

Hiker

Date: July 6, 2018

Client: University of Pittsburgh School of Computing and Information

Subject: Momacs Key Messaging RD1

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MOMACS KEY MESSAGING

Know your audience, tell your story well

The purpose of this document is to assist Momacs communicators in telling our story both **powerfully and pointedly**.

Powerfully, because we need to think like storytellers when communicating our mission, values, work, and goals — using **human-centered narratives** that inspire, engage, entertain, and inform site visitors. Our great science serves people, so when we share stories about breakthrough science taking place at The Momacs Institute, we do so by highlighting the human benefit that science brings.

And pointedly, because to do so effectively, we must also think like marketers, with a clear understanding that among other things Momacs is an idea, a “brand” that must deliver a clear, consistent, and differentiating promise and point of view to its audiences in order to motivate them to take the actions we desire. As topics become more complex, the best communicators know to keep language simple and direct. This is particularly critical for an institution like Momacs where the work is complicated and the commitment we seek from our audiences in time, effort, and money is substantial.

Our goal in the marketplace (and therefore in every communication) is to *promote our point of view, highlight our mission*, and “own” the thinking in the minds of potential customers, partners, and amplifiers around how to best use and manage AI, machine learning, and other analytical tools to model for solutions to the world’s biggest challenges. This is a question of promoting our superlative science (e.g. our researchers, tools, collaborative platform, and system are better than the rest) but also of amplifying our humanity-centered vision of using advanced modeling tools to solve problems and create a better world for people.

A framework for great communicating

Momacs’ success in reaching its lofty goals will depend as much on how well it positions itself in the market as on the quality of the analytics tools, the science, and the thinking it brings to bear in the research it conducts. Telling great stories, the right stories to the right audiences will help us amplify our message and promote Momacs as a world leader in the modeling of complicated systems.

Key messaging helps us do this by establishing the foundational groundwork that answers questions like: What do we do? Why do we do it? Whom do we serve? And to what end? What makes us better or different? And why should people care? Key messaging isn’t marketing copy. It’s framing copy. It helps to define audiences and “position” our message in a way that

delivers the greatest impact. Future writers/communicators can turn to key messaging to find the True North of the Momacs perspective. Key messaging centers thinking. It provides a framework around which communicators can align their marketing, PR, advertising, and other communications.

How to use key messaging to amplify and promote the institute

Momacs communicators should consider these themes whenever writing about the institute. Your marketing, advertising or public relations copy doesn't need to incorporate these themes or the key messages directly, nor does your copy need to engage every audience or employ every theme in every communication. But you should make as many references to these ideas in your messaging as you can without forcing the language. Consistency is the key. In every single communication, be it an email blast, a social media post, a letter, a phone call, a brochure or a press release. Know your audience(s) explicitly. Know what you want to say and how you want to say it. Use the key messaging to frame the story you tell and better shape your message for the purpose you desire.

Though there is nothing wrong with doing so, key messaging is not meant to be pulled verbatim in marketing communications. Key messaging is meant to guide marketing copywriting, not replace it. The critical thing is that your copywriters and communicators understand the ideas behind each key and the Market Themes driving them. By using these themes and the key messaging, you will be sure to deliver a consistent message to your audiences about what distinguishes Momacs from competitors.

One key alone may not tell enough of our story. When possible, try to use two or three keys together within each marketing communication (web page, post, PR release, etc.) as they complement one another and help prospective clients, partners, and amplifiers to better understand the Momacs mission, vision, and point of view.

OUR AUDIENCES – PARTNERS IN A COMMON CAUSE

In service to the common good

The Momacs Institute aspires to create nothing less than a new kind of science with which to solve the world's great challenges. This high aspiration must be met with an equally robust and expansive view of the people we seek to serve. As a university, we have the obligation to pursue the most democratic and egalitarian an understanding of our purpose, our partners, and our potential clients as possible. Our individual clients and partners may be beneficiaries of our research, but the work we do will first and foremost serve the common good.

People everywhere must understand that Momacs is for them. The language we use in our communications, the research we engage in, and the values and outcomes we celebrate must make clear to the public, and all our various constituent audiences, that the Institute is interested in hearing about (and solving) their problems, and we encourage them to bring their ideas, their perspectives, and their energy with them as we partner and work to make the world a better place.

No man or woman is an island

Who is a partner? Who is a client? Who is the ideal audience we hope to reach with our message? Our audience is anyone who has a complicated challenge that needs solving or an interest in seeing such problems solved. This could be researchers, graduate students, other institutions, policy makers, government leaders, business sectors, foundations, or think tanks. A central tenet of Momacs is that everything is connected. The world's systems don't operate in a vacuum, but are inter-connected in extremely complicated ways. Policies or changes within one system, affect other systems, so solutions can't come quickly, if at all, through domain-specific expertise. Advances in Artificial Intelligence, machine learning, and other analytical tools now provide us with a great opportunity to successfully model complicated challenges to arrive at solutions that benefit us all. But, to effectively model and manage the world's great systems – that is to solve the world's problems — we must break down academic and ideological silos and foster communication across a wide range of experts and interested stakeholders. Momacs will be a place for this cross-disciplinary collaboration.

Some of our stakeholders will provide the challenges we work on, others the funding needed to keep the science rolling. Some will bring both challenges they need solved and the funding to take that endeavor on. All will provide their ideas and belief in the promise of systems-science to bring about real solutions to the world's most challenging problems. Some of our diverse group of stakeholders follow below.

MAIN AUDIENCE GROUPS

Researchers & Academics – The Big Brains/The Thinkers/The Doers

These are the researchers, scholars, and scientists actually performing the difficult work of modeling complicated systems and then managing those systems in order to arrive at desired outcomes faster, more effectively, equitably, and sustainably. These potential stakeholders could be internal to Pitt or external within the collaborative network that the Institute seeks to nourish. This group contains researchers at all levels – graduate and undergrad students, Ph.D. candidates, and academic partners and peers at other universities or institutions.

Secondary audiences:

Extremely important secondary audiences related to this group, but not directly involved for the most part in the work of the Institute, are future students and their parents, alumni, Pitt faculty from all departments, and university administration and trustees. By raising the academic profile and recognition of the School of Computing and Information and The Momacs Institute, we will benefit the whole university. Particularly, because our vision is that many researchers from diverse disciplines across the academic spectrum of the university will be involved in the research conducted within the Institute. We are interested in promoting our mission to all of these audiences.

Some of the things they may want:

These researchers are looking for the tools, resources, and means to test existing models. They may not even know the full value of the collaborative possibilities the Institute offers. Or, if they are in a field of study outside of computing and information, may not realize that their expertise, their research, their data, their challenges are not only welcome but necessary for Momacs' polymathic, collaborative approach to succeed. Our messaging should make them feel excited to press forward and engage in their academic pursuits with fresh, new energy, inspired by the promise of the Institute's collaborative platform to bridge academic divides and accelerate research.

Government Policy Makers & Think Tanks —The Road Builders/The Visionaries

Though this audience is a mix of public and private sector, they work hand-in-glove in the setting of agendas and the formation of policies implemented to affect positive social change.

Policy Makers include both elected and appointed officials, seeking solutions to very complex social, economic, and political challenges. They may or may not have a clear understanding of what it means to model complicated systems, but they understand that there is no one silver-bullet answer to solving the deeply interconnected challenges communities face. Its possible members of this group will have an institutional bias against risk-taking and/or change.

That, of course, is where the expertise-in-managing, the influencing, part of this effort comes in. Through its efforts the Institute will represent “a way forward” for policymakers, providing an unbiased science-based analysis to help guide their governing decisions. We want them to feel confident in our expertise and in the ability of Momacs to bring rational analysis and management to the problems they need to solve.

Think Tanks will turn to Momacs for the data analysis needed to support and/or shape policy recommendations. Think tanks may have their own existing client stakeholder within government or NGOs or business sectors and often will have a political or ideological bias. The Institute can offer them a platform for collaboration and the data/computing tools and modeling frameworks needed to analyze complicated systems and arrive at agenda-agnostic conclusions even faster. Such data analysis will provide authority and credibility to positions they take and the policies they influence.

Business & Industry Sectors — The Innovators

If researchers are the “doers” of the work and foundations empower our collaborative systems-science approach to solving big world challenges, then this audience supplies the need. Enterprise business and industry sectors (along with policymakers and nonprofits) will be the primary source for bringing us the need, the challenge, that science and research at Momacs will seek to solve.

This audience consists of enterprise and industry sector leaders looking for solutions to complex business problems. They could be individual or associations. The C-suite movers at enterprise businesses, strategy, business development, and revenue officers looking to drive solutions through predictive analysis that improves products and services for their customers and increases their market share.

They are innovators, risk-takers, seeking to gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. They will have a very good understanding of their need and may understand how modeling in the whole can help them solve for their complex problems. That said, their decisions will be heavily influenced by a need for speed. With its state-of-the-art modeling frameworks and the proven workflow languages, the Institute will reduce the time needed to model complicated systems, and offer businesses the smartest, fastest path to breakout solutions for their business and/or industry sector.

Though the interests of this group may be more narrowly defined (i.e. their own interests for market share), that does not mean solving their singular challenge won't improve lives of many or work against our goal of serving the common good. Momacs can even serve as a platform in which strange bedfellows (for instance the waste management industry and environmental groups) might find common cause and apply concerted effort.

In our messaging, we want members of this audience to feel they are smart, forward-thinking business leaders who will achieve robust, proven solutions for their business objectives faster because of their partnership with Momacs.

Foundations & Futurists — The Funders/The Promoters/The Empowerers/The Amplifiers
Foundations and futurists will be primary sources for both funding and in amplifying our message. By futurist, we refer to the people who are early adopters, technologists, curious explorers who believe in the power of science to solve the world's ills. They recognize the promise a place like the Momacs Institute represents and want to be part of enabling our mission to solve the big challenges through the modeling and management of complicated systems. Though futurists may not support Momacs with funding, we include them here because like philanthropic sources, their contribution is primarily in advancing/amplifying our mission rather than directly providing the challenge (Policy Makers, Business, NGOs) or conducting the work (Researchers and Academics).

Foundations are looking for partners to help address pressing world needs. They may be funded by governments or independently, but they are critical change agents in search of experts to help them achieve their goals. The Institute can offer a platform (and vocabulary) that will allow these NGOs to work collaboratively, even (and perhaps especially) with organizations with whom they otherwise have little common ground. Clean, unbiased data analysis is critical to shaping policy and promoting those changes to people and governments. We want this audience to feel the Institute is a place they can turn for agenda-free clarity on sometimes hot social/policy issues. They should feel trusting of our intentions, confident in our expertise, and comfortable with our broad collaborative approach.

NGOs & Nonprofits — The Activists/Issue Elevators/True Believers

NGOs and large national/international nonprofits are issue-centric partners. The primary point of connection to Momacs will be in recognizing the Institute as a way to help them solve the great challenges around which they are focused. It may be hunger or the availability of potable water, the environment or curing cancer. Whatever the issue, NGOs and nonprofits bring a powerful and passionate desire to solve specific challenges and will turn to Momacs to help them advance that cause.

Despite their ideological leanings, NGOs and nonprofits are usually conservative in organization and operation. That is to say, they are cautious. Unlike commercial interests, preservation of assets and protecting reputation are often greater drivers of action than a simple desire for growth or even short-term advancement of their goals. For this audience, Momacs offers a stable, reliable, scalable approach to outcome prediction. More importantly, we provide a way to manage, or you could say influence, the models involved. This means nonprofits can plan for

the future with a clearer idea of likely outcomes, relying more on empirical data rather than emotion or their feelings on issues which are closely associated with their cause.

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PREVAILING THEMES OF TODAY'S MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS

Markets are noisy, abuzz with static that distorts communications. Competing ideas. Misinformation and prejudices. Perceptions and misconceptions that can derail our efforts to effectively tell the world about who we are, what we do, and why we do it.

To establish useful key messaging, it helps to understand the environment — that is, the marketplace of ideas — in which Momacs communicators must compete to be heard. Below are a few themes inspired by interviews with Momacs stakeholders. These themes touch on attitudes and assumptions. They speak to the zeitgeist, and the current social culture driving thought, trends, and behavior. Momacs communicators of all kinds (public relations, marketing, advertising, and content copywriters) can use these themes to gain a better understanding of audiences, the opportunities, and the challenges in which they will deploy their messaging.

[Note: We want to shorten the themes themselves and increase the number. Themes are intended to spark ideas for how to position future copy. Potential angles to explore in messaging. Challenges to hedge against. Opportunities for owning a benefit etc.]

Students demand more of schools

The rising cost of education has made parents, future students, graduate students, and doctoral candidates seeking places to conduct research more critical and demanding of the education they receive. They are looking at the return on their investment with a more critical eye. This makes stating our educational mission clearly and highlighting what makes our programs different (and we hope better) than other options critical.

Founded in optimism

It has been said that the School of Computing and Information is a product of optimism, trust, and commitment at all levels of the University. More so, the Momacs institute, which seeks to extend that collaboration and multidisciplinary approach beyond the university and across multiple, diverse stakeholders.

Erosion of trust

Recent years have led to an erosion of trust in science in general and technology specifically. Cambridge Analytics' use of data to shape and influence voting in the 2016 election... News that Russian bots are helping to keep divisive issues alive on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms... Claims of "fake news" from people on all sides of the political spectrum... The Institute must differentiate itself focusing on its goal of serving the common good, providing unbiased leadership in managing modeling outcomes. Our message must gain attention and be received as credible.

Risk of language that isolates

There is a potential risk of desired partners self-selecting out of engagement with The Momacs Institute because of the language we use to describe the institute, the work, and the mission. Messaging must be clear and concise. Or we risk isolating ourselves within the vocabulary of our domain-specific knowledge.

Key Messaging to Support Momacs' Mission and Differentiation

Key Message 1

We always put our great science to work for the benefit of the common good.

We are a human-centered enterprise. Our science, our research, our work is always in service to people and making the world a better, safer place. We will have individual clients, with individual needs, but Momacs will not ever be about wealth-extraction or benefiting just a few. Momacs is about making the whole world better for all people everywhere.

Key Message 2

Our collaborative, cross-disciplinary approach to problem-solving breaks down academic silos, allowing researchers to arrive at better solutions to today's global challenges.

Momacs is a unifying force, providing researchers from varying areas of expertise with a platform and the common, unifying language of systems science around which to collaborate. In doing so, we invite new voices into the process, allowing science to ask better questions, build better models, and arrive at better solutions to the world's most complex challenges.

Key Message 3

Momacs helps researchers find life-improving and life-saving solutions to the world's big problems faster.

Momacs is a platform that systematically reduces the time needed to set up and run models. By providing the latest in AI and machine learning, proven modeling frameworks, workflow languages, data, and powerful computing resources, we enable students and researchers to overcome global challenges like cancer, climate change, and world hunger even faster.

Key Message 4

Momacs better prepares students for the complex challenges of the information age.

We cannot fix what we don't understand. The best way to empower the next generation to successfully solve the challenges of the world's increasingly stressed and complex systems is through a polymathic, systems-oriented education. Such an education not only better prepares students to work in many fields, it arms them with the technologies, tools, and a common language they need to understand the world and its complicated dance of systems better.

Key Message 5

We believe that people, ideas, and knowledge are strengthened when they work together, and that unity amplifies understanding, rather than diminishes it.

Momacs' focus on cross-discipline collaboration, on the central role of a polymathic education, and on the importance of providing a platform around which diverse stakeholders can engage and work to achieve common goals are all predicated on our fundamental belief that people are stronger and better, together.

Key Message 6

Our collaborative platform promotes innovation.

Momacs brings talent together in a powerful way to create not just better science, but breakthrough science. The Institute is committed to becoming an international hub that gathers together the right people, arms them with the right tools and training, and gives them the space and support they need to solve the challenges of complex systems in exciting new ways.

Key Message 7

Momacs is at the forefront of a new science changing the way we think, research, work to solve the world's challenges.

Much of modern science and education have been about systematically breaking apart the big challenges in order to better understand them. For the most part, it worked. But no longer. The world's increasingly complex interconnected systems demand a holistic approach or solutions will remain elusive. Momacs is leading the next frontier of science, bringing those knowledge bases back together in meaningful, impactful collaboration and using advancements in AI and machine learning to press systems science further and faster.

Key Message 8

We foster partnerships across a diverse community of stakeholders in order to help people achieve common goals.

Momacs offers a science-based, agenda-agnostic platform through which diverse stakeholders can partner in order to tackle big social, economic, environmental, and political challenges. Organizations and institutions that agree on little else, can find in Momacs a place to set aside differences, share knowledge and resources, and work to achieve common causes through the modeling and managing of the world's great systems.

Key Message 9

Modeling and systems science offers the best chance to solve the world's biggest challenges and brings benefits to everybody.

Everything is connected. Changes in policies affecting one system, affect other systems. The world's complex, interconnected systems simply cannot be understood in isolation. The good news is that modeling the world's complicated, interacting systems is possible, and Momacs is leading the exploration of this systems-oriented approach to problem-solving. Everybody benefits from having a better understanding of the world — our financial systems, our environment, our governments, medicine, and others. Together, we can solve the world's most vexing challenges.