Communications Plan Template

Template resource provided by the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP)

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| **Initiative Goal:**   * What does your community’s SHIP initiative hope to achieve overall? | *TA Tip: Use this space to articulate your big picture goal that will anchor all work across sites and strategies.* |
| **Communications Objective(s):**   * Over the next 18 months, what will be achieved through communications to further the initiative’s goal? * Build grassroots support? Engage decision makers? Keep stakeholders informed and engaged? Forge new partnerships? | *TA Tip: Communications objectives should create the influence needed to advance your initiative’s PSE change goal.* |
| **Audience:**   * Who does your initiative need to influence to achieve its goals? * Who influences the people you must influence? * Who are the key supporters you must motivate and sustain? * Where do you need to build new relationships to advance your initiative’s goals? * What relationships must you sustain or deepen? | *TA Tip: Categorize audiences (e.g. decision-makers, influencers, stakeholders) to help prioritize future communications.* |
| **Key Messages:**   * What is your initiative’s core story? * What is the value your initiative contributes to the community? And to health? * In plain language, why is your Community Leadership Team working in schools, worksites, and across the community to create lasting changes? How will your work benefit health? | *TA Tip: These messages will serve as your “refrain” across communications for all sites and strategies, reinforcing the value that your SHIP initiative is contributing to the community.* |

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| Environmental Scan Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats that influence what communications tactics are achievable on time/budget and how they will be percieved within the larger community conversation | | | |
| Strengths   * What are your initiative’s greatest assets that can further communications? * Influential champions? * Broad base of supporters (and database)? * Strong media relationships? | Weaknesses   * What are your initiative’s shortcomings that must be acknowledged in planning for communications? * Does your initiative have any “blind spots” – influential leaders who are unfamiliar or lack relationships with your initiative? | Opportunities   * Where are your initiative’s strongest relationships? Can this support be used to further initiative goals? * What are upcoming community or calendar activities – holidays, back-to-school, local festivals – that offer opportunities to reinforce your initiative’s value? | Threats   * Who are potential opponents to your initiative (they may not be publicly opposed)? Why might they oppose this work? |

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| Sustaining Tactics Core communications tactics used to maintain support and information flow with key audiences | | | | |
| **Tactic** | **Audience** | **Timing** | **Responsible** | **Evaluation** |
| What tactics will you use to sustain positive information flow with supporters and stakeholders?   * Electronic/print newsletter? * In-person updates with decision makers, reporters? * Relationship-building outreach with potential allies? * Social media * Web content * Other | Who will the tactic aim to reach?   * Supporters * Stakeholders * Decision makers * Site-specific contacts | When will each tactic be executed?   * Monthly? * Bi-monthly? * Quarterly? * Bi-annually? | Who is responsible for coordinating execution of the tactic? This work would include:   * Collecting updates on actions across strategies. * Drafting or editing communications-ready updates. * Shepherding approval process. | How will you evaluate success of these efforts? (Social media reach, newspaper coverage, open rates for e-newsletters, etc.) |

NEW: Briefly describe successes and challenges of previous communications efforts. What worked? What didn’t? What were the lessons learned?

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| Momentum-Building Tactics One-time events that can be leveraged to communicate the Initaitive’s value with multiple audiences to generate momentum for change. Consider developing a specific plan for each “event”as they arise. Aim for at least 5 to 6 throughout the year. | | | | | | |
| **Event** | **Tactics** | **Audience** | **“Headline” Message** | **Messenger** | **Timing** | **Evaluation** |
| Events are gatherings and actions that exemplify the key values messages of your SHIP initiative. Possible events include:   * *Public launch of local initiative* * *Community forum on health* * *Local fun-run* * *Implementation of new farm-to-school policy* * *Passage of a Complete Streets policy* | For each event, potential tactics could include:   * *News release, radio interviews announcing event/action.* * *Update in electronic or print newsletters.* * *Update on website/calendar* * *Personal invitations/ updates to decision makers.* * *Update to key supporters, volunteers.* * *Follow-up letter to the editor.* * *Social media posts* * *Mention on supporters’ web calendars and in newsletters* * *Other* | Who will be reached for each tactic? | What is the major take-away of this event or activity?  How does this event or activity reinforce the initiative’s overall key values messages, noted above? | Who is the best voice (or voices) to share this message with credibility among the target audience(s)?  For example:   * *Doctors are powerful messengers on health issues.* * *Parents are enthusiastic supporters of fresh fruits and veggies in schools.* * *Business owners listen to other business owners.* | When should each action be completed?  For example:   * *Which communications should take place before the event?* * *Which should take place as part of the announcement/*   *event?*   * *Which follow-up communications are appropriate?* | How will you evaluate success of these efforts? (attendance at events, news coverage, social media reach, etc.) |

NEW: Briefly describe successes and challenges. What worked? What didn’t? What were the lessons learned?

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| Program Branding Branding includes both messaging and design elements that help identify a product or program | | |
| Branding Elements  *Messaging*:   * Program name * Tag line * Elevator speech * Talking points * Key messages * Domain name for website   *Design elements:*   * Logo * Color pallet * Font * Presentation template * Printed/electronic material template * Web design | What elements were introduced? | What new elements are planned? |