Amplifying Our Voice: Leading Boldly for Our Students, Our Professions, and Our Union

COM210
Foundations of Organizing Communications

Richard Allen Smith + Erin Hofteig
National Education Association
NEA Leadership Competencies: COMMUNICATIONS and ORGANIZING

• Indicate all of the NEA Leadership Competency progression level(s).
  • Level 2: Mobilizing & Power Building
  • Level 3: Agenda Driving

• Leadership Competency themes for each Level
  • Tailors communications to appeal to different audiences; adjusts the purpose, substance and style
  • Executes, monitors, and adjusts plans, policies, and strategies to accomplish the short and long-term objectives of the association
Strategic Goal and NEA Organizational Priorities

NEA Strategic Goal

• advancing opportunities that will identify, organize, and engage new and early career educators; amplify the voices of all educators, support our members’ professional growth, and promote social justice for our students, communities and our nation.

• securing a pro-public education environment for students, educators, and families.

NEA Organizational Priorities

• Early Career Educator
• Racial Justice in Education
• My School, My Voice
• Supporting Professional Excellence
Goals for Today’s Session

Today’s session will help you:

• Build strategic plans that use communications to drive action on the ground.
• Be more strategic in why you are doing something and limit actions that don’t actually help you meet your goal.
• Create cohesive campaigns that allow members and supporters to amplify and carry your message for change.
Agenda

1. Overview
2. Message Clarity
3. Understanding Your Audience
4. Message Delivery
5. What Makes a Great Plan
6. Building Your Plan
7. Tracking & Measurement
8. Tips & Tricks
Set Your Goals → Select Your Targets → Define Your Audience → Clarify Your Message → Deliver Your Message → Evaluate & Learn

**SIMPILIFY**

Clear Message to the Right People

**Right Messenger in the Best Place**
#1 Rule on Messaging:

Messages almost always get warped.
Clarity is IMPORTANT!
Woman without her man is nothing
Woman, without her, man is nothing.
Factors that impact how your message is received

Direct: Personal
- One on One
- Call
- Email
- Social Networks

Indirect: Messenger
- Surrogate
- Media
- Opinion Makers
- Social Networks

Cultural Perspective
- Personal Lens
- Race
- Faith
- Gender
- Class

Environmental Background Noise
- Popular Culture
- Political Dynamics
- Economic Environment
#1 Rule on Audience:

You’re not the only person talking to your audience.
Mapping Audiences: Circles of Benefit - How much work will it take to drive your audience?
Message clarity makes a message more likely to spur action:

A simple story that illustrates the issue and solution.

A focused message that conveys your Theory of Change.

A single call to action. Don’t ask for too much at once.
Where is your audience?

Traditional Outlets or Locations: Print, TV, radio, flyers, in-person events

Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, YouTube, Instagram

Online: Email, popular websites, member publications, news outlets
Who is your best messenger?

• Third Party
• Your President
• Your Members
How do you make sure your communications drive action?

Planning!

• Set Your Goals
• Have clear targets
• Define your audience
• Outline your Theory of Change
• Understand your distribution channels
• Identify the right Strategies & tactics for your audience / target
• Learn from the results
Four key principles for effective planning:

1. Explicit and written (shared only internally).
2. Set specific, quantifiable goals, and establish compression points.
3. Create a timeline and work backwards.
Planning = progress!
What’s at stake?

OUR MESSAGE IS SIMPLE:

ARIZONA STUDENTS DESERVE BETTER.

“The deal announced today by Speaker Charles McCall and his leadership team is not a plan at all. In fact, it’s worse than the plan that failed in the Senate last night, and once again, it’s nothing more than a political stunt that falls woefully short of the revenue needed to save our schools and keep teachers in Oklahoma classrooms.”

Alicia Priest
President, Oklahoma Education Association
How Do We Build Support?

“I’m Strike Ready, because my smallest class is 39 students.”

— LAUSD Educator

89% PERCENTAGE OF DPS PARENTS WHO SIDE WITH TEACHERS IN NEGOTIATIONS

79% PERCENTAGE OF DENVER VOTERS WHO THINK TEACHER PAY FALLS SHORT

69% PERCENTAGE OF DPS PARENTS WHO SUPPORT TEACHERS STRIKING

WE STAND WITH DENVER TEACHERS.
TEACHERS WIN

STRIKE IS OVER
School workers, W.Va. State Police get 5% pay hikes

By Tara Jarrettt, email: toxttu@gmail.com

Gov. Jim Justice signed a new state $5,000 per year pay hike for teachers and school service personnel Wednesday at the Capitol Annex House of Delegates Chamber.

Justice, accompanied by State Police Commissioner Major Mark Fite, announced the pay increases at the ceremony Wednesday from the Senate chamber.

Willing to consider

Justice earlier this week offered workers a hiring bonus of at least $3,000 and another $2,000 in a one-year contract. The new pay increases were approved by the Board of Education.

The strikes were a series of public demonstrations and rallies in support of increased funding for public education and to protest the state’s failure to fully fund the state’s education funding formula.

Teachers and support personnel strike in the state for the third week after the West Virginia Senate approved a 2 percent pay hike for teachers and school service personnel on Wednesday.
1. Set your goal

What are you trying to accomplish?

SMART(IE) Goal:
- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Time-Bound
- Inclusive
- Equitable
1. Set a SMART(IE) goal

Statewide walkout to educate public on resource gaps and build resistance to privatization of public schools.

- 400 people (parents / community leaders / public) to attend 20 local events
- 2 member leaders at each site to coordinate action and 20+ RSVPs
- Grow email list by 400 valid email addresses
2. Build Your Theory of Change – should answer the following:

- What is/are the change(s) you want to create to achieve your goal?
- Who has the resources to create change and what do they want?
- What is your strategy to create change?
- What is the role people must play to create change?
- What is the narrative of change (story of self/us/now with your theory of change)?
A Strong Theory of Change is…

Plausible: Stakeholders believe it’s logic and the model is correct. If we do these things, we’ll get the result we want.

Doable: Human, political, and economic resources are sufficient to implement the actions.

Testable: Stakeholders believe there’s a credible way to discover whether the results are as predicted.

Meaningful: Stakeholders see the outcomes as important and the magnitude of change in these outcomes being pushed as worthy.
A Theory of Change needs to answer the following:

If [audience] takes [action], then [target] will [do something] that will [meet goal].
Define your audience

What’s the difference between your audience and target?

**Targets:** The people we are attempting to get to take an action.

- Superintendent
- School board members
- District bargaining leads
- State legislators
- Governor

**Audience:** Members, Parents and grandparents of public school students and supporters of public education.
If educators, parents, and community members support work actions, then the Governor and State Legislature will be pressured to stop expanding charter legislation and fund 600 additional school councilors.
3. Develop a strategy

What are the types of communication that will allow you to reach your audience and help meet your stated goals?

- Earned Media
- Social Media
- Paid Media
- Owned Media
- One-on-Ones
Goal: 400 people to attend 20 local work actions.

**Strategies:**

- Social Media strategy that engages our audience where they are to drive participation.
- Engage member leaders (one-on-one) to tell the story and inform participants.
- Earned Media strategy to educate public about issue and resistance.
Connect tactics to strategy.

Social Strategy: Facebook
Share posts that drive people to RSVP for events.

Owned: post on our own page.
Paid: boost posts to reach targeted parent/public audience.
3. Tactics: Time to get specific

**Owned Media**
- Websites
- Email
- Publications
- SMS
- Action Network Pages
  - Petitions or Event pages

**Earned Media**
- Press releases
- Press calls
- OpEds and Letters to the Editor
- Blog posts

**Social Media**
- Facebook posts
- Facebook Live
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Graphics/Photos

**One on One**
- Scripts
- Materials

**Paid Media**
- Online and Offline Ads

• And more…
**Goal:** 400 people to attend 20 local events.

**Strategy:** Social Media strategy that engages our audience where they are to drive participation.

**Tactics:**
- Each school event page on Action Network with 1 member admin
- Facebook Posts (stories, memes, pics) that highlight student/member stories and why action is needed. Share posts to drive event RSVPs.
- Include CTA & event RSVP link.
- Twitter: Target press in weeks ahead of walk-ins and invite to event.
- Share day-of action photos and posts across all platforms
- Accumulate social posts and share with online tools
What does this look like in real life and how did it help the organizing effort?
Creates a Place to Communicate
Created a Place to Communicate
Educates the Public

BEVIN'S BUDGET AIMS TO SQUEEZE MORE MONEY OUT OF RETIRED TEACHERS FOR HEALTH INSURANCE

Gov. Bevin's budget proposal eliminates state funding for the "Shared Responsibility Plan." This means many retired teachers will be forced to pay hundreds of dollars extra each month to cover their personal health-insurance payments.

INFORMATION: WHY IS FRANKFORT TARGETING RETIREES WHO LIVE ON A FIXED INCOME? *Affects retired teachers under age 65 who have retired since 2010.
Builds Momentum

DAY 2

3700+ DENVER TEACHERS OUT ON STRIKE.
WE’RE STILL GOING STRONG!

#DCTASTRONG #REDFORED
OUR STRIKE BY THE NUMBERS

95% of OEA members were on strike

85% of OEA members were on the picket line

3% of students attended school

#Unite4OaklandKids #OUSDstrike #WeAreOakland
Create excitement that drives RSVPs

FEB 11 @ 2PM
RSVP TO RECEIVE MORE DETAILS!

MAKE SURE YOU’RE IN THE NUMBER!

RSVP FOR OUR RALLY:
BIT.LY/DCTASTRIKERALLY

DCTA
Denver Classroom Teachers Association
Created excitement & drove RSVPs
Why should you track and measure?

- Identify opportunities and threats
- Raise the level of accountability for all involved
- Learn from success and discover growth opportunities
- Track Effectiveness: Helps inform what tactics to use next time
- It proves success and gives us content to brag with
- Sets the bar for future fights/actions
- Promotes modeling good behavior
Metrics give us information to refine and prove our success.

Earned Media
• Press hits
• # of surrogates interviewed
• # of third-party validators

Social Media
• Email addresses collected
• Social media likes/followers
• Email open and click rate
• Effectiveness of paid ads

Action Metrics
• RSVPs and attendees
• # of letters written
• # of calls made
• Dollars raised
Goal: 400 people to attend 20 local events.

Strategy: Social Media strategy that engages our audience where they are to drive participation.

Tactic: Each site has its own event page

Metrics:
- 20 event pages on Action Network
- 20+ RSVPs on each page
- 1 member leaders at each site
- Number of page views: Did you have 150 visitors and only 25 RSVPs?
- How did your Action Network email perform? Open / click / action rates
- Engagement levels on the page itself
Create a Calendar
Create a comprehensive timeline and work backwards.

Determine the compression points
“What is the date of our action?”

Work Backward
If your events are on the 15th, then work backward to when to send reminders and instructions.
How to set yourself up for success

Develop and share SMART(IE) goals together.

Use/offer centralized hub for resources that is sharable.

Encourage two-way information flow.

Set up regular check-ins to evaluate progress, troubleshoot issues, etc.

Make sure everyone understands who is in charge of what, and who will be responsible for each component.
Session Outcomes

The content from this session can be used in the following ways in your current position/role:

• Build strategic plans that use communications to drive action on the ground.
• Be more strategic in why you are doing something and limit actions that don’t actually help you meet your goal.
• Create cohesive campaigns that allow members and supporters to amplify and carry your message for change.
Let us know how we did!

• Please complete the evaluation for **COM210** by using the NEA Summit Mobile App!

• Please visit the Leadership Development Resources website at [www.nea.org/leadershipdevelopment](http://www.nea.org/leadershipdevelopment)

Richard Allen Smith, rasmith@nea.org
Erin Hofteig, ehofteig@nea.org