UNITING OUR MEMBERS AND THE NATION
Empowering leaders, educating students, strengthening communities

Foundations of Organizing Communications

COM309

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NEA Leadership Competency – Communications

- **Level 1**: Understands the fundamentals of communications strategy.
  - Traditional and online media; use of technology;
  - Various approaches & styles needed to communicate with diverse audiences;
  - Connects association messages with audiences using the appropriate messenger

- **Level 2**: Develops & implements communications plans with consistent & purposeful messages that consider the unique needs of different Constituencies.
  - Tailors communications to appeal to different audiences; adjusts the purpose, substance and style;
  - Delivers engaging & persuasive presentations that motivate audiences to take action.
NEA Strategic Goal and Organizational Priorities

• NEA Strategic Goal:
  – Strong Affiliates for Educator Voice and Empowerment

• NEA Organizational Priorities
  – Early Career Educators
  – My School, My Voice
  – Racial Justice in Education
Agenda

- Overview
- Message Clarity
- Understanding Your Audience
- Message Delivery
- What Makes a Great Plan
- Building Your Plan
- Tracking & Measurement
- Tips & Tricks
Communication that Drives Action

**SIMPLIFY**
Clear Message to the Right People

- Set Your Goals
- Select Your Targets
- Define Your Audience
- Clarify Your Message
- Deliver Your Message
- Evaluate & Learn

Right Messenger in the Best Place
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
Audience

#1 Rule on Audience:

You’re not the only person talking to your audience.

- NEA
- State Affiliate
- Local Affiliate
- Management
- Co-Workers
- Parents
- Students
- Members
Mapping Audiences:

Circles of Benefit - How much work will it take to drive your audience?
Developing Your Message

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.
Delivering Your Message

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
Delivering Your Message

Who is your best messenger?

- Third Party
- Your President
- Your Members
Planning

How do you make sure your communications drive action?

• 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
What Makes a Great Plan

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.
What Makes a Great Plan

Essential elements of a plan:

• What is your goal? What is your timeline?
• What/who are your targets?
• Who is your audience?
• What is your Theory of Change?
• What are the strategies that will get to those audiences? Earned media or owned media?
• What tactics will you use to implement your strategy?
• How will you measure your results?
What Makes a Great Plan

Planning = progress!
Building Your Plan

1. Set your goal

What are you trying to accomplish?

SMART Goal:
• Specific
• Measurable
• Attainable
• Relevant
• Time-Bound
Building Your Plan

1. Set a SMART goal

Walk-ins at 30 district public schools on the same day to educate public and build resistance to state takeover of public schools.

- 500 people (parents / community leaders / public) to attend 30 school walk-ins
- 4 member leaders at each site to coordinate action and 20+ RSVPs
- Grow email list by 750 valid email addresses
Building Your Plan

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)?
What is a Theory of Change?

A Theory of Change needs to answer the following:

If [audience] takes [action], then [target] will [do something] that will [meet goal].
Building Your Plan

Define your audience

What’s the difference between your audience and target?

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

For example:
- A school board member to vote for Annenberg standards.
- A member of State Leg or Congress to vote a certain way.

Audience: The group of people we are talking to and asking to take an action that will apply pressure on our target.
What is a Theory of Change?

A strong Theory of Change is...

Plausible: Stakeholder 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.
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
Building Your Plan

Goal: 500 people to attend 30 school walk-ins.

Strategies:
- Social Media strategy that engages our audience where they are to drive participation.
- Engagement member leaders (one-on-one) to tell the story and inform participants.
- Earned Media strategy to educate public about issue and resistance.
Building Your Plan

3. Tactics: Time to get specific

• Websites
• Press releases
• Scripts
• Blog posts
• Facebook posts
• Facebook Live
• Twitter
• SMS
• Photo/graphics
• Pledges
• Petitions
• Letter campaign
• And more…
Building Your Plan

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.

One on Ones: Ten Minute Meetings
Create flyers and talking points to help leaders engage and recruit members at school sites to be part of the walk-in.

Media Strategy: Press Outreach
Recruit parents to talk to media at walk-ins. Prep parents with talking points.
Building Your Plan

**Goal:** 500 people to attend 30 school walk-ins.

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

**Tactics:**

- Each school event page on Action Network with 4 member admins
- 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 on Storify
Tracking and Measurement

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
Tracking and Measurement

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
**Building Your Plan**

**Goal:** 500 people to attend 30 school walk-ins.

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

**Tactic:** Each site has its own event page

**Metrics:**
- 30 event pages on Action Network
- 20+ RSVPs on each page
- 4 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
Tips & Tricks

Create a Calendar
Create a comprehensive timeline and work backwards.

Determine the compression points
“What is the date of our walk-in?”

Work Backward
If your walk-ins are on the 15th, then work backward to when to send reminders and instructions.
Tips & Tricks

How to set yourself up for success

Develop and share SMART 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:

– Use Communications to drive action on your local priorities.

– Enhance event or meeting participation.

– Educate people about the work you are doing that brings value to their work and lives.
Let us know how we did!

Organizing Communications
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• Please complete the evaluation for this breakout session by using the **NEA Summit Mobile APP**!

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

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