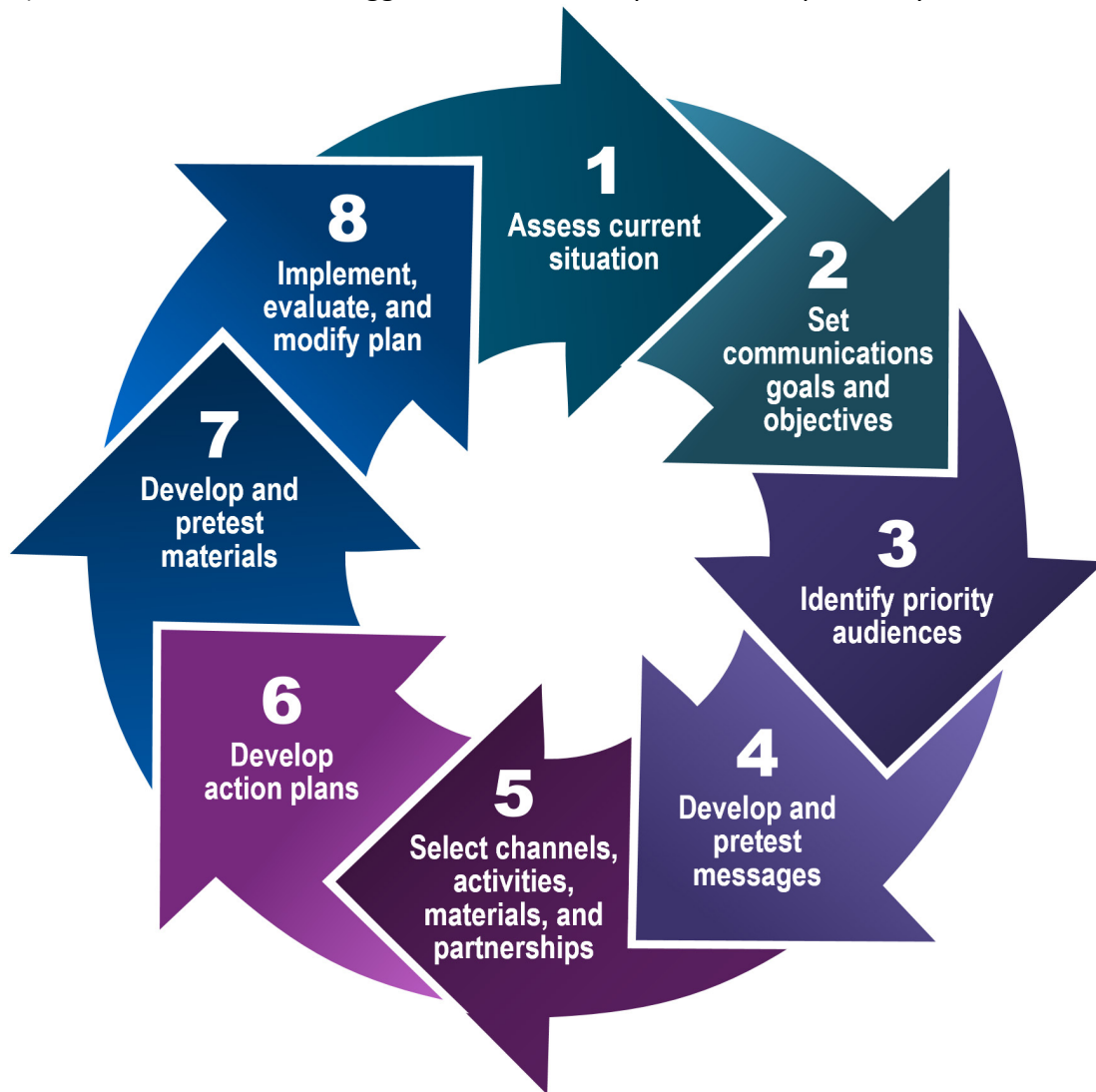


Program Communication Planning Template

Eight Steps to Success

This template follows an eight-step communication planning model.¹ For each step, we provide suggestions and recommendations for completing the step as well as space to record your proposed activity. Add more space as needed. The template ends with a sample action plan (step 6), which can, like all the suggestions in this template, be adapted for your needs.



Program Communication Plan for [name of state/program]

1. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS. *Think about:*

- *What programs, people, and money -- resources -- are currently available to you.*
- *What else is happening in your state or community? What could be seen as “competition” for the attention of community members?*
- *What existing research and what activities can you pursue that will lead to a better understanding of the challenge in your state or community?*

2A. PROGRAM GOAL. *The overall goal for your program? Often the program goal is articulated in your strategic plan, logic model, or other guiding documents.*

2B. COMMUNICATION GOAL. *Think about:*

- *The overarching goal for the communication effort that supports your program goal.*
- *Write as “a broad, general, tangible, and descriptive statement. It does not say how to do something, but rather what the results will look like.”ⁱⁱ*

2C. COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES. *Think about:*

- *Steps toward achieving your communication goal.*
- *Write as “a specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-bound condition that must be attained in order to accomplish [your communication] goal.”*

[communication objective 1]

[communication objective 2]

[communication objective 3]

Program Communication Plan for [name of state/program]

3A. PRIORITY AUDIENCE SEGMENT. *Think about:*

- *Specific group of community members that you want to engage with your initial efforts. You may want – or need – to focus on different audience segments with additional or subsequent communication efforts.*
- *Priority audiences are more specific than broad population groups (e.g., general public, workers). Describe the audience segment with a “who” statement (e.g., “workers who have been injured and are at risk of not returning to work”)*

3B. RESEARCH ACTIVITIES. *Consider activities to better understand your priority audience, especially their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Consider using previous research or conducting your own focus and discussion groups, surveys, community discussions and forums, one-on-one conversations.*

3C. SECONDARY AUDIENCES. *Think about:*

- *Groups of people who can influence the behavior(s) of your priority audience segment.*
- *Possible secondary audiences include friends, family, colleagues, community leaders, influencers in the community, etc.*

Program Communication Plan for [name of state/program]

4A. MESSAGES. Consider effective messages make an issue **relevant and urgent** to your priority audience. Effective messages communicate ways to lower barriers and increase the benefits of adopting or abandoning a behavior.

4B. MESSAGE TESTING PLAN. Consider ways to ensure that your messages will resonate with your priority audience. Testing could include groups, surveys, or interviews, intercepts, or informal discussions with members of the priority audience.

5A. COMMUNICATION CHANNELS. Consider several communication channels to reach your priority audiences. Think “people, places, things” when deciding which channels. The preferences and practices of your priority audiences should drive this decision.

5B. ACTIVITIES & EVENTS. Consider activities and events that will help you engage with your priority audiences. Activities and events range from a “formal” events and press conference through community gathering, conferences, trade shows, etc..

Program Communication Plan for [name of state/program]

5C. PARTNERS. Consider individuals and organizations in your state or community who can help develop, implement, and evaluation our communication efforts, including community leaders, nonprofits, and civic organizations.

6. ACTION PLAN. Consider the primary tasks and supporting activities that need to get done in order to execute on this plan. Ensure that you assign responsibility for each activity to a person with a realistic completion date.

Task	Activity	Responsibility	Completion Date

[Add more rows as needed]

ⁱ Developed by Patrick Cook based on National Cancer Institute. (2001). Making health communication programs work; Kotler, P., & Lee, N. (2008). Social marketing: Improving the quality of life.

ⁱⁱ Dan Feliciano, "Do you know the difference between a goal and an objective?" *Fast Company*, April 1, 2008. Retrieved from <https://www.fastcompany.com/776233/do-you-know-difference-between-goal-and-objective>