Effective Communication

Steps to think about when putting a plan together

Here are five steps that may be useful to take when planning a communications campaign. Even though some of them might seem obvious, it's often very helpful to map them out and take the time to think deeply about each of these areas before putting a comms plan together. This detail will focus your thinking and help you go into a helpful level of detail when putting your plan together.

Te Taumata Toi-a-Iwi

1. Objectives

Think about your communications objectives. Be as specific as possible. What do you want to get out of this campaign or piece of work? What do you want people to understand? What action (if any) do you want to drive as a result of people engaging with your communications?

2. Audience

Think hard about the audience you're trying to reach and define them. There may be multiple groups and stakeholders, and that means you might have slightly different approaches for those groups. Be as specific as possible. Sometimes it is helpful to think about audience personas for this work and develop a person in mind that represents who you're trying to communicate to. For example: Mother, two kids under 5, works part-time, time poor, loves theatre and comedy. Personas can help you identify audience motivations, needs and obstacles and how these lead to real life decisions.

3. Messages

How can you best communicate your messages? What language do you need to use to be persuasive and engaging? Leading with vision-led, value-based messaging can often be useful when trying to encourage behaviour change, particularly for social issues. For example, language like 'Here's what we can achieve together, and how you can be part of this change". The Workshop and Common Cause do this work extremely well if you'd like to read further on it. If you're trying to encourage people to engage with your organisation, or come to a show, try and think about what's unique about what you're offering. What will they experience or get out of it? Why is your mahi a cause worth supporting? How can you appeal to their intrinsic values to prompt an action? If these messages are coming from a person, who can be a trusted messenger from your organisation that will appeal to your audience?

4. Channels

How are you going to spread your messages? Which channels make the most sense to use? Which have worked for you well in the past? It's possible that you'll need to use slightly different messaging for different channels. The amount of space (and attention!) you have in a social ad is very different to the level of detail you can go into in an email newsletter or press release. Certain channels will be a better use of your time and resources than others, depending on the campaign focus. Think about whether a press release, media alert or specific PR pitches should be part of this work. Alternatively, do you focus on using your own channels such as social campaigns, e-newsletters, video production. Is paid media an option if there is a budget for this work? Are there any partner or 'friendly aligned' organisations that you can ask to help carry or amplify your messaging?

5. Evaluating Outcomes

What does a successful campaign look like to you? What metrics can you use as goals? These could be an increase in traffic to your digital touchpoints, new donations or ticket sales as a result of the campaign, engagement from social media or e-newsletters, increased awareness of your mahi, media placement as a result of your communications campaign. Be specific about what would constitute a successful campaign, and don't be afraid to set big goals. Each time you do this mahi you'll get a better sense for what 'successful' looks like for you and become more aware of areas that you communications can influence.

Below is a template that can be used as a starting point to create your own comms plan. Fill in each area and talk to your team or colleagues to get feedback. Remember, there are no wrong answers to this work. Each time you deliver a communications campaign, you'll be learning more about which techniques and tactics are best for you. This is about trying, learning and improving as you work.

Objectives & actions What do you want to achieve?	Audience & Stakeholders Who do you want to reach?	Messages What do you want to tell them?	Delivery channels Which channels will you use?	Outcomes What does success look like?	Timing When will this happen?	Owner Who is leading this?
Objective 1						
Objective 2						
Objective 3						

Te Taumata Toi-a-Iwi