

# MESSAGING MAGIC

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Whether you're writing about your campaign on your website, trying to get someone's attention on the street, or figuring out the right framing for a great documentation video that you're putting out about an action you just held, the way you message is key to success.

One messaging framework that has been proven to be especially effective in championing progressive causes (thanks ASO Communications) is VPSA. **VPSA stands for: Value, Problem, Solution, Action.** Let's take each one in turn and then give you an example:

- **Value:** Start with a shared value, something that you know your audience would agree with and connect them with people across race and place. Start from a place of positivity and hope.
- **Problem:** Then you can get into the problem — what it is that's preventing the realization of that value, who is the villain in the way, and what they get out of it.
- **Solution:** But it's ok, because you have the answer! Share how we can come together to vanquish the villain and what it will feel like when we solve the problem.
- **Action:** End with the clear call to action that you've primed your audience for through the previous statements.

Want to see it in action? Here's a VPSA that partners fighting for D.C. statehood came up with during a workshop we led with them:

All Americans should have an equal voice in our government.

But over 700,000 citizens — the majority of whom are Black and Brown — do not have representation in Congress, and Congress can overturn the local laws that D.C. voters pass.

Help those thousands of Americans' voices be heard by making D.C. a state.

Contact your members of Congress and demand they support D.C. statehood now.

Now it's your turn:

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## EXERCISE:

### VALUE - PROBLEM - SOLUTION - ACTION

10 MIN

Take a few minutes with your team to make your messaging as engaging and motivating as possible

Work together to come up with answers to the following prompts. Try to keep them to one sentence:



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- **VALUE:** What's a value that will resonate with your audience and connect to your goal? Who else across race connects with that value?
- **PROBLEM:** What's the major issue you're trying to overcome? Bonus points if you can include a clear villain — often (though not always) people love to have villains to mobilize against.
- **SOLUTION:** How can the problem be solved? Who is joining together across difference to solve the problem? What happens when we solve the problem?
- **ACTION:** What's the very specific call to action you want your audience to take?

Look back on what you wrote. Can sentences be condensed? Can stronger, more motivating words be used? Make any edits you'd like.

Now, put your four sentences together. Have one person on the team read the VPSA to your colleagues. As your colleagues listen, have them think about how your audiences would receive the message. Are your colleagues moved? Would they respond to the call to action by doing what you've asked? If yes, hooray! If not, what can be changed to make the message even more engaging?

Write down your final VPSA here:

