

Online course prospectus

Communicating science for impact

Science communication training for individuals

Communicating your science to the right people, at the right times, and in the right ways, ensures that research has value and impact beyond academia, and that it supports positive change in policy, practice and behaviour.

With a focus on humanising science, and the people who do it, this online course invites researchers to explore and develop the powerful stories that help audiences connect with their work. It pairs this human focus with practical tools for strategically, cost-effectively and professionally communicating with non-specialists and the media.

Brendon Bosworth & Tali Hoffman

© 2022



Who we are

Tali Hoffman and Brendon Bosworth are communication consultants working to bring the worlds of science and communication closer together.



With a PhD in Zoology **Tali Hoffman** is able to understand and interpret the technical details and complexity of a wide range of scientific disciplines. Through a decade of working as a science communicator she has also honed her abilities to make that science more relatable and accessible to diverse audiences. Tali is as confident communicating science in the spotlight – on television, on the radio and in public speaking fora – as she is developing professional and cost-effective communications products. Her passion for teaching and experience as a trainer allows her to successfully help others to build their capacities in these same areas.

tali.s.hoffman@gmail.com



Brendon Bosworth believes that academic research needs to be paired with a softer, more human approach that relies on the power of storytelling to bring science to life. Brendon has 10 years' experience as a journalist, editor, and communicator with a focus on urbanisation, climate change, and sustainable development. His work inside and outside of research institutions, locally and abroad, has allowed him to identify the challenges and opportunities for creating better synergies between researchers and non-specialist audiences.

brendon@humanelementcommunications.com

How the course works

Communicating Science for Impact blends self-paced online learning with one-on-one instructor support for students. We support students in the development of a communication product with real-world value.

Course material is presented in four modules that include video lessons, text lessons, and assignments housed on an easy-to-use online course platform. One-on-one sessions are held over Zoom.

Students will learn to

- Develop impact-focused communication strategies that target key audiences and cater to their specific information needs (Strategy Module)
- Identify and convey the core messages in their science in compelling and relatable ways (Stories Module)
- More effectively and confidently communicate with the media (Media Module)
- Understand how to effectively develop a wide range of communications products (Toolbox Module)

Details

Timing: Registration provides access to the course material for a 90-day period after payment. Participants work through the course material at their own pace. Instructors provide feedback on development of chosen communication product.

Participant outputs: (1) A communication strategy; (2) Researcher- and research-focused soundbites and story frameworks, (3) An impact-focused communication product targeted to a particular audience.

Participant requirements: (1) Work through all online material; (2) Submit Communication Strategy for review; (3) Submit draft of chosen communication product for review; (4) Attend two one-on-one sessions with course instructors.

Strategy Module

Taking a strategic approach helps scientists to consider how their communication efforts can yield the greatest impact on the most important audiences.

In this module, we discuss how to develop a communication strategy that (1) has specific and measurable communication goals, (2) identifies the target audiences that can help to reach those goals, (3) determines which tactics to follow to best reach those audiences, and (4) evaluates the effectiveness of the communication efforts. Participants then use these strategic skills to begin developing their own communication strategy.

Learning outcomes

Participants will:

- Learn to conceptualise and articulate specific communication goals (e.g., on policy, practice, behaviour).
- Learn to identify the specific audiences that need to be reached in order to reach those goals, and the actions these audiences need to take.
- Learn to analyse the information needs of each audience to determine the content, format and dissemination timing that will be most effective at reaching those audiences.
- Learn to evaluate the communication efforts in meaningful ways and over useful timeframes.



Stories module

Humans understand the world through stories. But when researchers want to communicate about complex research, it can be difficult to identify and tell the powerful stories that help audiences connect with their work.

This module explores the power of storytelling. It covers the fundamentals of what a story is and how different types of stories can be used to animate and humanise research. We prompt researchers to look at and reflect upon their own stories so they can tell these in a way that invites others to see them as people with values, ideas, and concerns.

Learning outcomes

Participants will:

- Learn to identify different types of stories within their research, and apply storytelling techniques to communicate their research to non-specialists.
- Learn to identify and develop their “personal narratives” in order to integrate these into their public communication efforts.
- Reflect on the values that inform their work, and consider how to incorporate these into their communications.



Hendra A Setyawan



Media module

Scientists and journalists work in different worlds. A deeper understanding of the world of news media builds the capacity of scientists to confidently perform media interviews, publicise their research findings, and ultimately become respected experts in the media space.

In this chapter, participants learn how the media works, how news stories are constructed, and how to better communicate with the press. We include instruction on how to stay calm and focused during press interviews.

Learning outcomes

Participants will:

- Gain improved understanding of media practices, processes, and the news cycle so that they are equipped to effectively communicate with journalists and provide them with relevant information about their research.
- Evaluate their professional relationship with the media in order to strengthen their capacities to interface with the media and share their research with the public.
- Formulate a set of key messages and soundbites related to their core research which can be used for media interviews, public speaking, and writing for popular media.
- Learn to evaluate the newsworthiness of their work to increase the likelihood of getting media coverage.
- Improve their ability to prepare for and confidently conduct media interviews – be they print, TV or radio – and effectively convey impactful messages to the press.
- Learn how to use voice control, breath control, and other physical techniques to reduce their public-speaking anxiety.



Toolbox module

Working with specialists to develop high-quality communications products can be prohibitively costly. Yet many products can be developed in-house, at low cost, and to a professional standard. In this chapter we unpack our communication toolbox, demonstrating how participants can develop a range of effective products using readily-available software.

We focus on some of the 'usual suspects' of communication, such as presentations, posters and policy briefs, focusing on how to better prepare and deliver these. We explore how to write effective articles for the popular press, particularly for high-impact publications. We discuss how to use social media for impact, and demonstrate and discuss techniques for taking photographs, producing films, animations, podcasts and infographics. Lastly, we discuss some creative forms of communication that are captivating yet seldom considered.

Learning outcomes

Participants will:

- Learn how strategy, storytelling, high-quality visuals, and well-prepared delivery can make presentations, policy briefs and webinars more engaging, understandable, and memorable.
- Improve their non-scientific writing ability, and gain an understanding of the different styles used in different communications products (e.g., popular press articles, scripts) to keep audiences engaged.
- Learn about the importance of developing a social media strategy, the way to use different social media platforms to help achieve specific communication goals, and how to develop an online identity with a consistent and genuine "voice".
- Learn about the basics of photography and video-making (composition, lighting, etc.).
- Learn why animations can be so effective at communicating science, when (and when not to) use them, and the key steps involved in making them.
- Learn the basics of developing engaging and informative podcasts.
- Learn how to use storytelling and improved data visualisations to develop impact-focused infographics.
- Learn about some innovative and underused communication techniques.

Developing a communications product

Using the knowledge and skills gained, in the final weeks of the course participants develop a communications product of choice, targeted at a particular audience.

Learning outcomes

Participants will:

- Develop their own communications product with real world application that showcases key research messages for a target audience.
- Gain experience in all steps of developing a communications product, from conceptualisation, to production, to dissemination.



Fees and policies

Communicating Science for Impact: training for individuals

US\$600

- Participants gain access to the course material for 90 days after registering and making payment.
- Participants may request a refund within 30 days of paying and enrolling for the course provided they have not accessed any of the course material. In the case where a refund is due, the course fee (minus applicable bank, Paypal, and foreign exchange fees) will be reimbursed.
- Participants who have paid for and started any part of the course are not eligible for a refund.
- Participants need to book their one-on-one sessions with the course instructors at a suitable time during the 3-month course window.

For more information please contact

Tali Hoffman: tali.s.hoffman@gmail.com

Brendon Bosworth: brendon@humanelementcommunications.com

<https://communicating-science.thinkific.com/>