

# Effective Communication Planning for Program Success

March 25, 2021



**RETAIN**

Retaining Employment and Talent  
After Injury/Illness Network

 **AIR**<sup>®</sup>  
AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH<sup>®</sup>

  
**ODEP**  
Office of Disability  
Employment Policy

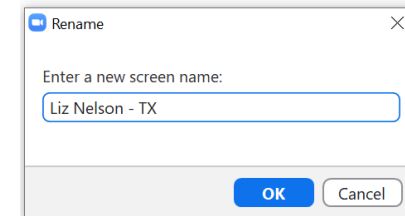
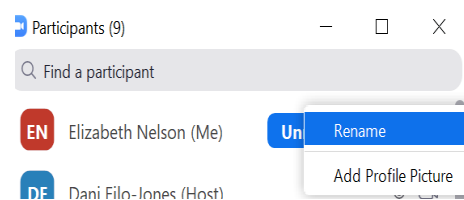
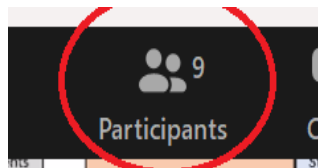
# How to Participate

Chat box and email:

- Use the chat box throughout the session to make comments and communicate your tech problems. Raise your hand and we'll call on you. Lower your hand after you've been called on.
- You also can communicate by email at [RETAINTA@air.org](mailto:RETAINTA@air.org).

Other helpful Zoom features:

- To access closed captioning, click on the link in the chat box.
- To add your state abbreviation to your name, find your name under "Participants," click "More" beside your name, and select "Rename."



# Welcome

**RETAIN** | Retaining Employment and Talent After  
Injury/Illness Network

# About RETAIN

- Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN)
- Joint initiative led by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), and funded by ODEP, DOL's Employment and Training Administration and the Social Security Administration
- RETAIN technical assistance (TA) funded by ODEP and housed at the American Institutes for Research (AIR)
- Focused on building state capacity in stay-at-work (SAW)/return-to-work (RTW) strategies across eight states
- Explores ways to help people who become ill or injured during their working years remain in the labor force

# Virtual Meeting/Conference Recording Notice

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# Disclaimer

These materials were prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Disability Employment Policy, and Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN) state grantees by the American Institutes for Research and the presenting subject matter expert. The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to DOL, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement of same by the U.S. Government.

# Objectives

Through this webinar, attendees will:

- Learn about effective communication planning to promote RETAIN programs to priority audiences and to communicate successes to key stakeholders
- Understand the eight key steps of the communication planning model
- Learn how to plan communication efforts so they can be evaluated for success

# Today's Speaker



Patrick Cook

**Patrick Cook** is a communication and social marketing professional with more than 20 years of experience helping federal, state, and local agencies and organizations plan and implement effective communication and marketing programs. With experience in a wide variety of health and safety issues—from disease prevention and health promotion to violence prevention and injury control—Patrick has helped government and nonprofit teams develop the skills and capacity to plan, implement, and evaluate effective communication efforts.





# Effective Communication Planning for Program Success

March 25, 2021

Patrick Cook

# Our Work Plan for Today

Introduction to program  
communication and template

Breakout planning sessions in  
state teams

Pulling it all together

## Tool: Program Communication Planning Template

### Program Communication Planning Template

#### Eight Steps to Success

This template follows an eight-step communication planning model.<sup>1</sup> 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

If you build it, will they come?  
*Promotion*

If you build it, will they fund?  
*Sustainability*



## Promotion

Engage priority groups (individuals in communities) who are affected directly by SAW/RTW and who can benefit from program, practice, or policy

## Sustainability

Engage stakeholders (decision makers and policy makers, community members, business leaders, and others) who can support and sustain the work of the initiative or program



**“Public relations** is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.”  
*(About Public Relations, 2021)*

**“Marketing** is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.” *(Definitions of Marketing, 2021)*

**“Social marketing** seeks to develop and integrate marketing concepts with other approaches to influence behaviors that benefit individuals and communities for the greater social good.” *(International Social Marketing Association, 2021)*







Who do you want to do  
what, why, and how?

Knowledge > Attitudes > Practices



What we  
know

What we  
believe

What we do

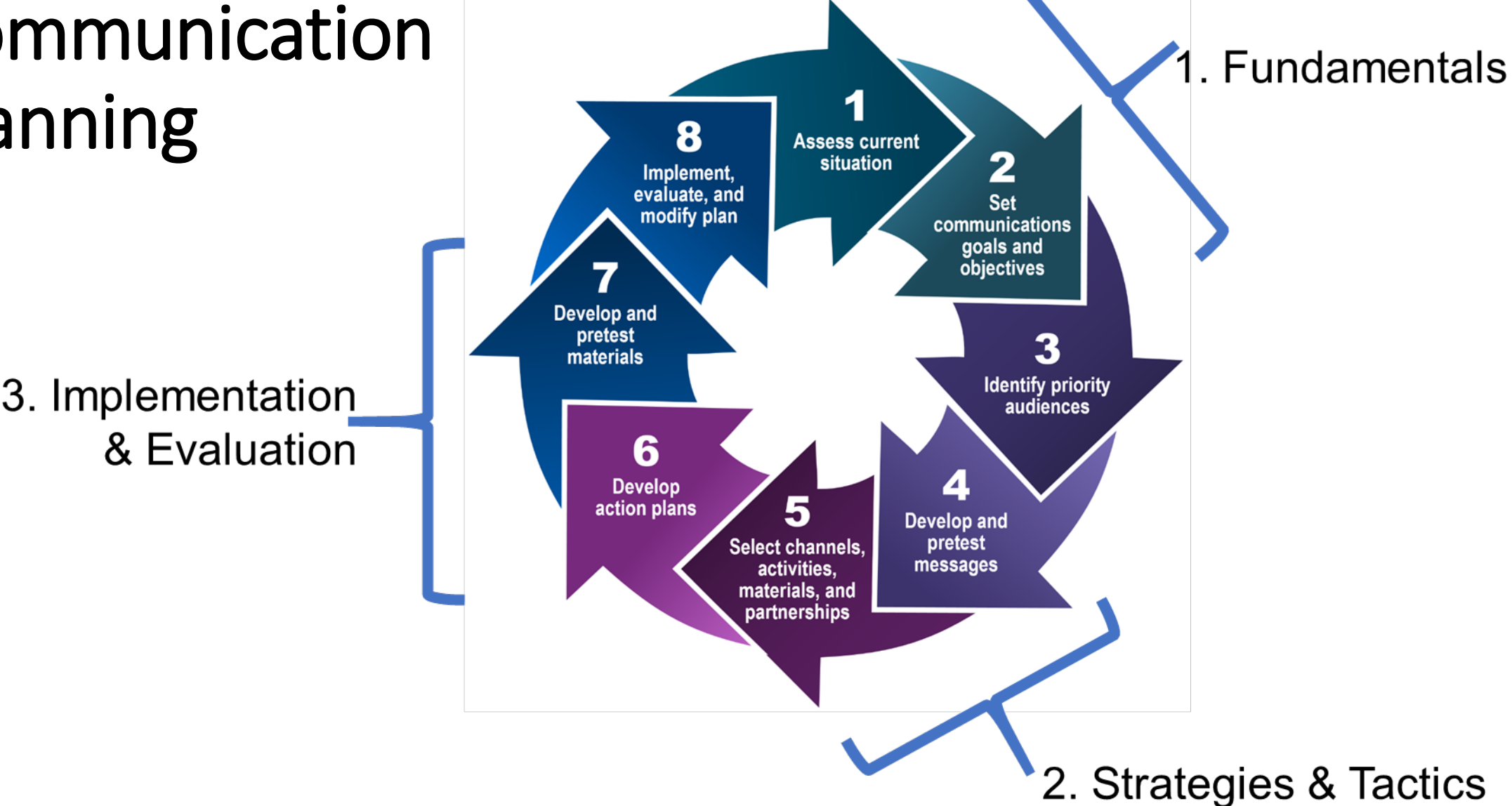
# Poll 1: I know that ...



## Poll 2: But I do this ...



# Communication Planning



# Planning Template

- Provides direction on eight steps
- Can be used as your communication plan when completed
- Adaptable—make it your own

## Program Communication Planning Template

### Eight Steps to Success

This template follows an eight-step communication planning model.<sup>1</sup> 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.



# Module 1: Fundamentals

# Communication Planning

3. Implementation & Evaluation



1. Fundamentals

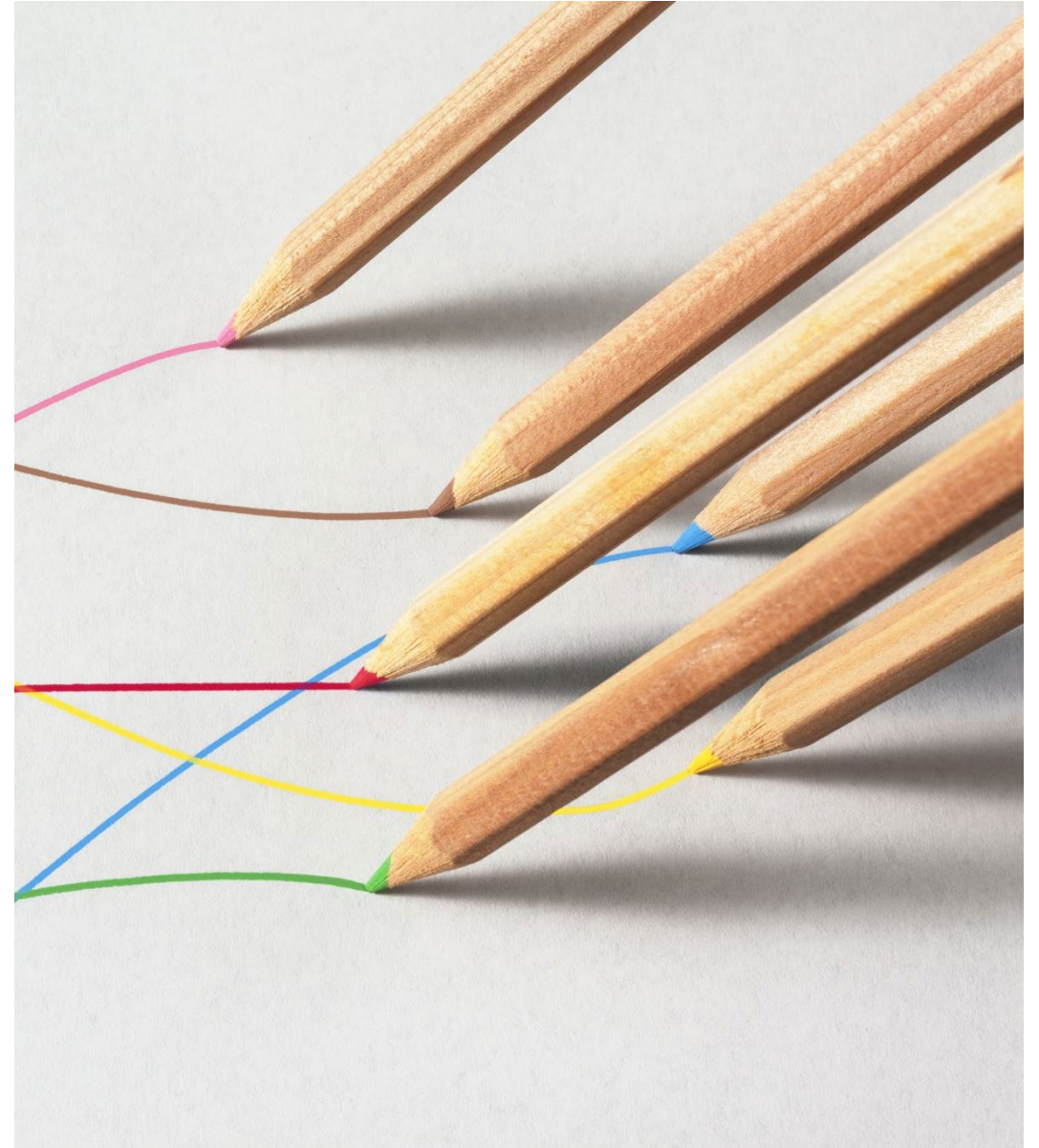
2. Strategies & Tactics





# Understanding Our Situation

- **Support**—What resources (programs, people, money) are or could be available to us?
- **Competition**—What's competing for the attention of our community?
- **Confirmation**—What research could you do to deepen understanding?

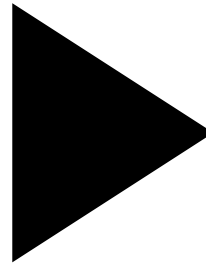




# Goals

## **Program Goal:**

As outlined in your strategic plan, program plan, or other guiding documents.



## **Communication Goal:**

Broad, general, tangible, and descriptive statement. It does not say how to do something, but rather describes what the results will look like.\*

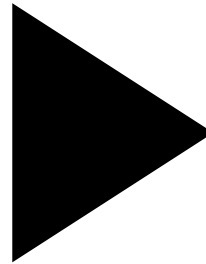
\* Dan Feliciano, "Do you know the difference between a goal and an objective?" Fast Company, April 1, 2008. Retrieved from <https://www.fastcompany.com/776233/do-you-know-difference-between-goal-and-objective>



# Sample Goals

## Program Goals:

- To increase employment retention and labor force participation of individuals who acquire and/or are at risk of developing disabilities that inhibit their ability to work
- To reduce long-term work absences among project participants, including the need for Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income.\*



## Communication Goal:

- More persons who experienced injury working in [industry X] and [industry y] participating in the [name] program.

\* Source <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employers/saw-rtw/about>

# Communication Supports Program





# Communication Objectives

- An objective is a specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-bound condition that must be attained to accomplish (your communication) goal.\*
- Objectives provide steps toward achieving our goal.
- Several objectives usually comprise each goal.



\* 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>



# Sample Objectives

- *Goal:* More persons who experienced injury working in [industry X] and [industry y] participating in the [name of program].
- *Objective 1:* Increase participation in [program name] of persons who experienced injury working in [industry X] by 25% by the end of 2022.
- *Objective 2:* Increase participation in [program name] of persons who experienced injury working in [industry Y] by 10% by the end of 2022.

# Audiences



# Population > audience > audience segment

Workers >

Workers who have been injured >

*Workers who have been injured  
and are at risk of not returning to  
work*



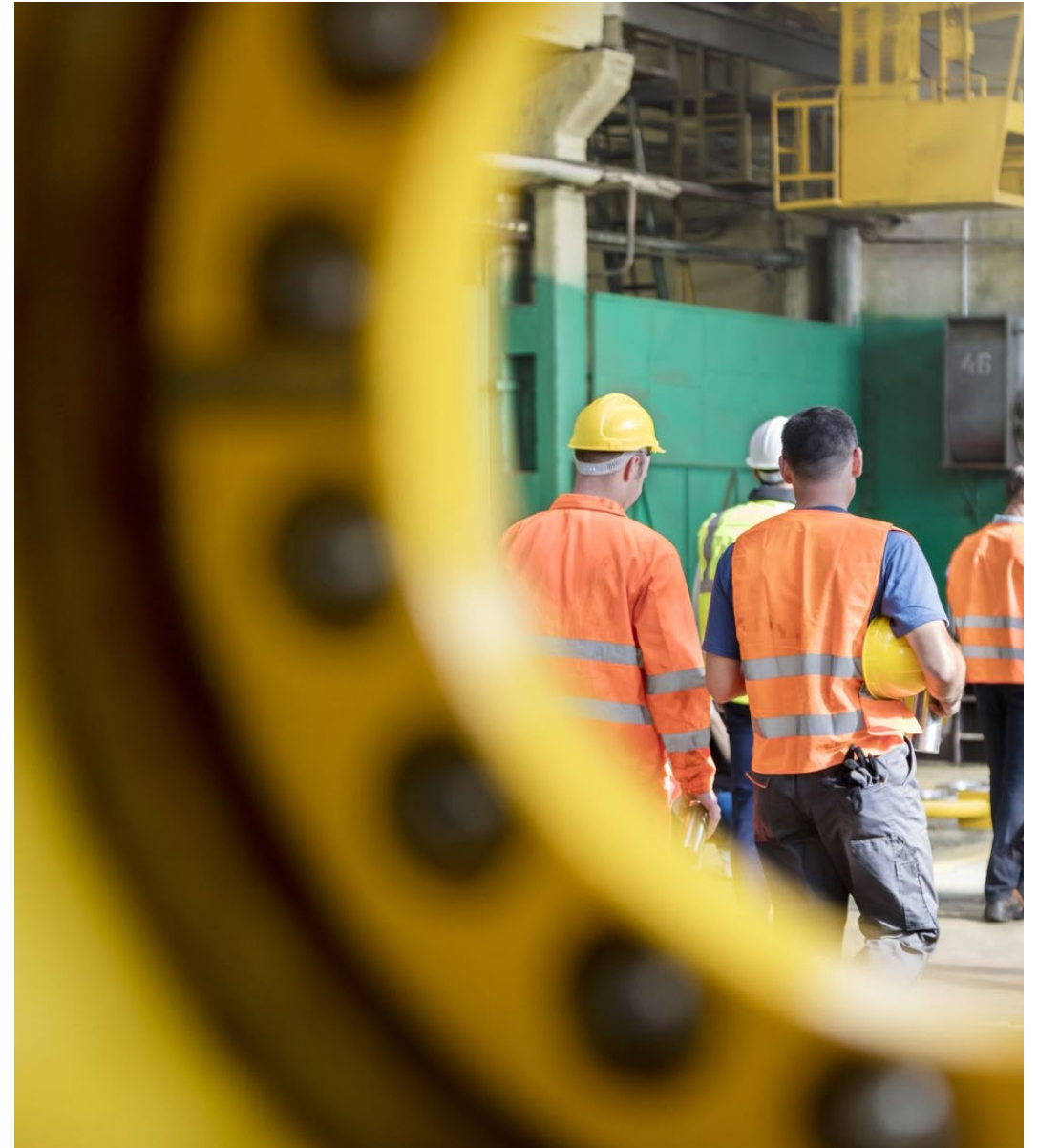


# The “Who” in Our Campaign

Define audience segment by:

- Who are the people at highest risk?
- Who are the people most open to change?
- What are the critical-for-success groups?\*

E.g., “Workers who have been injured and are at risk of not returning to work”



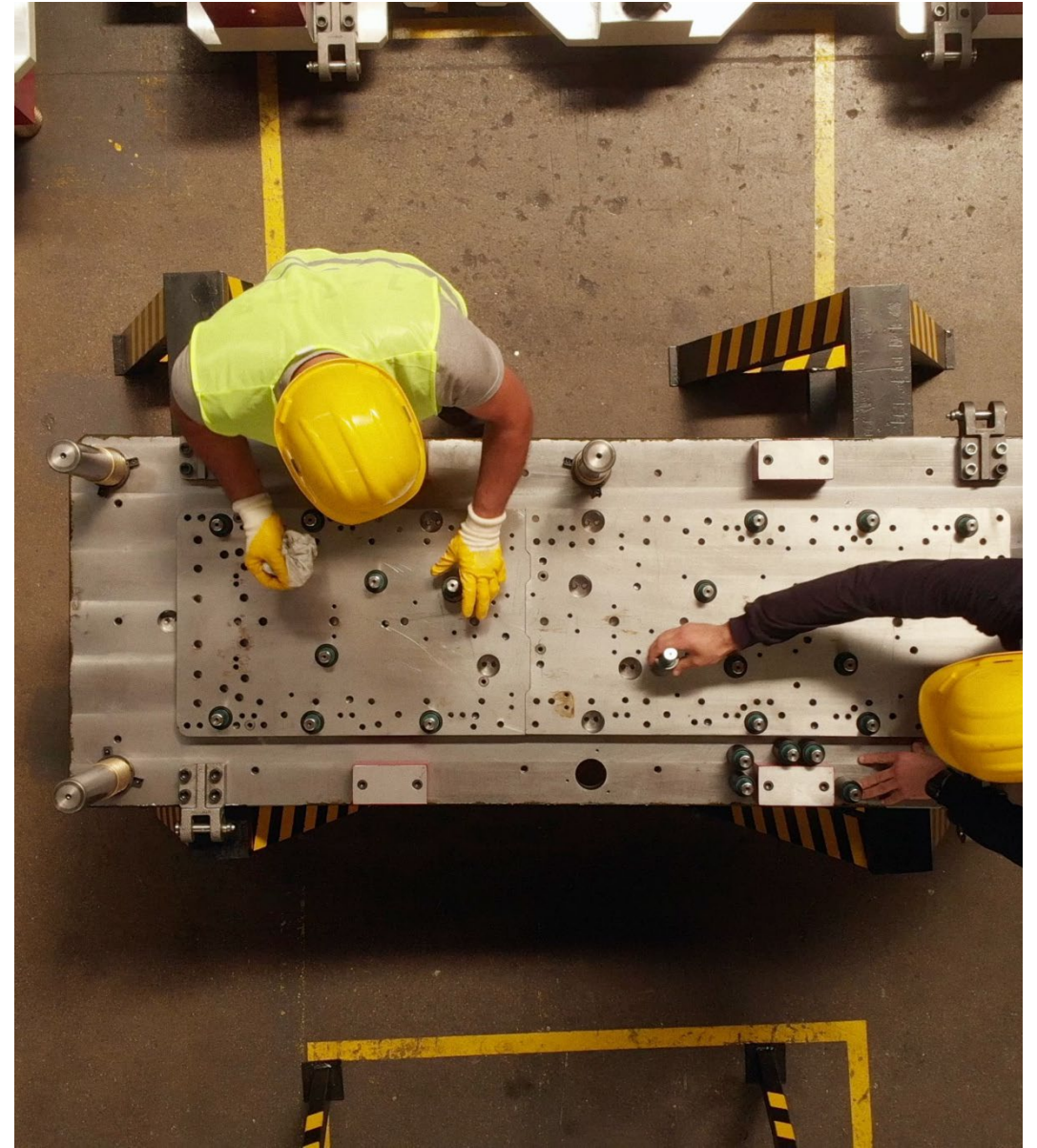
# Understanding priority audience segment

- Formative research: knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP)
- Secondary sources: surveillance data, community surveys
- Primary research: focus groups, interviews, discussions, one-on-one conversations



# Secondary Audiences

- Influencers are people who can
  - Change minds and change behaviors
  - Lower barriers and increase motivation
- Influencers may be managers, colleagues, union and community leaders, friends, family



# Priority Versus Target Audience

- Effective prevention communication: engagement and co-creation
- “Target” audience: “us versus them”
- “Target”: metaphor of war



Check In:  
Who are your priority audiences?

# Module 2: Strategies & Tactics

### 3. Implementation & Evaluation



### 1. Fundamentals

### 2. Strategies & Tactics

4

Develop and  
pretest  
messages

# Develop and Pretest Messages

What does your audience  
need to know?

What can they hear?

How do you want them to  
feel?





# Effective Messages

- Align with your audiences' values
- Make the issue relevant and urgent
- Solve a problem
- Lower barriers to change
- Increase motivation for action



# Sample Message

Workplace injuries like low back pain, sprains, or strains can lay you low. They also can turn into disabling injuries that keep you away from your work.

Getting help and treatment early can make a world of difference.

We can help.

**RETAIN**

[gethelp@rtwc.mystate.gov](mailto:gethelp@rtwc.mystate.gov)

1 800 555 5555



5

Select channels,  
activities,  
materials, and  
partnerships

# Channels, Activities, Materials, and Partnerships

Where does our audience live, work, and play?

Whom do they trust?

How do they like to receive information?

# Channels



## People:

- Bosses and co-workers
- Friends and family
- Community leaders
- Other trusted authorities

## Places:

- Laundromat
- School
- Community center
- Place of worship
- Health clinic

## Things:

- Website
- Social media
- Email and text
- Apps
- TV, radio, and print

# Activities and Events



# Materials

## Examples:

- Fact sheets
- Posters and infographics
- Success stories and articles
- Videos, buttons, and banners
- T-shirts, stickers, and decals
- Public service announcements



Check In:  
What are some of the materials that have worked in  
your communications efforts?

Enter your response in Chat

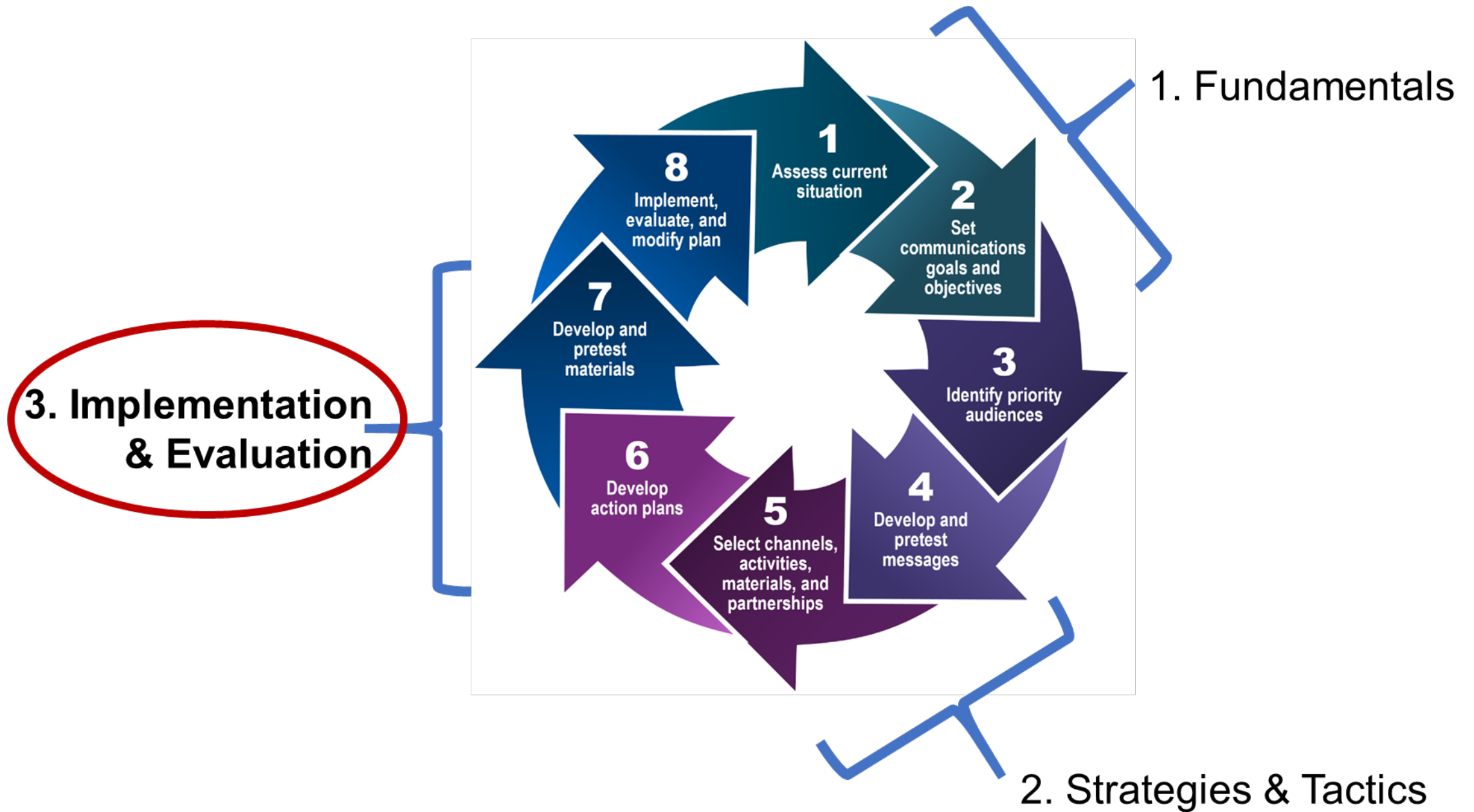
# Materials Testing

- Tells you whether your materials will work
- Helps you improve design before going to production
- Ensures cultural alignment





# Module 3: Action Planning





# Action Plan

- Major tasks and activities
- Target date for completing each task
- Person responsible for each task

Task	Activity	Responsibility	Completion Date

6

Develop  
action plans

# Sample Action Plan

Task	Activity	Responsibility	Completion Date
1	Conduct literature review	TC	5/28/2021
1	Conduct environmental scan	AD	5/28
2	Plan planning session with advisory group	TC	6/15
2	Host planning session with advisory group; take notes	AD	6/30
3	Plan community forums	TC	7/31



Questions?

# Resources

# RETAIN Project

- New Program Communication Planning Template
- ROC *Communications and Branding* Topic Page

<https://retainta.org/course/view.php?id=2&section=10>



# References

About Public Relations. (2021, March 17). Retrieved from <https://www.prsa.org/about/all-about-pr>

Definitions of Marketing. (2021, March 17). Retrieved from <https://www.ama.org/the-definition-of-marketing-what-is-marketing/>

International Social Marketing Association. (2021, March 17). Retrieved from <https://www.i-socialmarketing.org>





Thank you!  
patrick@cooksow.com

# Thank you for your participation!

Please take a moment to complete this evaluation:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3 25 21 Communications PCook](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3_25_21_Communications_PCook)