TOOLKIT WORKSHEET

Communications Toolkit: What Are Your Goals?

Align your communication goals with your research plan.	
What is the problem, issue, or question(s) you are asking and addressing in your research?	
Why is the problem interesting and important? (i.e., So what?)	
How does your work connect with a broader disciplinary conversation about this topic/problem in your field, and what does your work add to that conversation?	
Think **BIG**! What impact *could* your research have?	
Is your research more basic (fundamental), applied (practical, like in medicine?), or actionable (incorporating end-users in the process?), or some combination?	
Are you primarily looking to advance an idea (inform), engage other researchers or stakeholders, or change a particular entity's behavior? Or some combination?	

Identify concise & specific goals.	Short-Term Goal 1	Short-Term Goal 2	Long-Term Goal 1	Long-Term Goal 2
Specific: Define a clear goal and who is responsible for it's execution.				
Measurable: How will success be measured?				
Achievable: Y/N?				
Relevant: Does it align with the overall objectives and bigger picture? How?				
Time-Bound: What is a realistic deadline?				
Actionability: Does this work necessitate the inclusion of end-users (such as policy makers or community members) in the research process? Y/N; Why/Why not?				

Communications Toolkit: Identifying Your Audiences

Brainstorm potential audienes and their unique characteristics.	
Start by writing down categories or groups of people, e.g., other researchers, policymakers, community members, etc., with whom your research may be relevant.	
Next, be more specific—are there certain institutions or faculty who would benefit from your research? Particular policymakers? Communities?	
Then, list what you believe to be some of the values, motivational forces, and/or needs of each group and how your research intersects with some of these entitites.	

Communications Toolkit: Audience-Centered Analysis

Conduct an audience-centered analysis.			
List your audiences.	**Audience 1**	**Audience 2**	**Audience 3**
Write your top three audiences in descending order of relevance.			
Consider your relationship with the audiences.	**Audience 1**	**Audience 2**	**Audience 3**
What is your relationship to the audience?			
How much credibility do you have with the audience?			
"What are the sources of that credibility? E.g., Your position within an organization? Your technical expertise? Your track record? Your relationship with key people? Your personal characteristics? Your shared values with the audience?"			
How can you increase or reinforce your credibility with the audience?			
Who are other relevant influencers of the audience(s)? How do they connect to your audience and what do they know? How do they portray different issues? How might these outside groups react to your messages?			

Conduct an audience-centered analysis (cont'd).

Consider your relationship with the audiences.	Audience 1	Audience 2	Audience 3
Does the audience have any biases about the subject?			
Are there any political factors that need to be taken into account?			

Determine audience-centered goals.	Audience 1	Audience 2	Audience 3
What does the audience already know about the subject? How are they involved in the matter?			
What's in it for the audience? Are you solving a problem? Are you raising awareness?			
What's the objective of the communication? Inform? Engage? Influence? Some combination?			
What is the desired response from this audience? Are they simply taking in information? Do you wish to collaborate? Are you looking to change their behavior? What would you like them to do as a response to your communication?			
If your goal is to inform, what key points do you wish to share?			
If you wish to collaborate, why might that be useful to them?			
If you wish to change or influence their behavior, what information revealed in your research may sway them to do that?			
What questions or objections might the audience have?			

Communications Toolkit: How to Reach Your Audiences (Pt. 1)

List what products you will use to reach your audiences.			
Use this section to draft content, or, simply check applicable boxes to let your team know which products you will be making. For example, if your secondary audience is a particular policymaker you would like to meet with, you could draft your script in the box or check that box and work in a separate location.			
Medium	Audience 1	Audience 2	Audience 3
Social Media			
Multimedia			
Website			
Press Release			
Policy Memo			
Blog Post			
Pitch to Journal			
Commentary or Opinion Piece			
Script for Meeting with Policy Maker			
Fact Sheet or One Pager			

Communications Toolkit: How to Reach Your Audiences (Pt. 2)

Develop a media and contacts list.							
Throughout the process, compile a list of contacts for use when sharing your work. Use this template to keep track of your network of communication professionals and their contact infromation.							
Organization	Contact Name	Title	Email	Social Media	List Serv	Date Last Contacted	Product

Communications Toolkit: Crafting a Clear Message

Craft a message that will meet your communication goal(s).			
	Audience 1	Audience 2	Audience 3
Describe the problem and how it relates to your audience.			
Talk about an overall solution (e.g., "We found that...") OR focus on Your team's successes (e.g., "Our team did x, y, and z.")			
Identify other specific actions to take ("What next?")			
Explain the consequences of both action and inaction.			

Communications Toolkit: Writing Tips

Use the following writing tips to craft a clear message.			
Use this space to identify some of the complex language and terminology in your messaging and draft alternatives.			
Writing Tip			
Avoid jargon.	Jargon Term	Definition or Explanation	Example(s)
Create metaphors.	Difficult concept	Metaphor	
Use shorter sentences.	Long sentence(s)	Distilled sentence(s)	
Simplify the language.	Complex word(s)	Synonym(s)	
Change passive voice to active voice: Identify the subject (doer) and make it the focus of the sentence, followed by the verb and object.	Passive voice	Active voice	

Communications Toolkit: And, But, Therefore Statement

Write an And, But, Therefore (ABT) statement.						
Use the template below to make a quick, catchy, and simplified abstract, for non-technical audiences, using the ABT format. The ABT format can also be expanded to a longer paragraph by setting up a few facts, then stating the problem you are tackling, and ending with your resolution of how you intend to or are addressing the problem with your research. Use the space below to craft an ABT paragraph.						
[This is true & observable]	AND	[This is true and observable OR this data exists],	BUT	[Problem statement],	THERE-FORE	[This is how we are addressing the problem].

Communications Toolkit: Elements of a Story

Translate your research into a story.	
Hook: Introduce characters and setting. Confront the audience with an idea that's not familiar or easily understood.	
Introduce conflict—what's the problem that your research seeks to address?	
How will this research change people's lives or what we know?	
Build tension—what were some twists and turns in your research? What were some of the struggles?	
What was the 'climax' or turning point in your process where discoveries were made or things started to come together?	
What conclusions did you come to?	

Communications Toolkit: Follow-Up: How Is Your Strategy Working?

Track your progress and reflect on your successes.			
Use the space below to record your products' numbers, comments, etc.			
Audience 1	**Product 1**	**Product 2**	**Product 3**
Qualitative Feedback: Comments, etc.			
Quantitative Feedback: Numbers related to engagement with content.			
Audience 2	**Product 1**	**Product 2**	**Product 3**
Qualitative Feedback: Com-ments, etc.			
Quantitative Feedback: Numbers related to engagement with content			
Audience 3	**Product 1**	**Product 2**	**Product 3**
Qualitative Feedback: Comments, etc.			
Quantitative Feedback: Numbers related to engagement with content			
Themes/Patterns Noted Overall:			
Areas for Improvement:			
Wins:			
Ideas for the Future:			