



Communicating for Impact

The inability to communicate science to a general audience can decrease the impact and translational potential of research.

To improve researcher interaction with consumers and attract interest from potential donors, Mater has launched the BRIDGE program.

Shannon Ryan

Communicating research matters

Government funding for research is becoming increasingly competitive with more people applying for the same amount of funding each year.

Effective communication skills are critical to:

- allow researchers to talk directly and engagingly with donors about their work
- create awareness of research beyond the scientific community
- engage the public with research.

Yet researchers rarely receive training in telling their stories!

The program

The BRIDGE Program consists of two 90-minute face-to-face sessions. Participants are then offered the opportunity to present their work in front of a relevant audience.

Key achievements:

- Closing the loop to health consumers
- Disseminating your research
- Facilitating consumer engagement with research to support grant application success
- Professional development – new skill for researchers
- Increase consumer participation in, and understanding of, research activity.

Results

We surveyed participants of the program; this is what they said:

94.12% - “The program was well organised”

88.8% - “The content was very relevant”

82.3% - “It has changed the way I present to lay audiences”

82.35% - “It covered everything I needed”

11.76% - Found the content difficult to adapt to their presentation style

100% - Would recommend it

Then we followed up with the Mater Foundation donors and fundraiser who attended the 2020 Mater Research Showcase. This is what they said:

88.8% - Found the presentations engaging and entertaining

100% - Understood what the researchers were trying to achieve

80% - remembered the name of their favourite presenter and their topic

0% - recalled the names or topics of their least favourite presentations

Your presentation is either memorable; or forgotten!

It’s a toolbox, not a template

There is no one right way to communicate research but there are a lot of wrong ways. At the end of the day, you have to be comfortable with the way you are talking about your work.

Each audience is different and will require different tools and approaches to maximise engagement.

Testimonials

“The Bridge program was excellent to develop my public speaking skills in a way that optimises delivery of our work, while making it accessible to a wide audience thus maximising the reach of our messaging.”

Dr Lisa Gillinder – Staff Specialist Epilepsy Mater Advanced Epilepsy Unit



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