



Expanding Agricultural Conservation Outreach through Applied Social Science

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Leadership for Midwestern Watersheds
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A Central Challenge in Conservation Outreach

you're
preaching
to the choir

Who comes to conservation events?

- Conservation-oriented farmers
- Long-time practice adopters
- Agency personnel

The Traditional Outreach Model



Information Deficit Model

- “If people only knew the facts...”
 - Knowledge is not often the most important barrier → necessary but insufficient
 - Change in awareness may not lead to behavior change
- Outreach should address the most relevant barriers and motivations for the audience





Behavior Change and Effective Communications



- Expanding on the traditional outreach model
- Diffusion of Innovations theory
- Social norms and conservation culture
- Messaging to non-adopters

Legend

CCC Counties

-  Farmer Champion
-  Outreach Champion
-  Both
-  None



2021-2023 Conservation Champions

Outreach Capacity Building

•• Grow More

- Training workshops for conservation professionals
 - SWCDs, Extension, NRCS, NGOs
- Focused on behavior change science, communications guidance, and messaging innovation



TABLE 9

Educational and training background.

Subject	No Training at All (%)	Very Little Training (%)	Some Training (%)	A Lot of Training (%)
Soil science	3	13	52	32
Environmental science	4	17	46	33
Water resources management	5	21	49	25
Agronomy	8	18	43	31
Wildlife management	9	27	36	29
Agricultural engineering	15	22	36	27
Communications	9	29	50	13
Forestry	13	31	45	12
Animal ecology	16	36	31	17
Animal science/livestock management	13	40	38	9
Agricultural economics/economics	15	41	40	4
Urban conservation	29	39	25	6
Marketing/sales	31	40	25	5
Rural sociology/sociology	30	44	22	4
Psychology	36	40	22	3



GROW MORE

Basics of Behavior Change

Don't forget the science! Humans make decisions based on external and internal factors



Culture & Social Norms

Appealing to culture is key to successful outreach and the creation of social norms.



Outreach Messaging

Successful outreach starts with you! Now that you know HOW people make decisions its time to get to work



Framing Your Outreach

Don't be afraid to get personal! Tailoring your outreach to match your audience is key.

Outreach Planning & Preparing Speakers

Here's where you get creative. Creating successful events requires thinking outside of the box.



Planning and Evaluation

Put it all together! Using the resources and tools provided its time to plan your event and measure its success. Don't forget your SMART goals and Impact.

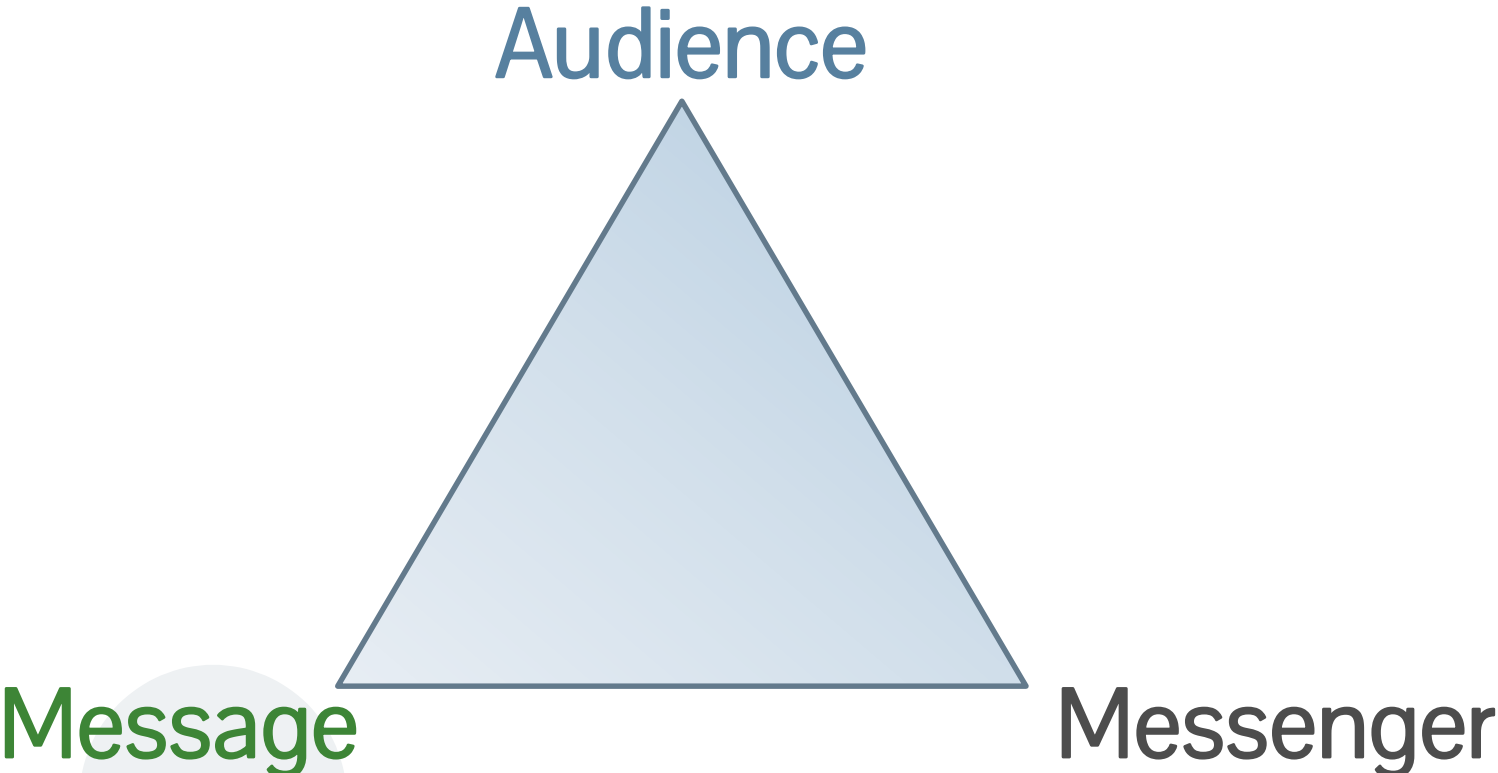


Interested in More? Check out our outreach toolkit!

Grow More Training Locations



Effective Communications for Behavior Change

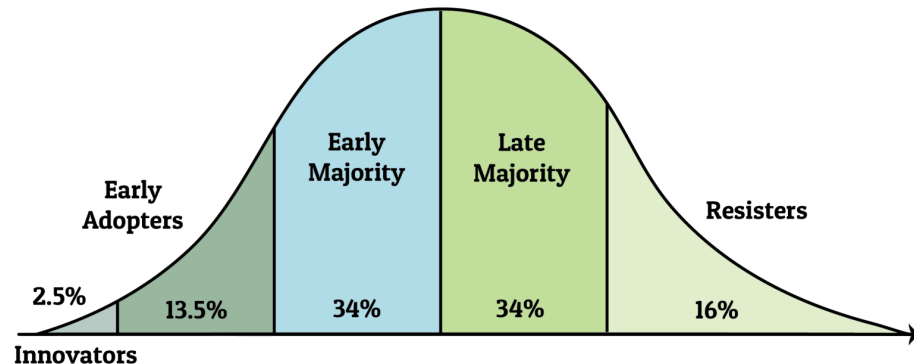


The background is a solid light green color. On the left side, there are several stylized green leaves and circles of various shades and sizes, creating a decorative, organic feel. The word "Audience" is written in a dark green, sans-serif font on the right side of the page.

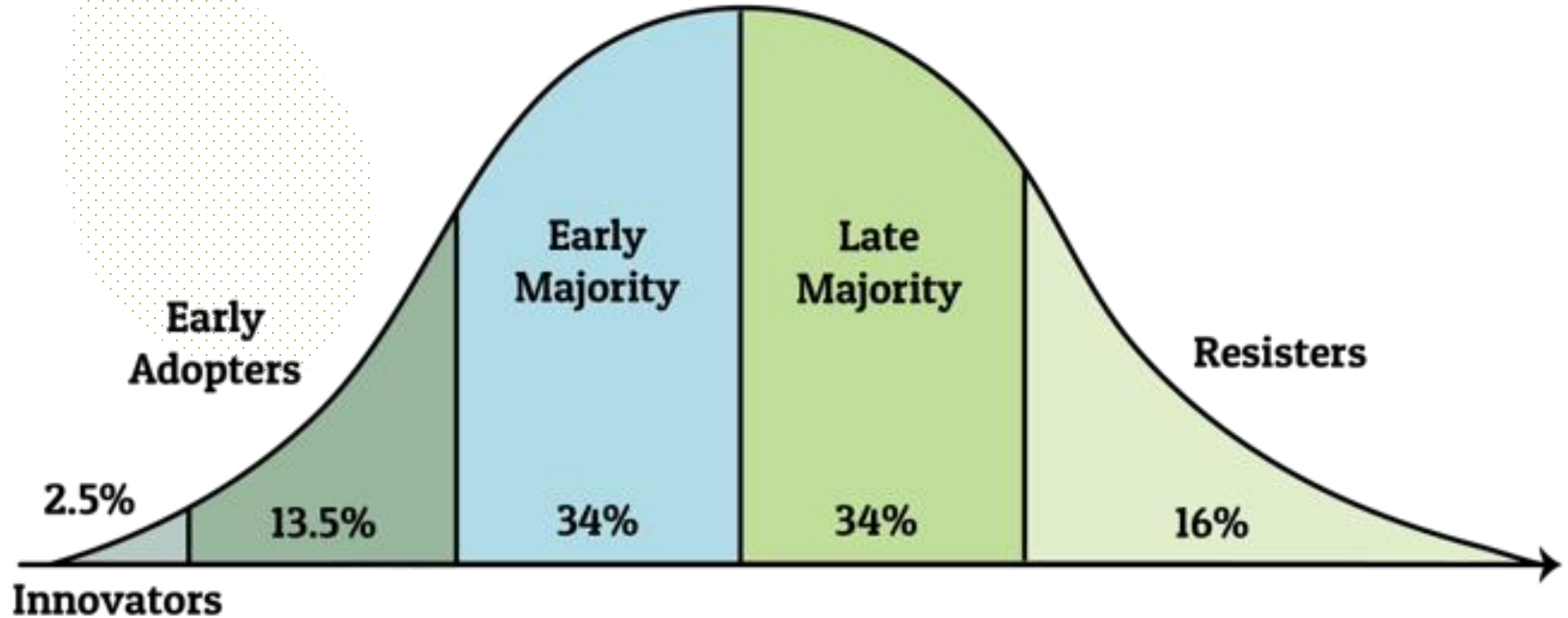
Audience

How Do New Ideas Become Mainstream?

- Diffusion of Innovations theory
 - Describes the process of innovation spread
 - Highlights different mental models within a population
 - Details aspects of innovation (characteristics of practices)



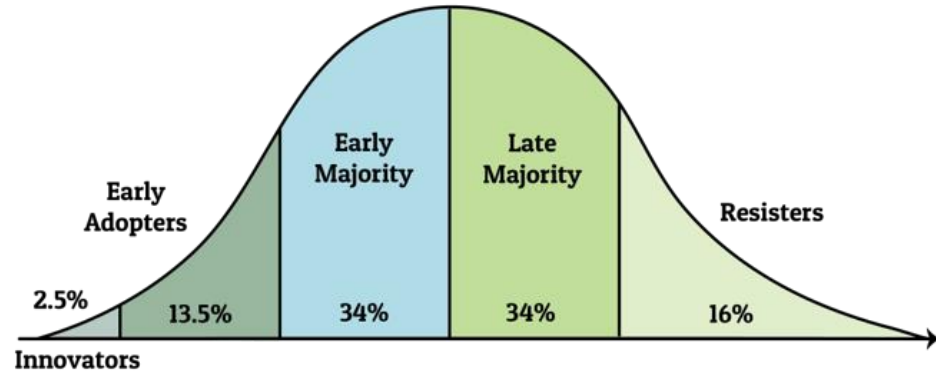
5 Categories of “Adopters”



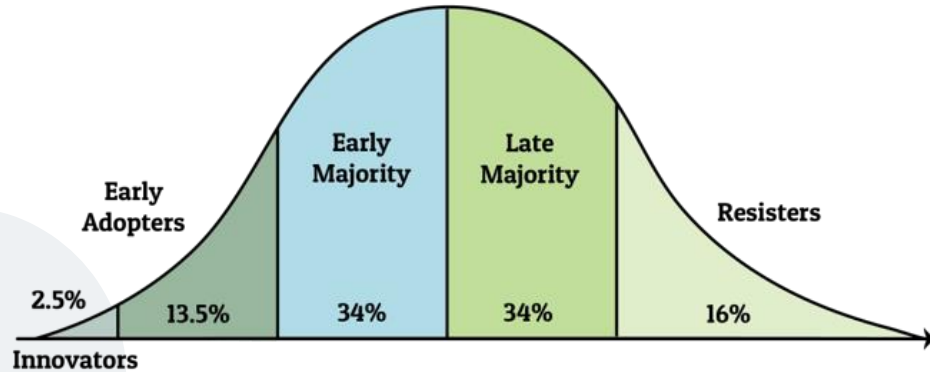
The Different Thought Processes of Innovators and Late Adopters

Innovators/Early Adopters

- Are more open to change, uncertainty
- Use longer timeframes to evaluate practices
- See failure as part of progress
- Do not respond as readily to social pressure



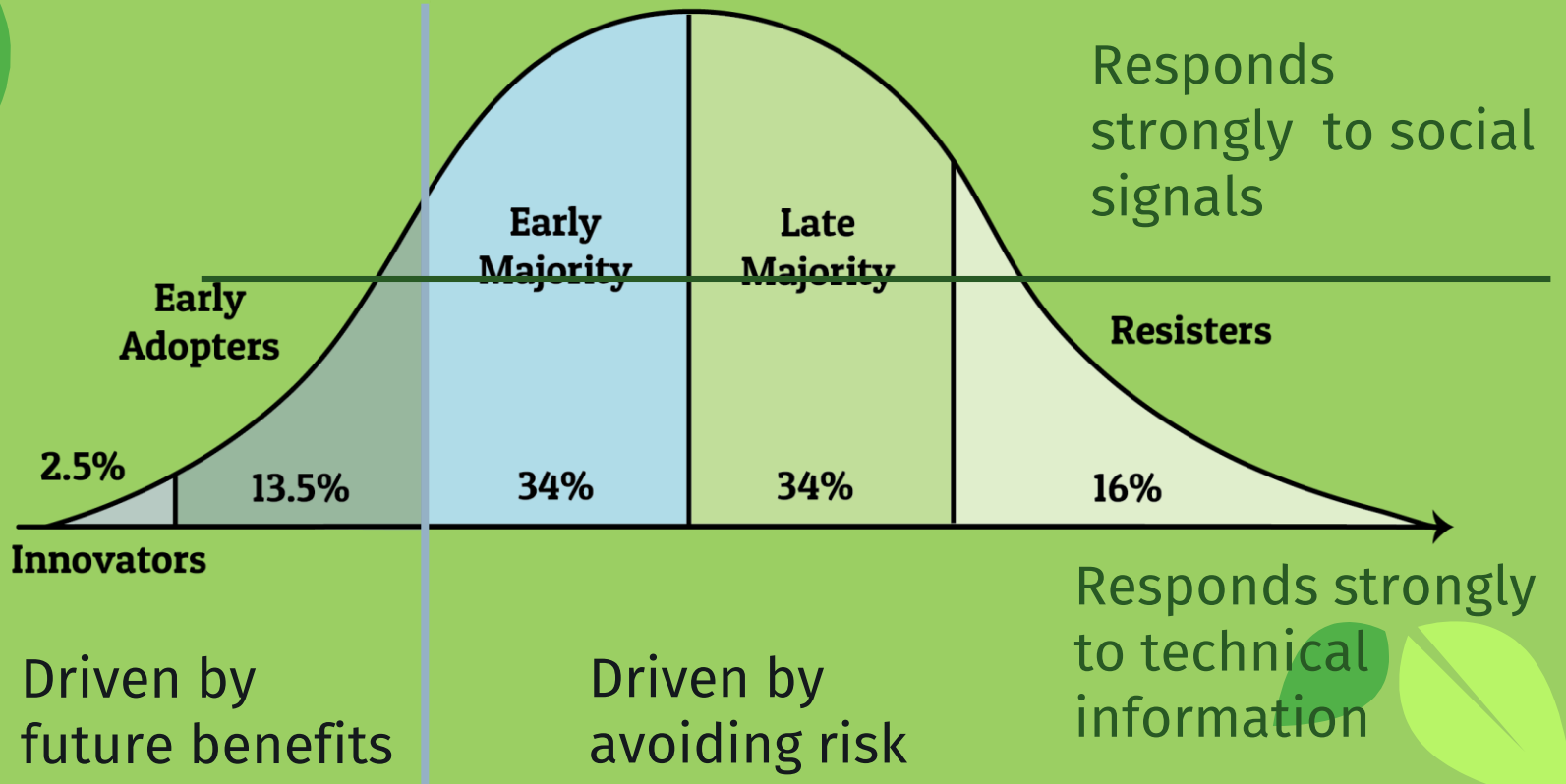
The Different Thought Processes of Innovators and Late Adopters



Middle/Late Adopters

- Are uncomfortable with new ideas that challenge existing thinking
- Use shorter time frames
- See failure as a stain on their reputation
- Are concerned with what others are doing

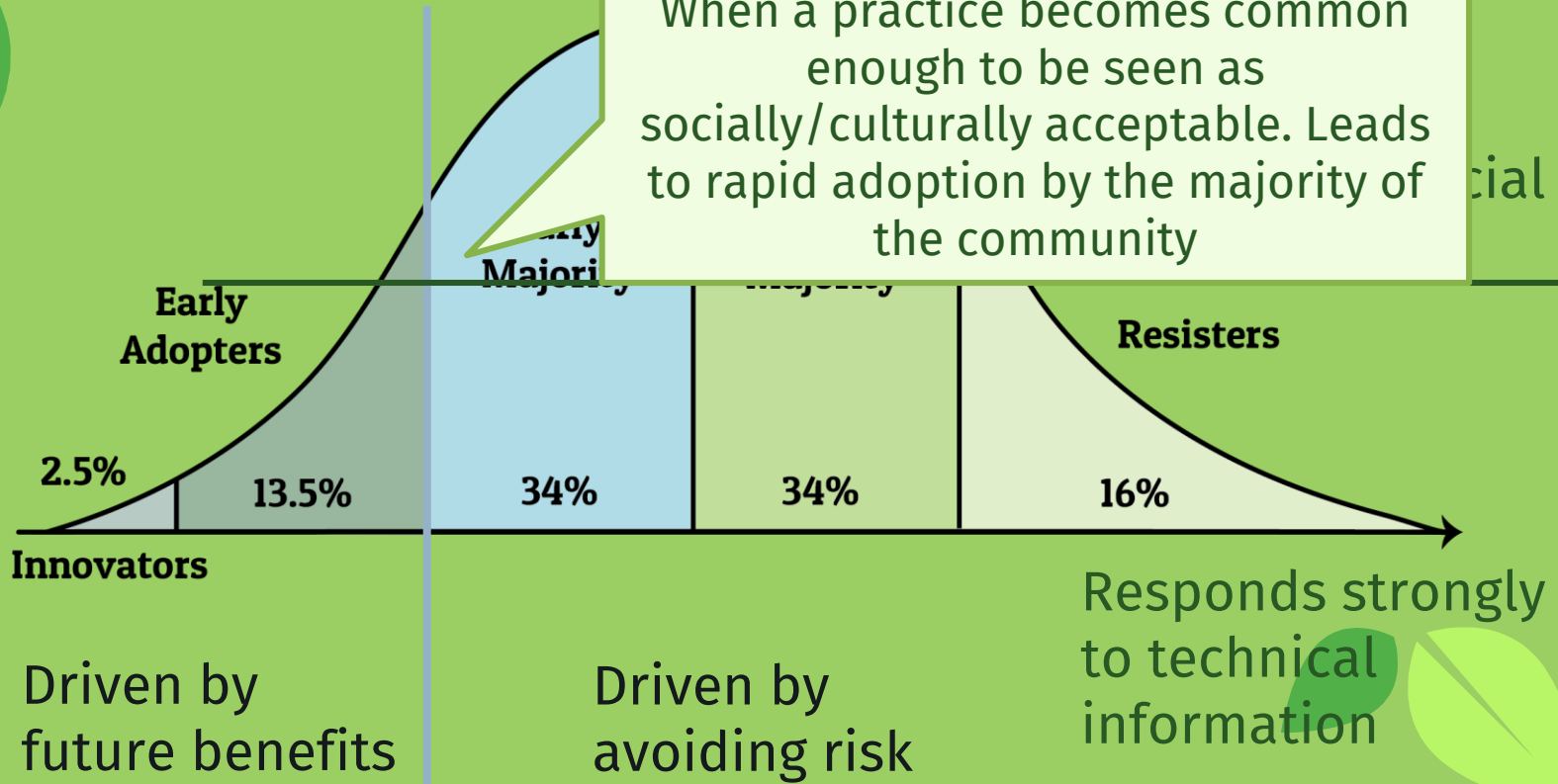
Variation in response to social signals



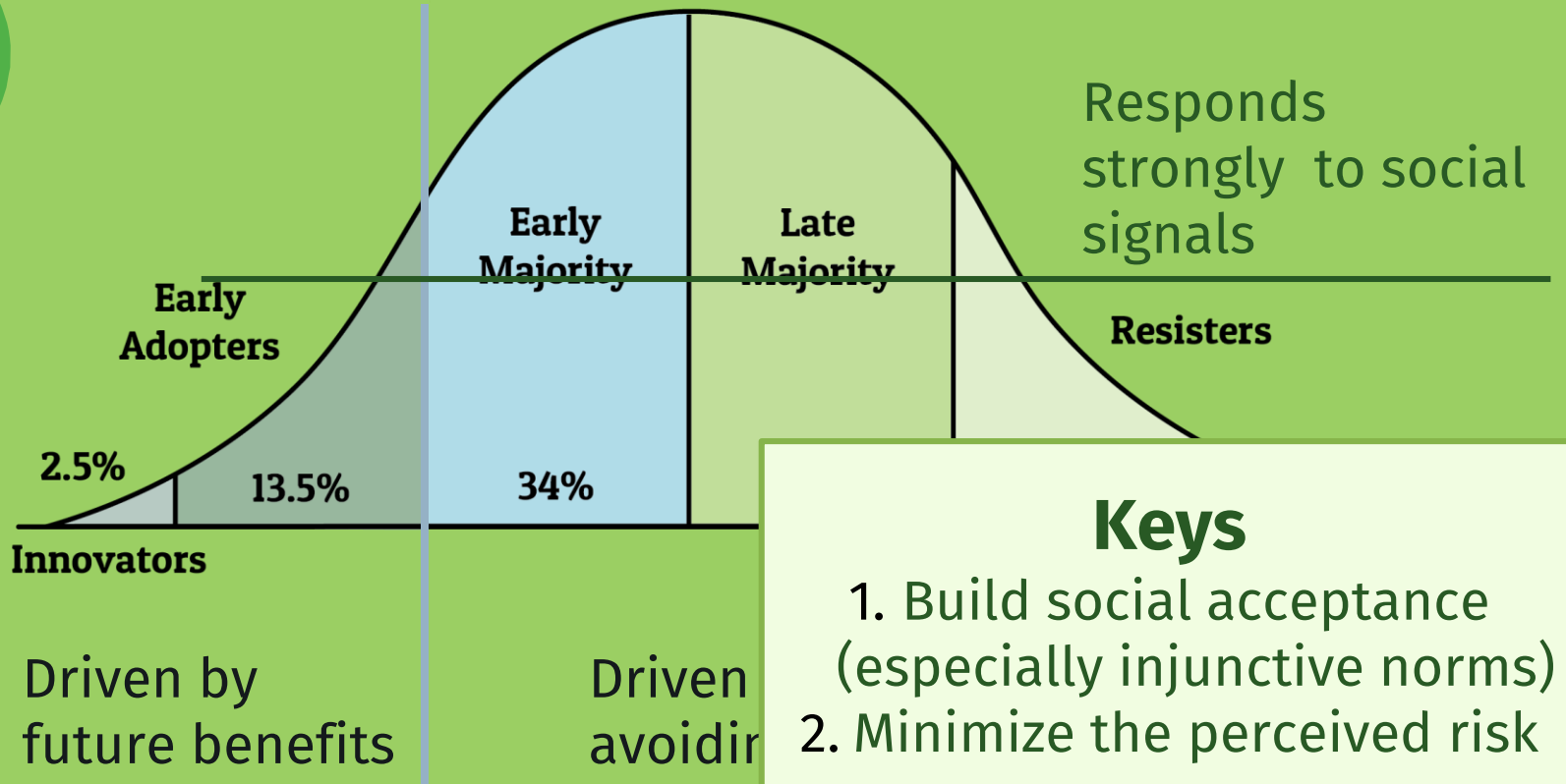
Variation in response to social signals

The Tipping Point:

When a practice becomes common enough to be seen as socially/culturally acceptable. Leads to rapid adoption by the majority of the community



Variation in response to social signals



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Messengers for Middle Adopters

Strategies for Reaching the Tipping Point



1. Maximize innovator success
2. Equip innovators to counter skepticism
3. Make it socially and emotionally safe for Middle Adopters to adopt
4. Get non-farmer influencers to support practices

Strategies to Overcome Barriers

1. Provide the right motivation
2. Speak your audiences language
3. Address key problems producers are facing
4. Frame the conversation by putting change and risk in context
5. Make it safe for change
6. Clear steps for success

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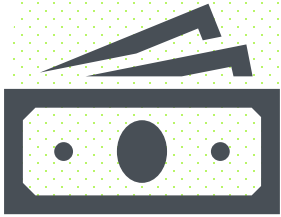
Messages for Middle Adopters

Issue Framing

- A way of structuring or presenting a problem or an issue to an audience
- Refers to the terms, phrases, and images we use to connect concepts
- Taps into past experiences, current attitudes, and emotions



Traditional Frames for Ag Conservation



- Economics
- Yield



- BMPs
- Stewardship
- Soil Health

Messages That Resonate

- Solving problems
- Risk management
- Supply chain sustainability
- Personal & industry reputation
- Stewardship
- Legacy value of farming
 - Honoring the past
 - Leaving it better for next generation



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Meeting in the Middle Part II: Engaging the Next Wave of Cover Crop Adopters

A Descriptive Report of the Environment and Social Sustainability Lab



SUNSET ON THE FARM YOU'RE INVITED!



*Join us for a fun evening on the farm!
We're excited to share with you and your
family the conservation practices we're
using to help protect our water resources!*

The evening will include:

- ◆ Grilled dinner sponsored by Vita Plus Corporation
- ◆ Wagon ride field tours
- ◆ Petting zoo
- ◆ Science station for kids
- ◆ Bounce house
- ◆ And more!

Brickstead Dairy
1734 Wayside Rd. Greenleaf, WI
Thursday, July 27, 2017
6:00 - 8:00 PM

Please RSVP by Wednesday, July 19

Contact Kelly Vande Hei at: (920) 532-0386 or kvandehei@bricksteaddairy.com



More Than Just Field Days

SUPPER & SOIL

MARCH 10TH
5:00-7:00 PM



Hosted by Champaign Co. SWCD

Parkland Community College
Tony Noel Center

2400 W Bradley Ave, Champaign, IL

Bring the whole family for a fun night enjoying BBQ, making soil crafts, and visiting Parkland's cover crop research plots!

Hickory River BBQ

Visit Parkland's
Cover Crop Plots

Crafts for the
kids!

Conduct a slake
test

RSVP appreciated
to Champaign Co.
SWCD at the
number below

Champaign County
Soil & Water
Conservation
District



Farmers and landowners face unprecedented challenges as market and weather patterns shift.

Family, Faith, and Farming brings farmers and landowners together to have a conversation about how faith impacts land stewardship decisions.

This virtual meeting will bring the community together around our deepest passion, land, and how God calls us to tend it.

Join the Zoom

Thursday, November 5th
6:00 pm - 7:15pm

Register by scanning the QR Code with
your smart phone

or email **Bob Rasmus** for the
registration link

urbanabob@gmail.com



We hope the conversations will inspire:

- sharing stories
- supportive community
- connections to faith and farming
- hope and legacy
- place to find support

Meet the Speakers



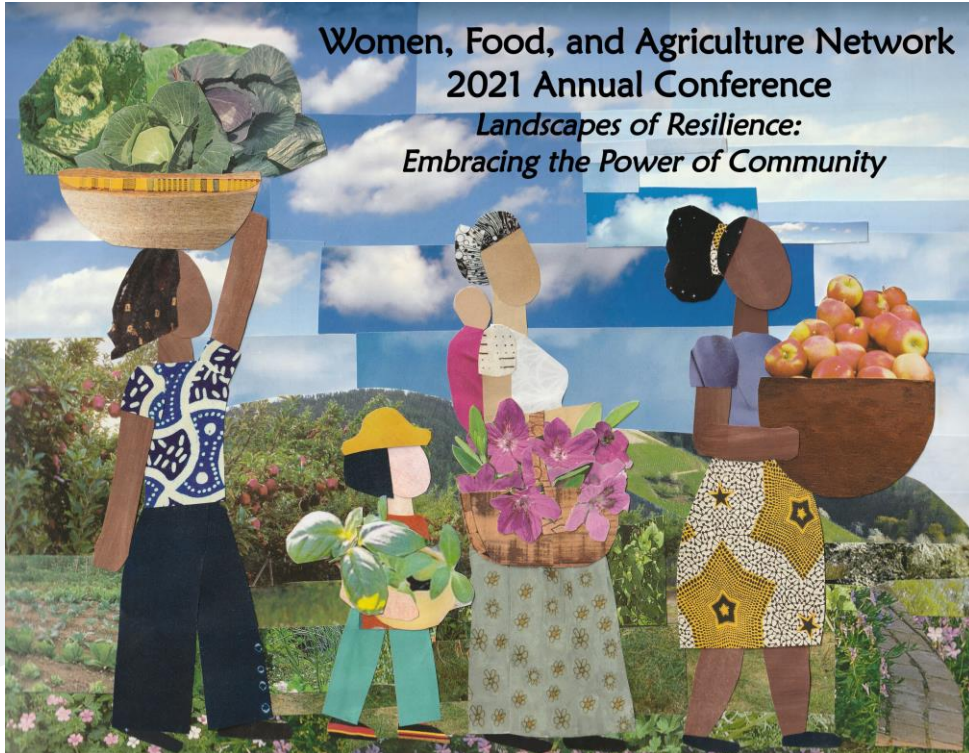
Pastor Bob Rasmus
formerly of St. Matthew Lutheran



Tom Abbott
Farmer/Landowner
Fulton County



Example: Women, Food, and Agriculture Network (WFAN, Iowa)



- Women Caring for the Land Learning Circles
- Stewardship Ambassador Program



Thanks!

You can find me at:

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growingoutreach.nwf.org

