

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY TITLE - DATE

BACKGROUND -why have you asked for a comms strategy?

Outline what prompted the organisation to need a comms plan. This could be things like:

- Made aware of an issue arising in future
- Crisis happening now
- Project or event happening and want to maximise comms opportunities
- Launching a new product and want a PR component to marketing plan
- Need to build reputation, create awareness, education, change perception

PURPOSE – how will this strategy help the organisation?

The general purpose of a communications strategy is to sit alongside your business or project strategy and make it easier – from a communications perspective – to achieve those business/project goals. Set expectations of what this comms plan will/won't do, what phase of the project or timeline it covers, etc.

INITIAL RESEARCH – what do we know about the current situation?

You can't develop a good strategy without having done your research to inform the process. Outline succinctly: 1) what we know of the current situation and 2) how you discovered this info - - how have you done your research? Research can be done through:

- Staff interviews
- Google/desktop research
- Formal marketing research surveys
- Focus groups with a small group of customers or other audience
- Information found online that affects the industry, current market, trends we need to be aware of, etc.



FURTHER RESEARCH – what do we still need to discover?

You've done the above research and have some background, but is there anything at the present moment you still need to discover? And how will you go about gathering this additional info?

ORGANISATION GOALS – what are your overall goals?

Detail the company's overall goals. If you are doing a corporate comms strategy, then list here what the organisation's business goals are for the period you are talking about. If you are doing a project or event comms strategy, the goals listed here will be specific for that one-off project or event.

It's important to include this section so that you distinguish the company or project goals from the comms goals. Do not muddle the two.

COMMUNICATIONS GOALS – what are your communications goals?

Have 2-4 communications goals maximum. These communications goals will help you achieve the above organisation goals. Remember to ensure these goals are SMART:

- **Specific** (not broad, like 'raise awareness')
- **Measurable** (use #s, %s, etc)
- **Achievable** (under promise and over-deliver!)
- **Realistic** (the org is short on resource, you need to dial back the goals)
- **Time-bound** (by a specific date)

AUDIENCES – who do you need to reach?

Audiences that the company needs to build relationships with, listen to, speak with to achieve its goals. Sometimes it is good to break these up into segments and prioritise. And don't just list them generally – give some specific info about them (i.e. not just 'small businesses' – what kind, industry, who within the business, etc). Remember, 'the public' is not an audience!



RISKS – what are they and what is your mitigation plan for each?

List the communications risks that you can see could happen and what your mitigation will be for each one. Keep these risks related to communications only – these are not operational risks (although the risk of operational failure can CREATE comms risks and the mitigation strategy may be to plan for this possibility, develop a holding statement, etc).

STRATEGY – what overall approach will you use in all your communications?

Here's where you detail the strategic approach to how you will implement all communications. This is the 'strategy' you will apply overall and your tactics fall out of this overall strategic approach.

Remember, it's important that your strategy doesn't erroneously 'veer into' 1) key messages or 2) tactics.

KEY MESSAGES – what will you say?

These are the top 5-7 key messages that we want all our audiences to 'get.'

These messages may not be used word-for-word, but rather may be 'proved' through what you do.

TACTICS – what actions need to be completed, by whom and when?

List your tactics in this section. It's often easy to do this in a table format. Focus on outputs and outcomes.

MEASURES – how will you measure progress toward goals?

Look back at your SMART comms objectives above. How will you measure if you are achieving each one of those objectives and how often will you measure? Who is responsible for gathering that measure (i.e. you or someone else in the organisation?). Remember to ensure the measures you select are realistic and easy to gather/track.



BUDGET – what can you expect to invest?

This is the budget section.

