AN EVALUATION OF SCIENCE COMMUNICATION WORKSHOPS FOR FLORIDA EXTENSION AGENTS

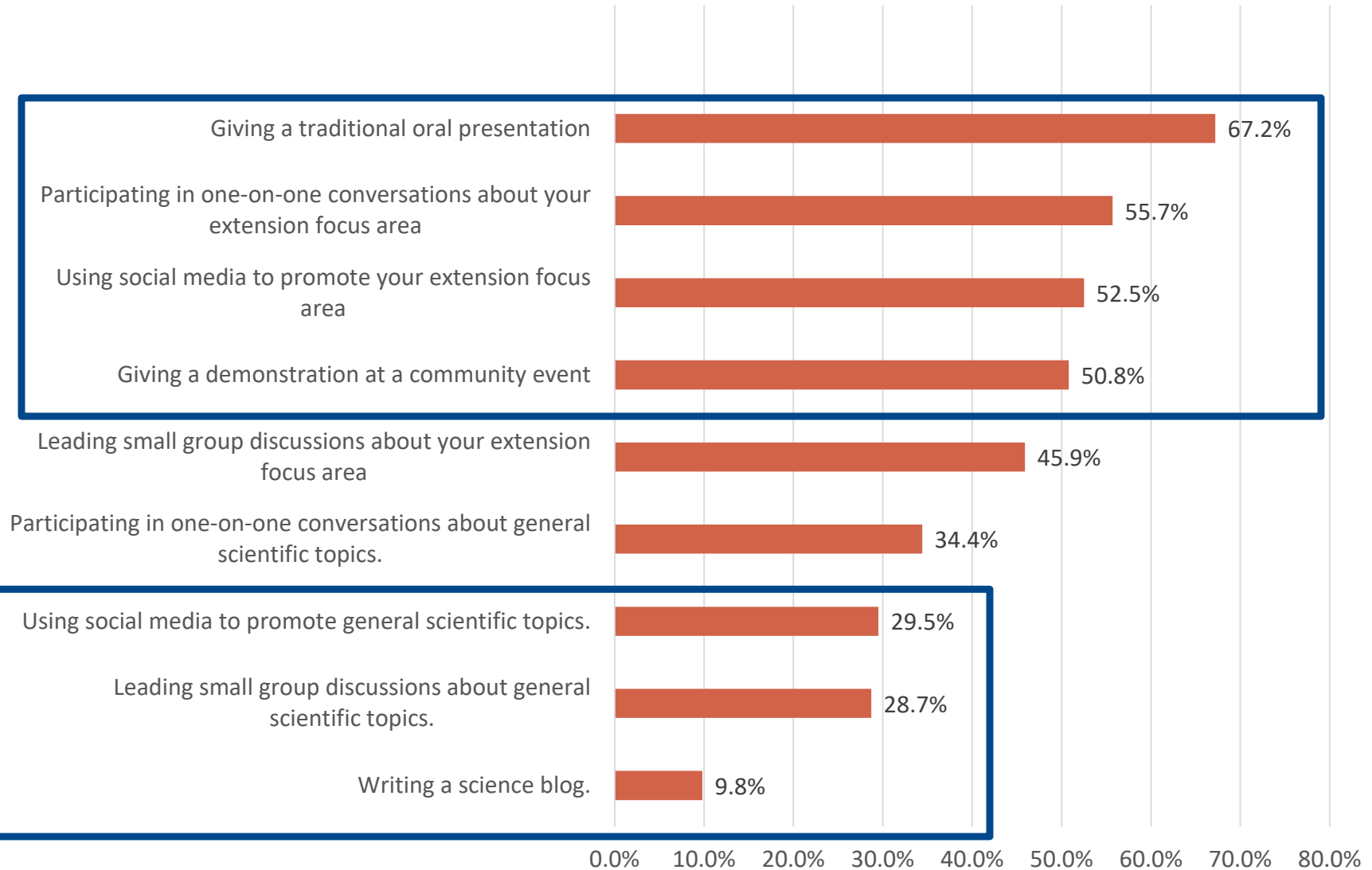Taylor Ruth, Joy Rumble, Lisa Lundy, Ricky Telg, & Angie Lindsey

Public Engagement Definition

- The intentional, meaningful interactions that provide opportunities for mutual learning between specialists and members of the public.
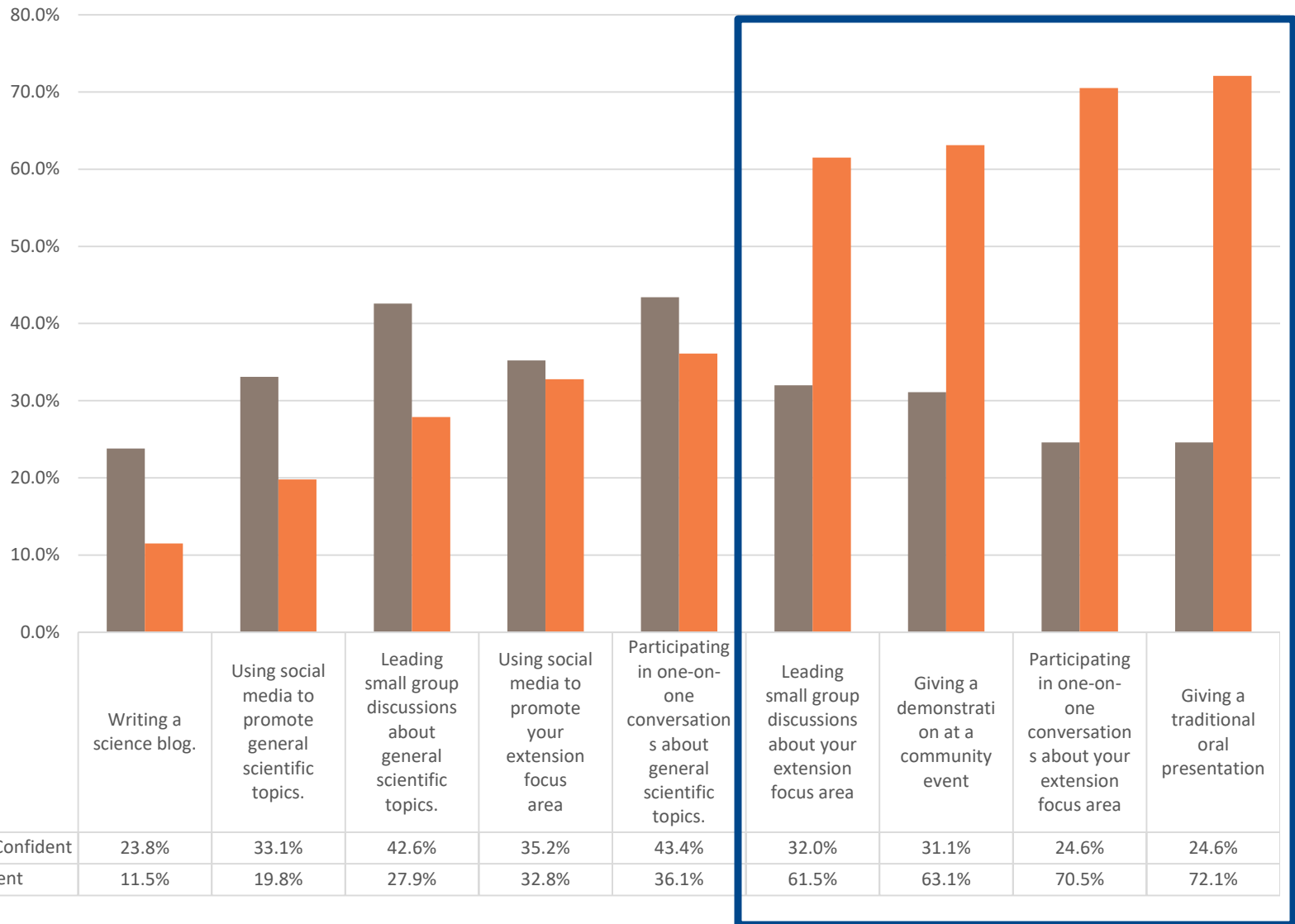
Needs Assessment

- Survey distributed in November 2016 to Florida Extension

- 114/348 agents completed the survey

- Majority were

    - White

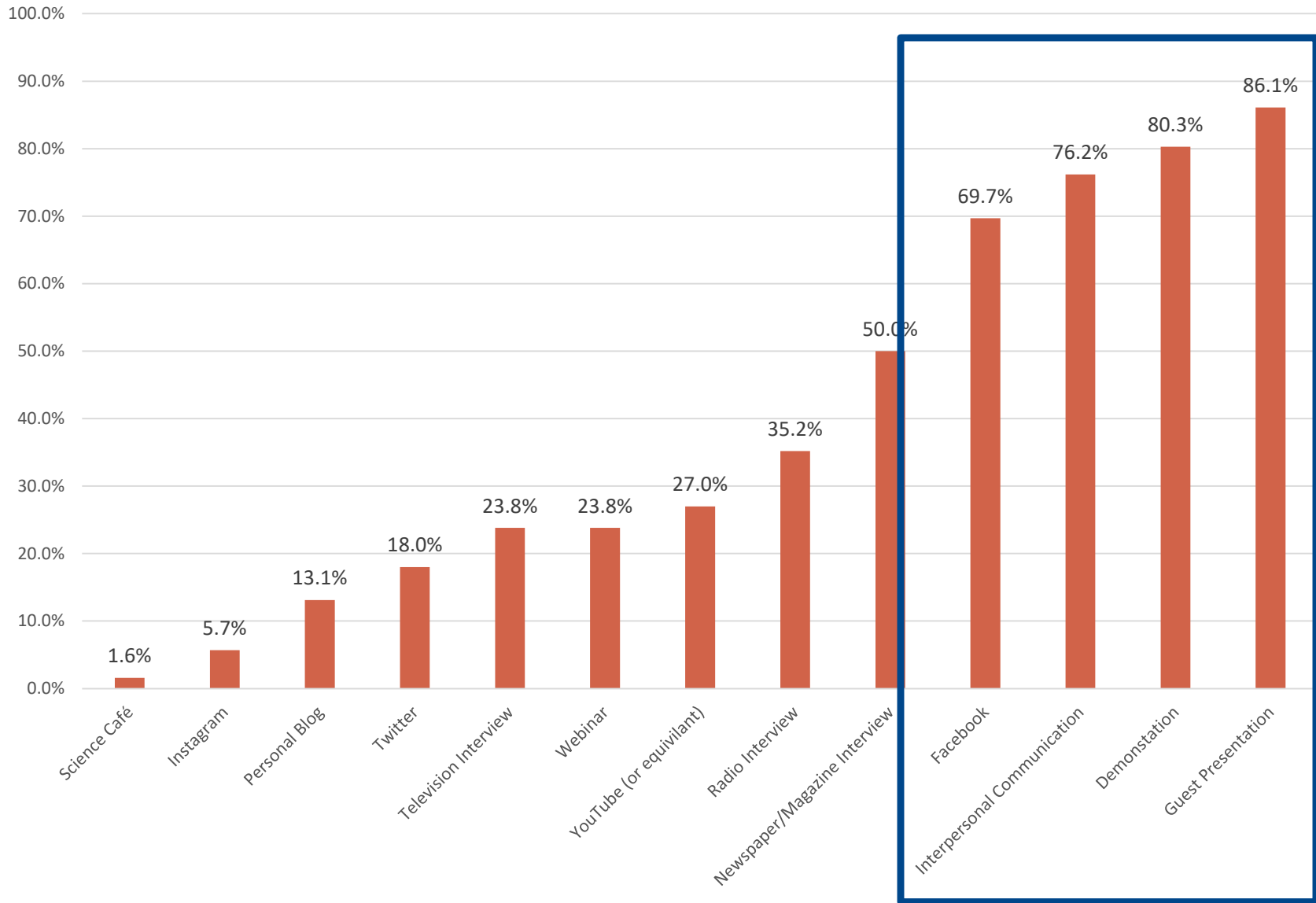   - Female 54.4% between the ages of 26 and 45

Previous Training Participation

Category	Percentage
Giving a traditional oral presentation	67.2%
Participating in one-on-one conversations about your extension focus area	55.7%
Using social media to promote your extension focus area	52.5%
Giving a demonstration at a community event	50.8%
Leading small group discussions about your extension focus area	45.9%
Participating in one-on-one conversations about general scientific topics.	34.4%
Using social media to promote general scientific topics.	29.5%
Leading small group discussions about general scientific topics.	28.7%
Writing a science blog.	9.8%

Confidence in Public Engagement

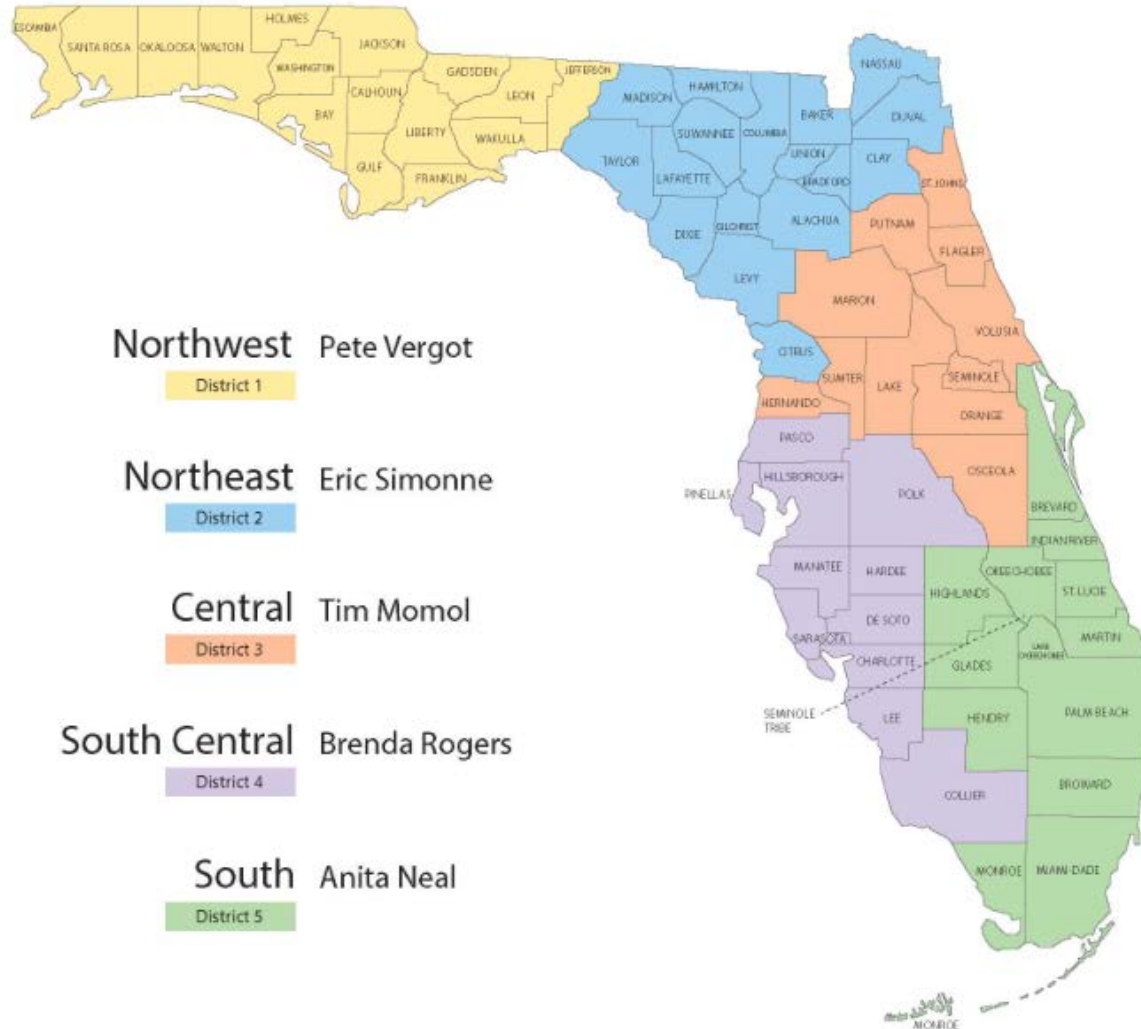|	Writing a science blog.	Using social media to promote general scientific topics.	Leading small group discussions about general scientific topics.	Using social media to promote your extension focus area	Participating in one-on-one conversations about general scientific topics.	Leading small group discussions about your extension focus area	Giving a demonstration at a community event	Participating in one-on-one conversations about your extension focus area	Giving a traditional oral presentation
■ Somewhat Confident	23.8%	33.1%	42.6%	35.2%	43.4%	32.0%	31.1%	24.6%	24.6%
■ Very Confident	11.5%	19.8%	27.9%	32.8%	36.1%	61.5%	63.1%	70.5%	72.1%

Platform used for Engagement

Likeliness to Participate in Training

- Majority reported likely to participate in training for media relations and crisis situations

- Likely to attend training for public engagement

- Most interested in social media training

- Not as interested in learning about delivering presentations and one-on-one conversations

District Workshops

UF/IFAS Extension Administrative Districts

Northwest — Pete Vergot
District 1

Northeast — Eric Simonne
District 2

Central — Tim Momol
District 3

South Central — Brenda Rogers
District 4

South — Anita Neal
District 5

District Workshops

Agenda:

9 a.m. – Session 1: Welcome and overview of the importance of storytelling

10:45 a.m. – Session 2: Communicating in disaster/crisis

Noon – Lunch

12:30 p.m. – Session 3: Working with media to tell your story

2:00 p.m. – Session 4: Using social media to tell your story

Wrap-up/Evaluation

Evaluation Results

- 172 Extension agents attended five workshops
- Retrospective pretest-posttest related to ability
  - 20 Likert-type questions
- Four Likert-type questions measured behavioral intent

I am able to…

	Pre M(SD)	Post M(SD)	Difference Post-Pre
Develop a crisis communications plan.	2.36 (0.97)	3.83 (0.81)	1.47**
Implement good story telling techniques when communicating about science.	2.84 (0.89)	4.20 (0.58)	1.36**
Organize a story about science.	2.88 (0.86)	4.20 (0.59)	1.32**
Develop a media relations strategy.	2.59 (0.95)	3.81 (0.76)	1.22**
Write a press release for crisis communications.	2.46 (1.02)	3.66 (0.88)	1.21**

Note. 1= *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither disagree nor agree*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*

** *Paired t-test was statistically significant ($\alpha < .01$)*

I am able to…

	Pre M(SD)	Post M(SD)	Difference Post-Pre
Work with a reporter.	2.97 (1.04)	4.09 (0.72)	1.12**
Be interviewed by a reporter.	3.09 (1.05)	4.10 (0.72)	1.02**
Use social media to promote my Extension focus area.	3.16 (1.34)	4.06 (0.82)	0.90**
Use social media to promote science.	3.08 (1.05)	3.98 (0.86)	0.89**
Write a science blog.	2.68 (1.11)	3.54 (1.06)	0.85**

Note. 1= *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither disagree nor agree*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*

** *Paired t-test was statistically significant ($\alpha < .01$)*

I plan to…

	M(SD)
Use social media to promote my Extension focus area.	4.31 (0.82)
Use story telling techniques in my job.	4.22 (0.70)
Reach out to the media to promote my Extension focus area.	4.10 (0.79)
Create a crisis communication plan related to my job.	3.54 (0.99)

Note. 1= *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither disagree nor agree*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*

Discussion

- Needs assessment was useful in guiding the development of the workshops

- Evaluations indicated success

- Follow-up interviews could help understand if the agents actually used the information

- This workshop development process could serve as a template for other states

QUESTIONS?

Taylor Ruth | t.ruth@ufl.edu
Lisa Lundy | lisalundy@ufl.edu