

Communications Planning

Effective, planned communications

Communication plans can be a useful way to think strategically about what messages you want to communicate, and how to do that in the most effective way.

Background

Add a paragraph or two about the background of the project, so that other staff members or officers can easily understand what it's about

Aims and objectives

Outline the aims and objectives of the campaign - these should try to be as specific as possible. What do you want the impact of this campaign/project to be?

Who should you be communicating with?

What is the target audience for the communication, are there different audiences for different sections?

What do you want to say?

What are the key messages that need to be communicated to ensure that the aims and objectives are met?

External organisations

Are there any other organisations that you are working with on this project and what are their requirements in terms of approving communications activity?

Are there external organisations that may be willing to promote the campaign/project to their usual audiences?

How do you want to communicate?

What channels of communication do you have, and how could they be utilised to reach the audience you want? E.g. email, website posts, social networking, posters, leafletting, videos, survey.

Who can support the communication?

How could you utilise your networks, e.g. SA officers, class reps, society members, other volunteers, college newsletters, teachers/lecturers, support staff.

PR opportunities

Can you identify any press angles and/or publications to pitch the story to? Would the local newspaper or the College marketing department be interested?

Key dates

Are there any key dates within the project/campaign that will be important to take note of?

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Resources and budget

Do you require any design or printed/promotional materials? If so what are the costs associated? What are the deadlines if items are requiring design? Make sure to add these to your activity schedule.

Evaluation and monitoring

What do you need to measure throughout the communications activity to effectively evaluate the success of it? What will success look like? Is it visitors to a web page, amount of respondents? Number of people at an event, number of signatures on a petition? This will ensure that resources spent on communication are worth it – instead of buying lots of posters that might not be effective, for example.

If you are not hitting your targets, what extra action could be taken?

Future developments

Is this an ongoing campaign/project? How can the communication plan be developed in future?

Contacts

Who are the main people working on this project?

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Example Activity Schedule

The activity schedule outlines what communication activity is taking place at which time, through which method and who is responsible for delivery. An example:

Activity	Method	When?	Who is responsible?
<i>Leaflet designed</i>	<i>Leaflet</i>	<i>By 16.9.16</i>	<i>Marketing Department</i>
<i>Poster designed for stall</i>	<i>Poster</i>	<i>By 16.9.16</i>	<i>Marketing Department</i>
<i>Leaflets and posters printed</i>	<i>Leaflet</i>	<i>By 25.9.16</i>	<i>SA Co-ordinator</i>
<i>Petition designed and printed</i>	<i>Petition</i>	<i>By 25.9.16</i>	<i>SA Co-ordinator</i>
<i>Ask Class Reps and Volunteer Officers if they can help out with petition signing, and to explain why it's important.</i>	<i>Email to class reps and volunteer officers</i>	<i>By 25.9.16</i>	<i>President</i>
<i>Letting students know that will be asked to sign the petition</i>	<i>Social media: Facebook page post</i>	<i>27.9.16 28.9.16 29.9.16</i>	<i>Vice President</i>
<i>Letting students know that will be asked to sign the petition</i>	<i>Email to all students</i>	<i>27.9.16</i>	<i>SA Co-ordinator to organise with Marketing Department</i>
<i>Leafletting session @ main campus café encouraging students to sign petition at stall</i>	<i>Leaflet/poster</i>	<i>28.9.16</i>	<i>Class reps and President</i>
<i>Monitor petition numbers</i>	<i>Monitoring</i>	<i>End of day 28.9.16</i>	<i>SA Co-ordinator</i>
<i>Leafletting session @ second campus foyer encouraging students to sign petition at stall</i>	<i>Leaflet/poster</i>	<i>29.9.16</i>	<i>Class reps and Vice President</i>
<i>Monitor petition numbers</i>	<i>Monitoring</i>	<i>End of day 29.9.16</i>	<i>SA Co-ordinator</i>
<i>Leafletting session @ second campus foyer encouraging students to sign petition at stall</i>	<i>Leaflet/poster</i>	<i>30.9.16</i>	<i>Volunteer officers and President</i>
<i>Monitor petition numbers and evaluate success</i>	<i>Monitoring/Evaluation</i>	<i>1.10.16</i>	<i>SA Co-ordinator</i>