CREATING YOUR COUNTY’S UO/E MESSAGE MAP

Why create a county UO/E message map?

The answer is simple:

You can use a county message map as a guide for effectively telling stakeholders how extension improves people’s lives.

People know us by what we tell them about ourselves. Now that budgets are getting tighter, it’s even more important that each of us be prepared to share our extension story anytime, any place.

The message map is a tool to help you, your county program director or your extension council members answer questions from your county commissioners such as — “So what does University Outreach and Extension do in this county?” or “Why should we continue to fund you?”

Message mapping is a process for developing a desired message for a particular audience. The map provides you with a visual guide for answering the real question behind “What does University Outreach and Extension do?” -- “What’s in it for me?”

The University Outreach and Extension organizational message map charts key points that you can use to explain our organization by showing how what we do benefits the people of Missouri. A county message map allows you to provide details about the programming and issues particular to your county.

Message Map Components

A message map includes at least three main components:

1. Home Base
   Main message, your single most important communication objective. Begin by using Home Base, go on to explain other points, then return to Home Base to emphasize your main message.

2. Positive Points
   Primary messages support your Home Base, back up your main message and add credibility to what you say.

3. Positive Proof Points
   Specific statements that verify your Positive Points; generally quantitative statements but may include qualitative information, such as client testimonials.

4. Distinguishing Points
   Unique points that distinguish UO/E from other organizations.
UO/E Message Map Components
(Shortened phrases on the map diagram are italicized.)

1. **Home Base**
   University Outreach and Extension *helps improve people’s lives.*

2. **Positive Points**
   UO/E:
   - Provides *education to help people help themselves.*
   - *Helps meet high-priority needs* in the state.
   - *Is in a partnership that links citizens with local, state, federal resources.*
   - *Offers flexible program access* to educational resources.
   - Provides *faculty & staff* experts who can help you solve problems.

3. **Positive Proof Points** (Below each Positive Point.)
   - **Education to help people help themselves**
     - Practical, research-based information
     - “What you need when you need it”
     - Saves you time, money and effort
     - Informed decision-making
   - **Helps meet high-priority needs**
     - Improves income
       - **Production Agriculture, Show-Me Select:** $6.1 million increase in Missouri economy.
       - **Business Development, SMART:** St. Louis manufacturer increased employees from 15 to 45.
     - Builds healthy families and individuals
       - **Family Nutrition, FNEP:** 132,000 Missourians make healthier food choices.
       - **Youth Development/4-H, Character Counts!**: 7,000 youth developing ethical values.
     - Creates strong communities
       - **Citizen Engagement, Community Development Academy:** $383,000 EPA grant received for community-based watershed management.
       - **Leadership Development, EXCEL:** 3,015 graduates assume leadership roles in communities.
     - Manages and conserves natural resources
       - **Consumer Horticulture, Master Gardeners:** Volunteer service valued at $1 million.
       - **Water Quality, Watershed Management:** Atrazine levels in Vandalia Reservoir drop from 85 ppb to 6 ppb.
✓ Partnership links citizens with local, state, federal resources

- University of Missouri (UMC, UMKC, UMR, UMSL)
- Lincoln University
- County extension councils
- Local government
- State agencies
- Federal agencies

✓ Flexible program access

- Distance education
- Classes
- Community programs
- Computer-based education
- Consultations
- Continuing education
- Demonstrations
- Media
- Publications/guidesheets
- Technical assistance
- TeleCenter Network
- Web site http://outreach.missouri.edu
- Workshops

✓ Faculty and staff

- Academic expertise
- Community involvement
- Information technology expertise
- Diversity
- Personal strengths