

Strategic Messaging

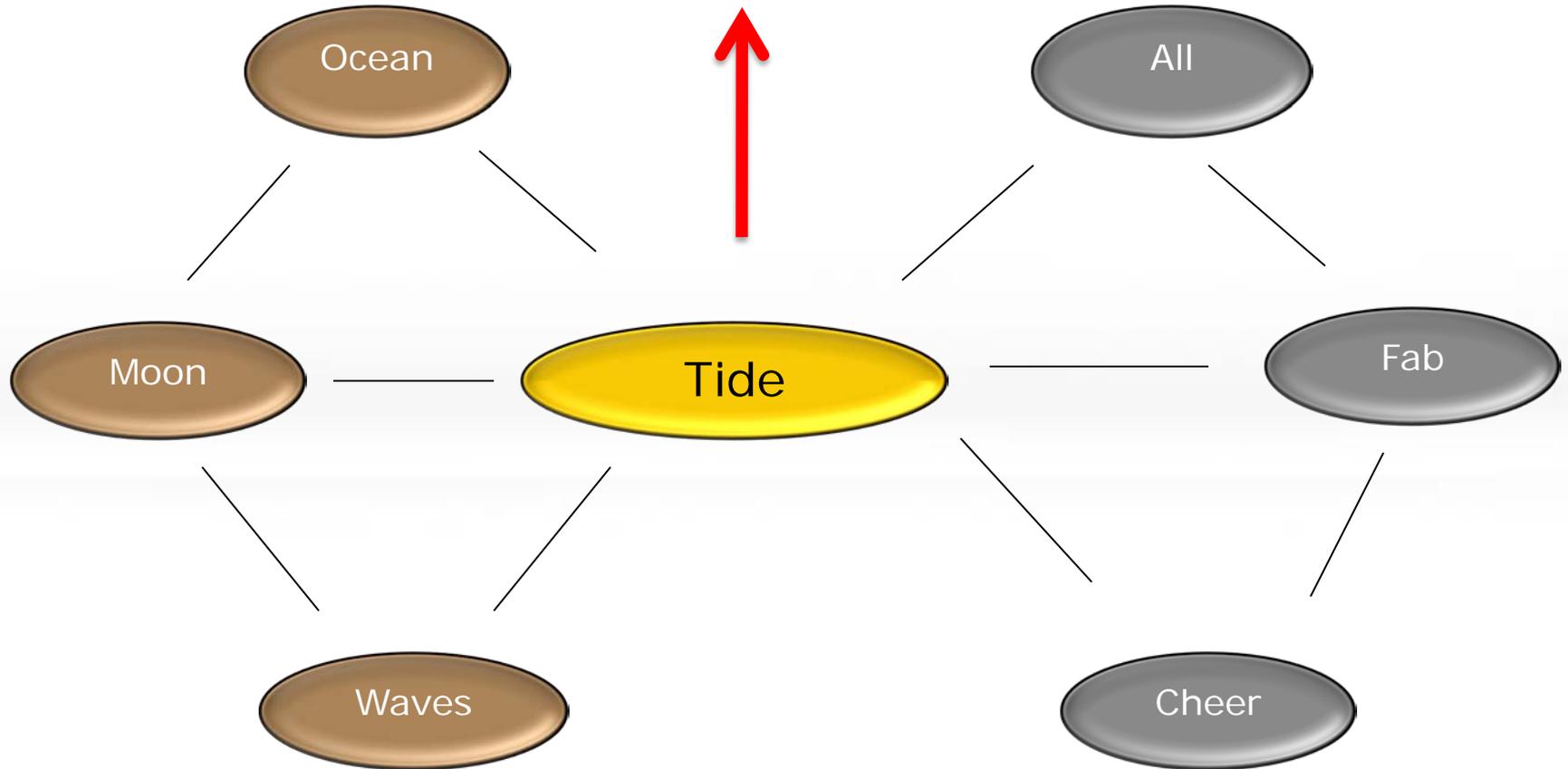
Messaging social insurance

Messaging Social Insurance



Drew Westen, Ph.D.
January 2012

An experiment



Why networks matter

Messaging social insurance

- Global warming
- *Extreme weather*
- Universal health care
- *A family doctor for every family*
- Entitlements
- *Insurance we pay for through our taxes*
- Medicare recipients
- *People who rely on Medicare for their health care*

Three principles of effective messaging

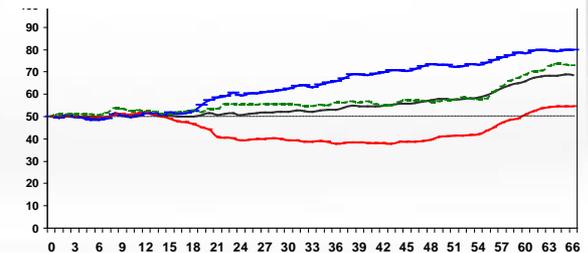
Messaging social insurance

- Tell a coherent, memorable story
 - Connect
 - Raise concerns
 - End with hope
- If you don't feel it, don't use it
 - Human behavior is motivated by emotion
 - Gore on Medicare
 - Jim Webb's response to the State of the Union
 - The point isn't to "dumb down" our messages
 - It's to increase their emotional intelligence
- Know what networks you're activating

A methodology for developing effective messages

Messaging social insurance

- Study the existing polls to understand the networks
- Design messages and refine them in focus groups if useful
- Survey and dial-test messages online using large samples, always testing against strong opposition language
- Identify a range of messages for advocates with a range of values and constituents



Lessons from Medicaid: If you only have 6 seconds...

Messaging social insurance

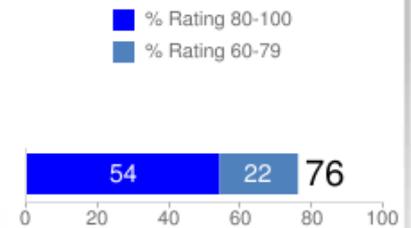
- If politicians want to cut somebody's health care, let them start with their own. (+76)
- If our leaders want to make sure Medicare and Medicaid are financially sound, there's one way to do it: put Americans back to work, so more people are paying their premiums again, and let millionaires and big corporations pay their fair share of taxes. (+71)
- Whether you're white, black, or brown, there's nothing more painful than having a sick child and not being able to take them to the doctor because you can't afford it. It's time we helped those parents get back to work, not take away health insurance for their kids. (+70)
- Medicaid covers long-term care for our aging parents and grandparents, and no one has the right to shred the contract this country made with our seniors after a lifetime of work. (+69)
- If we're going to cut, we should start with programs that don't work, not the ones that protect ordinary Americans like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. (+68)
- 15 million Americans are out of work right now, and they'd like nothing more than to be contributing to Medicaid again rather than receiving it—and they could be, if our leaders would start making jobs a priority instead of a talking point. (+67)
- We shouldn't be balancing the budget on the backs of people who are poor, have lost their jobs, or need nursing home care. Congress needs to stand up to the special interests, and let big corporations and the wealthy step up to the plate. (+67)

Protecting Medicaid

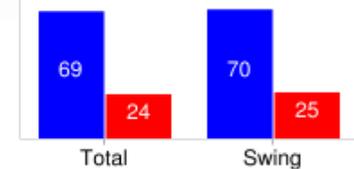
Last Resort

Medicaid is the last resort for most Americans when they need health care, whether they're poor or middle class, old or young, white, black, or brown. It's the place millions of Americans with disabilities and children from low-income families turn for their care. It's the place millions of our seniors turn when they need long-term care that Medicare doesn't cover, and it takes care of two-thirds of all people in nursing homes in America. And it's the place where working and middle class Americans turn when they've lost their job or run through all their savings to pay for an illness. That's what happened to Jennifer, whose daughter was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor when she was 15 months old. Jennifer had to quit her job to take care of her baby through months of chemotherapy and hospitalizations. Her family could no longer afford health insurance, but we, as Americans, pitched in through Medicaid, and today she has a beautiful, healthy four year old girl. Jennifer's story makes me proud to be an American. Her daughter is alive because we were there.

Message Rating 0-100

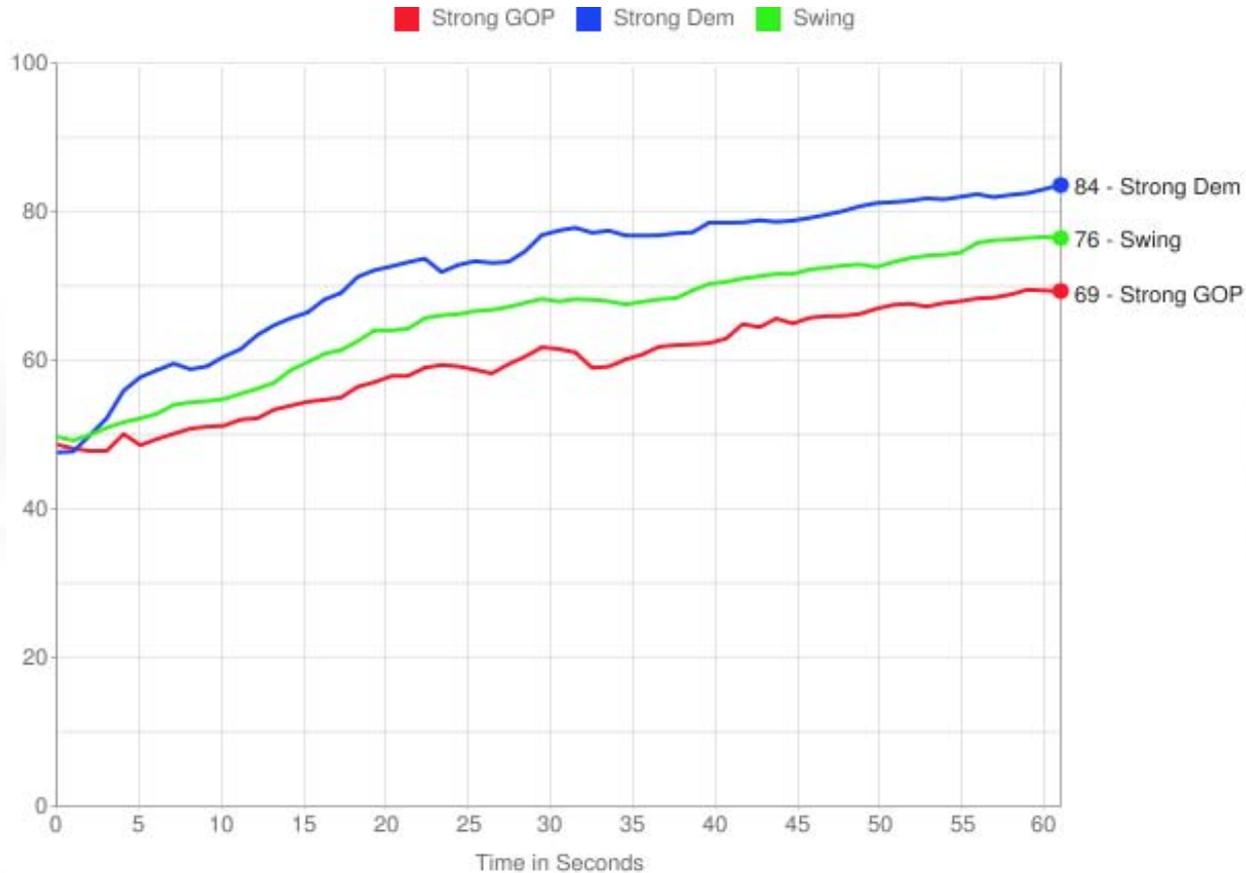


Preference



Dial-test results

Last Resort



Conclusions: “Selling” insurance the old-fashioned way

Messaging social insurance

- In 1935, Franklin Roosevelt described “economic security” as the goal behind Social Security and other forms of “social insurance”
- In so doing, he was activating some powerful networks
 - An insurance analogy that everyone understood (and was far better than a socialism analogy)
 - Economic security as parallel to national security
- We should be as thoughtful and data-driven in our messaging on social insurance as we are in our actuarial predictions

Strategic Messaging

Messaging social insurance

Messaging Social Insurance



Drew Westen, Ph.D.
January 2012