

How to: Communicate effectively about your action!



Why do we have this guide?

This guide helps SR maximize impact by making our communication more strategic and make the outreach for our actions more effective. Defining goals, messages, and audiences when planning actions creates coherent narratives that build momentum, inspire hope, and drive the systemic change we all want!



Who is this guide for?

This guide is for anyone organizing an SR action, big or small, to help maximize the impact of your efforts. By investing a little time in communication during planning, you can greatly amplify the reach and effectiveness of your efforts.



Why should I use it?

By providing a flexible, shared guide, this guide helps you and SR as a whole to align messaging, collaborate strategically with allies, and amplify our outreach. It is flexible to use and balances a structure approach with space for own initiative and creativity.

This is a summary of a full guide with all ins and outs. Use this guide for quick reference.

We advise the external communication of any action should contain the following:

In general

- Clearly define your 1) *communication goals*, 2) *key messages*, and 3) *target groups* or audiences.
- Make sure your message, content and channels fit your target group(s).
- *Tone of voice*: be both activating and hopeful (active hope) and work towards connection.
- Make (repetitive) use of *eye-catching visuals* and *ear-catching soundbites* to generate maximum attention and retention. One good picture can say a 1000 words!
- When possible, *collaborate* with NGO's, (investigative) journalists and/or other organizations for content and outreach.

Make it relatable

- A *storytelling element* helps you to bring your message to a more personal level.
- Use *relatable* examples and language that connects with the target audience's daily lives or with well-known examples.
- Stay away from calls to individual change in (consumer) behaviour, as this distracts from the *system change* that have to be established and suggests that the solution lies in consumer change instead of breaking then power of the multi's: the multi-billionaires and the multinationals.
- It is important to consider the framing of your storyline in order to achieve maximum impact and make it more relatable to your specific audience.

Be prepared for questions and pushback

- Have a clear, *pre-developed list of statements and calls to action* that is repeated by everyone in contact with the media or in the public eye during your action.
- Use the *power of repetition* to form a coherent message and present it to your audience. Take sufficient time to *learn your key statements by heart* when preparing for discussions.
- *Prepare your defence*: your message might generate nasty questions and counteractions.
- Try to imagine which negative reactions can be expected and *how to respond* on it (prepare Q&A's in advance).

Call for action

- Have clear and concise *statements and calls to actions* that any person can do today without too much effort (to get them over the first hurdle).
- We want people to focus on actions that help *collective action and change*, rather than getting them to do small individual things. Refer to the Tone-of-voice part on p. 4 for more detail on this.
- Why?: research based on self-perception theory and "positive spill over"-effects show that people, once they have done something environmentally conscious, are more likely to repeat or extend that behaviour.

Please make sure that any statement you make is fact-checked and as un-debunkable/academically defensible as possible.

Expect a backlash of disagreement that you may need to counteract with valid arguments.



Pro-tip: contact the SR coordination group to get in touch with the people at the SR communication and media channels to help you!

Don't forget: rally your SR-colleagues!

Make use of the full SR-NL communication power by using our outreach channels and network to mobilize allies!