Developing and delivering a communications strategy

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• Why is it important?
• Key components
• Delivering a strategy
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What is a communications strategy?

• A plan of action covering a finite time period
• A means of agreeing what you are trying to achieve
• A plan against which to measure success
• A process which helps you learn lessons for the future
Why is a comms strategy important?

• Enables you to plan ahead so you can:
  • Exploit all the channels available to you
  • Agree messages, timescales and responsibilities
  • Identify risks and take mitigating action
  • Take control of communications activity
Key components

Vision and goals

Objectives

Audiences

Messages

Channels

Timeline

Risks
Vision and goals

Vision

• Broad statement of intent:
  • To run the best chemistry department in the country
  • To migrate UAS from Lotus Notes to Outlook

Goals

• What objectives are required to realise that vision?
  • To secure an additional £5m in research funding by 2011
  • To undertake a phased roll-out of Outlook from May to July
Communications objectives

• State what you want to achieve from your comms activity:
  • To inform internal and external audiences about the acquisition of a new site for the research facility.

• Tailor your objectives by audience:
  • Provide reassurance to staff that locating the new facility outside Oxford will not result in redundancies.
Opening of new research facility

**VISION**
To conduct world-leading, life-saving research.

**GOALS**
- To attract research funding to the University.
- To build the University’s reputation in the field.
- To attract and retain the best academics and staff.

**COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES**

**STAFF**
Ensure staff who are moving to the new building feel informed and engaged.

**ACADEMIC COMMUNITY**
Encourage high-calibre candidates to apply for the new Chairs.

**DONORS**
Position department as dynamic and cutting-edge; worthy beneficiary for philanthropic gifts.
## Communications objectives by outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do we want people to know?</th>
<th>What do we want people to think?</th>
<th>What do we want people to do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A new email system is being introduced for UAS</td>
<td>• The new email system will benefit me by xxx</td>
<td>• Attend a roadshow to prepare for migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We will be migrated on 12 October</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Audience segmentation

Internal audience
- Staff
- Students
- Alumni

External audience
- Local community
- Wider academic community
- Prospective students

Power
- Decision-makers
- Opinion-formers
- Funders

Interest
- Directly affected
- Close interest
- General interest
Key messages

• Clear, concise, memorable
• Explain abbreviations, don’t use jargon
• Make messages relevant to your audience:
  • What is happening and when?
  • What does it mean for me?
  • What do you want me to do?
Key messages

What is happening and when?

• A new scheme is being introduced on 15 June called Salary Exchange.
• It involves a change in the way staff pension contributions are made.

What does it mean for me?

• It will result in a small increase in take-home pay for individuals and cost-savings for the University.

What do you want me to do?

• You will be enrolled automatically in the scheme unless you opt out by 30 May.
Communication channels

Your channels will be determined by:

- Audience
- Key messages
- Resources
- Time
Communication channels

Push channels
- Email
- Letter
- E-bulletin

Pull channels
- Website
- FAQs

Background channels
- Posters
- Leaflets
- Printed newsletter

Interactive channels
- Roadshows
- Open forum
- Social media (e.g. Facebook)

Mediated channels
- Newspapers
- Specialist press
- Radio and TV
Timeline

- What is your deadline?
- When is the optimum time to launch?
- Exploit hooks to attract media interest
- Ensure your key spokespeople are available
- Coordinate who is told what and when
Risks and mitigation

- Identify risks and issues
- Plan how you will deal with them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision to site the new facility outside Oxford brings criticism from local MPs / councillors.</td>
<td>Ensure local councillors and MPs are informed by email in advance of the press release.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Delivering a strategy

• Only commit to what you can deliver
• Agree responsibilities and sign-off process
• Ensure processes and resources are in place
• Inform the Press Office about any reputational issues
Evaluation

- Measure impact and success
- Helps you develop and refine your strategy
- Learn lessons for the future

**Quantitative methods**
- Attendance at presentations
- Number of questions
- Number of hits to website

**Qualitative methods**
- Feedback forms
- Focus groups
- Identify repeated themes & issues
## In summary

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| **Objectives** | • By audience  
|             | • By outcome                                                    |
| **Audiences**  | • Internal, external  
|             | • Influence, power                                              |
| **Messages**   | • Clear, concise, memorable  
|             | • What does it mean for me?                                     |
| **Channels**   | • Push, pull, background, interactive  
|             | • Mediated                                                      |
| **Risks**      | • Identify risks and issues  
|             | • Mitigation                                                    |
Exercise

- Working in groups, spend 15 minutes discussing one area
- Each group to report back via a spokesperson

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| Channels         | • Push, pull, background, interactive  
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| Risks            | • Identify risks and issues  
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