

Communications Plan Worksheet



Directions: Use this worksheet to plan QAPI communications for your organization or for any component of QAPI, such as performance improvement projects. A communications plan should be revisited every 6 to 12 months to ensure it is still applicable to the latest QAPI objectives and project activities. Your QAPI leader or coordinator may find it helpful to plan communications using this worksheet.

Date of Current Review: _____ **Next Review Scheduled for:** _____

Step 1: State the content of the communication (e.g., for a performance improvement plan it would be helpful to describe what the project was intended to accomplish or why it was initiated, what changes were made and a description of the results).

Step 2: Define Audiences. An effective communications plan targets messages and customizes tactics to specific audiences. In order to direct resources appropriately, you may choose to rank order audiences as primary or secondary. Internal audiences for a QAPI communications plan will likely include the board of directors/trustees, staff, residents, and their families. You may also choose to communicate about QAPI activities to external audiences, such as community partners, potential new residents, the media, or others. List your target audiences below.

Primary Audience(s): _____

Secondary Audience(s): _____

Step 3: Identify Communications Channels. Consider the different communications channels available for use. Mark any potential channels you may want to use based on whether (a) your organization has had previous success with it or has the resources available to try it for the first time; (b) your staff has the adequate skills and time to appropriately execute it; and (c) funds and other resources are available to support its use.

In-Person Channels:

- Face-to-face small meetings
- Health fairs or trade association events
- Lunch and learn events
- Off-site meetings, retreats, or seminars
- On-site meetings, retreats, or seminars
- Presentations or speeches
- Special events
- Town meetings
- Other: _____

Media Channels:

- Letters to the editor
- Paid advertising
- Press releases
- Other: _____

Print Channels:

- Annual report
- Banners
- Direct mailings
- Employee pay stub enclosures
- Fact sheets
- Flyers
- Newsletters
- Posters
- Other: _____

Electronic Channels:

- Blog
- Computer/video kiosk
- E-mail
- E-newsletters
- Intranet
- Organizational website
- Social networking websites (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn)
- Video
- Other: _____

Step 4: Define Approach. Using the table found on the following page, define key aspects of the communications plan based on audience and timeframe.

Each table has room to define a plan for two audiences.

	[Insert Name of Audience]	[Insert Name of Audience]
<p>Purpose Why is it important to communicate to this audience? What is the goal of your communications? Do you have a specific need or request (i.e., do you need approval, buy-in, involvement, support)?</p>		
<p>Values What does this audience most value when it comes to this topic? How will the content support these values? How will you express this in your messaging?</p>		
<p>Concerns What is this audience's greatest concern when it comes to this topic? How can the content alleviate these concerns or overcome them as barriers? How will you express this in your messaging?</p>		
<p>Message What is the key message you want to deliver to this audience at this time? Remember to tie in the audience's values and concerns. Also address the following: what successes are there at this point? What challenges need to be overcome? What is happening next?</p>		
<p>Channels Which communication channels will you use for this audience (Step 4)? How frequently will they be used?</p>		
<p>Messenger Who will deliver the message to this audience? You may assign the responsibility for delivering the message through each channel to different individuals.</p>		
<p>Evaluation How will you know you were successful? What output will you track (e.g., number of e-newsletters delivered and opened)? How will you monitor the effectiveness of the messages and channels used (e.g., surveys, key informant interviews, observations of changed behavior)?</p>		