The CRITICAL role of Strategic communications in the adoption of STI
Stories; Dialogue; Engagement

High-Level Conference on Application of STI in Harnessing African Agricultural Transformation

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African Agricultural Technology Foundation
• It is about PEOPLE!
• STI is also ABOUT PEOPLE!
  – Improving lives...of PEOPLE;
  – PEOPLE’s Enjoyment of life
• But getting science to people is not just about science
• Science alone is not enough!
  – Science operates in a more complex world
‘... Science has largely been developed in isolation from society’s input.

And the social debate ... has largely been held in isolation of scientific input - Craig Cormick
i) Scientific Fact not Always Truth to Public

Oxford Dictionaries 2016 intal word of the year was post-truth

- Where **objective facts** are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief
- **E.g Climate Change**

Source: Kahan 2015
ii) Opinion Difference Betn Scientists & Public

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biomedical sciences</th>
<th>U.S. adults</th>
<th>AAAS scientists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safe to eat genetically modified foods</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favor use of animals in research</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe to eat foods grown with pesticides</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humans have evolved over time</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood vaccines such as MMR should be required</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iii) Global Complex Village

- The world has become a village with greater complexities and fast and numerous information sources and opinions….

- “The **currency** of the New Economy won't be money, but **attention**” – A radical theory of value

- The more info there is the more **costly the attention currency**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes towards science</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>(Do not know)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science and Technology are making our lives healthier, easier, and more comfortable</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2015*
What can Strategic Communications Contribute?

‘…..robust and enduring international debate about the nature of the public-science interface has seen the discourse shift progressively from 'science literacy' to concerns over the 'public understanding of science' paradigm and more recently to a 'science and society' agenda.’
REDDY, Vijay; 2013

- **Attitudes** and not **Science** is at the center of whether technology is embraced or not
  - **Influencing attitude change**;
  - **Empowering decision making**;

Are key objectives of strategic communications
Strategic Communications

• Purposeful use of communications to enhance **positioning** & **competitiveness** in support of attaining its goals/mission

• A **process** that can only succeed when implemented through a coordinated & synergistic set of activities planned to build cumulative effects on knowledge, attitude change & supportive actions

• Helps channel investments available for best results

• Meaning - **integrating** or **infusing** communication efforts into the fabric of the organization based on an agenda & a master plan.
1. Structure & Focus STI Communications

- Bringing clarity to STI’s operational environment – *Internal Planning*
  - Reality Check

- Output - Communications Strategy
  - Defines communications process; manages expectations
    - Goals
    - Audiences
    - Message themes
    - Channels
    - Outputs etc
    - Timing

‘If you were in my shoes…’
Pod-borer Resistant Cowpea

Three key objectives
- To support the regulatory process;
- To engage political support;
- To ensure broad stakeholder awareness of Bt cowpea

50 Issues categorised
- Regulation
- Safety
- Product delivery
- Socioeconomic impact
- Trade
- Agronomy
- Technology

Addressed through Messages, info materials production

African Agricultural Technology Foundation

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Which genes have been incorporated into the Maruco-resistant cowpea?

- The cowpea variety contains cry1Ab, 3B, and 6Ac genes, which provide resistance to the cowpea pod borer (Liriomyza trifolii) and cowpea seed borer (Ostrinia furnacalis). The protein produced by these genes is toxic to these pests.

What is Maruca pod borer?

- A pest that feeds on cowpea plants and damages the pods, reducing yield. The Foundation is working to develop varieties that are resistant to this pest.
Audience ID - Key Players & Influencers
Product Development Lifecycle

- **Analysed groups**
  - Motivations
  - Key messages
  - Best communication methods
  - Key communicators
  - Tools & channels
  - Activities
  - Output indicators

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**Product Concept Discovery**
1 - 3 years

**Early Product Testing & Development**
1 - 3 years

**Integration & Product Selection**
1 - 3 years

**Product Ramp Up**
Market Introduction

**CFTs**

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**Direct Influencers**

**Indirect Influencers**

**Peripheral Influencers**

Stakeholder Engagement Intensity and Reach

Donna Ramaeker Zahn
Table 4. Summary of Bt cowpea communication details for Nigeria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Groups</th>
<th>Outreach mechanisms</th>
<th>Best communicator (PERSON)</th>
<th>Key Messages</th>
<th>Time to initiate communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory Planning</td>
<td>Provide pertinent information for identified activities</td>
<td>IAR- Mohammed Ishiyaku; AATF- Francis Nang’ayo; NABDA- Prof Solomon</td>
<td>The project will be carried out in compliance with national and international safety guidelines and regulations</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Demystify Science

• Building **understanding** and generating **attention**
  – *Bring science closer to people*

• This role is critical in
  – Building general & specific knowledge of science (**awareness**);
  – Imparting specific educational aspects (**capacity strengthening**);
  – Managing difficult situations (**issues management**)

• **Goal** – public to **know, appreciate & choose to support or tolerate science**
2. Demystify Science – How

1. Messaging – Development & training – Situation specific
   – Science in ‘human speak’ - Capture attention

2. Correcting misconceptions & misinformation – LoL!

3. Preparing for unexpected – emergency preparation;

4. Telling the story - Humanizing science –
   – “Humans are hard-wired to respond to stories.”
      Zak 2014
   a) Awareness; b) Dialogue; c) Engage – even critics

“People think that stories are shaped by people. In fact, it’s the other way around.” – Terry Pratchett
3. Build support for STI

- Building Networks - Coalition of ‘allies’ - “Kidole kimoja hakiui chawa”

- Advocating for enabling environment - policy, business levels - advocacy

- Accelerate the demand & uptake of STI

- Brand Building & Reputation Management
Research demonstrates power of communications in adoption of STI

- A 2017 study looking at the impact of Communication for Development (C4D) in increasing measles vaccination in western China found:
  - Knowledge of vaccines increased by 20%, with 95% of caregivers aware of health record requirements for school
  - Caregivers were more willing to have children vaccinated, increasing from 51% to 67%
  - Coverage rates of key immunizations increased.

- Key finding: communication messaging should be tailored to targeted population, based on their beliefs, attitudes & behaviours.
Research demonstrates power of communications in adoption of STI

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would buy GM maize if it were healthier</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would buy GM maize if it cost less than ordinary maize</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would buy GM maize if it were grown in a less damaging way to the environment</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2015
Awareness
- of issue or desired action

Appreciation
- Of issues

Commitment
- To desired change

Change/Action
- Goal attainment
Wired into Fabric!!

- As **strategic function** communications should be at the center of early STI decision making & funding
“I experiment with different hybrids; the DroughtTEGO looks promising.”

Judy Gichoya, Kirinyaga County Farmer