



SEED'S TIP OF THE MONTH:

USING DEVELOPMENTAL STAGING TO ACHIEVE YOUR MISSION

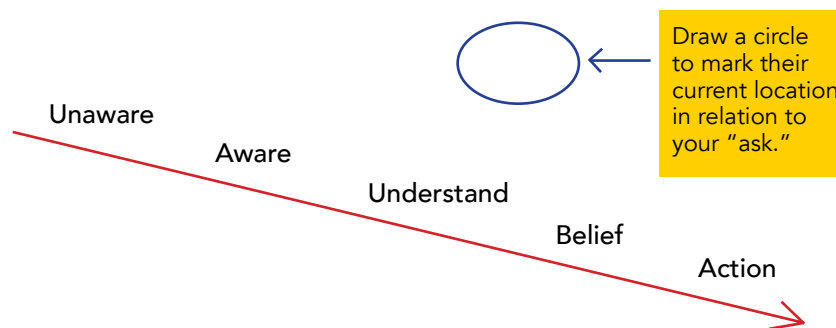
STRETCH: Developmental staging is one of the most widely used frameworks in social science and assessment. Growth is described through a sequence of steps. Achieving successively higher stages indicates positive, qualitative shifts in development. A simple example is the progression from elementary to middle to high school; or from a bachelor's to a master's to a doctorate degree. Or consider the advancing badges earned in scouts, and the progression of belts awarded in martial arts.

Can you think of developmental stages involved in achieving your organization's mission?

ENLIVEN: Let's practice together with a five-stage framework that we often recommend to develop marketing messages. This tool can be used each time you prepare a communication.

For practice, think of a request you want to make that will compel a particular person or group toward action. What do you know about your audience for this "ask"? What do *they* know about *your* interests? Where do they stand with regard to the request you are preparing to make?

At what stage do you see them on this scale?



Remember "Rome wasn't built in a day." Typically, you will want to plan a series of communications, each with an intention to advance them one step closer to your goal. For example, if your audience has not yet reached "understanding" about your issue, the goal of your first communication may simply be to achieve shared agreement on a next meeting—that could be a real victory in itself.



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The benefit of any staged model is that it guides you to engage in a developmental relationship with your participants that will raise the likelihood of bringing them to your desired level of results.

Staged models guide you to consider where your audience is now, so you can thoughtfully prepare what will be needed to move them to their next stage of potential.

As you craft talking points (or curriculum) for each stage, ask yourself:

“When I’m finished speaking, _____ will do _____.”
(who) (what)

The “what” is where we desire to take our audience next, moving them from passivity to action.

ENNOBLE: Now it is your turn. Pick an area of your work where higher levels of performance by team members, clients, partners, Board members or financial supporters will advance your mission. Picture your target individuals raising their game, in small but observable steps. Make the early steps of your staged model relatively easy for participants to achieve. Then push them as the steps advance. Aim for four to ten steps.

Are you gaining a sense of how your participants will benefit from developmental engagement using your model?

DISCOVER: Share your staged model application with other team members. Think together about ways to improve it. Test it in a low-risk context. If it proves itself, try a higher-stakes situation.

Keep in mind you can also assign points for achievement at each stage of your model. In this way you can quantify the gains being made by your targets over time and document progress.

Be sure to celebrate the increased impact you achieve using this model.

We would love to hear what you come up with and will offer feedback at no cost. Tell us what happens: tips@seedimpact.org.

