

Cracking the Code: Crafting Good Messages

WHAT MAKES A GOOD MESSAGE?

Good messages connect an issue with audiences' core concerns, appeal to their sense of right and wrong, and offer a solution in line with their values.

Having a safe, affordable and healthy home is hugely important to Americans that can afford the privilege of owning or renting a home. Homes are our places of refuge, where families are formed, traditions are born, and where we invest most of our time and money.

Effective messages around building codes should appeal to these core values and clearly articulate what is at stake if building codes are not updated.

RECOMMENDED MESSAGE THEMES

Save Money & Stop Energy Waste

- Messages should alert audiences to the incredible amount of energy and money that is wasted in buildings constructed below current efficiency standards, and how much it costs to retrofit these buildings and how intrusive and disruptive this can be.
- Audiences should also be made aware that buildings constructed to new standards ultimately cost less to own, are safer and hold their value better than those built to older standards.
- Furthermore, messages should emphasize that outdated building codes lock in energy waste for years to come. By updating codes, the energy savings can be locked in over the life of the building.



Consumer Protection

- Messages should raise awareness that many residents live in homes or work in buildings that were built below current standards for energy efficiency and safety, resulting in more expensive, potentially unsafe and unhealthy buildings.
- Messages should also highlight how adopting current standards can help fix these problems in new buildings.
- By extension, messages should emphasize that policymakers should stand up for families and business owners and ensure that all buildings are built right from the start.

