

# HOW TO CREATE A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Strategic Communications Planning Workbook

# CREATE A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN THAT GETS RESULTS

## ☐ A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

### WHY YOU NEED AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Experienced communicators know that developing a Strategic Communications Plan is crucial to:

- ☑ Achieve your goals.
- ☑ Reach your target audiences.
- ☑ Effectively communicate key messages.
- ☑ Motivate key stakeholders to take action.
- ☑ Inspire behavioral change.
- ☑ Gain leadership buy-in.
- ☑ Secure a budget for your efforts.
- ☑ Share your organization's story.

### HOW TO DEVELOP A FOOL-PROOF PLAN

This interactive workbook is a detailed roadmap designed to guide you to your ideal destination – a comprehensive Strategic Communications Plan. Follow each step carefully to create a polished plan that's ready to present to your leadership for approval or to start implementing right away.

*Ready to go? Let's start building your Strategic Communications Plan*

**Robin Rockey, APR**

RockSpark Communications + Marketing CEO



### QUESTIONS? REACH OUT!

Connect with Robin and the RockSpark team to let us know how we can help you build your plan and achieve your communications goals.

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NAME:

DATE:

PROJECT:

## CREATING YOUR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

We'll leverage the gold-standard four-step Public Relations Process known as **Research, Planning, Implementation and Evaluation (RPIE)** to develop your Strategic Communications Plan.

Communications professionals across all industries rely on the RPIE process to achieve extraordinary, quantifiable results. In fact, mastering the RPIE process is essential to earning the prestigious Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) credential.

**Fill in each section below to create your plan now!**

### ⋮ RESEARCH

Research is a critical first step to developing any Strategic Communications Plan. The foundation you lay during the research phase will enable you to establish a baseline that you can use to quantify your results at the end of your program or campaign.

### SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Describe the problem or opportunity facing your organization. Include the reason that a Strategic Communications Plan is needed. List potential consequences that could occur if you don't take action.

### RESEARCH PLAN

List each type of research you plan to conduct. Specify the type of your research according to these categories:

1. **Primary vs. secondary**
2. **Quantitative vs. qualitative**

# ⋮ PLANNING

## TARGET AUDIENCES

List the segments of people you wish to reach. Target audiences are also known as publics or stakeholders.

## GOAL

Define the goal for your communications campaign. Your goal should describe your desired end state. It should address your reason for creating the plan and reflect your organization's larger goals.

## OBJECTIVES

Create your key objectives. Each objective should be SMART: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound.

## STRATEGIES

Strategies outline where you are going. Tactics spell out exactly how you will get there. List each strategy you will use to support your objectives here.

## TACTICS

Now, it's time to dive into the nitty-gritty details. List the exact steps you will take to support each strategy. Identify the frequency at which you will execute each tactic (quarterly, monthly, etc.) Include numbers (examples: distribute two news releases, execute four events, etc.).

# ⋮ IMPLEMENTATION

## KEY MESSAGES

Spell out your high-level campaign messages. Support each message with proof points that can be used throughout your materials.

## TIMELINE

Describe your overall timeline and key dates.

## BUDGET

Outline the cost to execute your plan. Remember to include projected hours for in-house staff and list your budget for consultant support.

## ⋮ EVALUATION

Regular evaluation is essential to stay on track as you implement and reflect upon your plan. List the steps you will take to check in to assess your communications program. For example, will you redeploy a survey to track your progress at the three-month mark?

Remember, not every tactic will produce successful results. Make sure to stay flexible, knowing that you will likely need to pivot during your campaign. As you implement your program, write down your changes and edits.

At the end of your campaign, describe the results you achieved as measured against the goals and objectives you set at the beginning of the program.

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### **STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!**

Congratulations! You successfully created a comprehensive Strategic Communications Plan, the first step to accomplish any communications goal. Remember to stay focused, and feel free to reach out for support.

[www.RockSpark.com](http://www.RockSpark.com)





**A RockSpark® Workbook**

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