

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN OUTLINE

A solid communications plan contains several critical elements. Following is a comprehensive list to consider. Not every plan needs to include all of these, but using this outline will help you make sure you don't omit an important component.

1. **Overview:** Describe the situation at a high level.
 - a. Description and background of the issue or initiative
 - b. Project goal / desired outcomes
 - c. Communications objectives (e.g., awareness, attitude, and action)
 - d. Overriding concerns or major issues
2. **Stakeholders:** List who is concerned about the project's results and how each stakeholder will support the project.
 - a. Internal stakeholders
 - b. External stakeholders
3. **Audiences:** List the primary and secondary groups you are targeting.
 - a. Internal audiences
 - b. External audiences
4. **Messages:** Define the messages you want to communicate to your various audiences.
 - a. Key messages – should be two-to-three overriding messages that you want to convey
 - b. Supporting messages – these may be more specific based on the audience or timing
5. **Talking points:** Note the likely questions you may hear and how you want them answered.
 - a. Likely issues or questions
 - b. Associated talking points
6. **Timeline:** List the milestones from the project plan; this will ensure your tactics (in the next step) align.
 - a. Project milestones
7. **Tactics:** Write down all of the tactics (online and offline) that you'll use to communicate your messages.
 - a. Date
 - b. Audience
 - c. Format
 - d. Message
 - e. Person responsible
 - f. Budget considerations
8. **Evaluation:** Assess how well your plan worked; this will help you with your future plans.
 - a. What worked well?
 - b. What didn't work as well?
 - c. Scrapped ideas
 - d. Lessons learned