

Giving soils a voice: Key messaging and pitching for impact

European Network on Soil Awareness Meeting

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International Center for Tropical Agriculture
Since 1967 *Science to cultivate change*

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Plan of Action

9:30

- Introduction

9:40

- Distilling Key messages

9:55

- Principles of pitching

10:10

- Develop and practice pitch in groups

10:35

- Pitches to a panel for feedback

11:00

- Close for coffee break

Objectives

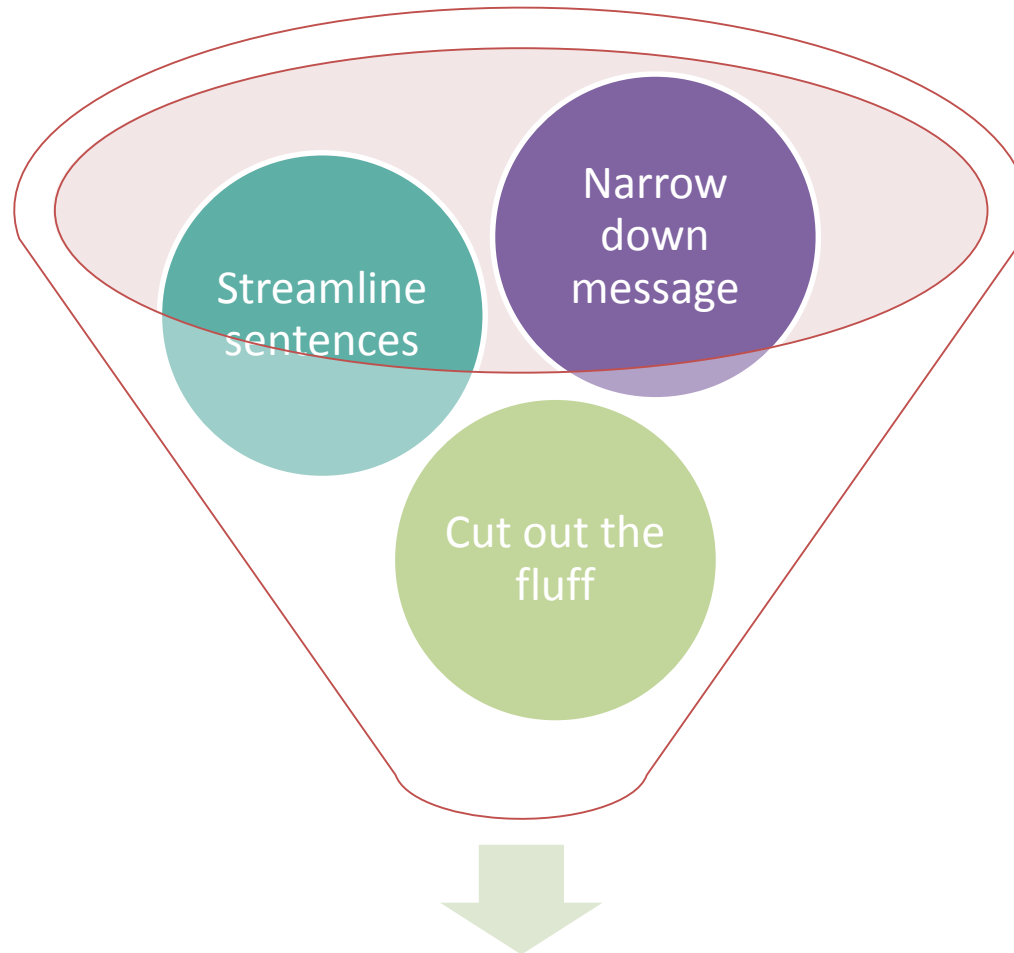
- Communicate more effectively through **key messages**
- Practice & tips for crafting **your message** into a pitch and **call to action** or “**ASK**”
- Prepare & deliver a **pitch** for a **specific target audience**



Photo: www.worldarchery.org

Distilling Key messages

What story do you want your audience to walk away with?



Deliver **one** strong, simple message clearly & concisely

International Year of Soils Key Message examples



Healthy soils are the basis for healthy food production.



Soils store and filter water, improving our resilience to floods and droughts.



Soils support our planet's biodiversity and they host a quarter of the total.



How to?.. With practice

Imagine you had a quick minute to tell someone why she should care about soil

1. Write down what you want to say
2. Cross out words until you have the shortest sentence you possibly can
3. Deliver your simplified message to someone (person A)
4. Have that person (A) tell a person (B) who wasn't in the room what you just said
5. If a person (A) who hears your simple message can repeat it pretty accurately to the next person (B), you've got it right.
6. If they don't say exactly the words you want repeated go back to simplify it some more.

Distilling a key message example

1. Soil provides more than just the nutrients for the plants that feed us. It helps provide clean water and regulate the climate. But soil needs to be actively protected or restored in most cases in order to provide these services we depend on. This requires an urgent investment of money, time, and resources.
2. Soil provides services we depend on and we need to invest in healthy soil now
3. **Healthy soil is worth investing in now**

6
min.

Now you try!



Draft, deliver, and receive feedback in 6 minutes

- 1. Write down your ideas** and distill the simple key message (2 minutes)
- 2. Find a partner** next to you and you each share it in 1 minute (2 minutes)
- 3. Can you repeat your partner's 1 minute message** back to them now? (2 minutes)

The next step: Taking your key message to an audience



What is a 'pitch' and why do you need one?

- Short pre-prepared speech
- Informs, persuades and asks for something

What does it do for you?

- Gets your key message across
- Gets your foot in the door
- Gets across exactly what you want
- Makes your audience care



Pitching Principles

1. Know your **audience**
2. Be clear and crisp with your **facts** (no jargon)
3. Give it a **human angle** (with **stories**)
4. State the **Action** you want them to take – your ‘**ASK**’
5. Build **Soft skills**- beyond the words you say
6. PRACTICE, feedback PRACTICE, feedback PRACTICE



So what?

Put yourself in your audience's shoes and ask the question



WHY SHOULD THEY CARE?

1. Know your Audience

- Do a little **research** so you can:
 - Understand what **they want**
 - Know what **issues they supported** in the past
 - Play to **personal biases**
- Spell out **why they should care**
 - Appeal to **their cause**
 - Place recommendations within **bigger societal concerns**
 - Example: policy makers concerned about constituency reaction and re-election
 - Need election cycle sound-bytes

2. Be clear and crisp with your facts

Use numbers very strategically



To pull at heartstrings or impress

Tell them the cost of the project

AND the likely cost of inaction

Use terminology you know they understand



Avoid jargon and acronyms

3. Put a story behind your facts

- Everyone you pitch to is a person with emotions
- Appeal to their humanity/circumstances
- Give it a human angle to paint a picture or tell a story
 - What is your story, or an individual's story?
- Link it to the bigger societal picture and current events

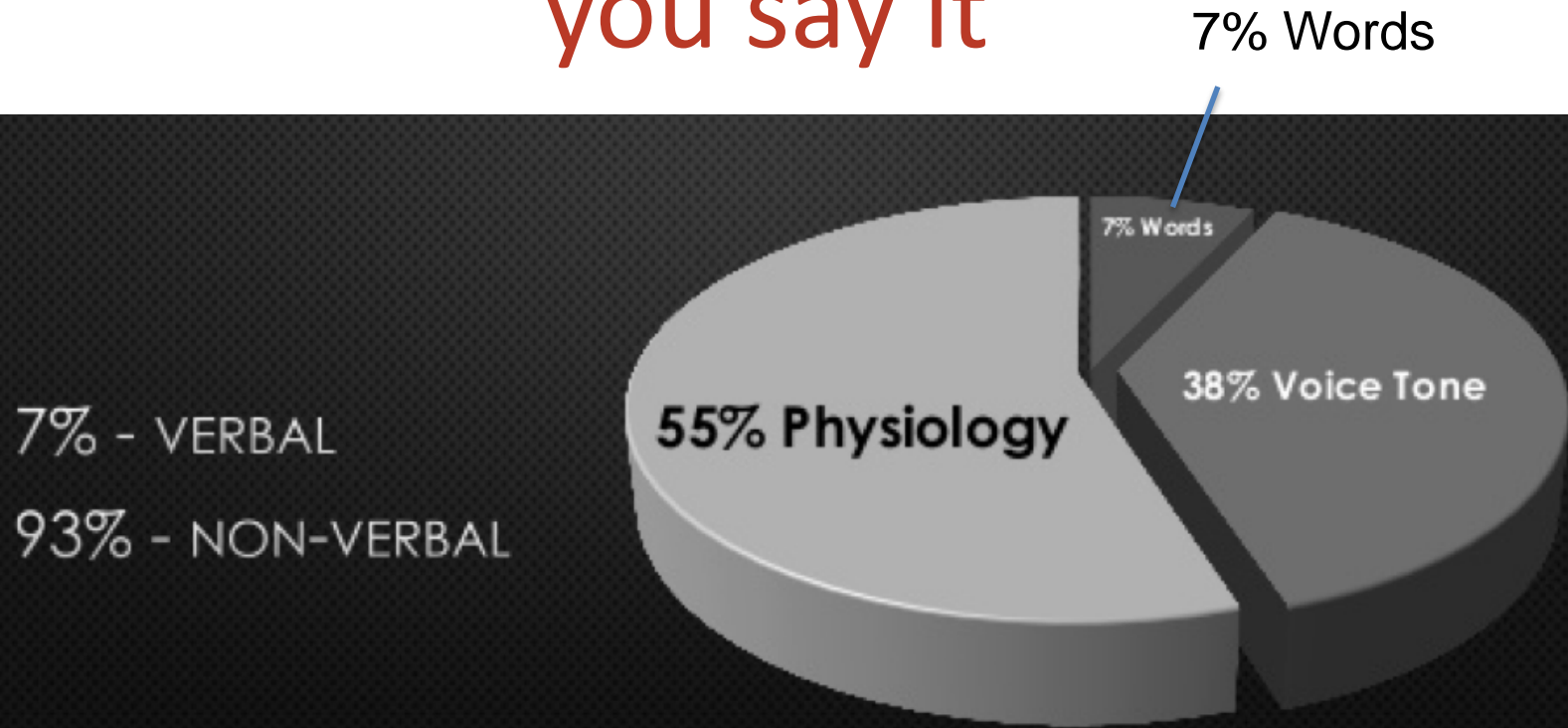


4. Know your ASK

- Clearly state what asking audience to DO
 - Maybe it's just getting a next meeting
- Present your solution as feasible
- Beware of too big or broad like “ending hunger”
 - What do you want listener to DO about it
 - DO connect *Ask* to bigger picture
- Have confidence in your solution



5. It's not what you say, but how you say it



Can make or break your pitch

Three parts of a pitch

Opening

- Grab attention

Middle

- Make them care

Closing

- You can DO it!

Inform

Empower

PRACTICE

PRACTICE
MAKES
PERFECT



- Practice using video and audio recording
- Practice on family, friends, colleagues

[Graphic: Hristo Neychev](#)

25
min.

Instructions to develop your group's 2 minute pitch

1. Choose your topic (ideally soil related)
2. Identify your audience and their information needs
 1. Panel will role play this type of audience
3. Distill your 1 key take away message
4. Why should your audience care?
 1. Add the human/emotional element
 2. Link to their interests and needs
5. Clarify your *Ask* – what do you want them to DO?
6. Compose pitch: Opening, Middle, Closing
7. 1 volunteer to give the 2 minute (max.) pitch

25
min.

Directions for Panel

3
Pitches

- 3 volunteers will sit on the panel and rotate
- Assume role/perspective of target audience

Feedback (1 minute each):

- Was the key message clear?
- Was the ASK clear? Would you consider it?
- Would you invite back for a 2nd meeting?
- Feedback on what was done well and suggestions
 - For our list of *Do's and Don'ts*

Thank you!



Please feel free to contact me: j.braslow@cgiar.org
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