UNIT 2

MESSAGING TO MIDDLE ADOPTERS

Contextualizing Communications

AGENDA

1. Understand basic goals and layout of the second module
2. Review key concepts
3. Anticipate questions about Exit Ramps
4. Connect to future modules

MODULE 2

Messaging

Purpose

Contextualize the social science concepts from the last module within conservation conversations and provide strategies for overcoming barriers specific to middle adopter decision making processes

Module Goal

Participants should understand middle adopter decision making processes and begin demonstrating how to apply specific strategies in their own context

Looking Forward

This module provides the communications background for the applied examples in the reframing module coming up

MESSSAGING TO MIDDLE ADOPTERS

CONTENT FOCUSED MODULE

- Mostly a content-focused module
- 2 interactive exercises:
  - Finding YOUR why, find THEIR why
  - Creating an Exit Ramp

Apply the Diffusion of Innovations model within specific middle adopter context

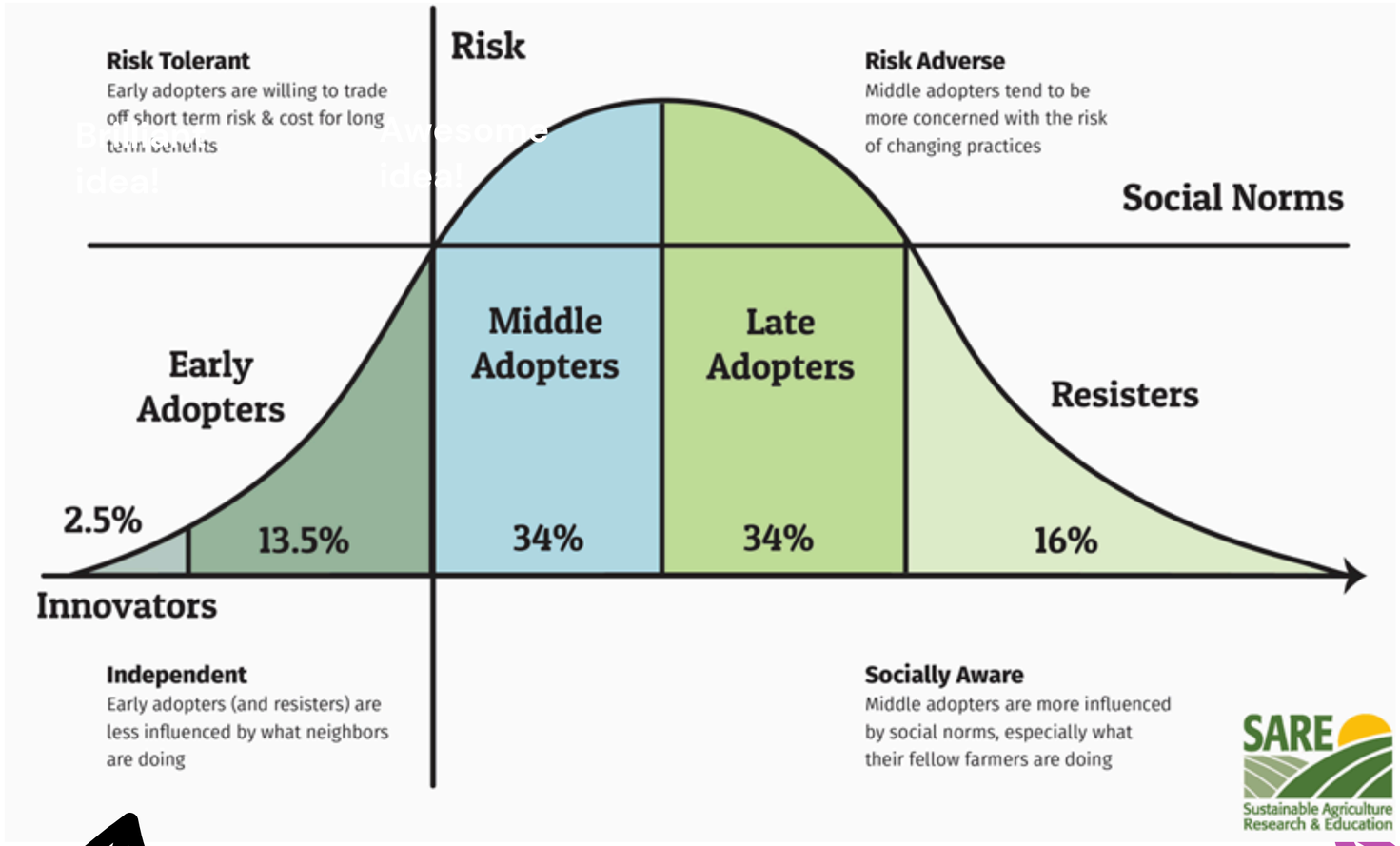
Emphasize how values can be used as messaging tools

Understand key strategies to meet middle adopters where they are

REVIEW

Middle adopters are risk averse and motivated by social pressure.

This leads to unique decision making processes that are different from our usual innovator and early adopter audiences.



MIDDLE ADOPTERS THINK DIFFERENTLY

Barriers to Adoption	How can we help?
Messages do not fit current decision making models	Speak the audience's language, provide the right motivation
We forget about current, specific problems	Solve a problem they may have
Unclear or complicated steps	Provide assistance or clear steps for success
Fear of admitting they were wrong	Make it emotionally and socially safe to change

USING VALUES IN YOUR MESSAGING

- Why values are important in messaging:
  - Helps build trust and encourages the client to share theirs.
  - Often clients provide a “scapegoat” barrier to adopt that does not reveal their true values.
  - More effective for overcoming their fear of change.

- Emphasize these points while introducing the interactive WHY activity

Speak their language, not yours

Words to Avoid

Imply a practice is untested and risky

Innovative

New

Trial and error

Immediate reason to not adopt

Learning curve

Every farm is different

Experiment

Middle adopters hear likely to fail

Try it

Words to Use

Social acceptance and pressure.

“This is what we do.”

“A key part of (weed, risk, nutrient) management.

Easier.

Basic steps to success

Common

Start simple

Solves problems

SOLVE PROBLEMS

- Talk about current practices and how they are working for them.

- Solve those problems using conservation practices.
  - Don’t list the benefits of a practice: “soil health improves soil structure”
  - Solve problems instead: “this cover crop can protect your topsoil from erosion”

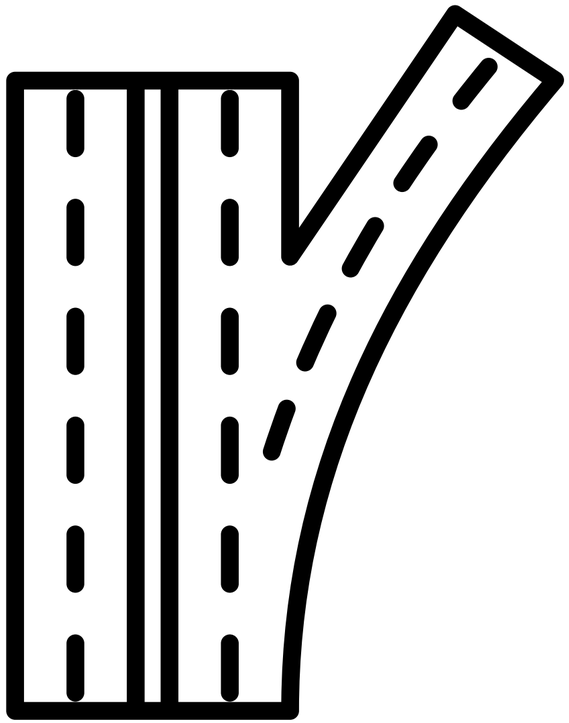
CONTEXTUALIZE RISK

- Change is inherently risky, middle adopters are particularly afraid of risk and therefore change
- Remind middle adopters that every farming decision holds risk
- Contextualize the risk of a new practice

“It’s going to take some trials and errors. It might fail but over the long term ... it has been proven that you can be very successful with some type of cover crop.”

“This isn’t a guarantee, but what in farming is? Compared to risks of not using cover crops, I’ll take this any day!”

ANTICIPATE QUESTIONS!



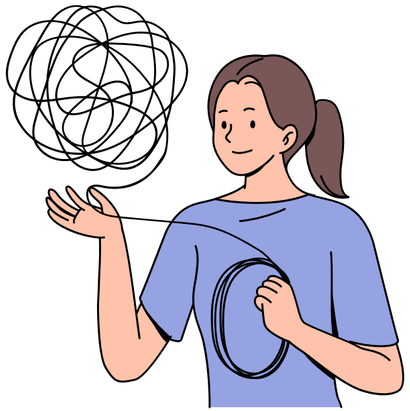
- Exit Ramps are one of our most challenging interactive activities
- Encourage participants to specifically address how the situation has changed
- Connect the importance of the practice to a specific value they observe in the client

TRANSITIONING TO REFRAMING

We need to demonstrate how these concepts can be made concrete in context

How do we apply these strategies to our outreach?

Key point: Need to shift our events and advertising strategies to appeal to middle adopters, not conservation enthusiasts



Reframing gives specific ideas for how to craft your communications

THANK YOU