

# COASTAL COMMUNICATORS

*A newsletter for the nation's coastal management and research reserve programs.*

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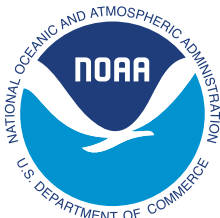
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THERE IS NO  
GREATER POWER  
ON THIS EARTH  
THAN STORY.

— Libba Bray

August 2025, Issue 74



## COMMUNICATION INSIGHTS

### THE POWER OF “No”

“No” can feel like a bad word sometimes. You want to be a team player and don’t want to stifle ideas; you want people to come to the communications department and hope to make their dreams come true!

But the truth is, saying “no” is setting a boundary, and as with every aspect of life, boundaries are healthy.

This boundary ensures your time and talents are spent creating products, stories, and whatever else that best reflect the goal of the organization and target your audience, and you aren’t just chasing the next shiny, new thing. Sometimes staff don’t realize the amount of time spent pondering their “what if we did this?” suggestions. They think they’re being helpful by brainstorming new ideas, which isn’t always a bad thing, but going down those rabbit holes can be a time suck if the idea isn’t feasible without significant resources, including time and effort, or the staff member wasn’t really invested in the idea in the first place.

My suggestion? Trust your instincts, and get comfortable with the word “no.”

Below are some questions I ask to determine if the rabbit hole is worth the jump.

#### What goal are you hoping to achieve?

As I said before, folks often offer an idea and don’t realize their idea is not going to do the thing they want it to do. This question makes them stop and really consider it. Oftentimes, the answer is “Oh, I was just throwing out an idea.” After that response, you can go with your gut and assess if you have the time and desire to dive in.

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**How will you share this with your audience?**

My favorite communication quote is “If you build it, they might not come” (*Field of Dreams*, anyone?). For example, videos are flashy and popular, and they can absolutely be the right answer. But a video in and of itself is not outreach, and producing a video can be very involved (something a lot of people don’t know). Make sure you know how people are getting to the thing you’re building before you build it.

**How much time do you have to devote to this project?**

Working with a communications department is a collaborative effort. Yes, a communications professional is going to draft and assemble materials, but the subject matter expert is the one who truly

knows the audience and content in order to really get the message out. This question kindly reminds them that they don’t get to dump an idea in your lap and run away.

The goal isn’t to stop people from bringing ideas. Ideas brought by staff have resulted in some of the best products to come out of our communications department! All projects have better results when you first have the staff buy-in that comes from answering these three basic questions.

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☐ YES

☒ NO

☐ MAYBE

# COMMUNICATION PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

**Featured product:** Odd Animal Specimens

**Source:** @OddAnimalSpecimens on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok

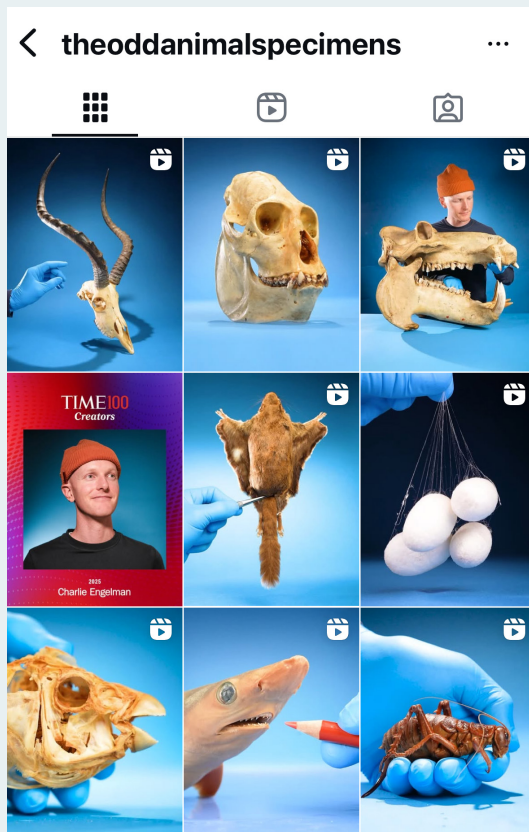
**Submitted by:** Pamela Jacobs, Lynker for NOAA's Office for Coastal Management

**What it is:** A social media platform that takes a deep dive into the myriad fascinating facts about this planet's diverse species and details everything from the hippo's powerful jaw to the starfish's unique ability to digest its food externally—and much in between.

**Why I like it:** Charlie Engelman, creator of Odd Animal Specimens, was recently named one of TIME's 100 most influential creators, and with an audience totaling more

than eight million across his multiple social media platforms, it's easy to understand why. Described by TIME as “part David Attenborough, part Bill Nye,” Engelman has mastered the art of science communication. His posts are equal parts captivating and accessible, making educational content engaging for all ages. By teaching his followers everything they ever wanted to know (and never knew they wanted to know) about the animal kingdom—like how much blood a sea lamprey can consume in a day, what the largest frog on earth is, and how many thumbs a koala has—Odd Animal Specimens proves how absolutely mesmerizing and magical this planet can be.

*(Please note: this is not an endorsement of the designers, websites, or any proprietary tools but simply this writer's opinion on a good communication product.)*



## FROM US TO YOU

### OUTREACH TOOL SPOTLIGHT— TSUNAMI AWARE

One of the most important tools you can have at your disposal is the ability to easily and effectively communicate hazard information. This online information system provides interactive maps of tsunami evacuation zones and other related information, allowing users in Hawaii and Guam to learn and share critical facts with ease. Access it here: [coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/tsunamimap.html](https://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/tsunamimap.html).

### UPCOMING SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Follow us on X, Facebook, and Instagram, and tag along with this theme:

- August 1 to 31: Back to School
- August 1 to 31: National Estuaries Week Photo Contest

### NATIONAL ESTUARIES WEEK PHOTO CONTEST

If a picture is worth a thousand words, your research reserve photos can speak volumes about the importance of our nation's estuaries. Throughout August, we're accepting images of the research reserves that showcase the plants, animals, people, and pastimes that make them such extraordinary places. Submit photos to [ocm.nerrs.photocontest@noaa.gov](mailto:ocm.nerrs.photocontest@noaa.gov) by August 31, and read the full contest rules here: [coast.noaa.gov/nerrs/about/photo-contest.html](https://coast.noaa.gov/nerrs/about/photo-contest.html).

### FAST FACTS—HIGH TIDE FLOOD

This is one of the many graphics and facts available for your use in presentations and handouts. Grab this one at [coast.noaa.gov/states/fast-facts/recurrent-tidal-flooding.html](https://coast.noaa.gov/states/fast-facts/recurrent-tidal-flooding.html). If you have an idea for a new group of fast facts or illustrations, please let us know.



Source: NOAA

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*Improving communication skills, one newsletter at a time.*