

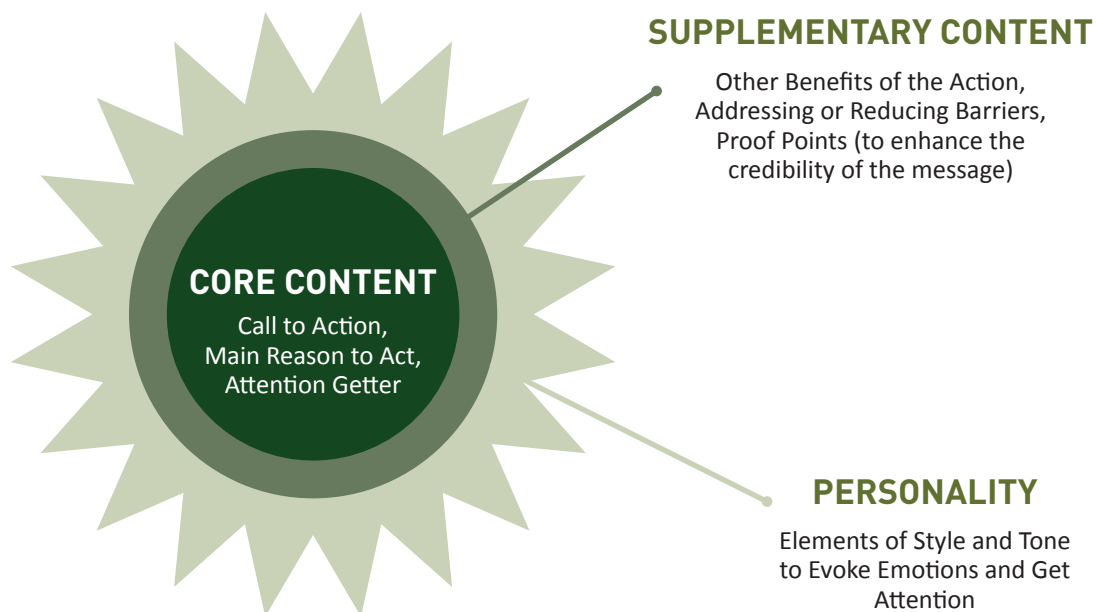
5 DESIGNING MESSAGES

Purnima Chawla

5.1 Components of an Effective Message

Before you can develop any materials, you must have a good sense of the main ideas you want to communicate and how you'll do so. The figure below shows the key components of an effective message.

THE MAIN COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE MESSAGE



All communications must have a clear and specific call to action and one strong compelling reason for audiences to take that action ([see Section 5.2: The Reason to Act](#)). Other benefits and arguments can be used as supporting elements, as can ideas that directly address or undermine barriers to action.

Effective messages also have something that attracts the target audience's attention ([see Section 5.3:](#)

[Messages with Personality](#)). This attention-getter can be an element of the text (such as a shocking statistic or unexpected endorsement), a visual or graphic, or the style and tone of your message. The style and tone of your materials also contribute to the impact of the message by evoking the right emotion to drive action. Just like a picture frame can greatly enhance or detract from the art, the personality of your materials can enhance or undermine your message.

Whether you're designing a postcard or an entire presentation, your communication should be organized around two or three strong, interrelated ideas to drive home a single, compelling reason to take the desired action.