

# comms planning guide.

"the who, the how, the when and the why of planning an effective & efficient communication campaign"

## why do we need a plan?

steps 1 - 3 of the comms planning process should help you clearly outline a concise & compelling need for the activity or campaign.



### 2. AIM

outline the desired overall goal - the results the planned activity needs to deliver.

### 3. OBJECTIVES

create a set of SMART comms objectives - they should clearly set out outcomes & impacts [not the comms inputs]

imparting knowledge?  
building an image? shaping attitudes? stimulating a want or desire, encouraging an action?

### 1. CONTEXT

set the scene. include references & links to relevant corporate/business plan priorities. detail the issue driving the need for dedicated communications activity.

what internal data supports or informs the objectives? market trends? national / sector reports? good practice examples? published data?

include headline evidence/data/stats which demonstrate need or issue.



## • ACT ON FACTS •

no research or evidence step? no.

because robust data & solid insight should underpin every step of the comms planning process. all sections should reference supporting evidence. formal, informal, quantitative & qualitative.



## how?

### 4. STRATEGY

scope out the campaign in a single common sense statement. KISS [keep it short and simple]. this should function as a useful shorthand tool for explaining the campaign to others.

revisit and finalise this section once the rest of the plan is completed



## who?

### 5. AUDIENCES

who are you trying to reach and what do you want them to do? think of both your primary target audiences and the people who influence them

[secondary audiences]

create audience groups based on similar characteristics e.g. geography, demography, likely interest, sector etc

prioritise groups - acknowledging available time/resources.



## what?

### 6. MESSAGES/CONTENT

be clear — jargon-free, no technical language, be relevant; be concise — can you deliver these messages in just a few seconds? be consistent — messages must be repeated if they are to sink in. create an engaging content plan, tell stories and create material that is memorable & shareworthy.

remember your calls to action. what do you want people to do?

## where?

### 7. CHANNELS

be specific, research your audiences, understand what they're interested in, 'where' you can find them and which platforms they're engaging with. understand who or what their influences are.

start with audience groups and build your channel mix around it, not the other way round.

a good mix will successfully blend one to one, one to few, one to many, many to many

## when?

### 8. TIMELINE

set a realistic timeline split into 'preparation' 'implementation' 'review' set milestones & factor in a little flexibility.

breaking complex campaigns into phases will maximise resources & maintain focus on achievable impacts.

## with what?

### 9. RESOURCES

people/time/access to channels/budget assign tasks, estimate all likely spend [including a 15% contingency] be realistic and honest about the likely returns you can achieve with the resources you have.

don't start with a set campaign budget & portion out spend. cost out your plan and build your budget from the bottom up.



## how did we do?

### 10. EVALUATION

evaluate based on communications objectives. record quantitative & qualitative impacts. share results. write case studies. celebrate success [and even enter the really good ones into awards\*] & learn from mistakes. demonstrating ROI is key.

prepare simple headline reports for upward communication/ share ROI results

gather quotes, take photos, record video, capture stats and share results.

