

Communications Plan Template

[SUBJECT]
MONTH, YEAR

Key messages

A bulleted list of three or four main messages you would want someone to know about your topic. Think of these as a sound bite or the headline you'd like to see on an article about your topic. Each should be no longer than two sentences (three at very most) and should be written in a conversational manner. They are NOT a duplicate of the agency's strategic goals nor are they operational/implementation goals. They are sometimes interchangeable with Talking Points.)

Background

This is a brief history of the issue and why the plan is needed. It should be as long as necessary to be helpful to people not fully immersed in the topic, but not so detailed as to be unwieldy and thus not useful.

Audience

Internal stakeholders involved or interested in your project.

External stakeholders involved or interested in your project.

List only those necessary rather than simply cutting and pasting from previous plans.

The audiences you list should be targeted by some communication tool listed later in the plan.

Communication Team

List the names and numbers of the communication team, keeping in mind that the communication team may be different than the team responsible for the project or activity itself. Identify the team leader and back-up. The team should typically consist of: relevant individuals within a program; staffers from other offices/regions if the communication plan topic crosses boundaries; appropriate representatives from the Office of Public Affairs and the Office of Congressional Affairs; and an EDO Communication Assistant. Do not list people who don't know they are part of your team.

Communication Tools

The number and type of tools will depend on the message, audience, timing and resources.

They could include:

Meetings	Press releases	Q&As/FAQs	Brochures
Talking points	Backgrounders	Web pages	Speeches
Direct mail	Phone calls	NRC Daily Notes	NRC Reporter
Generic Letters	Reports	Paid ads	Newsletters
Posters/fliers	Videos	Transcripts	

OPA should be consulted about whether or not a press release is necessary.

Timeline

This is useful to ensure activities are well coordinated between different offices i.e. OPA and OCA, or with notifications of different stakeholders. The timeline should detail communication activities; not be the timeline of steps for the activity or project itself.

Challenges

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An optional element that underscores specific challenges the plan should address, including potential controversies, pre-identified critical public groups, important timing elements, etc. Identified challenges should be linked to specific steps being taken to overcome the challenge.

Evaluation

An optional element that can attempt to identify what "success" would like look, keeping in mind that quantitative results can be difficult to obtain. This section might be devoted to how "lessons learned" would be documented.

Q's & A's

While not necessary for all plans, if OPA or OCA believe they will get questions, these should be developed. The OPA team member can develop the questions – including some hard questions the team may not be inclined to want to answer. Program experts on the team develop the answers. The answers should be written in plain, conversational language, a kind of "sound bite" that summarizes our position. Additional technical or supporting information can be provided in separate sentences or bullet points as background.