

Effective communication is key to the success of your innovation and change efforts. Use this guide to take charge of your communication to inspire, engage and move institutional change efforts from talk to results. Share it with your executive team and with those who will help with your communication efforts including PR staff and anyone who will speak for you. Apply it to any communication related to your change effort at every stage of the change journey.

Complete these seven steps for more effective communication planning:

1. Purpose and Outcomes
2. Audience
3. Channel
4. Message
5. Feedback
6. Timing
7. Walk the Talk

1. Purpose and Outcomes

Why are you speaking/writing to this audience? Write down the outcomes that will tell you this communication has been a success. If you don't make explicit your reasons and expectations, don't expect your audience to read your mind.

Purpose. Why I want to have this meeting. What I want to be different because my audience heard this message. (Example: Purpose: to unify our senior leadership team so that we can speak with one voice in undertaking this change initiative.)

Desired Outcomes. What will tell me this purpose has been achieved (Example: We have agreed on key messages that we will use in communicating about the change effort to others.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

2. Audience

Your message will be filtered through the perceptive lenses of your audience. What you say may not be what they hear. There is a big difference between your senior leadership team and your faculty or staff as an audience. How you communicate with them must take account of those differences. Ask these questions:

- What style will this group relate to best? Should message be casual, formal, humorous or something else? What will make you most credible?
- What does this audience know about the change that is planned? What rumors have circulated?
- Will they be receptive or skeptical of this initiative? How will the past history of change efforts color their perception?
- What interests of your audience could be affected (positively or negatively) if this change is successful? Remember W.I.I.F.M. (What's in it for me?). Why should this audience care about your message?

What I know about this audience and how best to shape my message to be effective

Where I will find the information about my audience that I don't have now

3. **Channel**

Where will you meet your audiences where they can really “tune in” to your message? In the digital age the delivery modality includes both face-to-face and every form of digital. Large or small group meetings have the virtue of everyone hearing the message at the same time knowing that others have heard it too. Digital media can be synchronous (webinar or webcast) or asynchronous (email, tweet, video on the net, etc.) but in any case, the digital listener is likely to be alone and not able to interact fully with other audience members. It is likely that you will want to use more than one channel depending on your audience and how important it is to sustain your message over time. Recording your message on video or as a podcast is a great way to make sure your message gets to those who may see it later without other people filtering it.

Audience _____

Communication Channels Best for this Group/Choose all that apply

Face-to-Face	Digital/Print
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual meeting (1on1)	<input type="checkbox"/> Email
<input type="checkbox"/> Small Group (standing meeting)	<input type="checkbox"/> Webinar/Webcast
<input type="checkbox"/> Small Group (special meeting)	<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook Live (streaming)
<input type="checkbox"/> Large Group (town hall)	<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook (group)
<input type="checkbox"/> Large Group (theater-style presentation)	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Media (Instagram, Tweet, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Presenter (surrogate)	<input type="checkbox"/> Video (YouTube)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Collateral Print (brochures, etc.)

Notes _____

4. **Message**

A big part of your role as leader is to be the champion of this change initiative. While messaging will change over the weeks, months or years that this initiative is underway, the basic format at every stage will include the following:

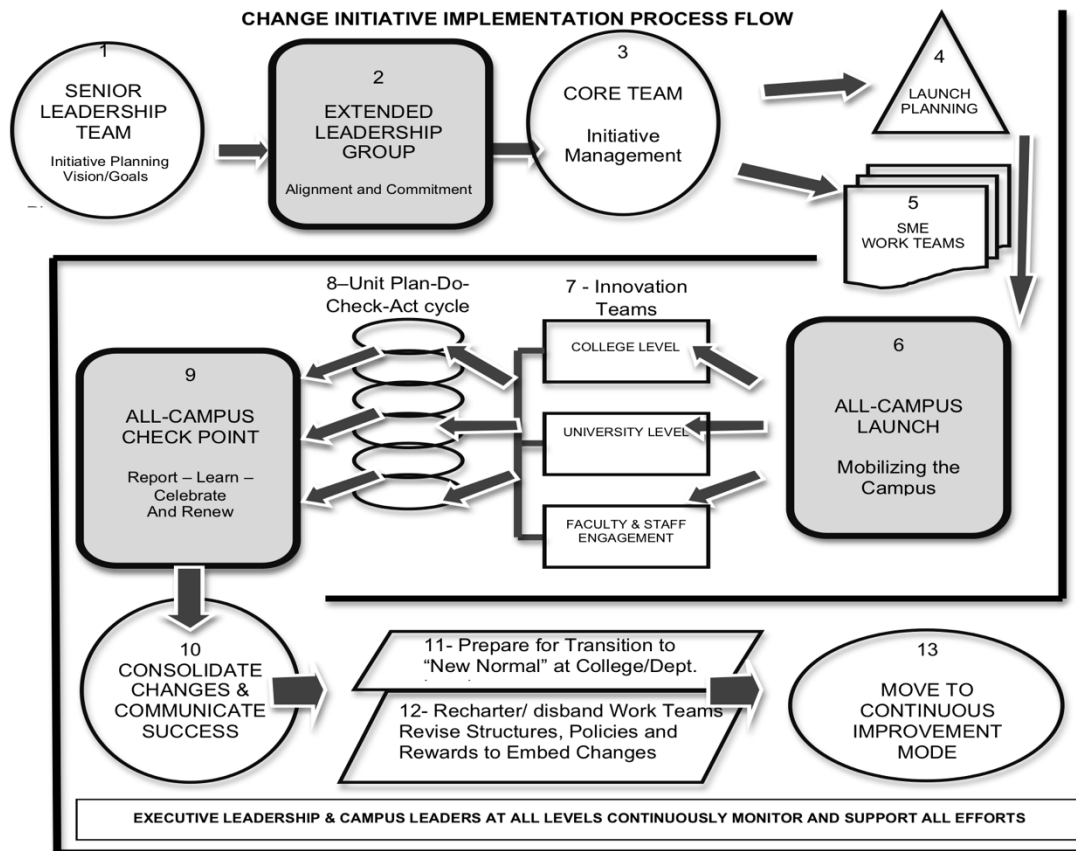
Presentation Talking Points (Complete on separate sheet as needed)

Why Are We Doing This? Stress the real reason why we are doing this work. Describe the need, the opportunity and what success will look like and the benefits that will come from making the change. How will our students, staff, or faculty benefit when this change is in place?

Where are we now? Describe the change as a journey. Use a change roadmap to let people see where they are on the pathway. (See sample on next page) This includes facts about the current situation and recognition of progress made at each stage.

What's next? Describe immediate next steps on the roadmap and describes the roles that members of the audience will play in advancing the change effort. At the end is a call to action in which the leader describes what all of this means for each member of the audience and leaves open the opportunity for each person to have input and make their own contribution.

Sample Change Roadmap



1. **Senior Leadership Team** meets to plan the initiative, create draft vision of success and set goals.
2. **Extended Leadership Group** (2nd. & 3rd. level managers) meet to provide input to the Vision and the implementation plan.
3. **A Core Team** is formed to provide administrative support to the project. This group will convene and monitor task teams that are needed from time to time.
4. **Planning for the All-Campus Launch** is done by an Event Planning Team made up of a representative sample of leaders, faculty, staff and students who will be part of the All-Campus Launch.
5. **Subject Matter Expert (SME) Work Teams** are formed to work on research and planning for the subject matter of the initiative to make sure information is ready for the All-Campus Launch and following activities.
6. **All-Campus Launch** is where a significant microcosm of the campus is engaged. The design of this meeting follows the DVF model moving from information to vision of success to next steps action.

7. **Innovation Teams** are formed at unit and system level to develop ideas and action plans for each level. These teams coordinate with the leadership and with the Core Team
8. **Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle** has people in their functional work groups taking action to work toward strategic objectives guided by the vision of success.
9. **All-Campus Check Point** is held at 6 or 12 months to bring everyone back together to assess progress, celebrate success and plan further steps.
10. **Consolidate Changes** means lessons learned are being applied and people are settling into new ways of working.
11. **Prepare for Transition** means integrating the change work into standard operating procedure.
12. **Work Teams** are disbanded and their functions are either no longer needed or transferred to permanent structures to embed changes.
13. **Move to Continuous Improvement** as the change shifts from transformation to improvement.

5. **Feedback**

People support what they help to create. Outstanding communicators must also be great listeners. Use your communication platform to invite others to make their voices heard. Communicate through forums that are interactive and provide participants the opportunity to ask questions, to make suggestions and to plan actions. Stress that the change process is open for continuous learning. There are many ways to invite feedback on the plan for change. This can happen in a large group meeting by having small groups provide advice on what to add, change or delete to the plan.

How will the audience be engaged? Examples include:

- Open Forum (time for small group discussion followed by all-room questions of understanding)
- Written questions and answers
- Written feedback form at the end of the session with email follow-up
- End of meeting individual verbal feedback (for small groups)
- Post meeting online survey or other feedback post event
- Debrief in small groups (e.g., departments) with feedback to leadership
- Feedback on Facebook or other social media

Plan for obtaining feedback

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6. Timing

When is the best time to deliver this particular message? If it's a meeting, consider time of the day, day of the week, or even time of year. How much time will this take? Will this be a special meeting called just for this purpose or will it be built into an already scheduled meeting or event? The more you need to engage your audience, the more time should be set aside. Avoid schedule conflicts such as the start or end of term and before or after holidays. Preview your communication with your senior team before going to a larger public so sequencing is also a consideration. Timing considerations connect directly with the next step of choosing communications channels.

Timing Considerations

Time Needed for this Face-to-Face meeting in hours or days _____

Other events and initiatives that will compete for attention

Campus Calendar Events (e.g., orientation) _____

Ongoing initiatives (e.g., IT implementation) _____

Holidays or other non-school events _____

Whose schedule must be consulted?

Best Day of Week

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

(Note: some events may last more than one day)

Best Time of Day

Morning Lunchtime Afternoon Dinner Evening

Suggested day, date and time of this event

7. **Walk the Talk**

The more important the change effort, the more essential it is that the leader is highly visible in supporting it. This means making resources available and making adjustments in roles, responsibilities, rewards and recognition that provide clarity and incentives for those who must support the change. Outstanding leaders recognize that the command-and-control leadership style is offensive and counter-productive with newer employee generations.

What I am prepared to do

What I will hold others accountable for doing

For more information on consulting, training, and coaching support, contact New Campus Dynamics at 734-657-5772 or write info@newcampusdynamics.com.