

# BRAUD *casting*



## **Kick-Butt Key Messages IABC 2005 Washington, D.C.**

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An award winning journalist for 15 years, Gerard was on the front lines of breaking news, with affiliate reports seen around the world on CNN, CBS, NBC and the BBC.

He is a Fellow of Environmental Communications from Loyola University and a member of their adjunct faculty.

### **Defining Key Messages**

One or a series of impactful sentences designed to \_\_\_\_\_ employees, \_\_\_\_\_ investors, \_\_\_\_\_ the community and \_\_\_\_\_ the media, all designed to enhance the bottom line profits of the company or organization.

### **Purpose:**

- Key messages state the basics of who you are and define the parameters of your vision, value, mission and beliefs.
- Key messages are a vehicle used to persuade an audience.
- Key Messages are a control mechanism used in conversations or interviews.

### **Identifying Audiences**

- Media
- Employees
- Investors
- Community

### **Practical Applications**

- Speaking to Media
- Newsletters
- Ambassador & Manager Training
- Web sites
- Investor Communications & Annual Reports
- Advertising & Marketing
- Speeches & Presentations
- Crisis Communications
- Video Programs

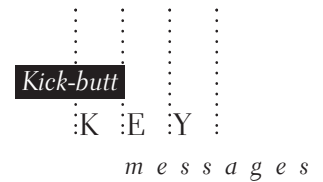


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# Elements of a Good Key Message



## **Boldly states who and what you are**

- It's not bragging if it's true.

## **Express your value and benefits to your audience**

- What's in it for the reader or the listener?

## **Shows you care about your audience**

- Let us feel the love.

## **Expressed in a conversational sentence**

- We should all be able to remember it and say it verbatim.

## **Quotable**

- I have a dream...

## **Analogies are great**

- Can we learn it in our heads?
- Can it live in our hearts?

# Elements of a Bad Key Message

## **Too much PR-BS**

- Would I find it in a pasture behind a cow?

## **Contains jargon**

- Would a 5th grade student know what every term means?

## **Fails to be quotable**

- We want others to be able to say it the way you do.

## **Long lists**

- Is it more than we can remember?
- Mission supercedes the "who"?

## **Cluttered with facts and figures**

- Keep it simple.

## **Contains too many qualifying explanations**

- Don't distract me from the core message.

## **Legalized sterilization**

- Have the superlatives and passion been stripped from your message?

## **"Please Everyone" Syndrome**

- Fear of offending one person.



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# Inside the Mind of a Key Message Writer



## Case Study: Forest Service

“Caring for the land and serving the people.”

### Convert a motto, slogan or tagline into a key message

The role of the Forest Service is to care for the land and serve the people.

### Forest Service Mission

The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

### Problems

- USDA is not understood by everyone
- Diversity and productivity...What does that mean?

### Good

- Including present and future generations.

### But...

Define, “the needs of present and future generations.”

### Can they be combined?

The role of the Forest Service is to care for the land and serve the people. Our mission is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

### Let’s ask questions:

What does a forest service do? It grows trees. It manages forests.

Why? For wood and paper.

Are there other benefits? Yes, clean air, water, habitat and recreation.

### Might it be modified to say:

The role of the Forest Service is to care for the land and serve the people.

Forests provide clean air and water, habitat, recreation, and the forest products to meet the needs of present and future generations.

### What if it said:

The goal of the Forest Service is to provide a healthy forest for today and tomorrow.

A healthy forest provides clean air and water, a healthy habitat for wildlife, great recreation for humans, and the forest products we need, whether it’s wood for your home, or paper for the books you read to your children.

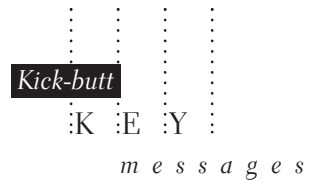
### Dissection:

The goal of the Forest Service is to provide a healthy forest for today and tomorrow.

A healthy forest provides clean air and water, a healthy habitat for wildlife, great recreation for humans, and the forest products we need, whether it’s wood for your home, or paper for the books you read to your children.



# Writing Kick-butt Key Messages



## Write two sentences

Sentence one is a “set-up” sentence. Sentence two is a qualifying sentence. Both must be quotable.

**Add words of power and prejudice.**

**Add words of emotion.**

**Are words of caution needed?**

**Refine the sentences to address any known opponents or negatives.**

## Dissection:

The goal of the Forest Service is to provide a healthy forest for today and tomorrow.

(shows vision, dreams & caution) (designed to prejudice the audience)(adds emotion and vision)

A healthy forest provides clean air and water, a healthy habitat for wildlife,

(prejudice)

(prejudice) (defines for whom or what)

(addresses known opponents and negatives)

great recreation for humans, and the forest products we need, whether it’s wood for your home

(prejudice) (defines for whom or what)

(addresses known opponents and negatives)

(addresses known opponents and negatives)

or paper for the books you read to your children.

(addresses known opponents and negatives)

(adds emotion by invoking reading to your children)

(My own great thoughts)

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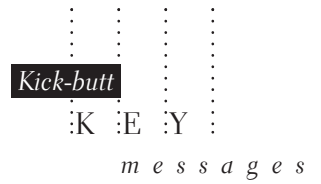
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# How to Use for Your Key Messages



**Media**

**Speeches & Presentations**

**Newsletter, Web, Print, Investor Relations**

**Employee Training, Orientation**



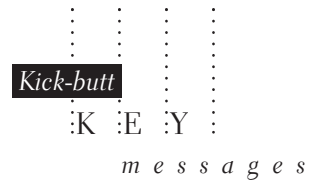
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# What Next?



## Writing Commitment

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## Time Commitment

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## Implementation Commitment

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## Training Commitment

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## The Payoff

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