



Developing Your Persuasive Message – the 27-9-3 Rule

Created by some Vermont lawmakers years ago, the 27-9-3 rule requires you to make your persuasive point in no more than **27 words** within a time frame no longer than **nine seconds** with no more than **three points** discussed. These limitations help us focus on understanding how to connect to our listener. This message is not the place to present your entire appeal – just enough to hook the listener in wanting to hear more. Try it!

Your name: _____

Before crafting your message, consider and answer the 5 questions below.

1. Who is the **audience** for this particular message? (i.e. a lawmaker, volunteer, prospective advocate, donor, colleague from a different department, reporter, etc.)
2. What might appeal to their **direct self-interest**? (What's in it for them? Why should they care?)
3. What do you want your audience to **think** or **understand** about your issue?
4. How do you want them to **feel** about what you have said?
5. What do you want your listener to **do** after they hear your message?

Write your 27-9-3 message on the reverse side. Practice saying it out loud to someone and invite their feedback. Your statement may *sound* very different than it reads and most of our messages will be spoken, so we want to make sure that our message rolls off our tongue easily; is not full of jargon; and that it actually sounds like something you would say out loud to another human being in person or leave on a voicemail! Revise your statement based on the feedback you receive.

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