

Developing relationships and sustaining improvement require many conversations. A communication plan helps you and your team engage others and create awareness across the organization.

Target Audience

List everyone who needs to know or do something for this initiative to be successful. Include those already involved and those you wish to engage. Stakeholders include those you serve—patients, clients, families—and those who serve them, both inside and outside your organization.

Type and Purpose of Communication

This is *why* you are reaching out to your various audiences and the best way to reach them. Remember, people are busy, so being succinct is important as you answer these upfront questions. What do you want them to know or do as a result of your communication? For example, be aware of your initiative or its progress; or act, like spread the news, or review or comment.

Messages

This is the *content* of your message—the specifics about what you want people to know or do. For example, provide input on draft messages, and by when; comment and make suggestions on progress reports, and by when; be aware of and/or share updates and lessons learned; or remain engaged.

Methods

How will you provide information? Examples include email, existing or planned meeting(s) with individuals, personal contact, and regular unit or department meetings. Formats may be verbal, physical, or digital awareness posters; handouts; or flyers to help managers spread the news.

Frequency

For *each* target audience, identify the intervals and frequency of messages needed to engage and sustain participation.

Who Will Communicate by When

Specify who is the best person to communicate with each target audience, and the when and where for each message. Example: “Our team leader will meet in person monthly with our senior sponsor.”

Tips from Experienced Teams

- Include your team members and sponsor in developing messages. Consider reviewing proposed messages with managers to ensure you are using the best language, tone, and content for their area’s context and culture.
- Your plan is useful to your marketing support. Engage them early to help inform target audiences and develop feature articles or social media messages for you.
- Update your plan regularly. Teams have found it necessary to revisit the plan weekly at the beginning and then monthly as communication becomes established.
- Always be on the watch for new target audiences and what you need them to know or do.

Story - Non-Clinical


The project lead for implementing teach-back in a public health facility was excited about all the ways teach-back could improve operations and the safety of their service users. Staff and service user input was useful. Now people were asking, “Who else needs to be included?” and “Who else needs to know what we are doing to support this work?” A communication plan was needed.

The lead pulled together a small group to develop a list of who should be on a communication list and what those people needed to know or do. As the group started reaching out, they realized they needed to develop specific messages to engage and inform each different audience. Topics included progress updates, draft reviews, lessons learned, frequently asked questions, and requests for input. Messages always included “Who else needs to be involved or informed about this?”

A marketing colleague gave suggestions for how to share messages beyond email, like standing meetings and social media, and offered to write a newsletter feature. He further suggested tracking who was assigned to each outreach, and their timing and discoveries, and regularly updating the list. He gave examples of adapting tone and content for various audiences’ context and culture.

On the following pages you can see a Communication Plan Template and Communication Plan Example that can be adapted for your needs. See [Communication Plan Template](#) and [Communication Plan Example](#).

Communication Plan Example*



Always Use
Teach-back!

Team Name:

Updated:

Target Audience	Type/Purpose of Communication	Message(s) Customized to values of group or individuals	Method	Frequency	Who, By Whom, Where
Sr Leaders Partners Frontline staff Stakeholders Influencers Project team Others	Awareness Information Take action Gain consensus Review/Comment Other	Progress Proposal drafts Lessons learned Scripted responses to frequent or expected questions Other	Existing meetings Newsletters Email Personal contact Unit meetings Other	Planned/ongoing As needed Other	Name of person or group Date
Senior Leader Sponsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep informed of progress and barriers - Gain clarity on key messages for moving forward - Provide stories for sponsor to share about value & benefits of teach-back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How teach-back fits our mission and vision - Vision is to move forward across our facility with teach-back and connect it with our existing equity initiative - Help us develop and carry messages throughout the organization 	Face-to-face meetings Email progress	Monthly Bi-weekly	By end of month Alternate weeks By Initiative Lead
First Recruited Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teach-back's importance to our organization - Determining their readiness - Initiative awareness and timeline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How teach-back fits our mission and vision - Their needs and interests are important to the success of the Program - What & how of teach-back training - How we plan to start small - Using PDSAs in small tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Face-to-face meeting - What and when of updates will be developed to meet their needs - Updates in regular staff meetings 	1st meeting with Unit Manager 2nd meeting with Unit Then weekly	1st meeting this week: Unit Manager with Initiative Lead Then Manager with Lead as needed

*See [Communication Planning](#) for the value of planning communication and an experienced team's story. Download [Communication Plan Example](#) for sample plan.



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