Basic Communications Planning Template

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Communications Plan – [Date]

**[Topic]**

**Overall Communications Goal**: Overview of what you want to accomplish through this communications initiative and how it supports your organization’s strategic goals.

**Communications Objectives/Metrics:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Objective/Expected Results**  *Ask: What specific outcomes, behaviors or results do we want to see as a result of this effort; what would success look like?* *What actions do we want people to start or stop taking? What attitudes do we want to influence?* | Metrics *Use metrics more to set expectations than to measure -- don't make yourself too crazy with attempting to quantify results.* |
| 1. |  |
| 2. |  |
| 3. |  |

**Key Target Audiences:**

*Ask: Who is our major audience for this communication? Do particular segments of the audience need their own sets of messages or a distinct approach to this communication? Examples: Current customers; potential customers; legislators; thought leaders. Internal audiences may include managers & supervisors; all employees in a certain job category (admins, techs); employees with five or more years of service, etc. You may also need to articulate which audiences you won’t reach, and why.*

**Major Messages, Business Context:**

*Ask: What two or three things do we want to be absolutely certain people "get?” What do audiences need to* ***know*** *(knowledge) in order to change their behavior? What do they need to* ***believe*** *(attitudes)? Do not try to script the program here, but bring focus to the key elements. Include references to what is happening in the market that is driving this situation.*

1.

2.

3.

**Considerations:**

*Ask: What threats, issues, barriers do we face? What is happening in the business or the environment that will impact our efforts? Timing might be a consideration, or a recent other announcement. Or current trust levels. Use this section to think seriously about whether your people will be receptive to the communication. What “hot buttons” do you see for each audience?* ***Also*** *– think through possible unwanted or unexpected consequences of your communications. Even a positive message can provoke a negative response in certain situations. How will you handle it? Do you need a Plan B? A Q&A?*

**Approach, Programs:**

*In general terms, consider how the communication will be handled -- high profile, low-key, one-on-one, in a group, etc. Is voice mail or e-mail appropriate? Do you want to use an existing communications/promotional program, or would a special approach be more appropriate? Consider the objectives, situation, message and audience as you decide. Think through the implications.*

**Pilot/Testing/Focus Group needed? Compare results to “control” group?**

**Feedback loops:**

*Ask: What processes can we build into this communication plan to help determine: 1) Whether audiences received messages as intended, and 2) What reactions/questions the messages generated. Did we achieve our objectives?*

**Communication Implementation Table**

**Overall Owner:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **When (Timing)**  *When should the communication be delivered?* | **What (Messages)**  *Which message is key for this audience at this time?* | **Who (Audience)**  *Who needs to know?* | **How (Media)**  ***Owner; key support***  *What channels or messengers will we use?*  *Who will own the communication for this audience?* | **Why (Objective)**  *Which objective is key for this audience at this time?* | **Direction**  Up, down, across organization Push/Pull | **Feedback Loop**  ***Owner;***  ***key support*** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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