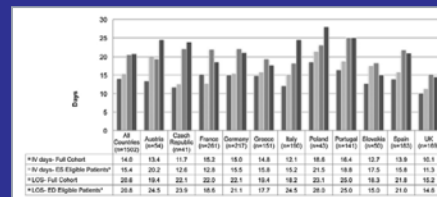
VISUALIZATIONS MAKE DATA MORE ACCESSIBLE AND ENGAGING

Country	Days	Country	Days	Country	Days	Country	Days	Country	Days
Poland	18.6	Portugal	16.4	France	15.2	Germany	15.0	Greece	14.0
Spain	13.9	Austria	13.4	Slovakia	12.7	Italy	12.1	Czech Republic	11.7
United Kingdom	10.1	All Countries	14.0						

Turn this table into a visual graphic that is easy to understand.



Turn this bar graphic into a visual graphic that tells a story.



Constructing Effective Communications



MAKE IT INTERACTIVE

Interactive communication tools can embody narratives from multiple perspectives displayed in a simple, engaging, and visual manner. In creating a narrative, we know that it is best to tailor it to the preferences and interests of the audience. A single interactive display's different features can show alternative narrative perspectives. Interactivity helps keep messaging simple yet offers the ability to create layers of information where details can be hidden from the high-level message but accessible on demand for those who want them. These features incorporated in a good visual design create an engaging, easy to use, and easy to understand presentation. As a bonus, **if analytics are included within the interactive presentation**, evidence generation and interpretation are in the audience's hands!

The candidates lost many voters' attention to a moving fly during the 2020 US vice presidential debate. Humans have evolved to be keenly aware of motion, and this awareness has been an important factor in our survival.



FLY LANDS ON VP PENCE'S HEAD DURING DEBATE



Interactive Analytics and Communications at OPEN Health

OPEN Health is made up of a global team of experts who work strategically alongside our client partners through all phases of the product lifecycle. Specifically, our Evidence & Access practice has worked with hundreds of pharmaceutical sponsors over the past 20 years to generate and disseminate evidence with the goal of establishing reimbursement and market access. With the increasing number of therapeutics coming to market along with increasing prices, evidence and value *communication* will become just as important as evidence and value *creation*.

If audiences' communication needs are not met, the harms can be substantial. Improper communication can produce requests for more information and more meetings to clarify issues, delaying decision-

making. The reputation of the research program could also be affected. A lack of understanding of a program's results and impact can compromise trust in the presented evidence, as well as decrease one's credibility, damaging future research opportunities and even leading to decisions contrary to the desired outcome.

Our Interactive Analytics & Communications team is a group of developers and HEOR experts dedicated to innovative solutions to communicate and disseminate the value of HEOR products to allow our sponsors' key messages to be heard—and understood—whether the stakeholder is an internal local affiliate or an external payer or clinician. Contact us to discuss ways to communicate your products' value to the audiences that matter to you in ways that matter to them.



References

- 1 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2017. *Communicating Science Effectively: A Research Agenda*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/23674>.
- 2 Mar RA, Li J, Nguyen ATP, et al. Memory and comprehension of narrative versus expository texts: A meta-analysis. *Psychon Bull Rev* 28, 732–749 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13423-020-01853-1>
- 3 Brascamp J, Blake R, Knapen T, et al. Negligible fronto-parietal BOLD activity accompanying unreportable switches in bistable perception. *Nat Neurosci*. 2015 Nov;18(11):1672–8. doi: 10.1038/nn.4130.
- 4 <https://www.news.iastate.edu/news/2013/07/18/digitaldisplays>

OPEN Health brings together deep scientific knowledge, global understanding, and broad specialist expertise to support our clients in improving health outcomes and patient wellbeing. We are united as one flexible organization, harnessing the power of the collective to solve complex challenges. Being built from cohesive partnerships across a range of specialist sectors gives us the ability to approach opportunities from fresh perspectives, creating solutions and innovations for market access and medical communications that are informed by the experience and knowledge of the many.

Our global team of experts — many with PhD and PharmD degrees — work strategically alongside our client partners in Medical Affairs, Health Economics and Outcomes Research (HEOR), Market Access, and Commercial teams across a wide range of therapy areas.

OPEN Health - Established as many. **United as one.**

