

TRAINING MATERIAL



8 STEPS TO DEVELOP  
AN EFFECTIVE  
COMMUNICATION  
PLAN

**EYESS**



# IN WHICH FIELD ARE WE

## **The one of social communication**

Social communication represents a segment of communication with peculiar characteristics. Indeed, it is very different from the commercial one.

Its social utility and public interest objectives are the basis of strategy choices that rarely coincide with those adopted in the profit sector. Its aims are to educate and sensitize citizens on the many themes of social interest, encourage the change of certain behaviors, inform the population about the existence of a social problem, sanction behaviors that affect the well-being of people and the population, support social relations, create links and share positive values for solidarity, inclusion and the well-being of the community.

Social communication has the power to contribute to influencing the knowledge and attitudes of individuals. An increasing number of subjects has become aware of these opportunities. Public institutions, associations, non-profit organizations and even private companies have finally understood how important it is to invest in communication campaigns related to issues of general interest.

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# WHAT IS A COMMUNICATION PLAN

## *The role of a communication plan*

The communication plan is a strategic document that has the task of guiding all the communication activities necessary to achieve a specific set of objectives. A communication plan describes how we intend to communicate the right messages to the right people at the right time.

The main elements of a communication plan are: objectives, target, strategy, key messages, creative orientation, budget, media, products, timing, monitoring.

When the plan covers a period of several years, it is updated throughout the lifetime of the campaign.

Several aspects should be taken into account before the communication plan: understanding the context through surveys, the phenomenon, the characteristics of the target, the choices of the "competitors".

This situation is created using different methods: listening to stakeholders through focus groups / briefings, surveys to learn more about the target; desk analysis to investigate the phenomenon; comparative reading of communication actions with similar objectives.

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**WHAT  
DO YOU  
WANT  
TO GET**

### *Define the communication objectives*

This is a key point. Everything derives from the objectives. The objectives of the communication activity must be:

- Detailed and non-generic
- Measurable through indicators that will become key monitoring points
- Feasible and coherent with the economic resources, time and tools available
- Temporally defined

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# WHO DO YOU WANT TO REACH

## *Target and geographical range of the campaign*

The communication plan should identify the specific target of the campaign.

The segmentation of the target is crucial in order to build homogeneous socio-cultural groups.

A careful work on the identification of the target is essential for an effective communication strategy and proper strategic choices.

Recognising the target makes it possible to be consistent without wasting resources on actions that are likely to be useless.

Identifying and describing the target audience means understanding all the socio-cultural, demographic and economic data, in order to be able to understand which elements to leverage and how to structure the communication campaign.

In order to identify the specific target, some first important information are: age, residence, level of education, gender, job position and profession. It must be added to these features more complex elements such as standard of living; behaviors and habits.

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# WHAT ARE THE MOST SUITABLE CHOICES, OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

## *Definition of the strategy and its tools*

The definition of the strategy is the cornerstone on which the entire communication plan relies.

In this phase, several decisions will be taken on the basis of the milestones identified so far (objectives, targets and available resources). These decisions will be on:

- The key elements of the creativity (i.e. key word, tone, visual concept and copy)
- Communication techniques/approach (i.e. single object, multi-subject, integrated communication, unconventional, guerilla mkt, relational communication, with high informative, institutional content, direct marketing);
- The media to be used (i.e. vertical media, new media);
- The bouquet of materials to convey the campaign (video spots, radio spots, editorial products, BTL equipment, press and digital set-up materials, multimedia products from the website and apps, to static and dynamic banners and infographics, to all the production necessary for social security: from page opening to development of posts).

We need to keep in mind that any aspect influences others: everything must be consistent, otherwise the communication operation will fail. The application of the strategy results in the creation of a communication ecosystem, whose elements interact with each other, generating a multiplier effect on the level of contact, attention, relationships and reactions.



# WHAT REGISTER FOR YOUR TARGET

## *Development of the visual Concept and copy of the communication*

The result of analysis implemented so far, translated into emotional values, is the basis of the creative proposal. It is not the campaign that is already complete, but the creative idea behind it, composed of graphic elements, images and slogans.

Creativity is not directly part of the plan but is one of the engines of communication.

Always remember that you communicate to the target and not to yourself: saying "I don't like" doesn't make sense because we're not the audience.

There is no single language that can work in any situation: the choice of the register is functional to the strategy which in turns depends on the objectives and the target of reference.

If commercial advertising adopts the weapon of seduction working mainly in the area of desires and needs, social advertising leverages ideas, values and responsibility.

Some of the most popular types of register used in social communication are:

- 1 **Moving, emotional, evocative**, that is a language that relies on people's feelings, emotions and empathy;
- 2 **Accusatory**, that means a denunciation of a problem and responsibility of the subjects with respect to this negative situation;
- 3 **Shocking/dramatic**, a way in which it has been chosen to represent a dramatic aspect of reality and to highlight the negative consequences of a certain behavior; it is a language that relies on fear;
- 4 **Ironic/funny**, this type of language has the main objective to highlight the problems and stimulate reflection and action on specific problems, but using a funny tone;
- 5 **Didactic**, in this category the approach is to inform and guide people to a correct behavior with respect to certain rules.

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# WHICH CHANNELS TO REACH YOUR TARGET

## *Media Mix*

Planning a media mix means to choose the tools to convey the message to the target, given a defined budget.

The choice of offline and online media to convey the campaign is a key moment in the communication strategy.

In the light of the extraordinary opportunities available today, there is a tendency to privilege a mix of tools to be optimized with respect to the resources and the profile of the targets.

Thinking of a media mix means composing a plan that allows channels with very different characteristics to coexist.

**Event.** A common feature of this media is interactivity and direct contact. Under the event category there are moments that can have very different characteristics ranging from the public occasion of the square event, to the seminar and the big conference.

**Press.** It has the ability to convey more information than other media, offering in this way an opportunity to deepen the message. An important advantage of this media is also the opportunity to select the public.

**Television.** It offers the possibility to communicate stories rich in emotions able to achieve strong engagement of the target. Television continues to be a particularly important mean to reach a vast audience. Some cons are the cost and the impossibility of a specific segmentation of the target.

**Radio.** Unlike in the past, radio is now considered an important medium that many profit and non-profit organizations use successfully in their communication campaigns. This success is due to an optimal relationship between costs and audience extension, as well as the target segmentation capacity and the strength to convey messages and emotions.





**Billboards.** The main feature of this tool is that it addresses the universe of people, a feature that in many cases also becomes critical because this media does not allow segmentation of the target. For billboards, more than the high media, the condition is that the message is clear, concise and direct. The audience will hardly be able to memorize messages that are too long and complex, given that the time of use is usually short.

The advantages of outdoor advertising include the relatively low cost.

It is the outdoor tool par excellence. Posters of various formats and dynamics, allow to speak to a vast not targeted and heterogeneous audience. If they achieve to capture the attention of a distracted mobile audience with a clear, concise message, they are able to leave a mark, a memory.

**Social-Web.** The preferred channel for communicating with young people is the digital one, and investments must be focused on social networks. Probably the economic crisis, and the consequent reduction of available budgets, had a role of primary importance in the use of the web world by many profit and non-profit organizations. Many argue that the future of communication will be in relationship marketing, that is, in the development of techniques and tools capable of creating and maintaining ever more engaging and interactive relationships between people.

Today there is no tool that allows an interaction comparable to that of the Internet. The user is gaining more and more power as relationships do.

**Media relations.** Media relations concern all relations, communications and information activities that are expressly addressed to the media and which have the objective of transferring a message outside the organization.

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# HOW DO YOU MONITOR THE RESULTS OF THE CAMPAIGN

## *Monitoring and evaluation of results*

Planning moments to check the progress of the campaign are a fundamental part of a communication plan. Even if we believe in the strategy, we should be ready to change it based on the results obtained.

All this goes through a monitoring and evaluation activity, which must be programmed on different intermediate phases of the campaign.

This programming gives the possibility to intervene and update the strategy based on the information gathered during the implementation of the activity.

Equally important is an analysis at the end of the campaign to measure the achievement of the objectives and any critical points of the strategies adopted.

This path is based on the identification of the so-called Key Performance Indicators (KPIs, ie indicators used to measure the results) and provides a schedule for the analytical steps and the data collection method. A schedule for the analysis steps and a data collection method, is primarily based on the correct choice of the so-called Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that we have chosen for measuring the results.

# EYESS

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