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 TacticsOne-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?  |