



Ninja Science Messenger

Typical Agendas for Two-Day Workshops

DAY ONE

Day One of the Ninja Science Messenger workshop equips attendees with the fundamental skills needed to plan, create, and construct effective communications efforts. The morning sessions convey how to plan and create convincing messages, while the afternoon sessions explain how to construct potent, convincing communications for delivery through various communications platforms—such as presentations, videos, and online blogs.

7:30 a.m. **Registration**

8:00—8:20 **The Power of Communications**

An upbeat glimpse into the essential role that effective communications play in securing success, and why overcoming our habitual approach to communicating requires conscious effort.

8:20—8:45 **The Workshop “Morning Show”**

A lighthearted demonstration of the challenges inherent in communicating purposefully.

8:45—9:30 **How Sweet It Is (Getting started with Twitter) *laptop/tablet required***

A fun, uncomplicated, hands-on introduction to one of the most popular and pervasive social media platforms, and how to use it to stimulate interest in science and promote research results.

9:30—10:30 **Creating & Distilling Your Message**

A practical, entertaining, step-by-step guide to developing messages intended to influence thinking, alter attitudes, sway decisions, and affect behaviors, using worksheets developed exclusively for this workshop, and based on the same proven strategies and techniques that professional communicators routinely employ. Part one addresses planning the message including: defining a specific audience, assessing audience disposition, framing, setting the communications objective, defining talking points, and substantiating assertions.



10:30—10:45 **Break**

10:45—noon **Creating & Distilling Your Message (continued)**

Part two of this session addresses crafting the message including: translating the plan into an enduring, actionable narrative, developing discourse strategies, focusing the message, making the message memorable, and techniques for staying on message. Highly interactive, this session includes numerous real-world examples of these techniques in action.

12:00—1:00 **Working Lunch**

During lunch, participants gain practical experience in communications planning and message development by using provided worksheets to craft communications efforts that promote their science at a fictional public event. This first working session focuses on articulating their communications plans and creating their messages.

1:00—2:00 **A Hitchhiker's Guide to Public Presentations**

A comprehensive crash course in how to use the communications techniques the pros use to transform humdrum, ineffective, feckless “talk and slides” presentations into memorable, persuasive communications powerhouses. Topics addressed include how to start a presentation, the four questions every audience has, keeping the audience interested, calling the audience to action, making visuals enhance rather than detract from presentations, the secret to creating charts and graphs that inform and engage, and two tips that can immediately improve presenter effectiveness.

2:00—3:00 **Working with Messages (Working Session)**

A second working session that enables participants to further develop their communications skills using a more in-depth worksheet focused on enhancing messages by fashioning leads, articulating set-ups, shaping sound bites, imagining visuals, defining a call to action, and more.

3:00—3:15 **Break**

3:15—4:45 **Anatomy of a Science Video *laptop/tablet/cellphone required (must be capable of video recording)***

A richly participatory session that teaches attendees the basics of constructing, delivering and capturing their messages using video, and then gets them on their feet—and on camera—to put what they've just learned into action. Participants have the opportunity to record and download to computer short videos of themselves delivering their messages on camera.



4:45—5:30 **I Am New Media (And So Can You!)** (Chris Mooney) *laptop/tablet required*

A user-friendly, step-by-step primer that walks attendees through the craft and art of translating messages into online blogs, and then once posted how to generate interest in, and traffic for, their online articles.

5:30—5:45 **The Workshop “Morning Show”—Revisited** (Chris Mooney and special guests)

A morning session redux that illustrates the advances attendees have made in becoming more effective science messengers.

5:45—6:00 **Complete Evaluation Forms**

DAY TWO

Day Two provides an additional, personalized, experiential learning opportunity for a small group of ambitious researchers specially selected from among the Day One attendees. It focuses on applying the skills and knowledge gained on Day One—skills and knowledge that are further reinforced through the required homework assignment each participant completes on the eve of Day Two. In-depth, one-on-one, mentoring sessions with workshop leaders, working sessions, and exercises developed specifically for this workshop help participants internalize effective communications discipline.

During the day, each participant submits to a short (3- to 4-minute) on-camera “journalist” interview and delivers a 3-minute PowerPoint presentation of his/her message to workshop attendees and the workshop leaders. Each presentation is followed by a mock press conference wherein participants respond extemporaneously to questions from the floor. These activities enable attendees to exhibit and practice their developing communications skills, and each activity is accompanied by constructive feedback and commentary by their workshop colleagues and/or the facilitators.

8:00—8:30 **Introductions**

An ice-breaking exercise in which participants address their workshop colleagues and are given 60-seconds to state their names, their institutions, their fields of study, and succinctly convey what they most want to achieve during the second day of the workshop.



8:30—9:30

**Media Interview Tips and Techniques
Phone Exercise Part One**

A fast-paced checklist of dos and don'ts for communicating successfully with journalists and the media, including recommendations on how to work with the media, preparing for interviews, how to dress and act on camera, and what not to say. The importance of these techniques is reinforced by reviewing a scientist's performance during an actual news broadcast. How to handle a journalist request for a telephone interview is then demonstrated through part one of a group exercise on dealing with the media.

9:30—10:15

Working Session and On-Camera Media Interviews

The first of two working sessions wherein attendees are required to meet individually with one of the three workshop leaders. During this first session, participants receive one-on-one coaching regarding the communications plans and messages developed through the homework assignment for their appearances at the fictional "U.S. Science Festival." Also during this time, each participant is escorted to a separate location for a mock, on-camera media interview that is recorded for individual analysis with Joe Schreiber later in the day. Participants can download the video interview to their laptops for additional review after the workshop.

10:15—10:25

Break

10:25—11:00

**Phone Exercise Part Two
Presentation Tips and Techniques**

Part Two of the group exercise focuses on how to prepare for, and conduct, the interview by applying the workshop's recommended messaging strategies. Participants "crowd source" the intended message and then one participant is selected to conduct the interview with Chris Mooney. Following this exercise, the lecture portion of Day Two concludes with recommendations on how to make messages persuasive, insights on the dimensions and impact of non-verbal communications, and tips for handling Q&A sessions.

11:00—1:30

Working Session (includes lunch)

During this second working session, participants are again mentored individually by one of the three facilitators, this time specifically on the PowerPoint presentations they have developed and intend to deliver later in the afternoon.

1:30—1:45

Setting the Stage for the Presentations and Mock Press Conference

Last minute instructions for the 3-minute PowerPoint presentations and the mock press conferences that follow.



1:45—3:00 Presentations and Mock Press Conferences

Following a randomly assigned order, participants proceed to the stage and deliver their PowerPoint presentations addressed to the audience for a fictional science event. In addition to limiting their presentations to no more than 3 minutes, presenters also must use a handheld microphone, a remote control for advancing their slides, and a special display mode within PowerPoint. Any presenter who exceeds the 3-minute time limit is summarily cut off. The rigid time constraint, combined with the awkwardness of handling unfamiliar presentation requirements, serves to approximate the stresses presenters feel during real presentations. At the conclusion of the presentation, presenters engage in a mock press conference, wherein their workshop colleagues and the facilitators play the part of journalists attending the science event. Presenters field questions from the floor that are variously serious and off-the-wall, helping them hone their messaging expertise and extemporaneous communications skills, as well as developing poise and confidence in front of an audience.

3:00—3:15 Break

3:15—4:30 Presentations and Mock Press Conferences Continue

4:30—4:45 Wrap Up

4:45—5:00 Complete Evaluation Forms