



The Ripple Effect

How Human Connection Builds Member Confidence

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In volatile moments, members don't see investment strategy — they feel uncertainty.

Communication is the first stabiliser. Clarity, tone and timing become part of the strategy itself.

Where are we going today

The next 30 minutes

We'll trace the ripple from communication to confidence to capability — drawing on insights from three pieces of research and practice.

1. The Voice Members Need

How empathy, clarity, and timing shape trust — and why language matters most when confidence is low.

2. The Power of the Engaged Member

Why engagement is the real trust signal — and how understanding behaviour can turn attention into action.

3. Beyond the Algorithm

How digital and hybrid models bring guidance to scale — turning communication into continuous advice.



“The ripple runs from communication → confidence → capability.”

Three simple ideas:

- 1 How language shapes trust
- 2 How behaviour reveals engagement
- 3 How digital and hybrid models scale guidance

“The ripple runs from communication → confidence → capability.”



The Moment of Uncertainty

“When confidence is tested, communication matters as much as investment strategy”

“The crosswalk moment: we’re safe... but we don’t feel safe.”

- Members don’t see what the CIO sees.
- They experience uncertainty the moment their confidence wobbles.
- When that happens, communication becomes just as important as portfolio construction.



The Noise we Compete With



Our diversified portfolio is positioned to manage cyclical volatility through dynamic asset allocation and hedging strategies.

“Members hear emotion long before they hear explanation.”

- Headlines are fast, emotive and simple.
- Fund communication is often slow, technical and complex.
- When those two collide, the headline wins — unless we speak in a way people can relate to.



The Noise we Compete With

**It's about THEIR
super not YOUR
strategy**

Your super is invested in different areas, which helps protect it when some parts of the market are up and others are down.

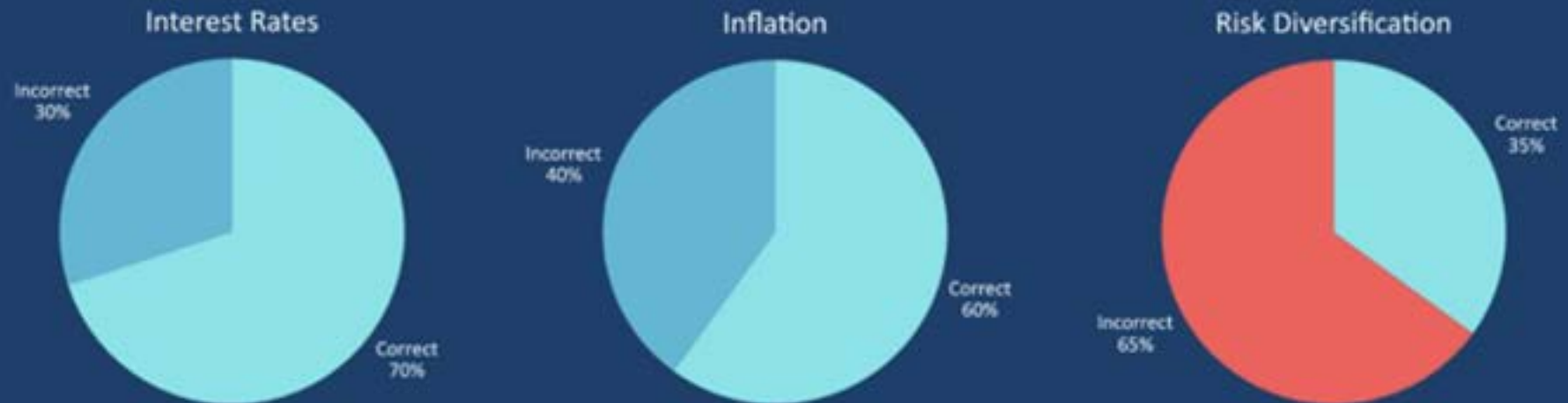
~~portfolio
manage
through
asset allocation
and hedging strategies.~~

“Accuracy isn’t enough if no one understands it.”

- Technical explanations may satisfy compliance, but they rarely calm anxiety.
- Plain language isn’t dumbing down — it’s showing respect for the reader.



The Literacy Gap



Two-thirds of everyday Australians don't understand 'diversification' yet we use the word everyday

Big 3:



Sources: OECD (2020) OECD/INFE International Survey of Adult Financial Literacy; ASIC & Treasury (2021) Financial Capability Survey Results – Australia.

“Two-thirds of Australians get the diversification question wrong.”

- If most people don't understand a core investment concept, we can't rely on industry language.
- How we explain complexity is just as important as the information itself.

The Readability Ladder

AFR
Level 4-5 Literacy Band
Tertiary Educated

Sydney Morning Herald
Level 2-3 Literacy Band
15 - 18 year olds

Daily Telegraph & Sun Herald
Level 2 Literacy Band
12 - 14 year olds



Source: OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), (2013), Australia - Country Note: Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), OECD Publishing, Paris, Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/australia/> (Accessed 7 November 2021)

“We often write for the AFR. Most members read like SMH — or below.”

- Many fund communications are written above the literacy level of the average member.
- When language makes people feel small, it doesn't matter how accurate the content is — trust drops.

Tone creates consequence

Facts inform

But emotion moves

**"I will take
down price
gouging"**



**"They'll eat
your cats
and your
dogs"**



"Facts inform. But emotion moves."

- Members respond to tone first.
- A message that's emotionally clear will beat a message that's technically perfect.
- We need to convey consequences in human terms — not technical ones.



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“ If your language makes the reader feel small, they won't trust you with something big - like their retirement ”

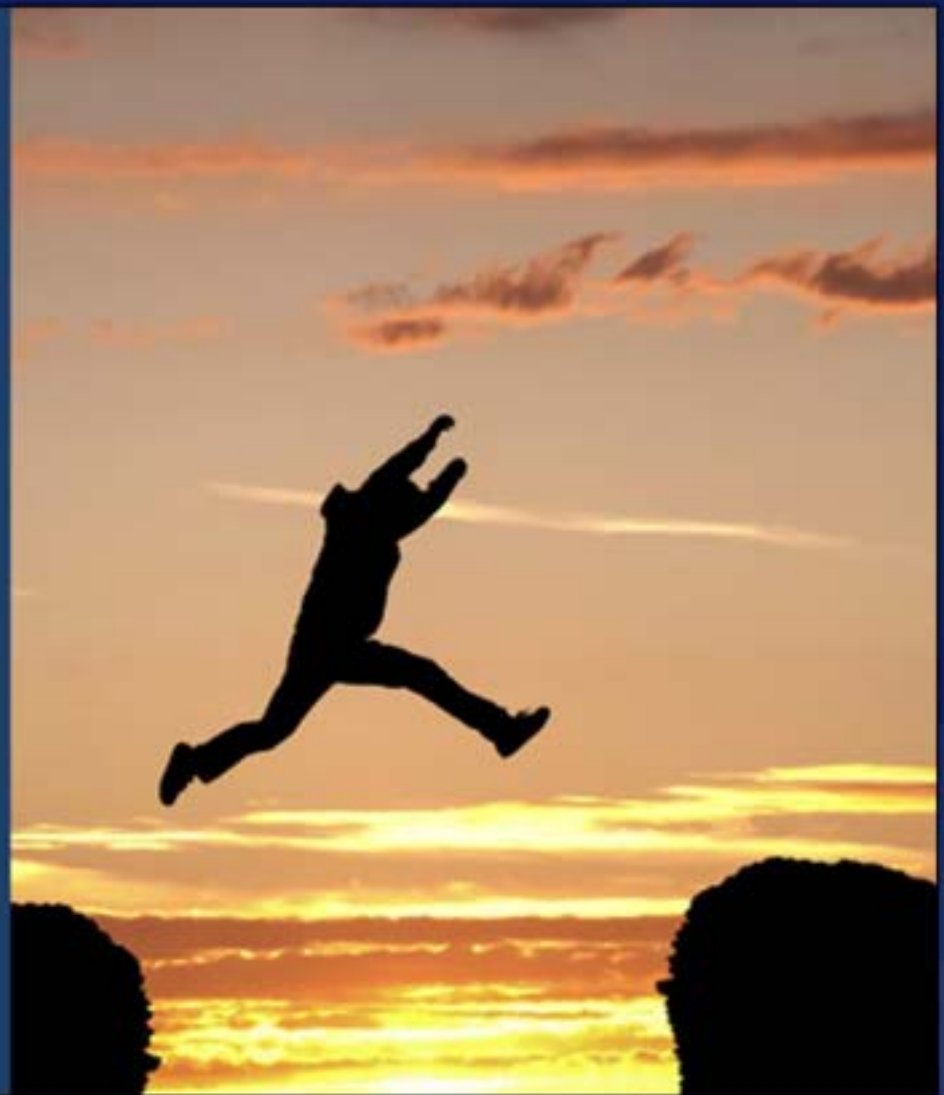


“Trust evaporates when communication feels like a test.”

- Members don't disengage because they don't care.
- They disengage because language makes them feel judged, confused or exposed.

**Trust doesn't
vanish - it shifts!**
*When members lose
confidence, they don't stop
trusting, they find
somewhere else to place it - a
competitor fund, an adviser
or someone who sounds
confident*

Edelman Trust
Barometer




“When confidence breaks, trust relocates.”

- Members don't stop trusting — they redirect it.
- To a competitor, an adviser, a friend, or an online voice that “sounds confident.”
- Communication is what keeps trust anchored to the fund.



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The Inertia Trap



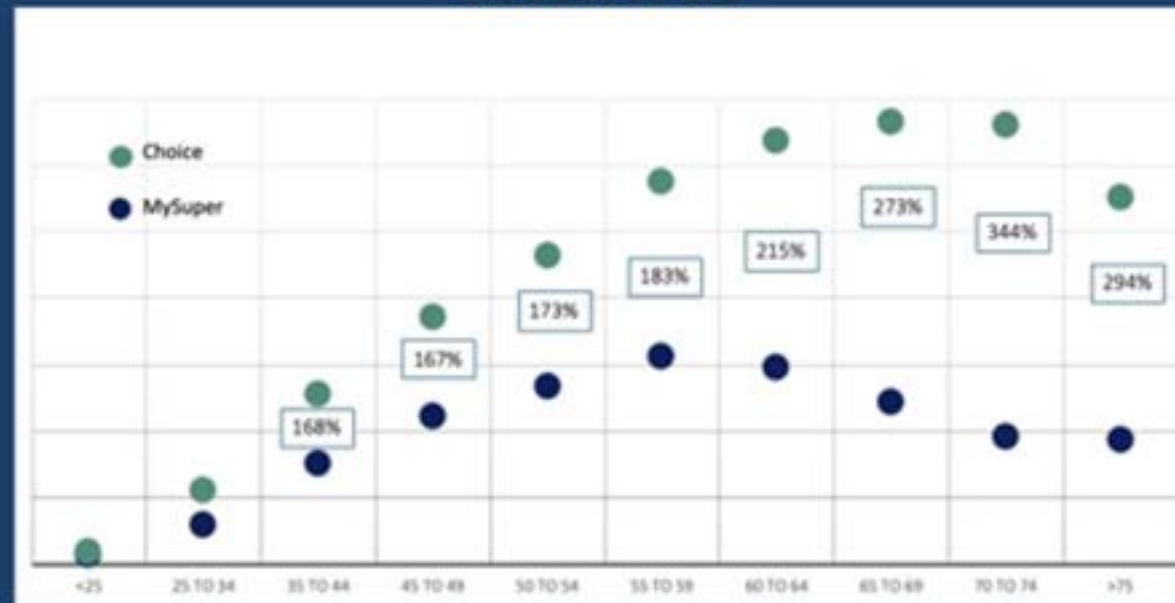
"Inertia isn't a sign of ignorance. It's a behavioural constant - one that quietly compounds over decades, eroding retirement outcomes not through bad decisions, but through no decisions at all!"

"Inertia isn't ignorance — it's a behavioural constant."

- Most members don't make bad decisions.
- They make *no* decisions.
- And inertia compounds over decades unless we make the first step smaller.



Making the first step smaller



Successful engagement isn't about teaching more - it's about making the first step smaller

“Engagement doesn't start with knowledge. It starts with confidence.”

- People don't need more information — they need a clear, safe, believable next step.
- Small steps build capability far faster than heavy education.

*“Between the accumulation and retirement sit **the quiet middle** - members in the their late 40's and early 50's whose curiosity peaks before we notice”*



Gerrans, P., & Hershey, D. A. (2017). Financial adviser anxiety, financial literacy, and financial advice seeking. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 51(1), 54-90. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joca.12120>



“The quietly curious 48–52 group — visible only if you know where to look.”

- This group feels invisible but is highly influenceable.
- Their trust is up for grabs.
- Reach them before they quietly leave to someone they’ve built trust with.



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**Before you know it
the they've quietly
gone**



“Trust shifts silently — and often permanently.”

- Patterns show the exit happens 10 years before retirement.
- If we're not present when curiosity begins, we arrive too late.



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What holds people back isn't a lack of interest - it's a lack of timely, accessible guidance they trust



Timing
is
Everything!

“The blocker isn't interest — it's the absence of timely, accessible guidance.”

- People want to act.
- But confidence, clarity and timing determine whether they *can* act.
- Guidance must meet people at the moment they seek it.



Scaling engagement means moving from digital tools that support existing service structures to models where engagement itself is digital first - continuous, data led and inclusive your text



“Digital shouldn’t support the service model — it should be the service model.”

- Engagement at scale isn’t about automation.
- It’s about continuous, human-centred guidance delivered through digital channels.
- Hybrid advice becomes the backbone, not the exception.



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Bringing it all together - The Momentum Curve

3 things you can do tomorrow

1. Are you speaking human
2. Find your quiet middle
3. Scale with purpose

“Behaviour grows from confidence. Capability grows from behaviour.”

- Members evolve when trust is built, language is clear, and pathways are simple.
- Momentum isn't created by campaigns — it's created by connection.

Trust and engagement happen when:

- language is relatable
- timing is aligned to curiosity
- the service model supports the scale of the system, not the size of the team



We don't need louder voices we need voices that are understood

Thank you



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“We don't need louder voices. We need voices that are understood.”

- Confidence grows when members feel heard, supported and guided.
- Human connection — delivered consistently — is the foundation of member trust.