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# YOU and the Power of Personal Communications

“YOU OWN UNDERSTANDING”

# YOU: *You Own Understanding*

A promotional graphic for Omodt & Associates. It features a circular portrait of Paul Omodt, a man with dark hair wearing a suit and tie, smiling. To the right of the portrait is the company logo, which consists of the text "omodt & associates" in a serif font, with "CRITICAL COMMUNICATIONS" in a smaller sans-serif font below it, all enclosed in a circular border. The background of the graphic is a landscape with a long, straight road stretching into the distance under a blue sky, with brownish fields on either side.

Presented by:  
PAUL OMODT  
ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA, MBC, SCMP  
FOUNDER & PRINCIPAL  
OMODT & ASSOCIATES

# Does Your City Communicate Well? Do You? Is it the Same?

*Let's discuss why you came here today.*





# What is Communication?

*Communication is the process of conveying information, ideas, or feelings through a shared system of words, symbols, signs, or behaviors.*

*Communication has to be two-way: It involves both the sender transmitting a message and the receiver understanding that message.*

*Effective communication ensures mutual understanding between individuals or groups.*





# What is Communication?

*Communication drives action: **start**, **stop**, or **continue**.*

**Start:** *Let me start something. You need to start something.*

**Stop:** *You need to stop something. I will stop doing something.*

**Continue:** *Let me continue something. You should continue doing something.*

# What Underlies Communication?

*All effective communication needs **TRUST**.*

*Without **TRUST**, effective communication can not happen.*

***“Trust, at its core, is a confident belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something. It involves a willingness to be vulnerable and rely on another, often without complete knowledge or control, expecting that they will act in your best interest. Trust is built through consistent positive experiences, demonstrating reliability, and open communication.”***







# The Trust Problem

*The world's trust problem is immense, and it is growing. We live in a **post-truth** and **post-trust** world.*

*In fact, the trust problem has become one of the United States' biggest exports over the last decade.*

*Our friends at Edelman break this down for us.*

# How Did We Get Here?

*2001/2: Rising influence of NGOs, Fall of Celebrity CEOs*

*2005/6: Trust shifts from authorities to peers/a “person like me” emerges as trust source*

*2008/9: Young people trust business more/trust in business plummets*

*2011/12: Business/government together regain trust/fall of government*





# How Did We Get Here?

*2016/7: The Mass-Class Divide/Trust in Crisis*

*2018/9: The Battle for Truth/Trust Goes to Work*

*2021/2: Business Most Trusted/The Cycle of Distrust*

*2024/5: Innovation in Peril/**Trust and the Crisis of Grievance***

# Let's Dig Deeper

*Globally, 69% of adults believe government leaders lie to me.*

*Globally, 63% of adults believe they are being discriminated against (up from 52% five years ago).*

*Globally, 53% of young adults believe hostile activism will drive change.*



# This ALL Sounds So Fun!

*Is this what you signed up for?*

*Is this why you got into government?*

*Is this hopeless?*

*Is there a solution?*



# YOU Are the Solution!

*Here's the solution:*

*YOU!*

*You **Own Understanding**. You build trust.*

*Three quick steps:*





# YOU Are the Solution! #1

*Here's the solution:*

*1. GET SMALL NOW. Be hyperlocal, use hyperlocal media, and your OWN media.*

*You are the best delivery system. Yes, YOU.*

***Person-to-person*** communication is key.  
*Get close to your residents – in person. Make government personal to them – deliver!*



# YOU Are the Solution! #2

*Here's the solution:*

*1. GET SMALL NOW.*

*2. BE MORE HUMAN AND BE  
COMPASSIONATE. (Influence is earned through  
compassion that you can count on. Things you  
can count on time and time again = trust.)*

***“Make the people who matter feel like they  
matter”***



# YOU Are the Solution! #3

*Here's the solution:*

- 1. GET SMALL NOW.*
- 2. BE MORE HUMAN AND BE COMPASSIONATE.*
- 3. DELIVER RESULTS – WITH GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE -- THAT BENEFIT YOUR RESIDENTS.*  
*Customer service from people serving people works. Set customer service standards for your city and yourself.*



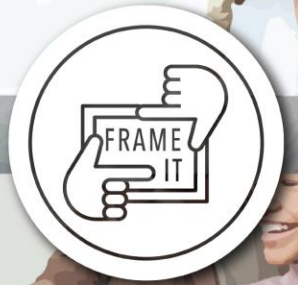
# Use Proximal Communication

*Use this concept: this is hard – but also easy.*

*YOU own the understanding, here's how:*



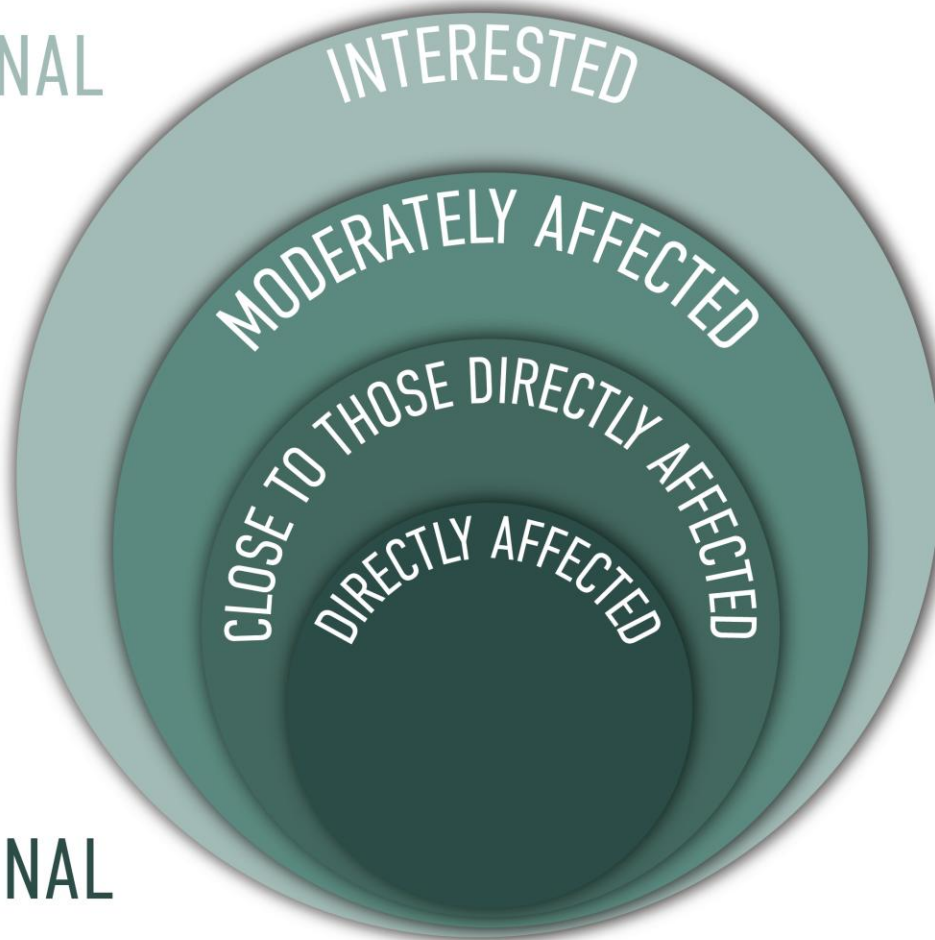
# AUDIENCE PROXIMITY



LESS PERSONAL



MORE PERSONAL



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# The Local Trust Barometer

*Early 2025, I worked with ResearchScape to conduct a national survey of residents in cities <50,000 on trust and communication...*

*Guess what we found:*





# The Local Trust Barometer

***Trust in the information that the local city provides is very high – 87% of adults trust local municipal information.***

***Which means: Local leaders should personally point to, amplify, and personalize the information provided by your city.***



# The Local Trust Barometer

***Resident trusted communication preferences are: hyper local media (76%), social media – city and city-related (67%), city website (55%)***

***Which means: Local leaders should personally be in the top three sources***



# The Local Trust Barometer

***Resident trusted communication from the fire/ambulance (80%) more than police (55%)***

***Which means: both badges work, but one badge can matter more – and we should choose carefully***





# Build The Local Trust Barometer

*And, we can have effective fun with this:*

*Reach out to residents – be seen and be personal. Use outreach vans, go to your own events, be seen.*

*Do things like naming your snow plows and making your residents own your city.*

*Focus on people and solving their problems.*

# Build The Local Trust Barometer

*And, we can have effective fun with this:*

***Let's share your ideas now!***



# YOU: You Own Understanding