



Navigating Thought Leadership in a Politically Charged Environment

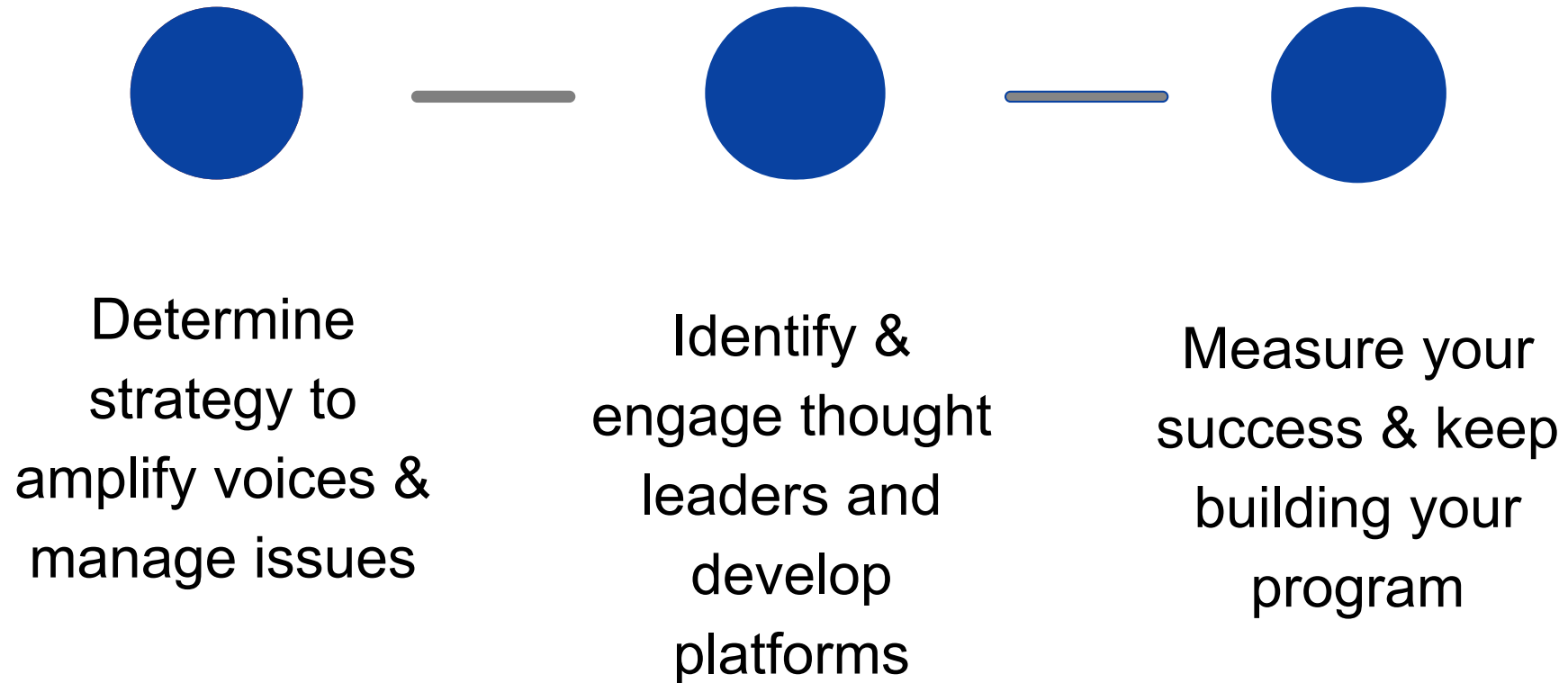
Strategies for Healthcare Communication Professionals

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES





THE CHALLENGE

Rising complexity and political sensitivity in healthcare communications.



THE GOAL

Equip healthcare communicators with practical strategies to help thought leaders maintain credibility, relevance and impact, internally and externally.



Which of these are a challenge for you? Select all that apply.

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- Getting our thought leader platform up and running effectively
- Staying politically neutral while being relevant
- Securing buy-in or bandwidth from thought leaders
- Navigating concerns with the news media climate
- Managing external perceptions and reputational risk
- Aligning on when to speak boldly

WHY THOUGHT LEADERSHIP MATTERS



**Fill the void
for trusted
information
sources**



**Enhance
reputation,
recruitment
and retention**



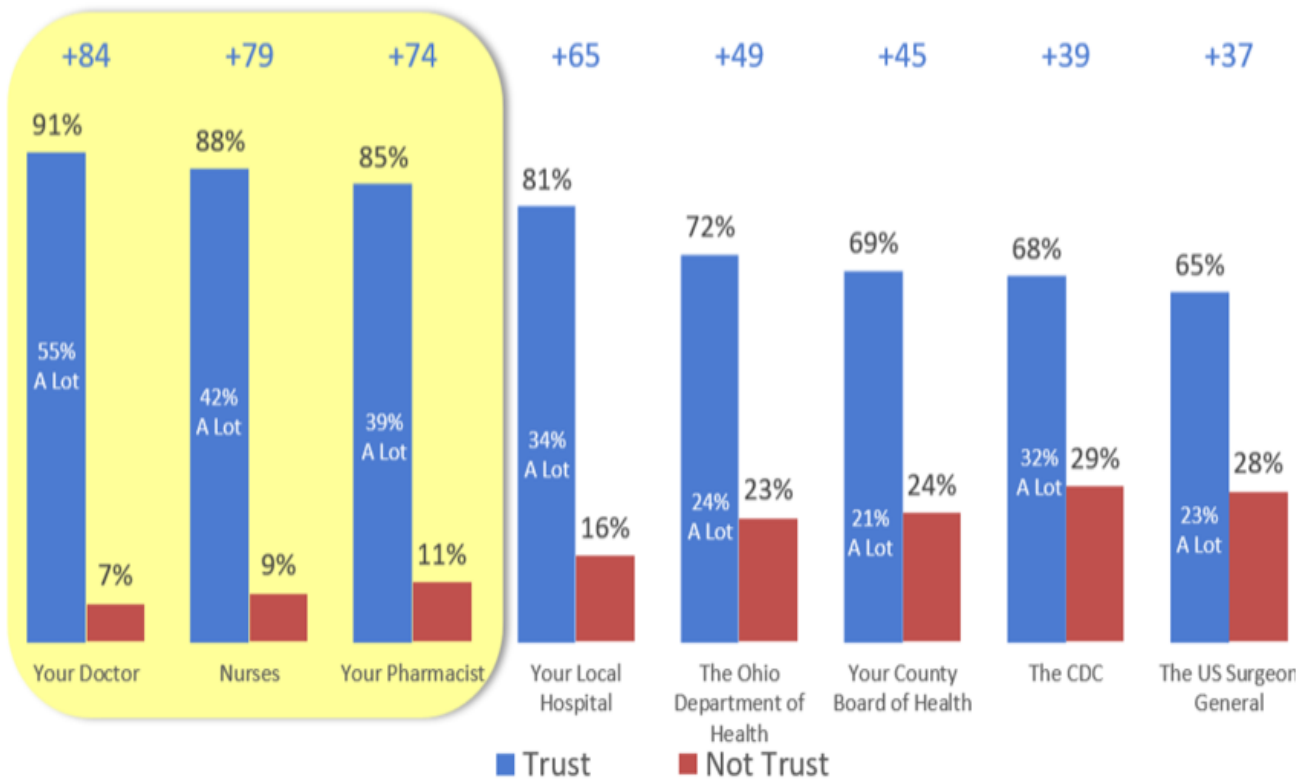
**Build trust
with patients
and the
community**



**Mitigate risk
in a politicized
landscape**

TRUSTED SOURCES OF INFORMATION

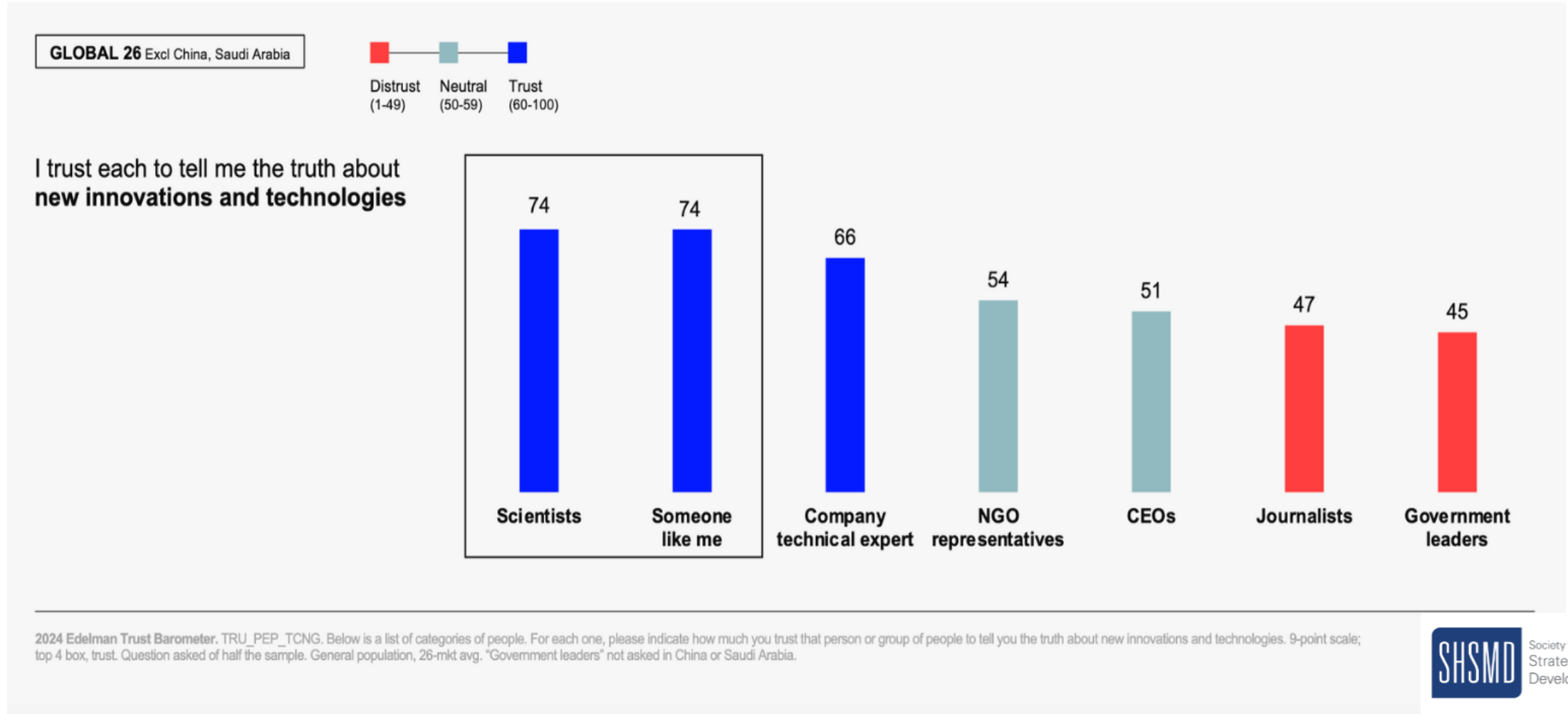
Doctors, nurses, pharmacists and hospitals top the list of trust sources of public health information.



And, on the issue of where you get public health information, how much do you trust information you receive from each of the following...

DISPERSION OF AUTHORITY: PEERS ON PAR WITH SCIENTISTS

Percent trust



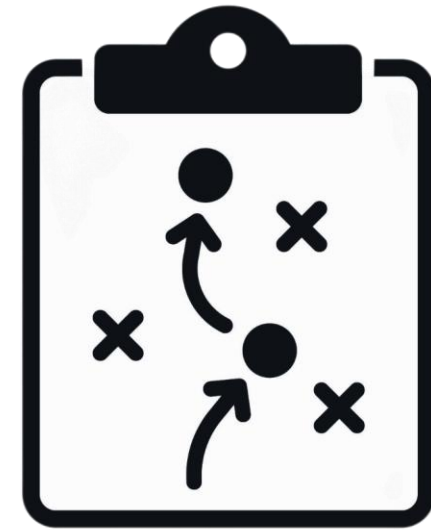
KEY STRATEGIES



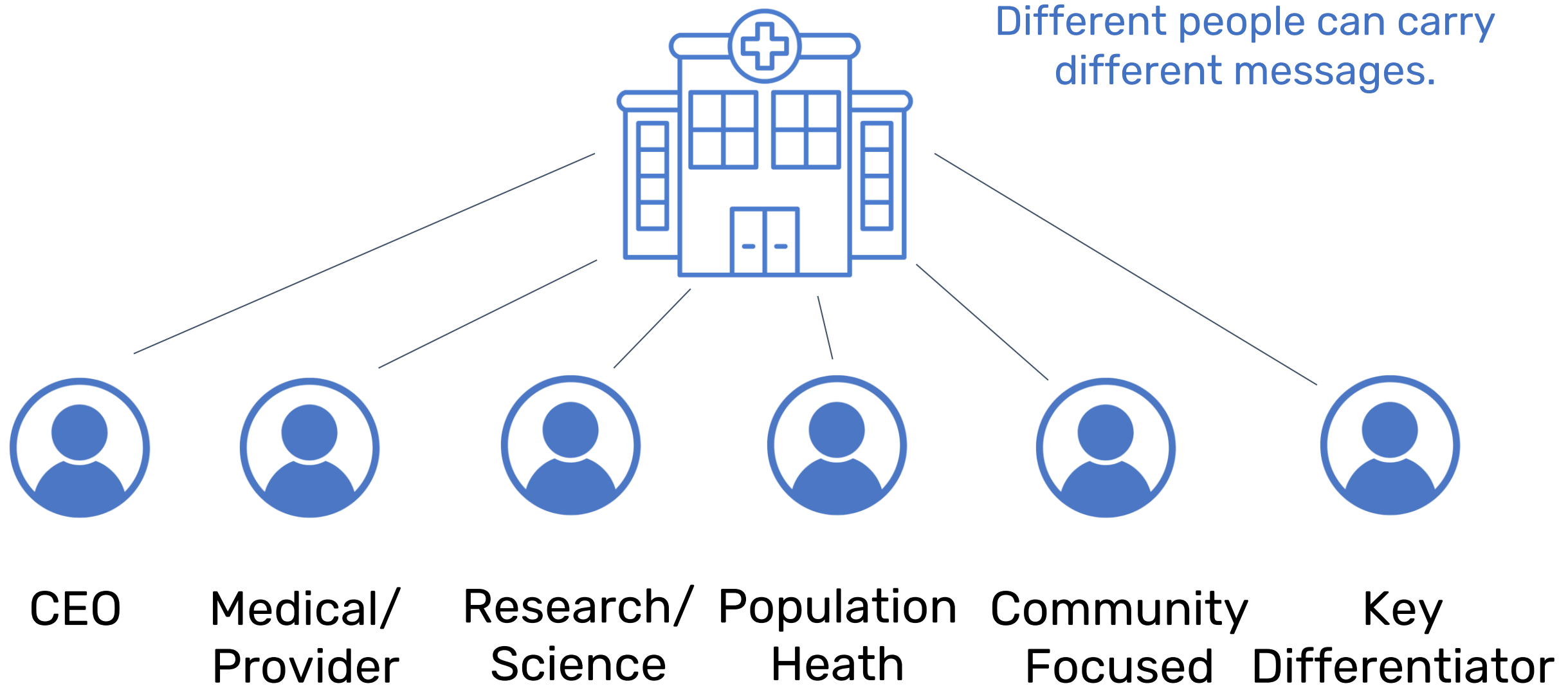
KEY STRATEGY #1: THOUGHT LEADERSHIP PLAYBOOK

**Make sure everyone gets what
you're doing.**

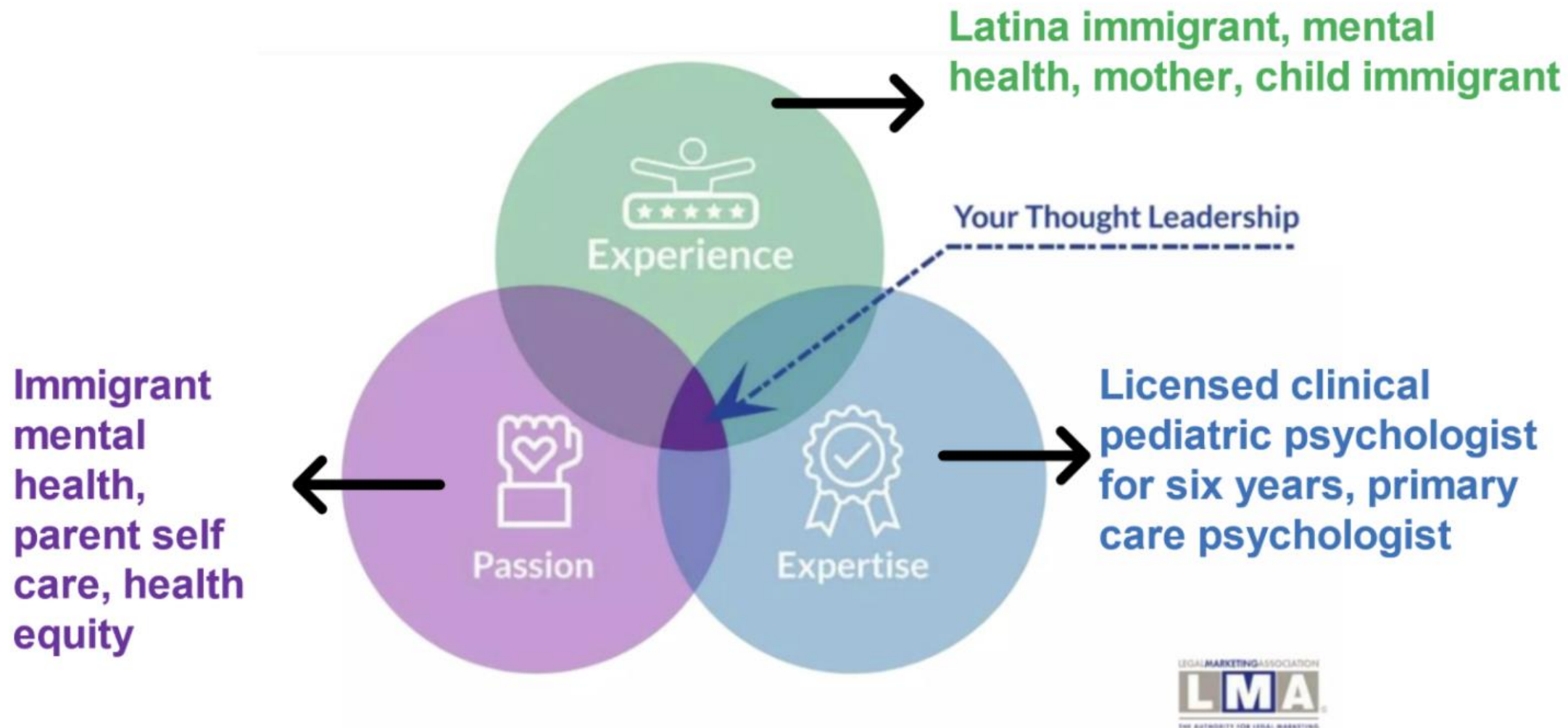
- Create clear policies and decision trees
- Communicate internally to align staff and show how this ties to your strategic goals
- Establish a varied class of thought leaders, not a single voice



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP CLASS



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP MESSAGING

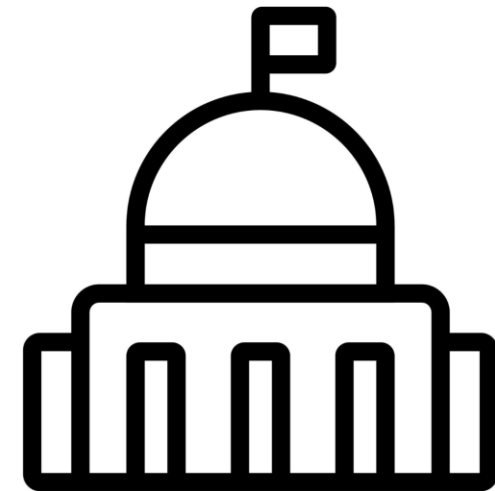


Source: Guy Akvarex, CEO & Founder, Good2bSocial

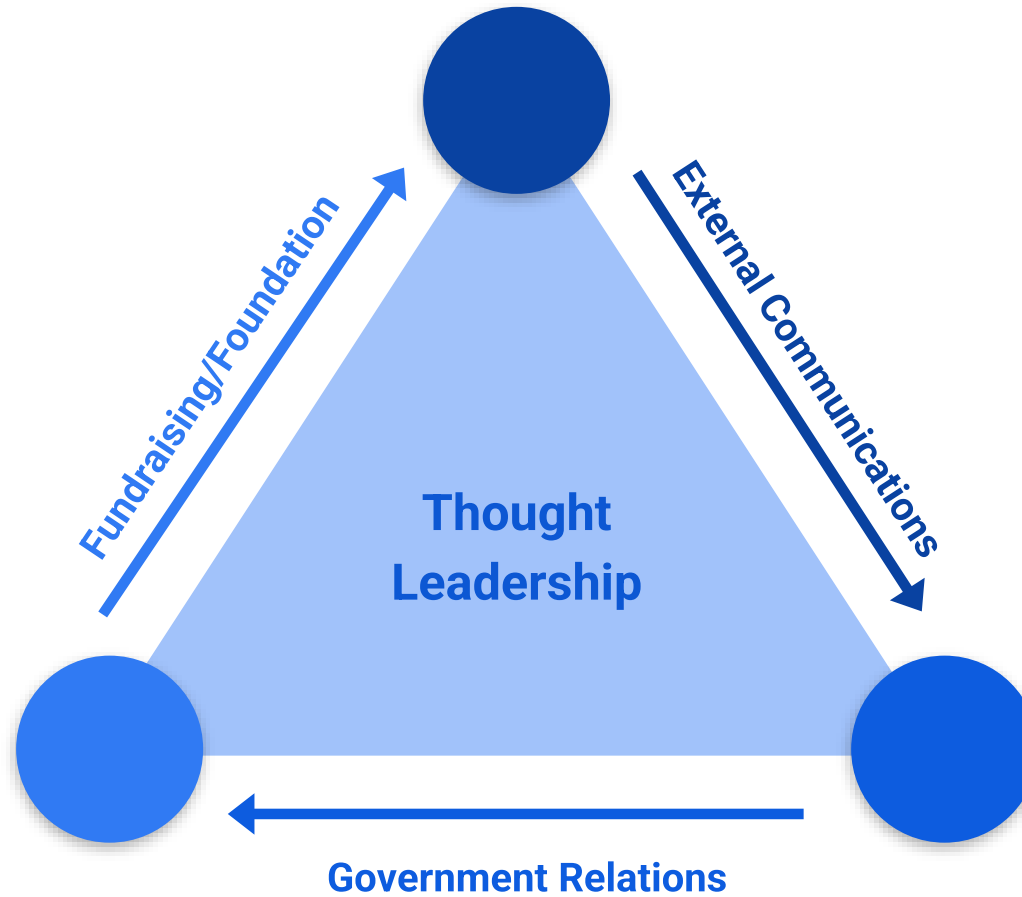
KEY STRATEGY #2: STRATEGIC COLLABORATION WITH GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & FUNDRAISING

Stay informed. Be prepared.

- Keep up with local, state and federal issues
- Utilize social media listening and executive briefings
- Anticipate and prepare for emerging issues



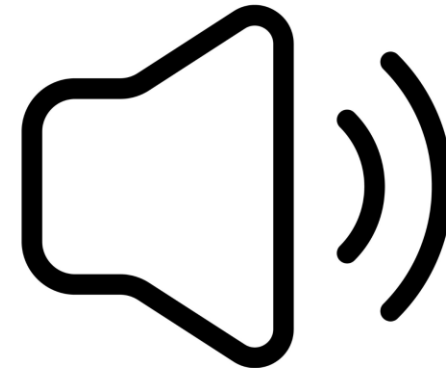
THOUGHT LEADERSHIP COLLABORATION



KEY STRATEGY #3: FINDING THE RIGHT VOLUME

Strive for balance.

- Prioritize sensitivity and relevance in all communications
- Use "quiet advocacy" with targeted audiences
- Balance visibility with risk mitigation



Moderating Approach to Achieve an Impact

Medicaid Advocacy At Different Volumes



2017



2025



KEY STRATEGY #4: STRENGTHEN CRISIS MESSAGING

Fine-tune your plan.

- Build relationships and trust because issues and crises will happen
- Refresh media training for leaders
- Identify and prepare spokespeople early
- Align on response protocols

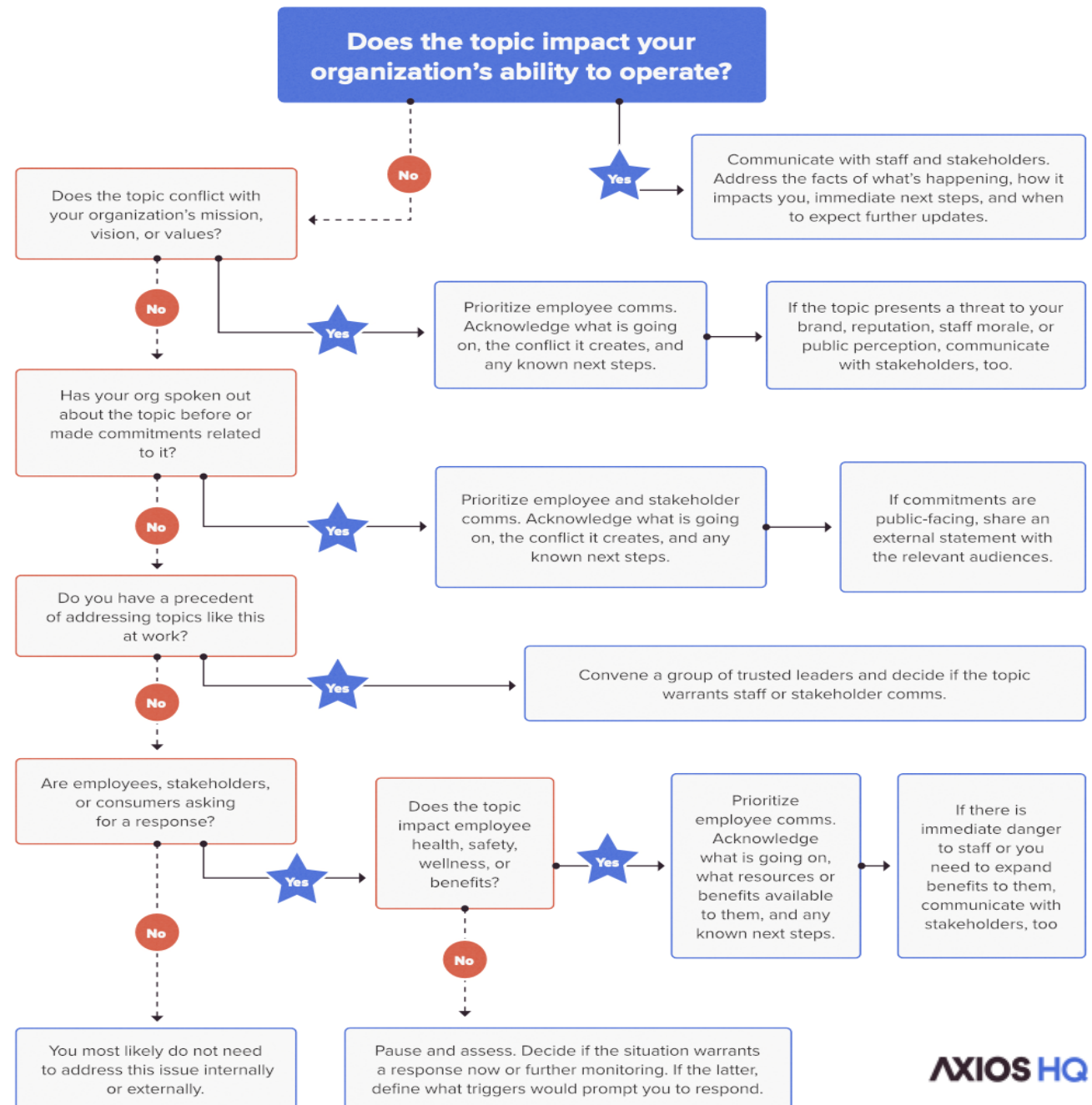


MEDIA DECISION TREE

Speed without chaos.

Expectation Setting.

Accountability.



Risk vs Relevance Scorecard

RISK CALCULATOR

Score (4 for highest risk, 1 for lowest risk)

Does responding hurt our stakeholder trust, and credibility?

Could our response escalate the situation or create unintended consequences?

Could responding hurt our long-term reputation in healthcare?

Would staying silent help prevent the spread of confusion, fear or misinformation?

Would our absence be seen as conspicuous?

Total Risk Score:

RELEVANCE CALCULATOR

Score (4 for highest relevance, 1 for lowest)

Does this situation impact the community we serve?

Does our mission compel us to respond?

Do we have a clear, well-articulated position with prepared spokespeople?

Have other respected organizations, including healthcare institutions, responded?

Is this an opportunity to reinforce our key messages or offer useful context that sets us apart or educates?

Total Relevance Score:

Response Toolbox

Leadership emails to strategic stakeholder groups

Community gatherings

Educational sessions or materials for managers

Internal news on intranet

Social media posts

Town hall meetings or employee gatherings

Advocacy

Op-ed or Letter to Editor

News media interviews

Holding statement and bridging statements

Website statement

Webinar

Alignment with peer events

Statement Events (ex. moment of silence)

Brand journalism/Multimedia

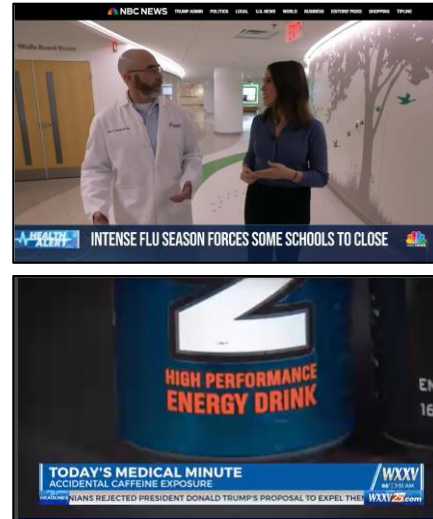
KEY STRATEGY #5: MAINTAIN MEDIA PRESENCE

Be proactive.

- Visible external leaders, internal trust
- Build goodwill, fill the well of trust and establish relationships
- Safe wins for steady positive news



The Positive Side of Public Affairs and Media Relations: Promotion, Awareness and Hope



KEY STRATEGY #6: EVALUATE & RESET GOALS

Stay flexible.

- Ensure goals reflect the current climate
- Focus on impact over process
- Be willing to adapt metrics as needed



METRICS & OUTCOMES

- Develop **meaningful KPIs**
- Focus on **outcome-based metrics**
- **Celebrate early wins** to build momentum

METRIC	STOPLIGHT	KPI Q2	Benchmark
Collaboratory Newsletter Performance	✓	11% CTR	9% CTR
Collaboratory Web Traffic	✓	9,183 Pageviews	8,450 Pageviews
LinkedIn Followers	✓	15,336	14,150
Tim Robinson Email Performance	✓	48% OR	35% OR

KEY TAKEAWAYS



Build trust and credibility



Strengthen relationships with stakeholders



Tailor spokesperson onboarding



Maintain momentum with small successes



Align efforts with strategic goals



DISCUSSION





Thank you!

Please be sure to complete the session evaluation on the mobile app!





When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™



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Jeb is the Managing Editor, Executive Communications, in the Department of Marketing and Public Relations at Nationwide Children's Hospital. He contributes feature stories and research news to PediatricsOnline, the hospital's electronic newsletter for physicians and other health care providers, and to Pediatrics Nationwide. He has served as a communications specialist at the Center for Injury Research and Policy at The Research Institute and came to Nationwide Children's after 14-year career as daily newspaper reporter, most recently at The Columbus Dispatch.





Shannon McCormick, Vice President of Communications at MediaSource, heads a team of media-savvy experts in promoting brands. A former television journalist, Shannon utilizes her newsroom insights to transform client messages into impactful headlines. She consults on thought leadership strategy and coaches key opinion leaders for major organizations, community treasures and Fortune 500 companies. With a sharp focus on surpassing goals, Shannon is committed to crafting compelling narratives that resonate, positioning her clients as influential opinion leaders in their respective fields.

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