



START SPREADING THE NEWS:

BY BOB GOURLEY

Finding your "voice"

Have you ever considered how

you are influenced by the way another person speaks to you? Do you believe that the way a message is delivered is as important as the message itself? The way you communicate is your "voice." What voice should you use to communicate with your community?

The first rule of communication is to get and keep your audience's attention. Learning to present your message while keeping your audience's attention lets you make maximum impact with your communication efforts.

Consider the following pair of typical community news items from a fictitious association we'll call Harbor Point. What voice would you use to make these announcements in your next newsletter or update to your community website?

Both methods tell the story. Method A presents the story in such a way as to engage the reader and encourage them to read more. Method B, while concise, does little to excite the audience and may even distract them from reading further.

Learning to present your message while keeping your audience's attention lets you make maximum impact with your communication efforts.

News Item 1: Unit 17 purchased by John and Jane Smith.

METHOD A

Harbor Point HOA welcomes John and Jane Smith to our community. The Smiths have purchased Unit 17 and will be living here with their son, John Jr. and the family dog, Skip, a friendly golden retriever.

METHOD B

New Residents - Smith, John/Jane - Unit 17

News Item 2: No Parking in the Fire Zones.

METHOD A

At our last HOA meeting, the serious problem of Fire Zones being blocked by inappropriate parking of cars by guest and residents was addressed. This is a very serious matter as it concerns the safety of every resident of Harbor Point. Be a good neighbor and help us spread the word that these cars will be towed and the responsible parties fined \$50 per occurrence per our by-laws. Please park responsibly and encourage guests to do the same.

METHOD B

Cars parked in any Harbor Point Fire Zone will be towed at owner's expense and a \$50 fine will be imposed on the responsible owner.

Both methods tell the story. Method A presents the story in such a way as to engage the reader and encourage them to read more. Method B, while concise, does little to excite the audience and may even distract them from reading further.

Let me try and break it down to some simple "Do's and Don'ts" you can use to make your next communication more successful.

DO

- » Use common words
- » Express complaints clearly
- » Speak as you would like to be spoken to

DON'T

- » Lecture in a professorial tone
- » Use fear as a motivator
- » Patronize your audience

If the topic of message dynamics eludes you at first, don't feel bad. It may take time to find your voice but once you have mastered this skill you will speak to your community like never before. Let your voice be heard!

Bob Gourley is one of the founders of MyEZCondo. He also serves as board president of Captain's Walk.