

Communications 101

Virginia Professional Fire Fighters



Communications 101

- **Why communications?**
- **Audience**
- **What are we saying?**
- **Tactics**
- **Legal Implications**
- **Resources**



Why Communications?

- Groups are trying to influence people against us
- These are not “pro-union” messages



Why Communications?

- **Union membership was 20.1% in 1983. It was 9.9% in 2024**
- **Most new hires coming on the job have no union experience**
- **Public education and media diminish the role of labor unions**
- **Popular culture depictions of unions are mostly unfavorable**



Why Communications?



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Why Communications?



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Why Communications?

New hires have little to no context or information on labor unions or the history of the IAFF.

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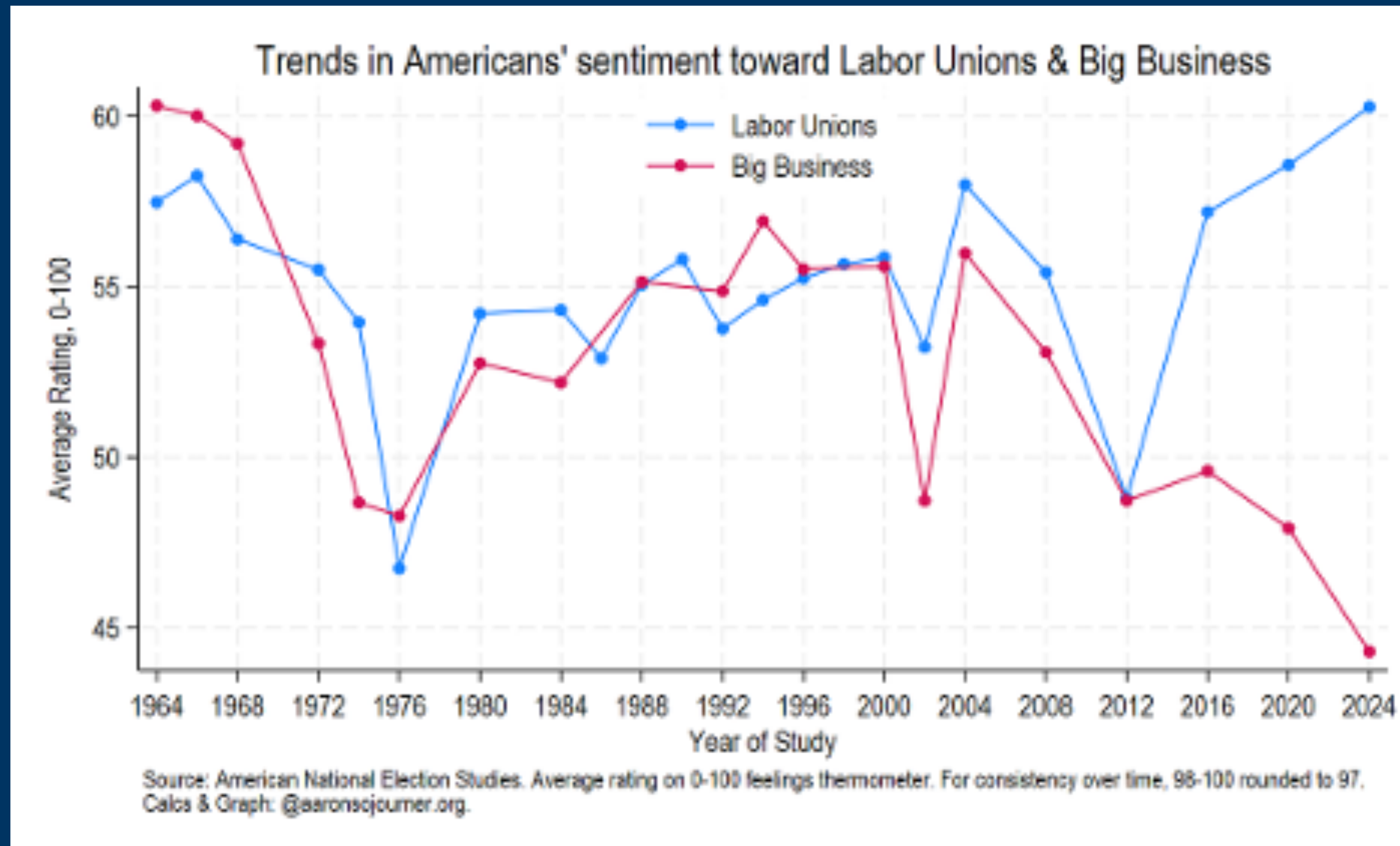


Why Communications?

- We have to advocate for ourselves. Tell our story.
- We are all here because we know the IAFF, the VPFF and our locals do good things.



Why Communications?



Why Communications?

- How do we do it?
- Develop a plan
- Difference between action and awareness



Why Communications?

- Let's talk brands

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Why Communications?



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Why Communications?


Prioritizing Your Safety 



Vote
November 2




ELECT
Caroline Simmons
FOR MAYOR



VOTE
 **Caroline Simmons**
for Mayor
The Firefighter's Choice
Paid for by Stamford Forward PAC

Vote
 **Caroline Simmons**
for Mayor
The Firefighter's Choice
Paid for by Stamford Forward PAC 

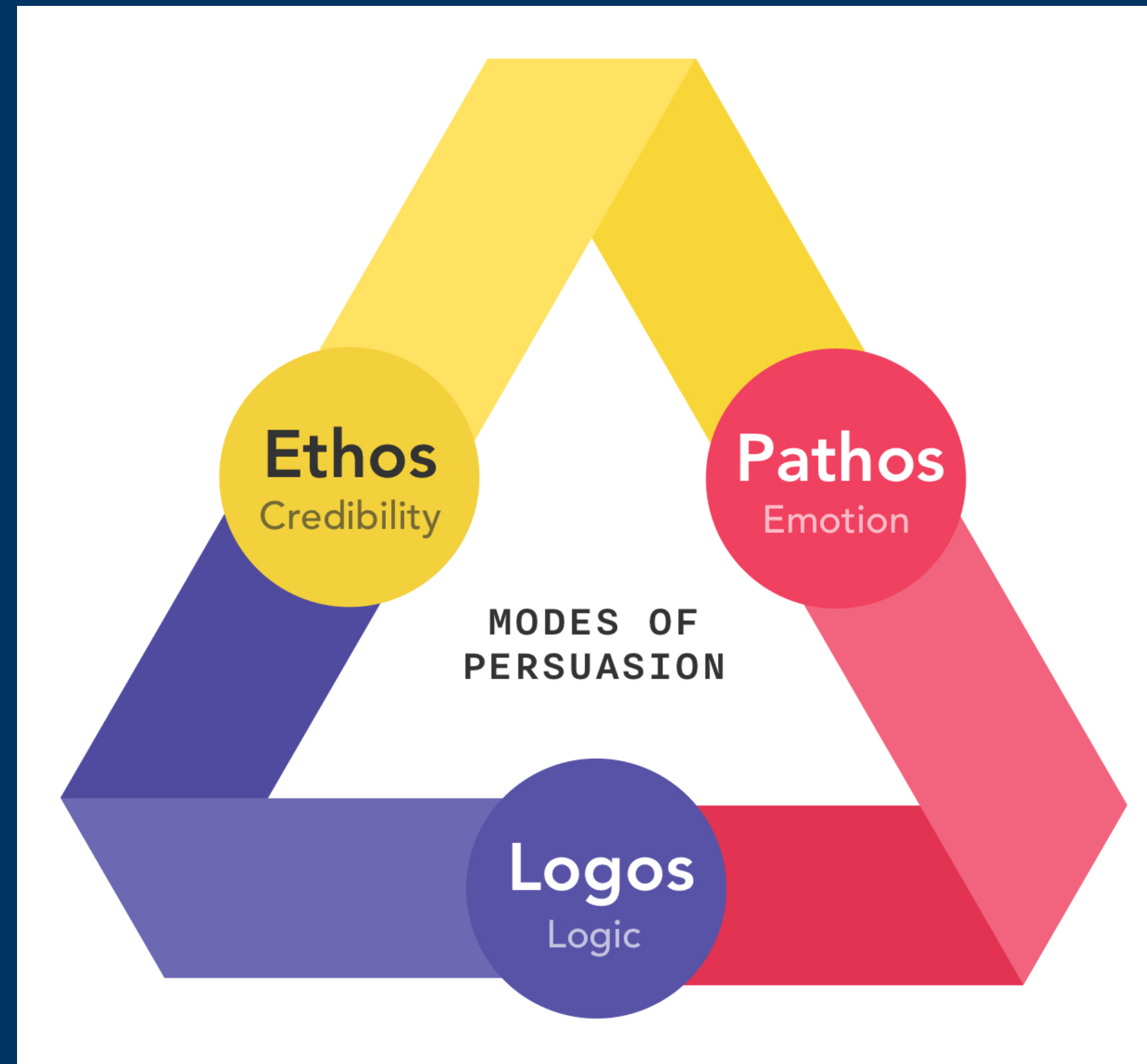


Why Communications?

- What is a brand?
- Tangible v. Intangible characteristics
- Emotional, Functional, Process, Relationship Benefits
- Brand Identity, Personality and Assets



Why Communications?



Audience

- Who are we talking to? Who do we want to influence?

Internal

External

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Audience

Internal Audiences:

- **Members!**
- **What about others?**

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Audience

External Audiences:

- The Public!
- Administration/Locality
- Elected Officials
- Media



Tactics

Tactics are what we use to get our message across:

- **Social Media**
- **Emails**
- **Text Messages**
- **Apps**
- **Events**
- **Advertising**
- **Public Relations**



Tactics

Social Media

- Facebook
- Instagram
- TikTok
- X



Tactics

Emails

- Smart Platform - > Engage (UnionTrack)
- Outlook, Gmail, etc.
- CRM Platforms (Constant Contact, Microsoft, Hubspot)
- Let's talk about professional appearance



Tactics

Text Messages

- Manual
- Engage Platform
- Other paid platforms (Textedly: ~\$26-\$100/month)



Tactics

Apps

- Create your own app
- Allows for push notifications and message boards
- UnionStrong
- UnionConnect (\$50/Month)



Tactics

Events

- Fundraisers
- Socials
- Press conferences
- Business meetings
- Regular union meetings



Tactics

Advertising

- Not as much needed for union work
- Could be helpful in certain situations
- Political advertising
 - Social media - inexpensive
 - Facebook verification
 - Google ads



Tactics

Public Relations

- News releases
- Issues statements
- Commentary
- Establish relationships



Tactics

What about other ways we get our message/
brand out there?

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Legal Implications

- Freedom of Speech
 - Matters of Public Concern
 - IAFF Assistance
- Limiting comments ~ restrictions on public entities
- Photo Copyright
- Likeness use (photo)



Legal Implications

The Law and the Internet for IAFF Affiliates



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Resources

IAFF Website

IAFF Strategic Campaigns

The VPFF

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