

FIVE IMPERATIVES FOR MANUFACTURERS ABOUT VACCINATION COMMUNICATIONS

The reasons Americans choose not to receive a vaccine against COVID-19 are varied. Some cite the science and speed of vaccine development, uncertainty over side effects, logistical challenges, trust in the national response, a perception that the disease won't hurt them or their loved ones and freedom of choice. We have a clear opportunity to activate community-level strategies to remove barriers to vaccine acceptance. Increasing vaccine confidence requires us to examine what makes hesitant communities unique and to apply messaging and strategies that address how people in these communities see themselves, their lived experiences and their essential role in building our society. As you design communication strategies for your employees, keep in mind the following:

Communicate from a place of trust. Build trust by communicating transparently and frequently about the vaccine, organizational policies about vaccination, vaccination rates within your facility and why your organization is helping its employees with this decision.

Help remove barriers. Limited access to transportation, paid leave and in-language information can create barriers to getting the vaccine. Make the vaccine easy to obtain or help your employees feel supported if they choose to receive the inoculation or experience side effects from it. Incentives can work among some hesitant communities as well.

Highlight trusted messengers. Engage local authorities (doctors, civic leaders, peer influencers, supervisors, etc.) to share information on the vaccine. Tell their stories while integrating the science of the vaccination efforts versus just sharing facts. Recognize that many who have not yet sought the vaccine are more motivated by information from their community and people they know and may be more skeptical of "outsiders."

Customize tactics to appeal to your community. There is no one-size-fits-all message. To date, messages have centered on collectivist motivations (valuing the good of the community) over individual interests (e.g., protecting the most vulnerable, reaching herd immunity), yet many of the communities where vaccination rates are the lowest demonstrate reverence for individual self-reliance (e.g., "protecting my family," "my choice"). Match the frame of your message to perspectives of the communities you are trying to reach.

Celebrate as a community, but address fears at the individual level. Communicate inclusively, affirming you heard their perspective, and in a way that reduces "othering," which may drive those who are hesitant even deeper into hesitance.

For more resources, visit nam.org/thisisourshot.

