

Strategic Communications Basics

GOALS

Goals represent a definite and specific plan of action.

Example of Goal:

- To provide outdoor environmental education opportunities for local schools

DECISION MAKERS

Decision makers are those people who can help you achieve your goal through the decisions they make. They are not necessarily the target audience, but they can be.

Decision makers might include:

- Elected officials
- Government agencies

AUDIENCE(S)

There is no such audience as the “general public.” Audiences are people who can influence the decision makers. Audiences must be targeted and specific and clearly linked to your decision-maker. The more targeted they are, the greater your chances of successfully reaching them.

Target audiences might include:

- Conservation-minded voters who are potential donors or volunteers
- Local business owners and county supervisors

MESSAGES

Messages are the key tools you will use to reach your audience, and can establish the tone of the story. The message should be short and succinct, and appeal directly to one or more of your audience’s values.

Messages typically answer these kinds of questions:

- What is the threat?
- What values are at stake?
- What is the solution?

Sample message: Add your partner-specific message here.

MEDIA TARGETS

You need to determine which types of media and which outlets will reach your audiences with your messages and messengers. Often, targets are determined by the subject matter of a story.

Examples of media targets could be:

- Associated Press
- Washington Post
- KQED
- The Atlantic
- Huffington Post

TACTICS

This is your very last step. It is a common mistake to start with tactics but it is critical that you first define the other components of your strategy, in order to know which tactics will help you reach your goal.

In today's dynamic media landscape, it pays to consider both traditional and digital media channels:

- Media advisories
 - Press releases
 - Press conferences
 - Tip sheets
 - Editorial board meetings
 - Media tours
 - Blogger outreach
 - Twitter and Facebook posts
 - Photo slideshows
 - Video
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