

DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

for KEA and Multimedia Design

Elements of a Strategic Communications Plan

- Determine Goal
- Identify and Profile Audience
- Develop Messages
- Select Communication Channels
- Choose Activities and Materials
- Establish Partnerships
- Implement the Plan
- Evaluate and Make Mid-Course Corrections

To initiate a successful and effective communications effort, start with an assessment of your current organizational goals. Examine what your organization stands for—its mission, values and beliefs. Look closely at who your organization is serving. This process will help narrow and sharpen the focus for your *communication initiative(s)*.

Step 1: Determine Goal

What issue is most important to your organization right now?

The main objective is to capture the attention and interest of prospective students. Make them fall in love with the KEA spirit and the Multimedia Design course.

Who is most affected by the issue stated above?

School administration and staff and already enrolled students.

Who makes decisions about the issue?

School administration.

What is the overall goal you want to achieve? (i.e., What change would you be able to observe?) (Be specific.)

We want potential students looking for studying opportunities to be attracted to KEA in general and specifically. They must look at the website and understand the KEA spirit. They must be able to address the people that work at KEA and understand that is an warming place where they will get a different and good education. This calls also for interactivity within the own website and email and phone contacts. We want to make people understand that KEA is hip and can be trusted and that it is totally worth to study in this place, for its great ambience as for the quality of the education. We want to make KEA a place where when you hear about it, it will be weird if you don't know what it is. We wish to make everything about KEA attractive, raise it's student population and make everyone feeling jealous for not having studied at this school.

For the Multimedia Design part, we must show that KEA has some great work produced by its students and that it is a way to learn design.

Show the potential of an international course, the experiences it brings and the sense of comradeship the students have.

What tangible outcomes would you like to achieve through a communications effort? i.e., How will you know you are achieving your goals? (Be specific. What would you see, hear, or have in-hand that would let you know you are making progress toward the goal?)

Ask peoples opinion after the communications effort is implemented. We would like to see that the image of KEA is acknowledged as something described above (answer to the last question). Provide users feedback to see if they are satisfied with the information provided.

Step 2: Identify and Profile the Audiences

Once you've identified your key issues, it's time to identify and profile specific audiences to target with a communications initiative. The reason for taking the time to look this closely at your audiences is that this kind of background information is essential in choosing the most effective ways to communicate with the audience. Madison Avenue has learned this lesson well, now we need to apply some of the same kind of thinking to communicating about your issue.

Audience Definition Worksheet

Of the audiences listed on the Step 1 worksheet, whose knowledge, attitudes and behavior must be changed in order to meet your goal?
(These groups now become your primary audiences.)

Prospective students:

High school students looking for careers.
People who would like to change their careerpath.
Everyone else who would be interested in getting an atypical teaching method, where it's just more interesting to learn.

Who else is affected if you succeed in your goal? (secondary audience)

All other people involved somehow with KEA, such as current students, teachers and even people that just want to know what goes on at KEA, parties, work produced, other events and workshops.

Also companies who look for employees or just talented people.

Are there others who can influence primary and secondary audiences? (tertiary audiences) (You may wish to design a communication initiative to reach some of these audiences as well. Or you may see a role for these folks as "allies and partners".)

Everyone else. The way people perceive KEA as a whole could help on KEA's reputation and word of mouth can make wonders.

Now you are ready to complete worksheets for each of your audiences identified above. (see next page)

Audience Segmentation Worksheet

(Note: you will probably need to make multiple copies of this worksheet.)

Audience: Prospective students

Describe what you know about this audience's knowledge, attitudes and behaviors as they relate to your issue:

There will be people with different types of skills and their education levels will be varied. They will be looking for a common goal but have completely different backgrounds. They are probably looking for an international environment to study. Thus, it needs to be appealing to everyone at the same time. As long as they are people that want to get their education seriously. There will have to be standards.

What are the barriers to this audience fully supporting or participating in reaching your goal? What are the benefits if they do?

They can find other schools, some need jobs and don't have, Danish language is hard and it is not that easy to start living. We could thus provide more information relevant to this matter, which is severely ignored by the school. If they want to call students, they will want to know opinions from people who study here. By adding a more open guestbook in the page we could facilitate this communication between everyone.

Benefits: school grows and gets better and everyone is happy.

What are the characteristics of this audience? How do they spend their time?

Some studying already, some will be working, also unemployed people and their activities can be immense.

What is their gender, ethnicity and income level? How have they been educated? What are the language considerations? What or who are they influenced by? What makes new information credible for them? What or who could motivate change or action?

Men and women from 18 to 40, most likely. They will have at least high school education. People that will start from scratch to people with already some design skills to people with other fields of expertise and want something new or to complement it with design. English and Danish, possibly worth considering making it available in other languages more commonly speak at least in the EU. Overall image of the school and quality of its students and graduates.

Audience Segmentation Worksheet

(Note: you will probably need to make multiple copies of this worksheet.)

Audience: Current KEA affiliates

Describe what you know about this audience's knowledge, attitudes and behaviors as they relate to your issue:

They will have understanding about the school, at least at some basic level, provided they haven't just gotten accepted as new students.

They will already know something about their fields of study and how KEA works. Use as a communication tool and to share works, inspiration, possible events around the city and important activities related to each area that might interest students and teachers.

What are the barriers to this audience fully supporting or participating in reaching your goal? What are the benefits if they do?

Not feeling attracted to the website design or interface. They might get already comfortable with everything they got out of it when they first need it, that they feel like not revisiting the website. We need to provide ways of turning it into something people actually want to contribute for and where good ideas and help is provided.

What are the characteristics of this audience? How do they spend their time?

They will be totally different, with the exception of belonging to the KEA institution. They will most likely work, even if they don't, they can spend their times in school or just doing their private things. Maybe engaging in other activities as to penetrate in the business community better, like building portfolios or workshops or conferences.

What is their gender, ethnicity and income level? How have they been educated? What are the language considerations? What or who are they influenced by? What makes new information credible for them? What or who could motivate change or action?

Men and women from 18 to 40, most likely. They will have at least high school education. People that will start from scratch to people with already some design skills to people with other fields of expertise and want something new or to complement it with design. English and danish, possibly worth considering making it available in other languages more commonly speak at least in the EU.

Overall image of the school and quality of its students and graduates.

Audience Segmentation Worksheet

(Note: you will probably need to make multiple copies of this worksheet.)

Audience: Potential employers or talent seekers

Describe what you know about this audience's knowledge, attitudes and behaviors as they relate to your issue:

They will be searching quality. They will look for the general image of the school and analyse the work it's workforce and students produce.

What are the barriers to this audience fully supporting or participating in reaching your goal? What are the benefits if they do?

They can find people anywhere.

Benefits: They make money and get happy and a person with a meaningful education who creates highly qualified people.

What are the characteristics of this audience? How do they spend their time?

They are entrepreneurs or people with a love for the arts, engineering, IT, and all the other educations KEA provides.

What is their gender, ethnicity and income level? How have they been educated? What are the language considerations? What or who are they influenced by? What makes new information credible for them? What or who could motivate change or action?

Men and women from 18 to 99. Everyone willing to invest. English and danish, possibly worth considering making it available in other languages more commonly speak at least in the EU. They are influenced by money. They want to make money.

Overall image of the school and quality of its students and graduates.

Step 3: Develop Messages

Your messages are closely tied to your goal and objectives. They deliver important information about the issue and compel the targeted audience to think, feel, or act. They can:

- Show the importance, urgency, or magnitude of the issue
- Show the relevance of the issue
- Put a “face” on the issue
- Be tied to specific audience values, beliefs, or interests of the audience
- Reflect an understanding of what would motivate the audience to think, feel, or act
- Be culturally relevant and sensitive
- Be Memorable

The messages you develop by using the worksheet provided in this section can be used in many ways. First, they are a set of statements that you and your team agree upon as conveying the key information for your initiative. They will not include all the detail and supporting ideas and data that you may use in printed materials or other forms of communication. The messages you develop in the worksheets can become the underlying themes for your materials and activities. You may develop slogans based on them. You may develop sets of talking points that members of your team will use in making presentations. And they easily become the basis for radio and print PSAs, the genesis for posters, and may suggest topics for fact sheets, drop-in articles, and even letters to the editor or newspaper editorials. Before turning to the Message Development Worksheet, take a few moments to read “Considerations for Message Construction.”

Considerations for Message Construction

Both the *channel* (the conduit for sending your message to the chosen target audience) and the *purpose* of communicating environmental information influence message design. Information may be designed to convey new facts, alter attitudes, change behavior, or encourage participation in decision-making. Some of these purposes overlap; often they are progressive. That is, for persuasion to work, the public must first receive information, then understand it, believe it, agree with it, and then act upon it. Regardless of the purpose, messages must be developed with consideration of the desired outcome.

Factors that help determine public acceptance include:

- ☐ **Clarity**—Messages must clearly convey information to assure the public’s understanding and to limit the chances for misunderstanding or inappropriate action. Clear messages contain as few technical/scientific/bureaucratic terms as possible, and eliminate information that the audience does not need in order to make necessary decisions (such as unnecessarily detailed explanations). Readability tests can help determine the reading level required to understand drafted material and help writers to be conscientious about the selection of words and phrases.
- ☐ **Consistency**—In an ideal world there would be specific consensus on the meaning of new findings, and all messages on a particular topic would be consistent. Unfortunately, consistency is sometimes elusive. Experts tend to interpret new data differently, making consensus among government, industry, and public interest groups difficult.
- ☐ **Main points**—The main points should be stressed, repeated, and never hidden within less strategically important information.
- ☐ **Tone and appeal**—A message should be reassuring, alarming, challenging, or straightforward, depending upon the desired impact and the target audience. Messages should also be truthful, honest and as complete as possible.
- ☐ **Credibility**—The spokesperson and source of the information should be believable and trustworthy.
- ☐ **Public need**—For a message to break through the “information clutter” of society, messages should be based on what the target audience perceives as most important to them, what they want to know, and not what is most important or most interesting to the originating agency.

Prior to final production, messages should be pretested with the target audiences (and in some cases with channel "gatekeepers") to assure public understanding and other intended responses.

Message Worksheet (one for each audience)

Note: Refer to your completed worksheets for Steps 1 & 2.

Audience: Prospective students

What are the barriers and benefits to your audience thinking, feeling, or acting on your issue?

Barriers: They have had negative feedback about the school. They don't really feel the image and brand is trustworthy.

Benefits: They will get a good thing in their lives, they just didn't realized it because we didn't share our message properly.

What change in **attitude** (the way they feel about the issue) do you want to motivate in your audience to meet your goal?

Change, Discover, Enjoy, Develop yourself, Grow, Learn with pleasure, Hands-on, Be happy, Get inspired and in the flow with the KEA feeling.

What change in the **behavior** (day-to-day actions) of your audience are trying to achieve?

Dynamism in their lives on a daily-basis. Motivation to be involved with the institution and the opportunities it provides.

Now, based on what you know about your audience needs to hear in order to think, feel or act, what are the three most compelling sentences you could use to motivate the audience? These are your messages.

Tired of classic teaching?

Looking for something different?

Learn how to do it, hands-on.

Have fun while getting a great education.

Learn by experiencing.

A place to know people and spread your network.

Message Worksheet (one for each audience)

Note: Refer to your completed worksheets for Steps 1 & 2.

Audience: Current students and personnel
Also employers and talent seekers when it makes sense

What are the barriers and benefits to your audience thinking, feeling, or acting on your issue?

Barriers: They don't find the whole interactivity and presence worthy enough and so they don't participate. Need to make things open, simple and worth.

Benefits: They will have a great tool to share their works and lives, while helping the potential future students. They can look also for other people's works.

What change in **attitude** (the way they feel about the issue) do you want to motivate in your audience to meet your goal?

Change, Discover, Enjoy, Develop yourself, Grow, Learn with pleasure, Hands-on, Be happy, Live the KEA feeling and . Make the international part of the school more relevant, and improve communication and activities between both the Danish and International lines.

What change in the **behavior** (day-to-day actions) of your audience are trying to achieve?

Dynamism in their lives on a daily-basis. Motivation to be involved with the institution and the opportunities it provides. Get motivation for helping others and for having their work and school recognized.

Now, based on what you know about your audience needs to hear in order to think, feel or act, what are the three most compelling sentences you could use to motivate the audience? These are your messages.

We're learning for life.

Random words of inspiration.

Step 4: Select Communication Channels

Communications channels carry the messages to the target audiences. Channels take many forms and there is an infinite list of possibilities. Answering some key questions will aid you in identifying the most effective channels for reaching your audiences.

Sample Channels

- Television stations
- Radio stations
- Newspapers
- Web sites
- Community centers
- Street festivals
- Laundromats
- City government offices (e.g. Division of Motor Vehicles)
- Malls
- Parks
- Schools, colleges, vocational and language training centers
- Libraries
- Recreation centers (e.g. basketball courts or soccer fields)
- Community non-profit offices
- Transportation depots/stations
- Supermarkets
- Fast food restaurants
- Literature Racks

Channel Worksheet *(one worksheet for each audience)*

Note: Use the work you did in Step 2 to help you with these worksheets.

Audience:

Where or from whom does this audience get its information? Who do they find credible?

Where does this audience spend most of its time? Where are they most likely to give you their attention?

Complete list of channels your team wants to use to reach this audience:

Step 5: Choose Activities and Materials

What are the activities, events, and/or materials—to be used in your selected channels—that will most effectively carry your message to the intended audiences? In choosing these, you should consider:

- Appropriateness to audience, goal, and message
- Relevance to desired outcomes
- Timing
- Costs/Resources
- Climate of community toward the issue/activity
- Cultural appropriateness (including language)
- Environment—geographic considerations

Sample Activities

News conferences
Editorial board meetings at newspapers
Radio talk or call-in shows
A benefit race
Parades
[Web links](#)
Conferences
One-on-one meetings
Open houses
Speeches
Hotlines
Listserves
Information Fair

Materials to Support Activities

[News releases](#)
Fliers and brochures
[Opinion editorials \(op-eds\)](#)
[Letters to the editor](#)
[Posters](#)
Public service announcements (PSAs)
Bookmarks
[Video presentations](#)
[Web pages](#)
A float in a parade
Buttons, pins, and ribbons
Promotional items and giveaways

Step 6: Establish Partnerships

Groups, organizations, or businesses may exist that would aid you in reaching your goal by providing funds, expertise, support, or other resources. Please list allies or partners who support or work with your audiences or share in your goals.

HARNESSING THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

Allies and Partners

Groups, organizations, or businesses may exist that would aid you in reaching your goal by providing funds, expertise or other resources toward your communications. The prospect of developing partnerships with area businesses and local organizations may seem overwhelming if you haven't had much experience in working with the private sector. However, there are some practical steps you can follow that will focus your energies and resources where they will be most effective.

Determine Your Needs

Before you ask for help, it's important to identify what you need most. Make a "Wish List" and include areas like equipment (computers, vehicles, or supplies); services; educational activities and materials; and specific products that can be donated. This list will help set your priorities and guide who you need to contact.

Identify Potential Partners

There may be hundreds of organizations to approach in your community—where do you start? Let your fingers do the walking and start with the Yellow Pages. By using your Wish List to identify categories of need, you can narrow the types of organizations that can help you. Don't limit yourself at this stage and try to be imaginative. For instance, a local pizza parlor may not have an obvious link, but if it is a popular hang-out for high school students, the restaurant might host a pizza party and allow you to hand out information on ORVs. Other sources for potential partners are your Chamber of Commerce directory, general corporate directories, and personal contacts, including your board of directors or existing coalitions. For national contacts as well as local, there are several national directories that are available at your local library. The Corporate Giving Directory, which is updated annually, is an excellent choice. Don't forget to monitor the local media. Who sponsored that nonprofit ball and where was it held? What company bought the T-shirts for the annual 10K Run to support environmental research? Also, if you have a good relationship with other nonprofits or agencies, they may share their giving list.

Prioritize Your Contacts

When you have a list of possible contacts, begin making your partnership circle. This circle will help you further identify your most important contacts so you can prioritize your efforts. You've chosen possible partners by category—now look for *personal contacts*. Think of dropping a pebble in the water and watching the ripples spread out. By putting organizations where you already have contacts in the center, you will anchor your effort as you move further and further out. Start with organizations that have helped in the past—they will be the very center of your circle. Then talk to employees, your board of directors, or coalition members. Who do they know? You may discover that someone on staff went to school with the president of a local bank. Put organizations where you have close personal contacts on the next "wave" of your circle. After examining personal contacts, look for

those organizations that would make “perfect partners,” i.e., organizations that have supported environmental issues in the past.

Keep going until you get to the very outer layer, which would be organizations where you have no contacts at all and no apparent links. Now you have prioritized your outreach list!

The final step before preparing your proposals is finding the correct contact. You may have this information if you’ve used an up-to-date directory or have a personal contact, but if you’re not sure, make a phone call. Ask to whom you would send a partnership proposal; be sure to get the person’s name, title, full address, and phone number. And finally, don’t overlook the importance of using the Internet to research target organizations.

Make Your Proposal Strategic

Companies have a giving strategy, so your proposal should be strategic too. A fundraiser for a major national nonprofit once said, “There is no corporate philanthropy—they all give for a reason.” Most organizations give strategically, meaning they give in an area(s) where they have an interest, want to influence someone or something, or stand to gain something—employees, customers, and the community influence those decisions as well. We all know that there can be tough competition for nonprofit support, and that decisions are sometimes made on small details. Look at your partnership circle and carefully look for connections. Has a city councilperson recently dealt with an environmental issue? Look for logical allies and mutual goals and put that information in your proposal. Make the proposal “mutually beneficial.” Just as you have asked for something, be prepared to offer something in return. Try to at least reward the organization with positive community exposure and recognition for its efforts.

Use your best judgment on the proposal. If you know someone, a letter may suffice. If you’re sending a proposal to a large company, you may want to send a letter, an information kit, and a recent newspaper article on what your organization is doing in the community. Always demonstrate the importance of the issue, the importance of the program in the community, specifically how the organization can help strengthen your efforts and how the organization will benefit from its participation.

Face-to-Face Follow-up

About a week after sending your proposal, call the contact to verify that he/she received the information. At this point, introduce yourself (if you don’t know the contact already) and offer to answer questions or send more information. Ask when would be a good time to call back to schedule an appointment; mark the date and call promptly at that time. The best way to “sell” the proposal is face-to-face where you can talk about the campaign, its

goals, and its accomplishments. It’s important to be realistic. Smaller businesses may not have extra funds to support community programs, but may be able to provide in-kind support. They may be willing to include information on ORVs in their mailings to the community, fliers to circulate to their employees, in their stores, etc. If you’ve done your homework, you will be able to request help that the company will gladly agree to provide.

Make Your Community Partners Part of Your Team

Don’t ask for something and then never contact the organization again! Keep a database of all donors (even listing those who said they might give in the future) and recognize them periodically with a personal note or newsletter. Keep them informed on what’s happening with ORVs and other environmental issues in the community and continually offer opportunities for participation, including volunteering. Also, offer a chance for feedback so you can establish a two-way dialogue with your partners. A town meeting, an online seminar, or a presentation, are all ways to share information with your partners. Make them team members and they will continue to support you for years to come!

Step 7: Implement the Plan

There are many tools for organizing yourself around time, dollars, and staff needed to implement an initiative. One approach is given here as an example. Of course you should feel free to use your own tried and true management tools.

Use the following steps to determine time, budget and staffing needs:

1. List all activities
2. Under each activity, outline the steps, in order, that will lead to its completion
3. Assign a budget estimate to each step
4. Assign a staffing needs estimate to each step
5. Working backwards from the activity completion point, assign a date for each step in the activity.

You can plot your dates on calendar pages if you'd like, or you can organize them in another timeline such as a Gantt chart (date/timeline runs horizontally across page; tasks are listed in chronological order down left-hand side. A line extends across the page from each task, showing the date work begins and ends on that task or subtask).

Sample Timeline Planning Sheet

Activity: Place print PSAs in up to 25 periodicals, newsletters, or bulletins

- ☐ [Preliminary Work] Design camera-ready PSA "slicks"; 10 person hours.
 - ☐ [Weeks 1 & 2] Identify list of potential placement opportunities and get names and addresses of public service director or advertising manager for each publication; (local phone charges); 4-6 person hours.
 - ☐ [Week 1] Draft/review/refine cover letter to director/manager; \$0.00; 2 person hours.
 - ☐ [Week 2] Print letters; \$0.50 (paper); 1 person hour.
 - ☐ [Week 2] Acquire flat envelopes and blank labels for mailing; \$10.00; 1 person hour.
 - ☐ [Week 2] Create labels for mailing; \$0.00; 3-4 person hours.
 - ☐ [Week 2] Assemble mailing; \$0.00; 2-3 person hours.
 - ☐ [Week 2] Mail print PSAs; \$13.75 (.55x25); .25 person hour.
 - ☐ [Week 3] Begin follow-up calls to PSA directors to encourage placement; (local calls); 6-8 hours (could be done by 2 persons;).
 - ☐ [Weeks 3-10] Monitor PSA placement; \$5.00 to purchase papers; 3-4 person hours.
 - ☐ [Week 10] Write report about initiative, its outcomes, midcourse corrections, and things you would do differently next time; \$2.00 paper & repro; 4-6 person hours.
 - ☐ [Week 10 or 11] Circulate to appropriate members of your organization; \$0.00; 1-2 person. hours
- Total direct costs: \$31.25
Labor: 28-38 person hours (over 4-10 weeks' time after acquiring PSAs)

Step 8: Evaluate and Make Mid-Course Corrections

- Specify times to take stock of progress in completing communications plan.
- Determine strengths and weaknesses.
- Identify obstacles.
- Create and implement new approaches for success.
- Consult with communications technical assistance advisors.

Campaign Planning Worksheet

Consider the following questions when planning a comprehensive communications campaign:

1. What are your short-term and long-term campaign objectives?
2. What is your timeline for completion of the campaign?
3. Who are your target audiences?
4. What are the key communications messages (no more than three, please)?
5. What are your staff and financial resources?
6. What materials and activities will best disseminate these messages?
7. What media have you targeted?
8. What specific roles have you identified for your spokespeople?
9. What role will consortium members, corporate partners, and staff play?
10. How will you evaluate your campaign?