

# The Importance of Communication Differences Between Environmental Organizations

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## Introduction

- The increasing effects of climate change creates a need for climate action.
- Environmental organizations can offer opportunities to participate in climate action.
- Communication differences between environmental organizations can impact their effectiveness of promoting climate action.
- Thus my research aims to identify these differences and how they impact the ability of an environmental organization to promote meaningful action.

## Researchable Questions

- How do communication methods differ between environmental organizations?
- How do these varying methods impact the effectiveness of an environmental organization?

## Internship & Methods

- I interned with the King County Climate Action Team.
- During my internship, I worked to develop a Climate Change Resource Hub for King County employees.
- I interviewed members of the Climate Action Team and other Department Leads which provided me anecdotal evidence for evaluating communication differences.
- I also conducted a comprehensive literature review to serve as additional evidence.

## Results

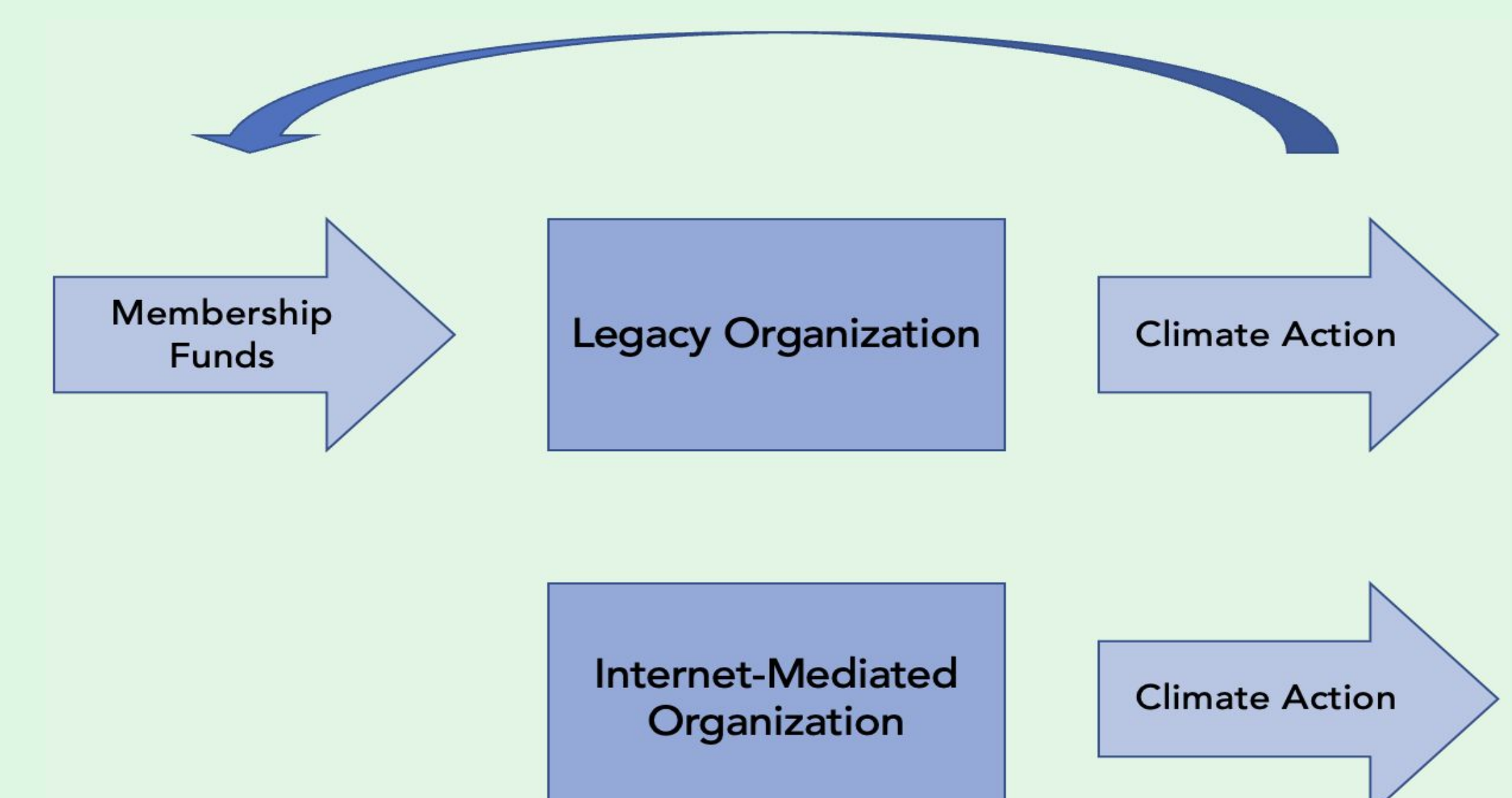
- Primarily, target audience and organization structure have the largest impact on communication differences with use of emotion and resources available being somewhat less impactful (see Figure 2).
- Specifically, whether an organization is a legacy-based or internet-mediated determines how an organization chooses to communicate with audiences (see Figure 1).
- Internet-Mediated organization's are generally more effective at communicating given their ability to more rapidly adapt to change.
- Both Internet-Mediated and Legacy organizations can improve climate action efforts by avoiding competition between audiences.



**Figure 2:** Factors of Communication shown by how much they may impact communication effectiveness

## Broader Significance

- Environmental organizations must shift towards a more flexible, internet-mediated approach to communication.
- Both Legacy and Internet-Mediated organizations need to prioritize promoting climate action over membership in their communication efforts (see Figure 3).
- There is a need for environmental organizations to be more transparent about their structure and how they use their funding.
- Minimizing competition between organizations will aid in motivating the public to participate in climate action.
- Most environmental organizations lack significant communication about ways to participate in climate action on an individual level.



**Figure 3:** Differences between Legacy Organizations and Internet-Mediated organizations

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Legacy Organizations

Internet-Mediated Organizations



**Figure 1:** Examples of Legacy vs. Internet-Mediated organizations