

Findings versus Message: What's the Difference?

People often confuse message with their research findings. To reach your audiences effectively, you need both. New, interesting research results provide the news hook you need to capture reporters' attention and get *into* the news - today. But a good message goes beyond the actual findings and tells your audiences why your results are important, often providing a sense of what can or should be done next.

To summarize, research findings:

- › Stick to the numbers
- › Provide a narrow view of results from a specific study
- › Capture immediate interest
- › Provide a news hook
- › Supply the factual basis for a broader message

A Good Message

- › Is factually accurate but goes beyond the findings
- › Answers the question: Who cares and why?
- › Gives the big picture by providing context, a sense of urgency, and/or possible next steps
- › May reflect not just one study but a whole body of research; is not necessarily time-sensitive
- › Is often picked up as the lead "quote" in a news story