

Communication Strategy

✓ Checklist for Activists

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Stop! Before you start that Facebook page, hire that PR consultant, or look for a protagonist for your video, double-check your strategy here.

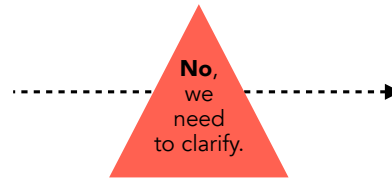
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Goal

Is it clear what you want to achieve?

Yes, our outcome is clear.

Example: If you are trying to increase funding in a public health budget, do you know which budget and how much the increase should be?



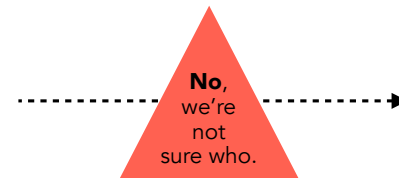
Goal Tip: Collect your team and identify a goal that is SMART: specific, measurable (achievement can be determined objectively), attainable & realistic (possible given your financial, skill, material, and time resources), and time-bound (connected to a deadline).

Audience

Is it clear who you need to persuade?

Yes, we know who has the power.

Example: Do you know who in the Ministry of Health (MoH) has the power to make that addition to the budget and how the legislature or executive branch will approve that change?



Audience Tip: The audience(s) of advocacy communication are the people with the power to realize your goal. The purpose of communicating with them is to persuade them to take action that will realize your goal. If you don't know who has the power, seek more information. Call allies with greater knowledge of the organization you are trying to influence and ask who has the power to realize your goal.

Message

Do you know what will persuade your audience to take action?

Yes, we know what to say.

Example: If you decide you'll need to mobilize the Roma/sex worker/HIV+ community to influence your audience in the MoH, do you know which messages you'll use to mobilize them?



Message Tip: The messages you'll use to mobilize an audience need to speak to the values and interests of the people in that audience. The most effective messages move people emotionally as well as intellectually. These messages use stories as well as information to make a call to action.

Media

How will you transmit the message?

Yes, we know how to reach the audience.

Example: What are the best ways to transmit your message to the community? Is it social media? Mobile text message (SMS)? TV? An in-person presentation?

Resources

How much can you actually do?

Yes, all our planned actions are possible.

Example: If you decide you want to do a live video screening to the community, do you have the skills, money, and time to create the video? Where can you host the screening?

Plan

When will it happen and who's responsible?

Yes, we assigned tasks with due dates,

Example: When does the video need to be completed? Who will edit the footage and how long will that take? Who will talk to our allies to arrange a screening location?

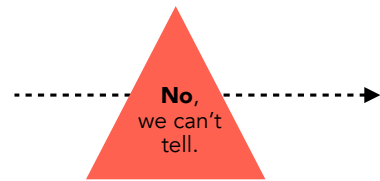
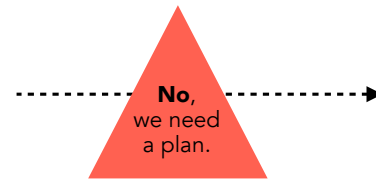
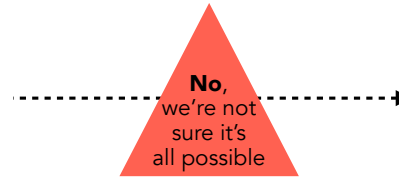
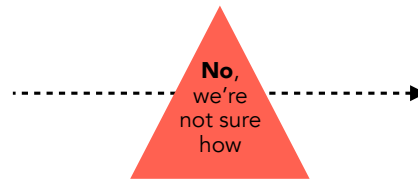
Evaluation

Are you closer to your goal?

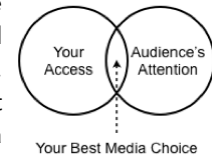
Yes, we know how much this media helped us.

Example: How many community members took action after watching the video? Did the MoH representative ask questions after our presentation or did she seem bored?

Keep going! It takes many tactics to achieve a social change goal. Go back to your audience and try a different message, a different medium. You can do this!



Media Tip: The best medium to transmit your message is one that you have access to and your audience pays attention to. (See diagram, right.) If you don't know your audience's media habits, ask members of the audience group directly in a focus group or survey or ask an expert who works with them closely.



Resource Tip: Your key resources are time, skills, equipment, and money. When thinking about what resources you have, consider the resources of allies and volunteers as well as staff. If you don't have enough resources, go back to the previous steps of this checklist and only do the communication work most likely to persuade your audience.

Planning Tip: It often helps to work backwards. Start with the date you need to have your media product finished. Then decide what you need to do immediately before the deadline. Work backwards until you get to today. Since the plan will certainly change, be more specific in the near future than in the distant future. Put tasks on a shared calendar like Google Calendar to support accountability.

Evaluation Tip: The key to media evaluation is looking for evidence as to whether your media had the intended persuasion effect on your audience. For digital content, views and shares are easy to track, but you don't know who viewed or shared. It's better to start with your audience than to count easy metrics. One media tactic is unlikely to get you all the way to your goal. The aim is to learn and gain insight you can use on your next tactic.