## Activity: Developing a Communications Plan

### Goals

1. Develop a plan to communication information and decisions with your community

### Prerequisites

None, although this guide presumes that your team has already decided that an event, decision, or other "big" piece of information needs an enhanced level of communication (i.e., outside the norm).

### Who Should Participate?

Program leadership (strategic thinkers), Program management (tactical thinkers)

### Length

60 minutes

### Activity Instructions

As a group, discuss and answer the following questions. The included matrix can help organize your decisions.

1. Who is responsible for implementing the communications plan and ensuring its success?

2. What is being communicated?

   a. Be very clear about what (if anything) is changing - have answers ready for what you anticipate to be common misperceptions

   b. Be prepared to respond to controversies / negative feedback

3. What do you want to happen as a result of each communication? Let your stakeholders know the purpose of the communication upfront - is it just for information, or do they need to take action?

4. Who is responsible for preparing and delivering communications? Who is on hand to proofread and ensure the message and any necessary actions on the part of stakeholders is clear?

5. Who are the stakeholders who need to receive the information? Is the information the same for each stakeholder group?

6. What is your communications timeline? Different communications might be timed to different elements of an event, such as an initial announcement and then follow-ups about significant milestones.

7. How will you share the information to ensure that all stakeholders receive it? Messages may need to be repeated in multiple formats across multiple channels.

8. Who will be responsible for following up to ensure that messages were received?

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The communications planning matrix below may help organize your plan (Examples in **blue italics**).

| Description<br>*What type of comm?* | Frequency<br>*How often?* | Method<br>*Channel* | Audience<br>*Recipient* | Owner<br>*Responsibility* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Project team meeting* | *Daily* | *Meeting* | *Tech team / Project team* | *PM*<br><br>*Chair* |
| *Stakeholder update* | *Biweekly* | *Email / Website* | *Stakeholders (internal and external)* | *PM* |
| *Leadership group update* | *Biweekly* | *Meeting* | *Executive leadership* | *PM* |
| *Regular newsletter / blog* | *Weekly* | *Portion in newsletter/blog/etc.* | *Users / community at large* | *Comms team lead* |