

Bryan Cohen:

All right. It looks like we've gotten everyone in here. So, we want to start by saying welcome, hello. This is the 2021 Better Buildings Better Plants Summit Workshop Your Voice. Thanks for joining us today. I even see some names of folks who I know and my team knows. So this will be really interesting. We have a great session prepared with some activities to get everyone working on their communications chops.

And about that, I just wanted to say in past summits sometimes when we've been together we've always done some kind of a com session. But this one I think the team and I wanted to focus on the opportunity to have a little bit of conversation and then a lot of interaction and work on sort of building out some of the audience ideas that we're going to talk about. And so this is going to be, this will be fun, and the idea is a lot of engagement, a lot of questions, and then an opportunity for share out. Okay.

So here's my housekeeping items to cover – and I hope I get them all. So, please note today's session is going to be recorded and archived onto the Better Buildings Solution Center, which I highly recommend here that everyone visit. We will follow-up when today's recording and slides are made available. Attendees, you do have the option to share video, as well as unmute yourself.

That said, if we could keep folks muted and just for a little bit while we kind of run through the slides and the conversation, and then we can unmute while we do the breakout rooms and we give specific scenarios. If you get any audio visual issues, send a message in the chat window, and we'll try and get on those. There are some technical support folks who are helping us out, which is awesome.

And then we're going to be using the Zoom breakout function during today's session. So we'll be breaking into smaller groups and coming back together. And I'll walk through this a little bit better. All right. Let's go one more slide.

All right. So this is me. Hi, everybody. So my name's Bryan Cohen. I am the owner of C+C. We are a Seattle-based PR advertising agency. We do a lot of work with the Department of Energy. We also work with the folks over at EPA on Energy Star, WaterSense. And I'm going to be your moderator today. And let me just share this agenda with you.

So we're going to talk a little bit through external coms 101. And that will be sort of the talking part – which I'm going to tell you

what my wife said to me about this last night after we practiced. And then we're going to break you into three workshop groups. And then we have three kind of specific scenarios where you can kind of try out some of the ideas that I'm going to talk through. Then we're going to reconvene and each group leader will share their ideas. And then we're going to leave plenty of time for Q and A.

Okay. My last housekeeping item is Slido. So we're excited today that we're using this interactive platform called Slido for Q and A session feedback. So if you haven't, go to [Slido.com](https://www.slido.com), enter #DOE, and then there's a pop-down menu that you'll see and you can go ahead and look for the code. So Workshop Your Voice. And if you'd like to ask any questions, you can submit them in Slido through the presentation, and we'll try and get to all of your questions.

So everyone, just take a minute, open up Slido, get that going. I even have it open. I'm going to look. Thermal greenhouse power by energy. Who do talk with? All right. That's a good question. We will get to that. All right. So, let's go to the next slide.

So, I'm going to talk to you a little bit about external communications, tips and pitfalls. And I practiced this last night with my wife, and she is an academic, and she had a lot of questions for me. And what I realized is that although this is a presentation about external communications, what it's really a presentation about is identifying your audience, figuring out how to get to them, how to deliver the message, and being real clear-eyed about the idea of getting to that audience. So, if we start, if we go to the next slide.

So, examples of external coms are press releases, social media, author articles or blogs, websites, podcasts, interviews, videos; anything that externally broadcasts out to your audience who you are, what your organization is doing, why it's important, what an issue might be. Let's have the next slide.

So, throughout this presentation, I'm going to try and give some tips. And my hot tip number one. Your audience is not the entire world, or you. Sorry. So, the simple truth in this one – and this is where my wife really started getting on me yesterday – is that for most of us, we don't work with organizations that have the resources or the staffing to reach the entire world. At the same time, you also have to remember that your audience may or may not be you, and if you get too sucked into thinking about how you

might react to a message where you might get a piece of information, you may miss some really interesting opportunities.

So, when I got really pushed on this with my wife, I said to her, "What I'm trying to communicate to this group is somewhere between the entire world audience and you is probably a place where you might find a couple of different audiences that would be open and interested in your messages." All right. Let's go to the next slide.

All right. So this is where we get into the meat of this conversation. So, defining your audience is the most critical part of doing external communications. So as you think about it – and we'll get to practice this when you do the breakout rooms – if you had to just pick one specific group of people to see your communication, who would it be? Now this is a great exercise because a lot of people that we work with will say, "Well, I want to meet this group. And I want to work with this group. And I want to work with this group."

And it's incredibly helpful to say, "Okay. Great. But who is the number one? Who is going to care most? Who is the easiest for you to reach?" Many of us work in resource-constrained organizations or organizations that have a moderate amount of resources. So, figuring out how to employ those resources efficiently to reach the most audience or the right audience is important. And then, of course, who is your dream audience? Always gotta think about the dream thing.

So examples of sort of like real specific audience is current customers, past investors, residents of Washington ages 18 to 35. I'm in Seattle, so we put that in there. People and companies interested in HVAC systems, federal policymakers. So you get the idea. These are different audiences. Okay.

Next tip. Here we go. So, once you identify the audience, you gotta tailor your communication for your audience, or else, dot, dot, they might not listen to you. Or you might not be as effective. So part of the trick here is find the audience and then figure out how to make it so that the message is going to be heard and seen. Okay. Next slide.

So when you're thinking about writing for your audience, when you're thinking about how to get into your audience's voice, you could ask yourself these questions, which I like. What piece of your communication will your audience care most about? So like

are you talking to folks who are interested in the print medium? Do they like opinion pieces? Do they like opinion pieces in *The New York Times*? Do they like opinion pieces on LinkedIn? What value does your communication provide for your audience? Is it ah-ha? Good to know? Is it oh, my gosh; my sector is going to change? Is it oh, that's a great tip that I can use at work? Is it a great tip that I can use, maybe selling an idea into my C-suite?

And then also this is a great question. What's your audience's technical familiarity with a topic? So a lot of us work on energy efficiency. A lot of us work in buildings. I think we always sort of walk that line, depending on who the audience is, and what level of technicality that we want to talk to them about.

And so the last couple of thoughts are what does your audience already know about your organization? Now, how much background do you have to give? Maybe your audience knows a lot. Maybe it's a sector group. Or maybe you've got to go deep and really explain things. And then last is what's the call to action, your CTA? Right? So what do you want them to think – we're going to practice this – feel and do? Those are going to be the big ones. Okay.

Next tip. Tip number three, my friends. So, your audience and your communication define your channel. It may not be *The New York Times*. So we have this conversation a lot with the organizations we work with. Everyone wants, everyone says, "Well, we want to be in *The New York Times*." But I would ask you to think a little bit about your audience. Is that necessarily the best place to reach your audience? Is your audience on social media? Does your audience engage through television, right? God forbid. Does your organization, do they look at boards on the Internet? Are there ways beyond the traditional channels that your audience engages? And if there are, that's a great place to look. All right. So let's look at the next slide.

All right. So here's some of the questions around this topic, like where does your audience go for information? It's a really, really important one now. There's a lot of places that people get information. I think we all experience that. So, ask the question where does your audience go? And be open that it might be a couple of places. Like a lot of work right now is being done with like opinion pieces landing in print, and also being on LinkedIn, for example.

Ask yourself is this a national story? Is it a local media story? And would it be a piece of information that your audience might like in a blog post? Is it a social media post? Is it worth more detail? What's your audience attention span for this topic? And then the last thing – and I think this is really important – and it tends to come at the end. But I like to kind of put it in the mix now, which is so what's the best medium to talk about this story, talk about your idea, talk about your organization? Is it print? Is it video? Is it audio? Is it photo? Is it all of them combined? Okay.

Next tip. Lead with the message your audience cares most about. So, we've done a little, we've had a lot of conversation here, right? We've thought about who is our audience? We've thought a little bit about what channels they're going to respond to the message on. We've thought a little bit about what are the assets, what are the medium that they might be most interested in?

And so now the question is around messaging. And this is always a tricky one, because somewhere in between the part about what your audience cares most about and what you care most about and want to communicate to them, you have to kind of meet in the middle. Because if you're going to take a message that your organization cares most about and your audience isn't that interested in, then you're probably not going to get to where you need to be. So I would say to anyone on this call as you're thinking about external coms, you want to lead with that message that's going to grab your audience, kind of hook them in. All right. Let's take a look at the next one.

So, on this one, I would say don't bury the lead. So, as you're thinking about messages, it's like narrow it down to one to three key messages. Identify the one thing that you want your audience to remember. Now, we're going to do this thing called a headline exercise when we get into the breakout rooms, where we're actually going to create some headlines. And then once you kind of figure out what that main message is, or what that headline is, what we like to tell people is fit that one thing into all your communications.

So that could be a first paragraph of a press release. It could be a single tweet. It could be a topic for op ed. It could be a topic for a conversation. It can be great for a podcast. But when you're thinking about external coms, once you've got the audience piece, once you know how you want to communicate with them, figure out what's that one thing that you want them to understand and sort of take with you? All right.

Number five. Well, this is the why, right? So, a lot of times I think, especially when we work in sort of smaller groups in maybe smaller industries, I think sometimes we lose the why. And I think that for folks who are doing energy efficiency work, we're working in the different building sectors. I think it's really important to constantly remind the audience why. It could be money savings. It could be climate change. It could be a more efficient building. It could be more comfort for travelers, maybe, if you're a hotel; or shoppers if you're a grocery store.

But I think it's very important when you're thinking about external coms once you've got that audience dial, once you've got the mediums figured out, once you've figured out what those assets should look like to tell the story, once you've figured out what's the one thing that you want your audience to know; ask yourself why, why does this story matter? What's the big picture? What's the big context? Super important.

So, just to follow-up on this. Why should my audience care about this? Does my story fit into a larger trend or an internal story arc? What bigger issue am I trying to address? These are always the things that you want to ask yourself when you're working on an external cause. All right. Next slide. All right.

We are in workshop time. So, what I'm going to do is I'm going to introduce you to my colleagues. They should be on the next slide. There we go. Great. We are going to break into three rooms. I'll introduce my colleagues, and then we'll walk, we'll go backwards through it. So we're going to have, I'm going to take a group of you. Emma Marshall, who is a senior account executive out of our Boston office, is going to take a group. And Nathan Yale, who comes to you from Bellingham, Washington – shout out to the north of Washington, very close to the Canadian border – is going to take the third group. All right.

So let's back up and I'll tell you a little bit about the breakup. Yeah. So, we're going to have three groups. Each group is going to have like a com scenario. So, it'll be a specific – let's see if I can show – I can't do that right now. It's going to be a specific organization that is looking to do an external coms push. And we're going to have some questions to ask each group. And then what we're going to do is we're going to come back – I think we have about 15 minutes or so – and we'll report back to the group on each of these scenarios. So we'll get to practice some of the ideas that we talked about and I walked through with my hot tips.

All right. Nina and Alison, why don't you break us up, and we will come back.

Emma Marshall:

I'm sorry. For those who already heard us, I'm going to repeat it again. But our scenario was Prince Paper Company, a northwest regional paper manufacturer. They had just completed a new state of the art plant outside of Seattle. It had all-new LED lighting, HVAC, ceiling, rooftop, solar PV, things like that. They wanted to get the word out about the plant.

So, first when we talked about the audience, we had some great engagement in our session. People kind of made the point of local news media as being something important. Like how would this affect the community? Specifically how could we have a press release from the organization? If that could come out first, I think that's obviously a great start. How we can engage trade publications; so things like smart energy decisions or facility executive, or some specific compressed air HVAC pubs that highlight those more technical aspects, as well as kind of some different online use publications, and broadcast publications, and things like that.

Then someone in the session also brought up a great point of clean energy jobs being something that we're talking a lot more about, and kind of how this could present new opportunities for them with the plan. I think that's something that the media cares a lot more about, too, now.

Then for our messaging, we kind of had to ask ourselves what does it add value to? Is it for the supply chain, for the customers, for the planet? So we kind of came up with that Prince Papers on the pulse of the latest in sustainability and smart business operations. So they're someone that is ahead of the curve compared to competitors. They'd be someone you'd want to work with. And the sustainable tech, it could offer cost savings, not just for the plant but to you as a customer as a result.

And then for think, feel, do; again, someone else in our session brought up a great point, saying, "Is this work replicable? Can other organizations do that, too?" And I think we talk about that a lot with the Solution Center. Everything on there, the idea is that you as a partner can go in and see what your colleagues and industry peers have done, and ideally you can replicate that in your own facility.

So, we kind of looked at, again, the impact on the local community. Do they feel connected with the organization? How would this affect their values? Things like that. Again, they should feel propelled to want to do business with Prince Paper if they're more conscious about their environmental footprint, things like that. So is this someone they want to do business with? Things to that nature.

We had a good few headline suggestions from people. We had some fun with alliterations and things like that, really playing off the title of Prince Paper. So, local paper company becomes sustainability prince. Prince Paper protects the planet. Local paper goes green. Prince Paper sets new standards for sustainability. So things like that that kind of have some fun to it, but also show that they are a leader, and this is something excited.

And I also made the note that if we had a big metric, like something with the partner support where Better Buildings partners have saved \$13.5 billion, that's something that we'd want to put in a hook and a headline; I think that reporters and the community would really care about a number like that. But in this case, because it's more broad strokes, I think we can have a little bit more fun with it that way.

And then I'll go quickly – because I know we have a couple more. For channels, we talked through owned, earned, and paid. So, again, someone brought up LinkedIn and Twitter being great platforms for that; what they could do on their website. Could they offer a tour for reporters, a tour for people in the community? Looking at trade publications, potential newsletter, a testimonial with the CEO; things like that.

So, it was a quick session, but I think we got a lot in there. So I think it's a great way to kind of backtrack your thinking before you just push out a message. So thanks to everyone in my group for your participation.

Bryan Cohen:

Paper, the paper people. Nice job. Nathan, why don't you do your stuff?

Nathan Yale:

Sure. Hi, everyone. Thanks to my group, it flew by. Wow. We were just starting to get to messaging when we got the little one-minute warning. So, our scenario was about a grocery chain called Food 'N Stuff. And they're announcing a carbon neutral goal by 2030. And they're going to do this through a comprehensive energy, water, and waste sufficiency plan, their physical stores and

supply chain. And the C-suite wants to announce this goal for Earth Day and make a big splash in the media.

So we started with the audience being about who do we want to hear about this? And who's actually going to listen? So, some ideas we came up with were customers. Obviously, we want our customers to know that this is happening. We even talked about ways to reach them, because that's a big group of people considering this is a national chain. Competitors, suppliers, maybe the surrounding community around our local stores, investors in the board of directors, also environmental groups, maybe environmental trades, and business trades, as well, maybe even local news, if we're trying to reach those communities around our stores, and then also that utilities would know that this is happening. So that's a long list, and we talked about how you'd probably start to prioritize that in an actual communications plan.

And thinking about the messaging and think you'll do exercise. We started to hone in on the fact that grocery shopping is very personal, and everyone does it, and it's a way to care for yourself and for your family. So we got to the feelings piece a lot. So thinking about this grocery chain is saying through this announcement, "We care. We're awesome. We're progressive. We're a leader in the environmental space. We're doing something about it."

And having our audience feel like a part of the community by shopping here, calling it maybe guilt-free shopping, right? And that also people would trust this company. And what do we want people to do? Well, we want them to come get their groceries from an environmentally sound store, right? And maybe even we want people to tell each other about it. Tell their community about the good things we're doing and that they should stop there. And even maybe we want our competitors to get onboard, right? Like Emma said, maybe we're using this as a way to influence the industry as a whole.

And the headline, we started – we were just starting to hone in on some headlines. But, focusing on the feelings piece as much as you can in a headline is probably a good way to do it, right? Thinking about if you only want your – well, if your audience can only remember one thing about your announcement, what do you want that one thing to be? And it's good association, right? It's positive pro-planet association with your brand.

So maybe something with the phrase Guilt-free groceries, Food 'N Stuff leads environmentalism, or maybe playing off like caring for the planet and yourself, right, but you're buying groceries, something in there. And also the fact that they're doing their part of the community. So, Food 'N Stuff leads environmentalism with carbon goal, or something along those lines.

We didn't get a ton into channels. We just didn't have time. But one idea that did come up in addition to the typical media pitching is having physical signage at stores, right? So people come in they're immediately feeling good about their shopping experience because they've seen a sign, or maybe you have something on an app, if you have, if you do your shopping on an app, about this. So, yeah, I think that's everything from our group.

Bryan Cohen:

Okay. That was great. So, we had the Vandelay Suites. We are a national mid-tier hotel chain, not to be confused with a low-tier or a high-tier – mid-tier. We have 1,500 locations across the country, and we have saved about 20 percent energy across the company, and we want to start talking about that.

So our group came up with the following audiences. Sort of like in our employee internal coms group, we had employees, managers, C-suite. For customers, travelers, we had that older millennial. They want to get out of the house. They have money. Love going places where they can take those pets. We had investors. We also did a professional words in industry, and then sort of overall hospitality.

In terms of the messaging side, we really got into the savings message for the C-suite, and for our customers that by staying with us they were shopping their values. And certainly if we care about energy efficiency, we care about comfort. We had some other cool thoughts about that in a second here.

We also liked the idea of messaging to the sector that they can learn from us. Maybe we're demonstrating innovation. For employees, we had this message of we care about the planet. We can't do it without you. And maybe we're going to even pay you more with some of the savings from energy efficiency. For professional orgs, we wanted to say we're driving industry forward. Here's how we're doing it, and bring your convention to us. Even mid-tier suites can have, you know, we need to have people doing conventions. Building brand, reducing costs is a message for investors. And also that investment in EE in real terms can deliver comfort to folks who are staying with us.

So I think our think, feel, do was think that we care about the planet. Feel, we are the heroes. So if you work for us, you're the hero for working for us. If you're staying with us, you are protecting the planet. And then our do is stay with us. We have this fun idea of maybe accumulating awards for CO2 saved.

Our headlines were triple bottom line planet first. And also the famous mid-tier hotel, top-tier efficiency. I'm just letting that one sink in. And then we liked the idea of doing LinkedIn and opinion pieces of why a mid-tier hotel has top-tier efficiency admissions, doing like a blog on ecotravel. We liked the whole idea of SEO, organic search, and then also getting into like the traveler influencer world.

Well, those were all of our things. Mid-tier hotel, top-tier efficiency. I think we should stop the thing right now. It's just true. No one's that excited about it. I was, though.

Emma Marshall: We are, Bryan. It was, it was fine. *[Laughs]*

Bryan Cohen: I did it last night to try and impress my wife, and she did the thing she does with work stuff. She's like, "It's nice. It's nice. It's very nice."

Emma Marshall: *[Laughs]*

Bryan Cohen: Okay. Cool. Well, let's take a minute here. We have 20 minutes, give or take. I want to start by thanking everyone who participated and threw out ideas. It's a lot of really good energy, and I love hearing about the audience segmentation and the way that people are thinking about communicating with audiences. Let's go ahead. Does anyone have questions they want to throw into Slido? I think there might be a couple in there already.

Ooh, look at that. Well, I think we should make Nathan answer how to get climate skeptics on board with sustainability strategies. I think we should just start right out there. Nathan, why don't you take that one?

Nathan Yale: I actually, we talked about this a little bit in my group, which is if you do have a sustainability announcement and you're trying to reach people who don't share those values, how can you do it? And I think we talked about can you – everyone wants to save money, right? So is what you're doing somehow going to save them money? That can be a tall order. Most companies aren't going to

want to say that. But, as far as our example, if Food 'N Stuff can say by saving, through our energy savings we are going to keep prices low, that's a message that everyone's going to care about, regardless of your stance on climate change or sustainability. So –

Emma Marshall: Yeah. I can add to that, too, and say – sorry, Nathan. That job creation, I think, is a big one, too. Is this going to create more jobs for the community? I think no one's going to shy away from there being more jobs to help people in your community and your organization. So I think that can be something.

Bryan Cohen: I like, I'm going to grab the – first of all, mid-tier hotel, top-tier efficiency, top-tier tagline; yeah, shout out to anyone who put that in there. I really thank you. I appreciate that. It's always good for a little good tagline.

So, let's do – oh, there was a best practices question in there that I wanted to pull down. Nina, there was a – oh, sorry. Top tips for communicating science in a very understandable way. You know, I think that one of the things – and all of us: Emma, and Nathan, and I; have worked on, with organizations that are a little bit more sciencey. And the thing that I have tried to do with science on science clients is really focus in on how is the work going to affect people? Now, that can't always be done, but trying to center the storytelling around science with a person in the middle of it can really help.

Now, sometimes it's a little bit more challenging. But I would say to everyone what are stories that are on NPR about? What are stories that you read in CNN? They're usually about a person. There's a person at the middle of it. So I would say on the science question if you're doing work on science and trying to tell those stories, figure out a way to put a person in the middle of it. And then build it out, rather than say, I'm going to put this scientific study or breakthrough in the middle of it. Okay.

These are great questions. Okay. So let's do the next one. What are some ways people can improve their awareness of the availabilities of channels for PR? A lot of smaller organizations don't have dedicated coms person. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. What a challenge. What a challenge. Emma, do you want to try this? It's a really good question.

Emma Marshall: Oh, geez. I think it's hard as a dedicated coms person. But I think we do work with organizations that are smaller, might not have a bigger budget. And a lot of times they just – Bryan loves the word

"scrappy" – they're scrappy with their time. They're scrappy with how they actually get things done. So in terms of awareness, if there are things you can do, for the most part unless you're doing paid campaigns, social is free. That's a great tool, and that's a way that you're going to engage people with not a lot of money.

Same thing with PR. If you're – we have access to figuring out a lot more specifics behind what publications are talking about and maybe reporters. But you can do a lot of your own research. Different publications list who's on staff for different beats, story beats, things like that. And you can e-mail them a lot of times directly. And I think if you're applying a lot of these tactics that we talked about with the core catchy headline, smart messaging, things like that; you're able to kind of do that without necessarily needing to be a coms person.

And I think, too, improving their awareness about the channels. I mean, you just came to this session. That's probably part one. And then I'd say, too, go back and talk to your organization. Say, "Here's what we learned. And this is why it's important." Yeah. I don't know if that was a good start, Bryan, but you can fully ask that. *[Laughs]*

Bryan Cohen:

No. It was really good. And I don't know what other people in this panel and in this room's experience is. But one of the things that I am finding more and more is that LinkedIn is an amazing place to share ideas. And so I would encourage any small organization, if the audience works, to use LinkedIn as a platform. Because if a piece is really well-written, the algorithm likes it. And I've seen a lot of cool ideas. And I think the last thing is any organization that's thinking about channels for PR, the goal is figure out that audience first, and then get laser focused on what channels that they are doing.

Let's see here. How can we better speak the language of our audiences when talking about EE sustainability in a way that causes an actionable response? Hmm. That's a good one. Nathan, what do you think?

Nathan Yale:

Yeah. Well, the first piece that I go to is making sure you are laser focused on what that actionable response is. And that can come out of the think, feel, do exercise; and if you do it a few times figure out what that do really is. And once you have figured out what you want people to do, you need to figure out why they're not doing it right now, and what will get them to do it. And there can be multiple answers to both of those. But, you generally in

communications, you are not trying to focus on the – it's like your audience is probably a bell curve, and most people are in the middle.

And there's some outliers who are already doing the thing you want them to do. And there are other outliers who are never going to do the thing you want them to do. So you want to focus on the main part of the bell curve, the folks who maybe are almost kind of thinking they should do the thing you want them to do, but aren't doing it yet for whatever reason. Focus on them. Because don't worry about the people who are never going to do it.

And then once you have that group of people, figuring out why they're not doing a thing. You can go really deep on this. You can have the market intelligence team, but I realize that's not the case for most of us. So, identifying why they're not doing something. Yeah. It's often about money, like someone said in the chat. But, removing any barriers to it that you can. So, I think it's going to depend on what the communication is. Are you trying to get people to turn off the lights more, or close the tap more? But, yeah, speaking the language of your audience is really important. And as much as you can, read what they're reading and try to frame it in a way that they're already being exposed to that, you can reach them.

Bryan Cohen:

Hmm. All right. Excellent. Let's see. Has anyone effectively used community-based social media to affect folks to take action? Yes. So, C+C does a ton of social, of community-based social marketing. We've done it around a number of different actions and different activities. And I think the one thing that we keep coming back to is that when it comes to community-based social marketing, when you ask people to do something that that first experience, it has to be good. It has to be something that is going to stick.

So, but the CBSM models can be used for all kinds of activities. We've used them for environmental activities. We've used them for home energy efficiency. We've used them even for things around health care and around COVID. So, yeah. I think, again, like I said, that the trick is with community-based social action marketing is when people do that first activity, when you make that first ask and they try a new activity, that they have a great first experience. Okay.

How do you balance marketing to both B to B and B to C? Well, I think that the answer to that one is you got to figure out what that audience is and then figure out what's the best place to put

resources. To me, this is a good question that I really like. I like resource questions because I feel like when you're saying with a limited resource and with a couple of audiences how do I make that decision? And I think the question is what is it that you want each one of those audiences to do, and what is that value relative to your organization? And if you keep asking yourself those questions, then you can kind of figure out how to allocate the resources to each of those audiences. But think about it from like a resource perspective. Okay.

Nathan Yale:

Bryan, I'll just add on the incentive piece and trying to get people to do what you want them to do, us included, we all get very stuck in looking at the benefits of something from the way we see it. But, again, we just need to refocus our perspective on why does our audience care about this thing? And so often, the case is that people do not care about energy efficiency. They care about saving money. They care about things being easier for them to do. Maybe they just want a free light bulb.

We work with a lot of utilities that do have programs where they just give away LED light bulbs. It helps their brand, and it also helps with energy efficiency, and it helps with their power load. And so maybe a free light bulb giveaway in exchange for someone doing some energy efficient activity at their home is enough for people to do it. Not because they really care about the energy efficiency outcome, because they want a free light bulb. And that's totally fine. At the end of the day – and this also goes with social marketing – you're trying to get people to do a behavior. You're not trying to get them to do it for whatever reason. You know?

Bryan Cohen:

There's a question here that I thought would be, I wanted to get out here. Oh, we're starting a newsletter or municipal agency focused on energy efficiency. Any advice on what would get people to read it? Yes. Here's my advice. Make it good. So like make it good and make it tight. So, use professional writers who have the given ability to use the word for compelling action. Like the things that I've seen in newsletters where things get south is where the writing isn't good, and the content is long and not compelling. So, my advice to you is get killer writers and keep the topics very, very now. And don't be afraid to lean into some harder conversations or some harder things going on. Okay. Let's see what else we've got here.

Emma Marshall:

Bryan, one thing I would probably add to that, because I've done a lot of newsletter overhauls for people, keep the visuals pretty streamlined. You don't need to slap – if you're working with 20

different organizations, don't put all their logos underneath. That's not going to add value for the company. That's just going to make you as a reader feel distracted. If there's content pillars that you can align up to, if there's certain things like within the organization. I know one company we worked with, they had a newsletter that you just scroll and scroll and scroll.

And so instead of doing one long one, we kind of did five different short ones, and they would go at different times of the month and have a specific content theme for that newsletter. And that way you're getting that target audience that you want to read that. And as long as they're not scrolling through multiple pages, people's attention spans are so short. You just want them to get to read the top things they need right away. And then if there's a link where if they're actually interested, they can go and do the action you want them to. I think shorter and sweeter is better, and just keep it visually streamlined.

And professional readers are great, but I think, too, as long as you're just making the content really tight, I think you can do it if you don't have the funds or the resources that just edit down. Less is more, I would say.

Bryan Cohen:

Tammy James, maybe you could tell us what you mean by, "Thermal greenhouse power by energy. Who do you talk with?" That would be helpful. All right. All right.

Emma and Nathan, what's the best way to conduct market research on audiences?

Emma Marshall:

I can start. We have a markets insight team at our organization, so we're kind of privileged to have that. But I will say before those days I did do some work on my own with like Claritas and segmentation analysis. So, a lot of those services are actually free, and you can learn about specific target audiences and communities based on ZIP codes, and things like that.

And I think oftentimes you can kind of learn people's income levels, their interests, what they like to spend money on, things like that. And a lot of those services can be free. Specific to actual groups, I don't think there's anything wrong with focus groups. I think if you can make it small and actionable and meaningful and give people an incentive to actually participate, I think those are good starting points. Nathan, I don't know if you want to add to that.

Nathan Yale: That was an awesome answer. The only thing I would add to it is there are always free resources from your state and local government that have data layers free and map, age ranges. It may not get down to the household level, just for security reasons. But age ranges, race and ethnicity, income level. That's not going to get at your psychographics that market research often does. But it may be enough for your purposes sometimes.

Bryan Cohen: Awesome. All right. We're going to take one more. Thank you for the shout out to the Yale Project. That was great. Let's see here. Best way to approach DOE? Well, you can send any of us an e-mail. We're here. Let's see here. We are piloting a new program and are now in the process of trying to identify our targeted channels. What is the best approach to set about scrubbing existing industry publications communities that is strategic? I love it. Nathan and Emma, you guys go again. That was great.

Nathan Yale: Tell me about scrubbing. Is that like putting a list together of publications?

Emma Marshall: Or like scrubbing, like getting rid of actually the content on there? That was my thought on scrubbing. Like starting from scratch kind of, right?

Female 1: Actually, it was more of Nathan's approach. So just *[Laughs]* trying to figure out something beyond just Googling, just something that's a little bit more purposeful, and going through, and making sure that we're capturing the audiences that we're looking to capture.

Nathan Yale: Yeah. As far as trades, Googling can get you pretty far. Aside from that, I think you're starting to look at paid services like Muck Rack, where there are a lot of advanced searches and key terms that you can do to find those trade publications, and they'll tell you the readership. And it'll also give you direct contacts for reporters and editors that work there. I don't mean to just plug Muck Rack. There are multiple services that do that.

Emma Marshall: And are you looking to your owned channels, targeted channels, like what your organization is doing to get the word out about the program?

Female 1: Well, we're sort of taking it to a new industry, not necessarily new to DOE, but yeah. We're just trying to identify right now all of the best outlets to target. So whether it be conferences, trade

magazines, things like that. Yeah. So I think that that's kind of where we're trying to focus right now.

Bryan Cohen: Yeah.

Nathan Yale: Yeah. And one other strategy is also just you can look at competitors or other similar announcements or communications that you are trying to do and see where those exist.

Bryan Cohen: All right. We're going to wrap it up. We have a little video, and then we're going to say a few words about webinar series, and send you on your virtual way. This has been a lovely session. I appreciate all the questions and feedback. And Emma and Nathan, thank you both. You guys were great. Let's go ahead and we'll show you the Solution Center video. Please, use the Solution Center. Come and check it out.

[Video playing from 0:47:53 to 0:48:40]

All right. That's Solution Center. Come visit. Come visit. I wanted to leave you with my plug for the webinar series. We want to invite you to attend our Better Buildings Summer Webinar series starting in June. Partners will discuss some of the most pressing topics we're facing, share best practices, and innovative new approaches to sustainability and energy performance. To register, go to Better Buildings Solution Center and click on Events Webinars. With that, thank you for joining us.

We've launched a short feedback survey in Slido. So take a couple minutes. Give us feedback on the session. Here's our information. All of us would love, love to chat with you. So if you want to drop us an e-mail, we will get back to you. And yeah, we rely on your feedback to design these webinars and future summits. So give us all of the feedback you can.

And again, if you want to get more information about Better Buildings, about the different solutions we've talked about, check out Better Buildings Solution Center, or again, shoot us an e-mail – any of us – and we will get back to you. Thank you. That was awesome. Appreciate you taking the time.

Female 2: Hey, Bryan?

Bryan Cohen: Yes.

Female 2: Can I ask Emma and Nathan one last question? What will convince audiences that energy efficiency technology works? What? Simulations, case studies? Any input on what works best?

Emma Marshall: Ooh. That's a good one. *[Laughs]*

Nathan Yale: I'll start with one thing. If people can hear it from a messenger that they trust, that is really important. So, and that can be hard, depending on who you can reach to say your message. But, if it's someone at a company that they've heard of, that can help. In the public health world right now, we're doing a lot of work with getting community doctors and nurses to talk about the pandemic and the vaccine, and getting that message out in a way that people will listen because they trust their community doctors. So finding someone that your audience already trusts, or maybe just heard of, or can recognize their title, that can be really helpful.

Emma Marshall: And I would add, too, that people love data and numbers and metrics. And I think it's hard sometimes because you might know something works, and you've seen it in action, but if people don't actually have the data to back it up – and I think the Solution Center is honestly a great resource to start and look at stuff like that, because we've shown different technologies; specifically I know with Better Plants we do a lot of stuff with the National Labs where they're actually going into plants, showing people why this technology is important, how it could be valuable if they implemented it. And the actual projected savings, whether they're cost savings, energy savings, water savings, things like that.

I think if you can actually pull the hard data or the – it doesn't have to be a full case study, but I think if there's things to back it up from people who have done it before and have proven successes, that's a great way to get people to buy in. And I also think, too, like for me I'm not super science engineering, but I think when the information is kind of dumbed down a little, I think for people who might not be that kind of core technical audience, they'll want to learn more about it, and they might understand it and kind of have more of an inkling to trust it that way, too, I think; as opposed to just getting lost in the weeds of all the technicality.

Female 2: Okay. Great. Yeah. That's very helpful.

Bryan Cohen: Love the questions. Thanks, everybody.

[End of Audio]