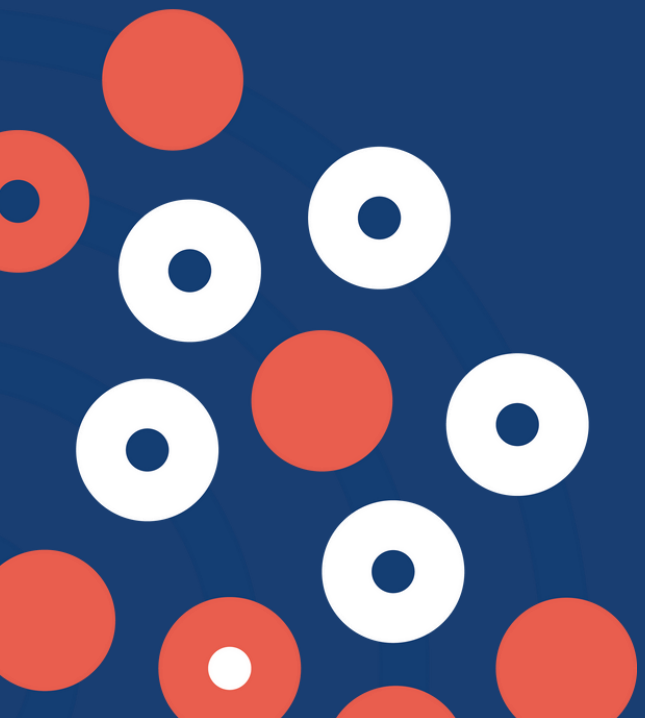


Communicating your research

Research Week 2024

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Connecting the dots between research and communication

“Research is of no use unless it gets to the people that need to use it.” - Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer for England and the UK government’s Chief Medical Advisor

“All communication must lead to change” - Aristotle, Greek Philosopher

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.” George Bernard Shaw



When should I start thinking about communications?

- Project / planning stages
- Think about what stages of your research you need to put out any communications? e.g. promote an event, recruit to your study, publish interim findings/ final report.
- This will then help you plan any outputs and decide which communication channels will work best for your audience e.g. a video, toolkit, blog or opinion piece, etc.



Strategic communications planning starts with...



6 steps to creating a communications plan

1. Why (objectives)
2. Who (stakeholders and audiences)
3. What (key messages)
4. Where (channels)
5. When (timetable of activity)
6. Monitoring and evaluation



Objectives

What are objectives and how do they help? What do you want to achieve?



- Objectives help to get everyone on the same page and clarify who's doing what.
- They create realistic expectations.
- Separates communications objectives from project objectives.
- Measures effectiveness and evaluates whether your approach is working.

Audience

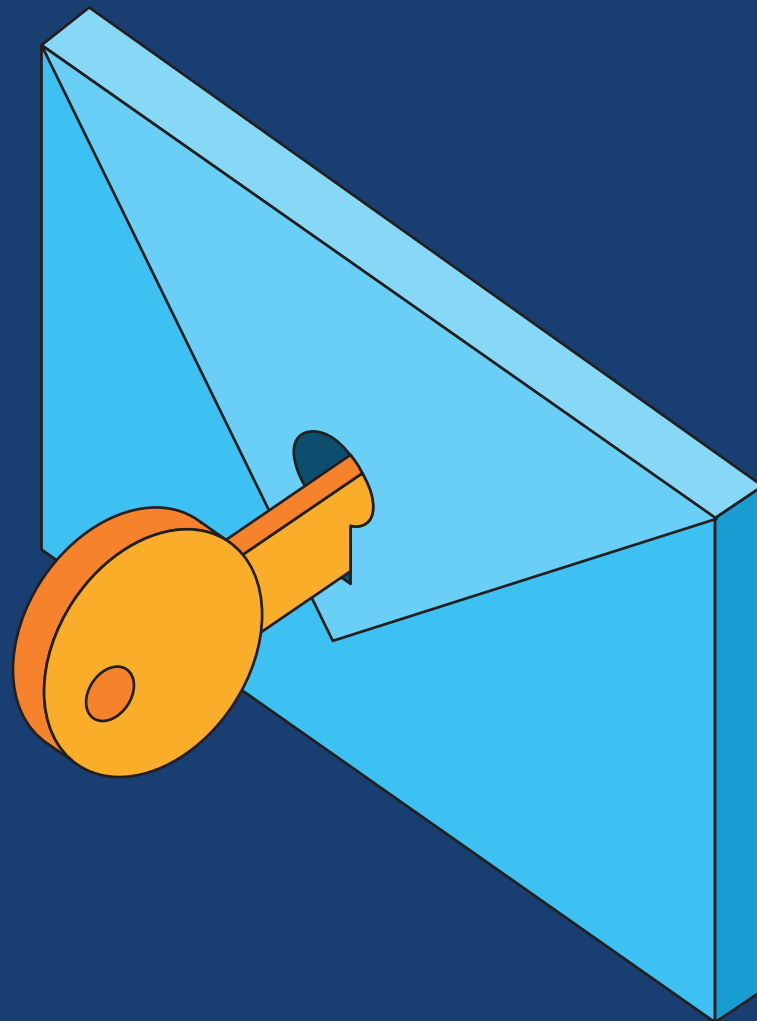
Who are you targeting?

Know your audiences. Prioritise audiences and groups according to their importance and influence in relation to your objectives.



Key messages

Simple bite-sized messaging that can form the basis of all
your communications activity



- Keep the messages clear, in an accessible language and avoid jargon.
- Easy to recall and repeat.
- Avoid technical terminology and acronyms.
- Balance what you think is important about your project with what your audiences need to know or what they're interested in / what motivates them.

Channels

Which channels are best to reach your target audiences?

- **Social media:** X (formerly twitter), LinkedIn, Youtube etc. think about what channels your audiences use most?
- **Blogs/ opinion pieces:** Offer expert insight into a subject of particular interest i.e.. topic making the headlines, direct from the researcher. They also convey a more personal testimony, research-driven opinion piece and can cover a range of topics such as career development and experiences.
- **Events, workshops and conferences (academic or non-academic):** Deliver in-person training/ networking and share expertise.
- **Printed promotional materials (e.g. flyers, brochures, business cards, pull-up stands):** Take-away information for those who may not have heard of us before. Strong brand promotion and visibility.
- **Webinars/ events (local and national):** Tailor messages to specific audiences and creates opportunities for open discussion.
- **Email:** Including your own email contact lists.



Timetable of activity

Who is doing what and when?



- Plan accordingly so that everyone who is involved knows exactly what they are doing and when.
- Think about key milestones.
- A timetable of activity keeps everyone accountable.

Monitoring and evaluation

Think back to your objectives

- Website analytics
- Social media metrics
 - Event feedback
 - Surveys
- Workshop and focus groups



Activity

In your groups, think of a project you have coming up.

Using the 6 steps to creating a communications plan, have a go at thinking about each step.



Name of project

Date

Communication Lead

Project/Programme Lead

Joint communication with

To be signed off by

Background

Note a couple of points on 'how we got here' i.e. what were the circumstances that brought about this proposal.

Objectives

State what is the aim of your project, from a communications and engagement perspective – what is it that you are trying to achieve?

State how will we be able to measure impact.

Audiences

Know your audiences. Prioritise audiences and groups according to their importance and influence in relation to your objectives.

Key Messages

Simple bite-sized messaging that can form the basis of all your communications activity.

Channels

Which communication channels are best to reach your target audiences?

Timetable of Activity

Who is doing what and when?

Monitoring and evaluation

Think about how you would like to evaluate your communications.