Effective Messaging in 90 and 360 Characters

Soraya Sutherlin, MPA, CEM
Regional Emergency Communications Manager
Alert South Bay
Messaging Ground Rules

- Tell the truth and tell it well
- Don’t speculate about ANYTHING
- Stop using absolutes
- The magic of #7 (plus or minus 2)
- Key Message, the supporting messages.
Understanding Human Behavior

- Your biology and background affect how approach and view situations
- In high stress situations human brains are discerningly slow
- Normalcy Bias
Implement Practical Approaches

- Anticipate, Prepare, Practice (APP)
  - 95% of questions are predictable
- The Rule of Three: 27/9/3 Tool
  - 27 Words
  - 9 Seconds
  - 3 Points
- Balance negatives with three positives
Message Blasting: Opting Out - BY CHOICE

- Informed vs Uninformed
- Defining BALANCE in messaging
  - Use of MNS for non-emergency use becoming white noise
    - Scale back the message blasting-its **HURTING** us
  - Develop IDA Balance Sheets (Message Mapping)
  - Message = Outcome
Message Mapping

- IDA Balance Sheets
  - Impacts
  - Disruption
  - Call to Action (make it count)

Impact
- What
- Where
- Why

Disruption
- Who
- How Long
- Why

Action
- What
- Where
- Why
Scaling the Delivery

- If IDA checks out, then scale the delivery
  - Text
  - Email
  - Voice
  - SM
  - IPAWS
Assess the Impact - THEN send

- Guidelines/Assessment of non-emergency messaging
  - While the promotion is nice, we don’t care

- Don’t botch the message!
  - Make sure you have spell check enabled
  - And don’t repeat the same BAD message
December 6, 2017

- IPAWS message sent to ALL of LA County
- Set off panic on twitter and social media
- No follow-up on where to get more information
Pre-Plan and Pre-Script

- Follow your hazards-map your plans
  - List every possible emergency
- Pre-scripted messages
  - Warning
  - Evacuation
  - Retraction
- Define clear lines of authority and processes
WEA 90 Character Template

- [Hazard] in [Location] [Guidance/Action] go to [URL/Phone] for information [Source]

- Example (89 Characters)
  - Police activity at 301 & Rte 5 road closures avoid area Go to bit.ly/xxx for info CC-EMA
WEA 360-Character Template

- [local, familiar, authoritative message source]. {Description of the threat or event} in [location and consequence]. [Protective Action]. [URL, phone number, media for more information]

Example (291-Characters)