Re.Climate™
COMMUNICATING FOR CHANGE
Action
Research
Communication
Motivation

We can make all the technological advances in the world, create and implement new laws and policies, but none of it will have an effect without the active engagement and support of citizens. Their informed support for action is what's known as a "social mandate"

HOW REAL CHANGE HAPPENS.

PAMELA JOE MCFARLANE/GETTY IMAGES

Montreal, QC -- Mother cools off her child during a heat wave. (Photo by EVA HAMBACH / AFP) (Photo by EVA HAMBACH/AFP via Getty Images)

THE FUNDAMENTALS

Where are people today on extreme weather?

PEOPLE NOTICE EXTREME WEATHER, BUT FEW POINT TO THE SOURCE

88%

Canadians who have witnessed at least one extreme weather event in the past year.

30%

Canadians who were personally impacted by an extreme weather event in the past year.

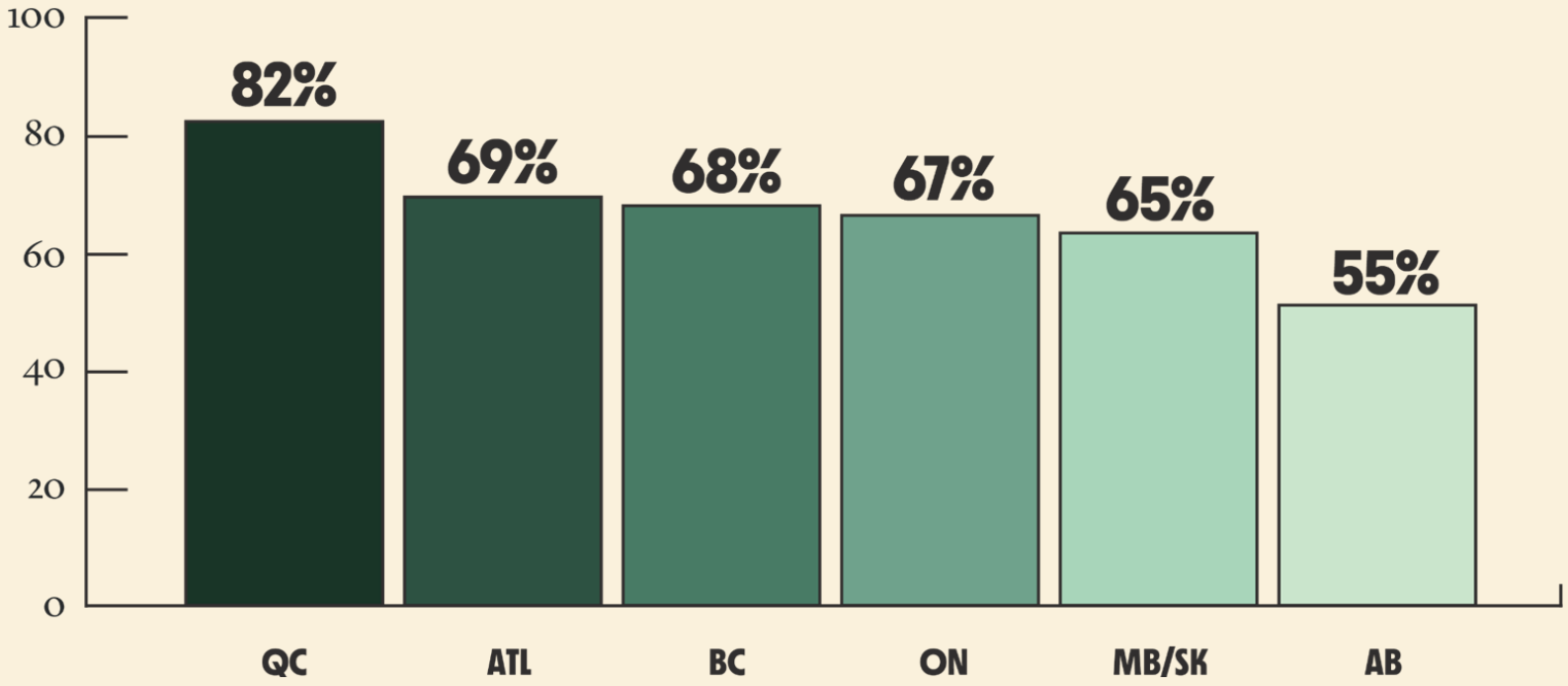
Leger Research (2024)

The earth is getting warmer because of human activity.

Ecoanalytics, 2022

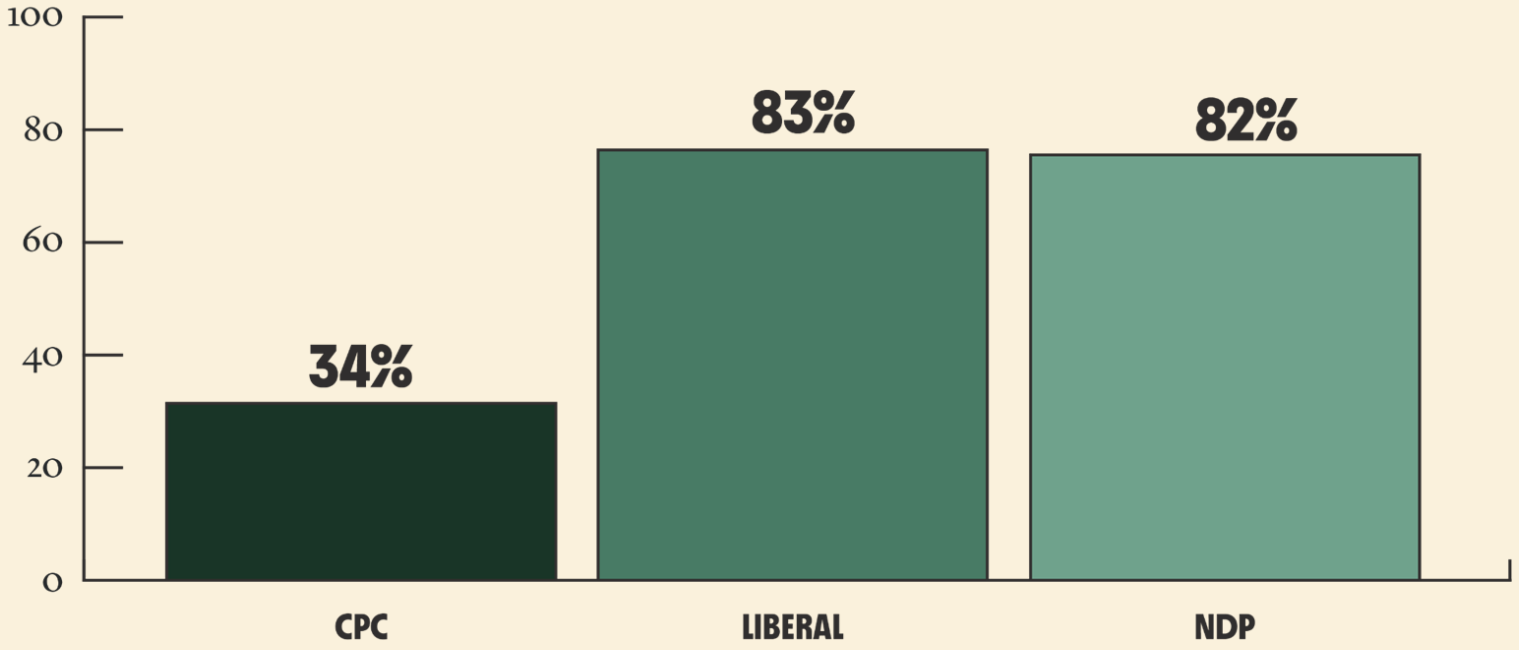
THE PRAIRIES ARE DIFFERENT

"Climate change is mostly caused by human activities."



POLITICAL DIVIDE: CLIMATE CRISIS

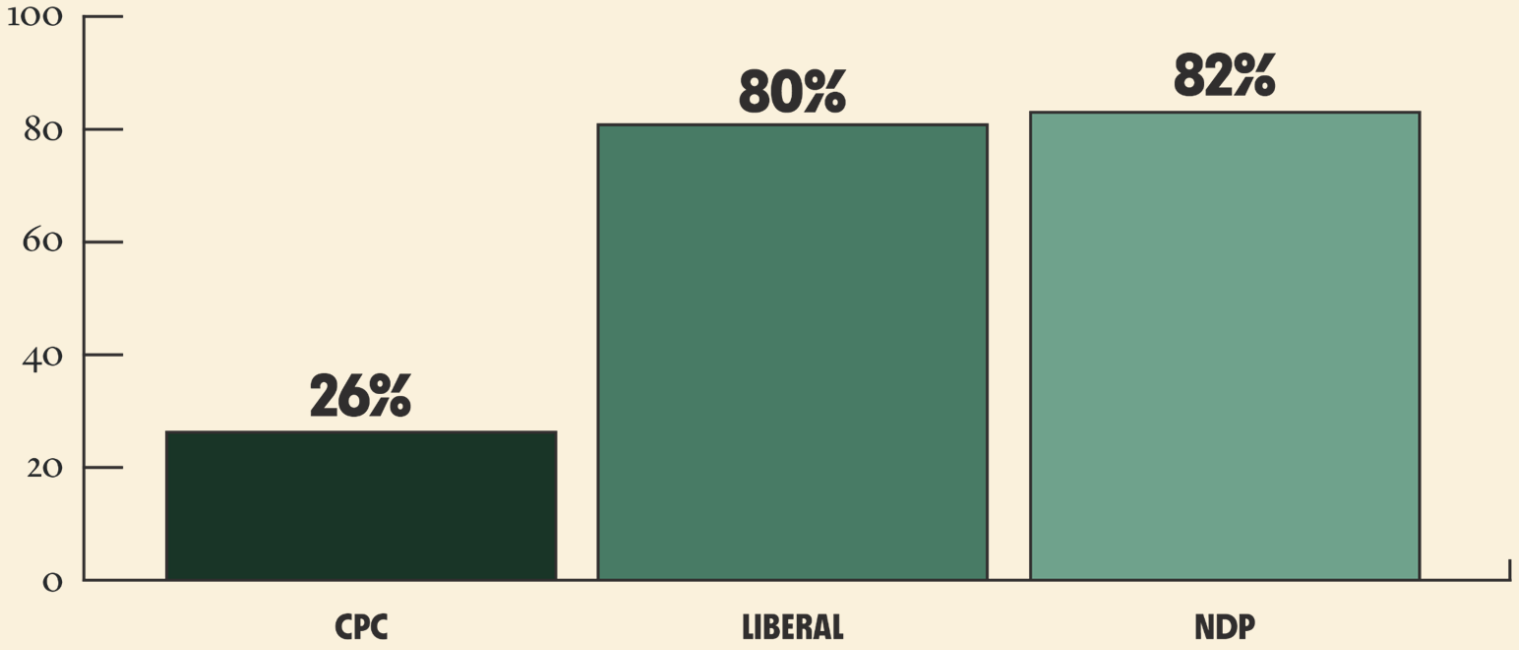
“Climate change is a crisis and we need to act quickly.”



Angus Reid Institute 2023i

POLITICAL DIVIDE: WILDFIRES

“These wildfires are directly linked to climate change.”



Angus Reid Institute 2023i

“HOT” EVENTS ARE MORE SALIENT THAN “WET” EVENTS

…a significant majority think “hot” events have increased…

74% forest fires/wildfires

63% extreme heat

…but less think “wet” events have increased…

34% heavy rainfall

50% floods

HOW DO WE MOVE PEOPLE?

AVOID TRAPS & PITFALLS

1

Resistance
Perceived threats to freedom/control, boomerang effects (opposite effects than intended)

2

Rationalization
Counter-arguing, motivated reasoning (social identity threats)

3

Solutions Skepticism
Confusion, overly optimistic, misinformation, legitimate doubts

4

Fatalism
It's too late perceptions

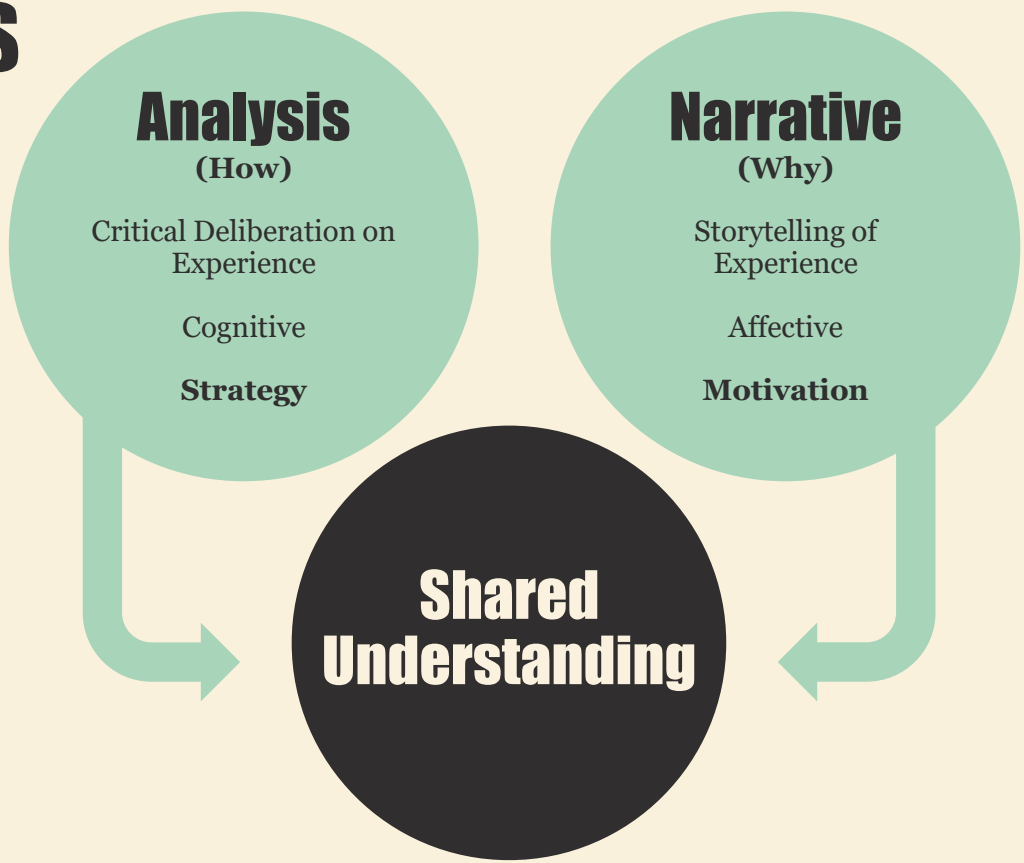
EDUCATION

Fort McMurray, AB – Wildfire evacuation. The combined cost of the 2016 fire is $11 billion. Photo: China Dialogue

MAKE IT HUMAN

STORIES TAP EMOTIONS THAT OVERCOME DEFENSES

- Facts are critical for analysis.
- Stories convey emotion and tap values to build common understanding.



ADAPTED FROM GANZ, M.

THINK IN PHASES

BEFORE
Foreshadow, educate, advocate, build capacity

DURING
Make it human, responsive

AFTER
Sense-making, advocacy

FOCUS ON NOW, NOT THE FUTURE

Abbotsford, BC — A member of the Canadian Forces carries sandbags as they create a temporary dike behind houses on Clayburn Creek ahead of a rainfall warning Environment Canada has forecast for the region which is already affected by flooding, in Abbotsford, British Columbia, on Wednesday, Nov. 24, 2021.
DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS VIA AP

SUPPORT A RANGE OF VOICES

Osler, SK -- A farmer inspects barley plants beside a crop insurance field inspector, right, during a drought on a grain farm. A prolonged lack of moisture and hot temperatures has caused significant damage to many crops, the Saskatchewan government said. Photographer: Kayle Neis/Bloomberg via Getty

SEVEN (other) KEY TAKEAWAYS

1.

Bring it back to basics

Talk impacts, causes and link to solutions. Use simple language. Hit repeat.

2.

Be realistic

All segments want more realistic messaging about challenges + costs.

3.

Provide hope

Make the story about community strength.

4.

Support not shoulder

Communities need to support resilience, not shoulder it. Collective, public solutions exist. Government's role is to protect, regulate and support.

5.

Stress what is known

Steer clear of fussy attribution and complex uncertainty – stress what we do know. Scientists and communicators need to wor

6.

Pre-bunk + debunk misinfo

Get ahead of misinformation early and respond quickly and directly.

7.

Make it visual

Show people, impacts and causes at scale, show local places, and communities working together to build resilience.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND WILDFIRES IN CANADA'S NATIONAL MEDIA
A summary of media-covered causes, solutions, and frames, with recommendations for communicators
2023
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WHAT DO CANADIANS REALLY THINK ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE?
A Summary of Public Opinion Research for Communicators
2024
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QUESTIONS

Thank You

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