

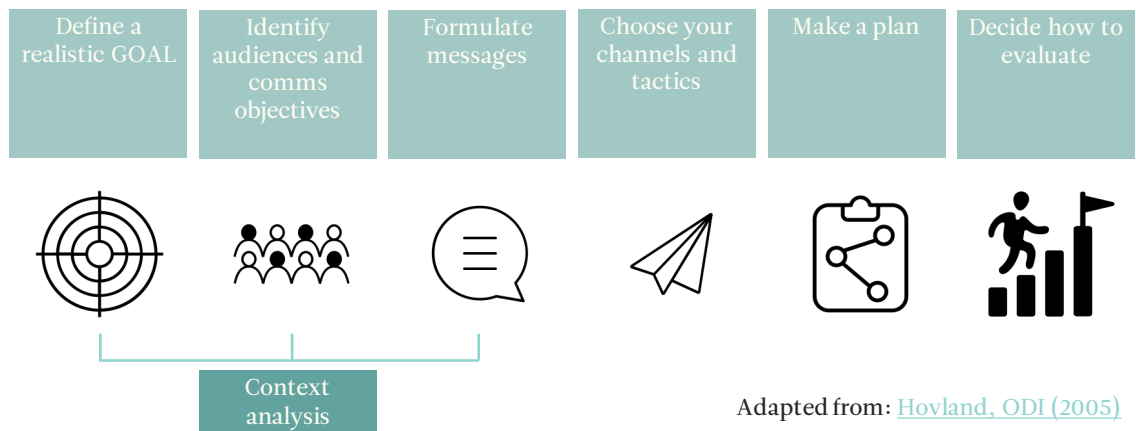
Communications strategy and MEL resources

Jeff Knezovich and Carolina Kern | December 2017

Communications strategies

Communications strategies are living documents that express the objectives, audiences, messages and channels that will be used for a particular outreach activity. They can be pitched at the organisational or campaign-level and should specify the resources (human and money) that will be needed to get to where you want to go. They are useful for coordinating tasks, with clear time-scales and task 'owners' of those tasks. They should also have defined measures for success and mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and learning from the process.

The process for developing communication strategies



Adapted from: [Hovland, ODI \(2005\)](#)

Communications strategy resources

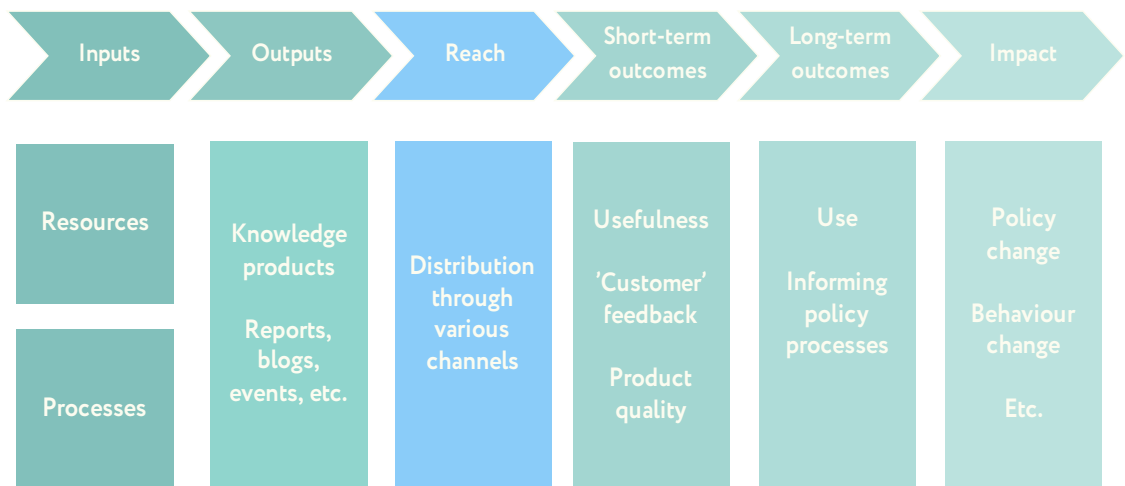
- Ingie Hovland 'Planning Tools: How to write a communications strategy' <https://www.odi.org/publications/5186-planning-tools-how-write-communications-strategy>
- Richard Darlington 'Defying gravity: why the 'submarine strategy' drags you down' <https://wonkcomms.net/2017/08/16/defying-gravity-why-the-submarine-strategy-drags-you-down/>
- Chip and Dan Heath 'Made to stick: Why some ideas survive and others die' <https://brandgenetics.com/made-to-stick-why-some-ideas-survive-and-others-die-speed-summary/>

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Monitoring, evaluation and learning from communication activities is useful for a number of reasons. It can support accountability, whether that's to donors or other funders, or to managers. At a fundamental level, it can also help to demonstrate the impact of effective communications planning and help build support for communications activities with researchers and other staff. And importantly, it can help to start conversations about what's working and what could be improved.

Most monitoring, evaluation and learning focuses on understanding inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts. Yet, most communications monitoring focuses only on reach, which is how many people had the opportunity to view a communications output. Just as important are some of the outcomes and measures of usefulness and use. See the diagram below (from Sullivan, 2007) for an overview of monitoring communications projects.

Framework for monitoring, evaluating and learning from communications activities



Relevant indicators for tracking different levels of communication outcomes for selected channels

	Reach	Usefulness	Use
Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copies printed/distributed Page views Downloads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scroll depth/time Comments (online, in person, via email) Feedback survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citations and mentions
Blogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Page views Networks accessed from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scroll depth/time Comments on blog Organic shares Re-shares 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citations and mentions Inbound links
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impressions Expands Clicks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-shares Replies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embedding
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of attendees Number of online attendees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments and discussion at event Feedback forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citations and mentions

Monitoring, evaluation and learning resources

General resources

- Tara Sullivan and others ‘**Guide to Monitoring and Evaluating Health Information Products and Services**’ <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.513.7887&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Carolina Kern ‘**Monitoring your communications: try this**’ <https://onthinktanks.org/articles/monitoring-your-comms-try-this/>
- Enrique Mendizabal ‘**Research uptake: what is it and can it be measured?**’ <https://onthinktanks.org/articles/research-uptake-what-is-it-and-can-it-be-measured/>
- Louise Ball ‘**Four questions to assess your research communications impact**’ <https://onthinktanks.org/articles/four-questions-to-assess-your-research-communications-impact/>
- Nick Scott ‘**A pragmatic guide to monitoring and evaluating research communications using digital tools**’ <https://onthinktanks.org/resources/a-pragmatic-guide-to-monitoring-and-evaluating-research-communications-using-digital-tools/>

Tools

- Richard Darlington ‘**After Action Reviews: the power of the feedback loop**’ <https://wonkcomms.net/2016/10/30/after-action-reviews-the-power-of-the-feedback-loop/>

Technologies

- Analytics and surveys
 - Google Analytics (<https://analytics.google.com>)
 - Twitter analytics (<https://analytics.twitter.com>)
 - 4Q survey (<https://www.iperceptions.com/en/4q>)
 - Google Site Surveys (<https://www.google.com/analytics/surveys/>)
 - HotJar (<https://www.hotjar.com>)
- Automatic collection
 - Zapier (<https://www.zapier.com>)
 - Import.io (<https://www.import.io>)
- Report creation
 - Google Data Studio (<https://datastudio.google.com>)
 - Tableau (<https://www.tableau.com>)