

ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE MESSAGES

Effective messages include elements that resonate with the audience. The following message themes were included in the tested messages described on pages 26-29 in this document.

Effective Themes for Screening Messages

Respondents identified the following themes as the most effective at motivating them to get screened.

Theme: Screening helps prevent colorectal cancer.

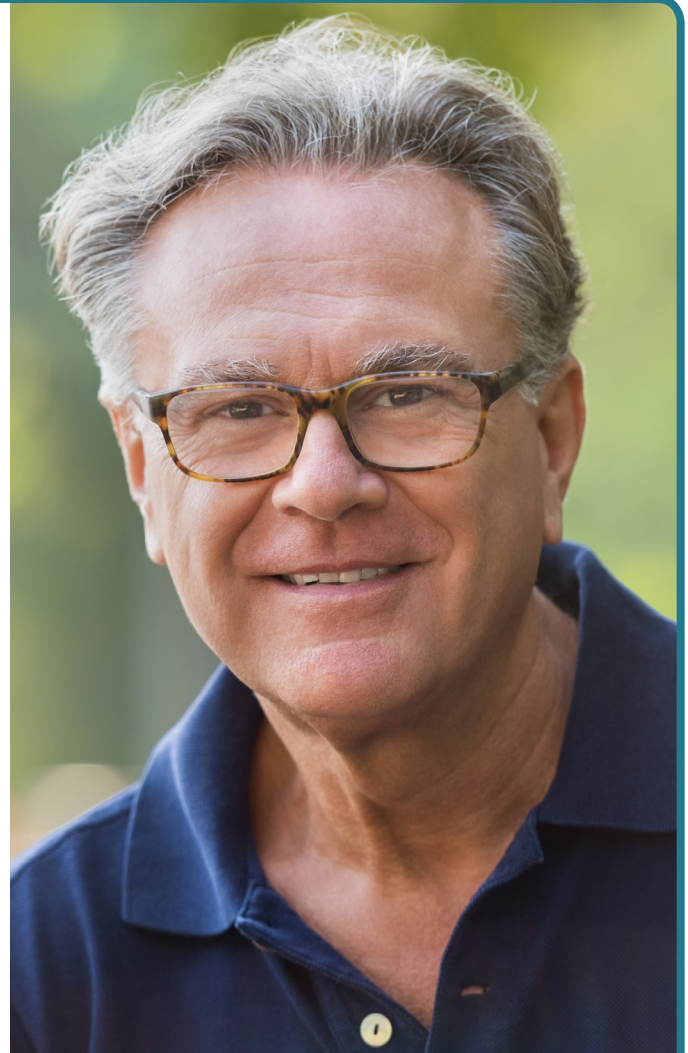
This theme clearly says why individuals should get screened. Screening can prevent colorectal cancer by detecting polyps that can easily be removed. The possibility of prevention through polyp removal was the most motivating driver tested in the research.

Theme: You can do the screening at home.

This theme was the most preferred among the unscreened. It significantly increased the likelihood of screening in every demographic and psychographic group. In some cases, the increase in the likelihood of screening was more than 10 percentage points. At-home screening options are less invasive than colonoscopies, cost less, and require less time to complete.

Theme: Other individuals like you found a way to get screened.

Regardless of the message used, promotional campaigns should enlist relatable patients or providers to deliver persuasive colorectal cancer screening messages. Showcase images and stories of people that are familiar to the audience you are trying to reach.



“That would kind of humanize the situation because it’s somebody that you know or someone who may be the same age, or live in the same area as you or something like that, encouraging you to do it.”

Effective Appeals for Screening Messages

Messages that use logic alone or emotions alone are not the most persuasive. The best messages use both.



The Head (Logic). Unscreened adults aged 50 and older were surveyed about their preferred information sources for learning about colorectal cancer. Respondents identified healthcare providers and health websites as their preferred information sources.



The Heart (Emotions). Storytelling and advertising can generate strong emotions in the audience by using compelling images and personal narratives. Especially on TV or radio, stories can deliver powerful messages that can motivate audiences to act. Email can also work, but emails are often deleted as junk mail before they are read.



Takeaway Tips for Successful Messaging

- Remember that **healthcare providers** (not just doctors) are the most persuasive sources.
- Use **relatable personalities** in campaigns and make sure the images are familiar to those experiencing a disproportionate burden of colorectal cancer.
- Explain **why screening is important**: Cancer is a real risk, yet prevention is possible.
- Paint the picture of the **relief** that can come after screening.
- Emphasize simple, affordable **at-home options**, and insurance coverage if applicable.
- Appeal to both the **head (logic)** and the **heart (emotions)**.

"You turned 50? Here's why screening is important for you."

Patients indicated that providers should explain why colorectal cancer screening is important instead of simply saying "you're due" for screening.

Patients also want to hear about the options, including the pros and cons of each test.

