

Building the trust you need, for your school district to succeed

Presentation to the OSPRA Spring 2014 Conference



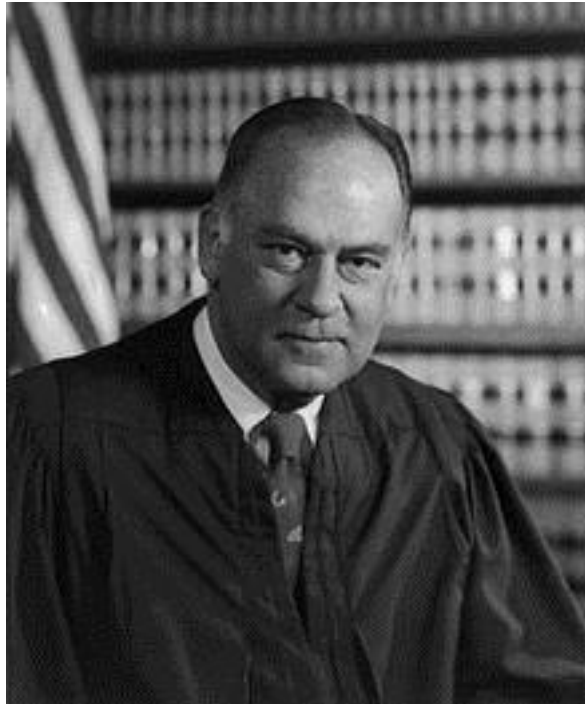
Let's start with a quiz...



How about these?



What we're talking about is "brand"



(Ladies and gentlemen...Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart)

Brand, a definition

Noun:

- 1. The thoughts, feelings, emotions and ideas that come to mind when a certain product, service, person or organization is mentioned**
- 2. A promise**

So....(questions for you to ponder)

**What is your school district's "promise"
(as you see it)?**

How do your stakeholders see it?

**How does stakeholder opinion differ
from group to group?**

The truth about your brand (and trust)

Your brand is influenced by you, but *determined by your stakeholders.*

You influence your brand perception by taking steps to demonstrate your trustworthiness.

You need to be realistic about what you can achieve (which is the principle of “trust targets”).

The biggest impact on your ability to build trust?



Versus



Trust-building opportunities

Current parents

Students

Staff

Affinity groups

Media

Key Opinion Leaders

Social Media

Recent Alumni

Long-term Alumni

Non-parent patrons

MOST



LEAST

Faced with this reality...

**How can you build the trust you need,
for your school district to succeed?**

Step one

Abandon the idea that you can earn the trust of every stakeholder.



(This is not realistic)

Step two

**Define the brand
you would prefer.**

An example of defining a brand



Versus



An example of defining a brand



Versus



**“The Ultimate
Driving Machine”**

Kidney grill

Quad headlights

Aerodynamic design

Hofmeister Kink

Roundel

“The Power to Surprise”

Safety

“Green”

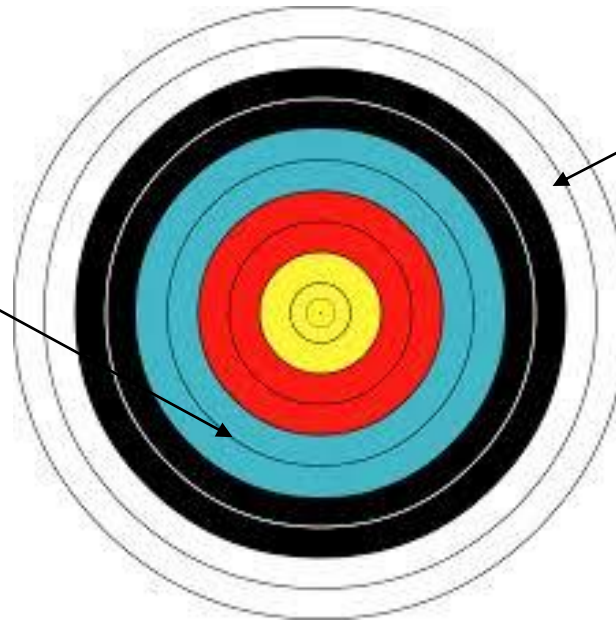
Low price

Fuel efficient

Step three

Parent Trust
Target:
Engagement and
more advocacy
than antagonism

Parents
today: Limited
engagement



Define your Trust Targets: Realistic trust goals for each stakeholder group

To define Trust Targets...

1. Start with a realistic view of where you are today with each stakeholder group; ignore the noise and the quiet.
2. If you don't know, consider doing research to find out; focus on people, programs, facilities and district/patron relationship factors.
3. Define what's possible, taking into account your environment, history and plans.
4. Use words like “awareness,” “advocacy,” “engagement,” and “participation.”
5. Write it down and – as much as possible – make it measurable.

Sample Trust Target

Current District Parents

“Engagement, and more advocacy than antagonism”

- Define “engagement” in your district (parent/teacher conference attendance, committee sign-up, etc.).
- Evaluate current level of advocacy (how much, where it is demonstrated, etc.) and set a goal.

Sample Trust Target

Staff

“Engagement beyond the job description, with a significant majority being advocates”

- Define what is expected “engagement” for staff, and identify growth opportunities.
- Define what advocacy looks like (in a measurable way), and determine how to document increase.

Sample Trust Target

Social Media

“Accuracy and fairness”

- Catalog stories and tone covered in social media (without driving yourself *insane*...).
- Track accuracy and fairness over time.

Step four

Engage in active, strategic communications to build trust.



(Brands are determined by stakeholders,

but influenced by the messages sent by the “brand holder.”)

Research says...

Successful districts:

1. Have patrons with an appropriate amount of interest and engagement.
2. Have processes and plans that fit with their community's expectations.
3. Are seen as being trustworthy stewards of the responsibilities of a school district (educate students, maintain facilities, monitor budgets, etc.).

(You strengthen each of these with active, strategic communications.)

Active, strategic communications...

Is outwardly focused,
rather than inwardly directed.



Talk about this



Not this

Active, strategic communications...

Builds a strong internal network of sources.



(Fits teachers, custodians, food service, bus drivers, front office staff...)

Active, strategic communications...

Remembers the balance of its audience.



Wants details



Want the basic information

Active, strategic communications...

Is prompt, accurate, and humble.

- 1. Needs are addressed promptly, at all levels.**
- 2. Information is accurate at all times. (Check your website at least weekly.)**
- 3. Errors are admitted and addressed immediately.**

(No encounter is insignificant in your efforts to build trust.)

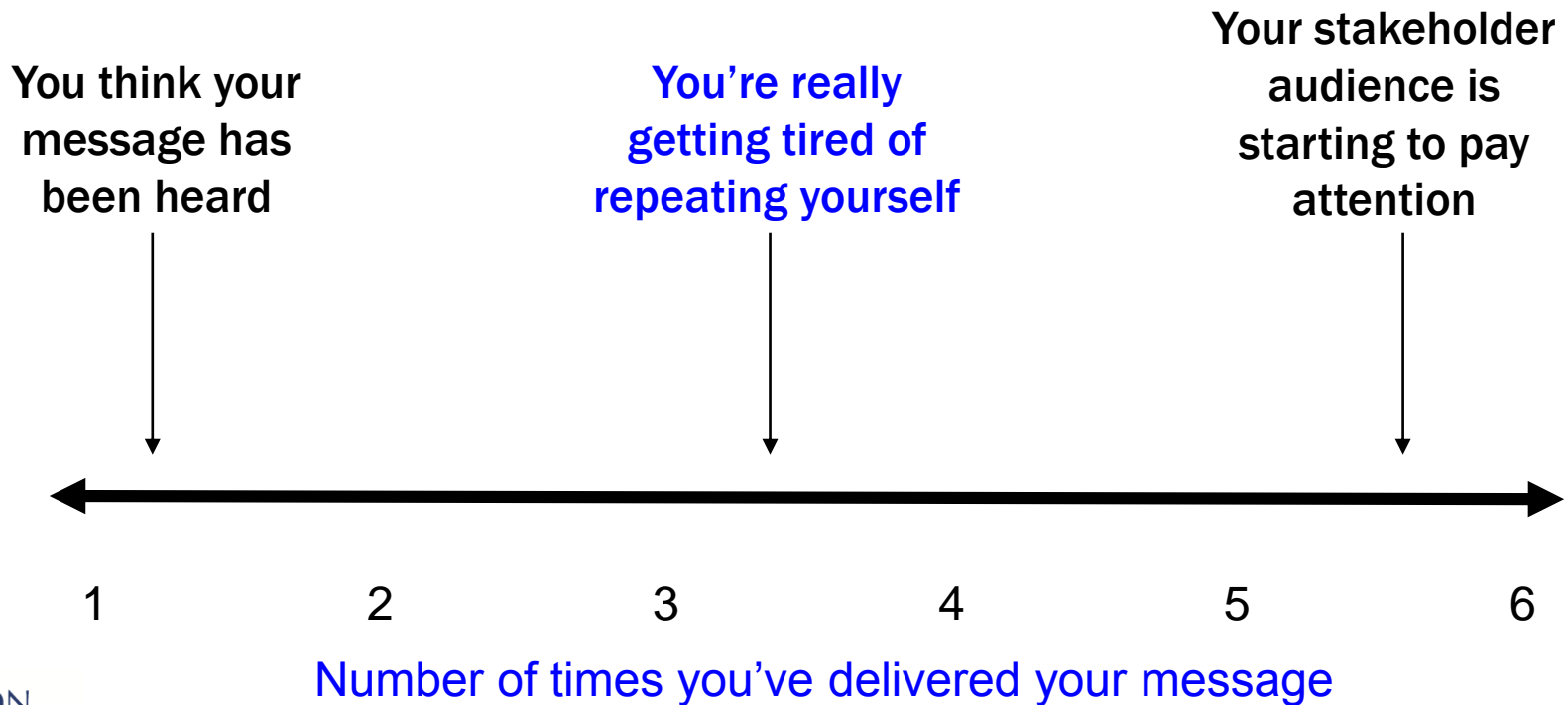
Active, strategic communications...

Talks about needs early, and often.



Active, strategic communications...

Repeats itself. A lot.



Active, strategic communications...

Haven't we said that enough?

The answer is always "no!"

"We just voted for that, didn't we?"

"Casino money is paying for schools now"

"I heard you have a big slush fund."

"Get money from somewhere else!"

"Just take up a collection."

"Get construction companies to donate steel."

Step five

- 1. Measure your progress (annually).**
- 2. Update your targets.**

Thank you!

Comments?

Questions?