

CRAFTING A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Improving Your Engagement and Communications Through Strategic Planning

FEBRUARY 3, 2016 • CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP

OVERVIEW

WHY

are you here?
does strategic communication matter?
do you need a communications plan?

WHAT

does the research say?
does strategic communication look like?

HOW

do we build a communications plan?

WHY?

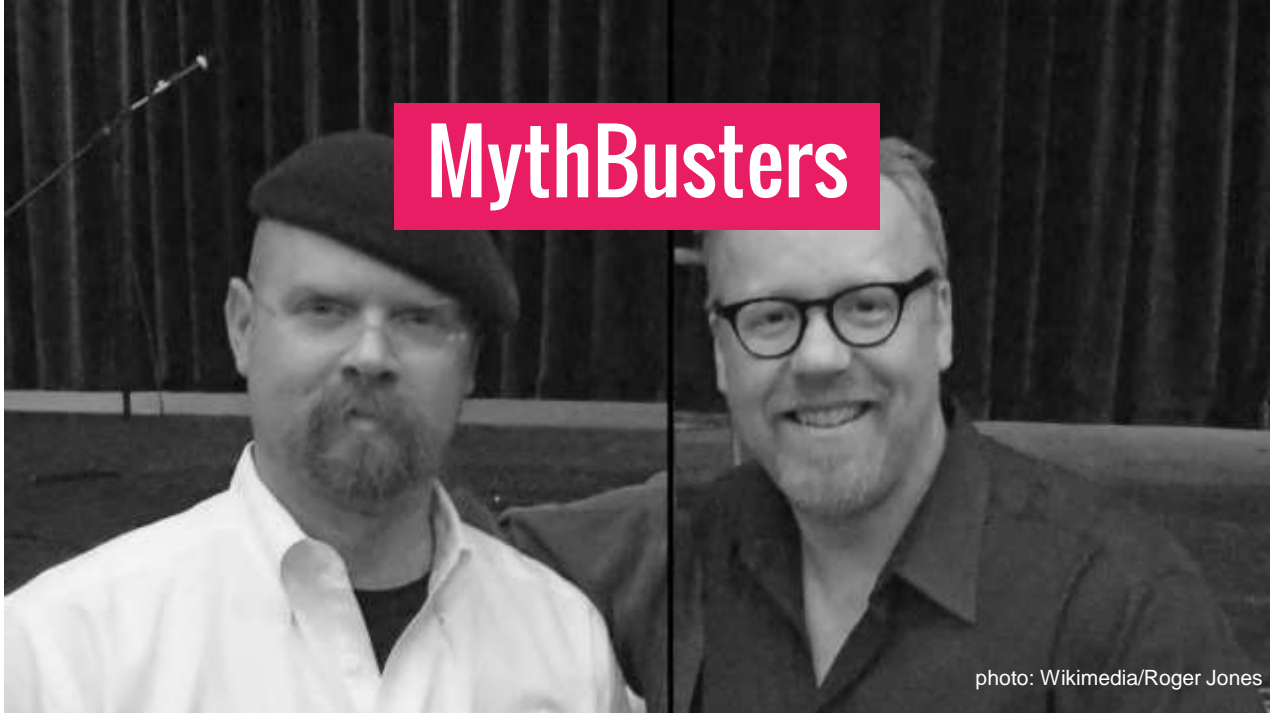
- 1. Why did you choose this session?**
- 2. What is your biggest challenge in communicating effectively as a program/school/organization?**



Why does communication matter?



Why do you need a communications plan?



WHAT?

How many
times must a
consumer
see/hear a
message before
they act?

A. 1

B. 7

--- C. 25

How many
times must a
consumer
see/hear a
message before
they act?

B. 7

Who has a longer attention span?



A. GOLDFISH

B. HUMAN

Who has a longer attention span?



A. GOLDFISH

What social media site do teens report using most often in 2015?

A. INSTAGRAM

B. SNAPCHAT

C. FACEBOOK

What social media site do teens report using most often in 2015?

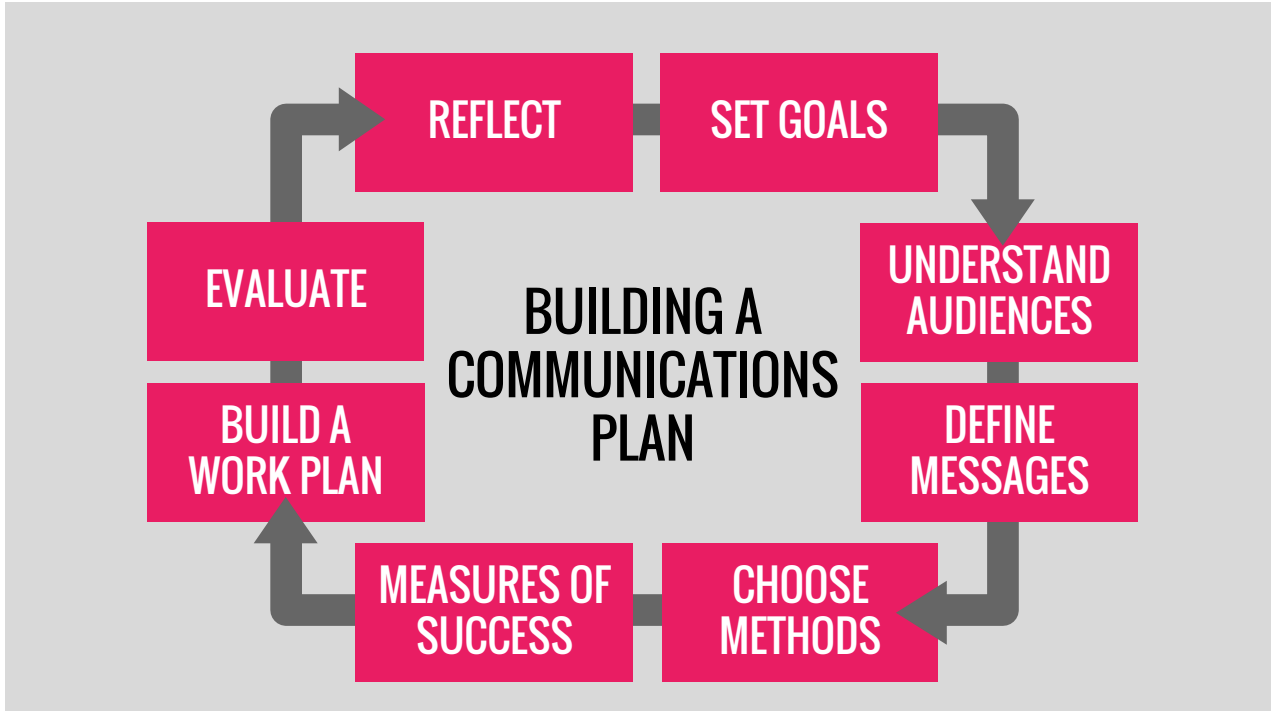
C. FACEBOOK

SEVEN 'C'S
of effective communication



clear
complete
concise
considerate
concrete
courteous
correct

HOW?



1. REFLECT

1. REFLECT

The state of our program's communication plan:

- A. We've got one, we use it, just need some help refining it/exploring new ideas.**
- B. We have one, but we don't use it.**
- C. What's a communications plan?**

1. REFLECT

If you asked 10 people in your school or community about GEAR UP, how many would be able to accurately describe what GEAR UP is?

- A. Almost all of them.**
- B. Some of them.**
- C. Close to no one.**

1. REFLECT

Who is currently responsible for communications at your program or organization?

- A. One person's full-time job.**
- B. One person's part-time job.**
- C. Everyone does a little to help out.**
- D. No one.**

	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Harmful</i>
<i>Internal</i>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active student leadership group • Instagram account with 300 followers 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disconnect between how many students say they complete the FAFSA and data from Office of Federal Student Aid
<i>External</i>	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free resources (videos, worksheets) from Office of Federal Student Aid 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media stories about the rising cost of college and the difficulty in filling out FAFSA

1. REFLECT

About the Exercise: Step One (Page 2 of Handout)

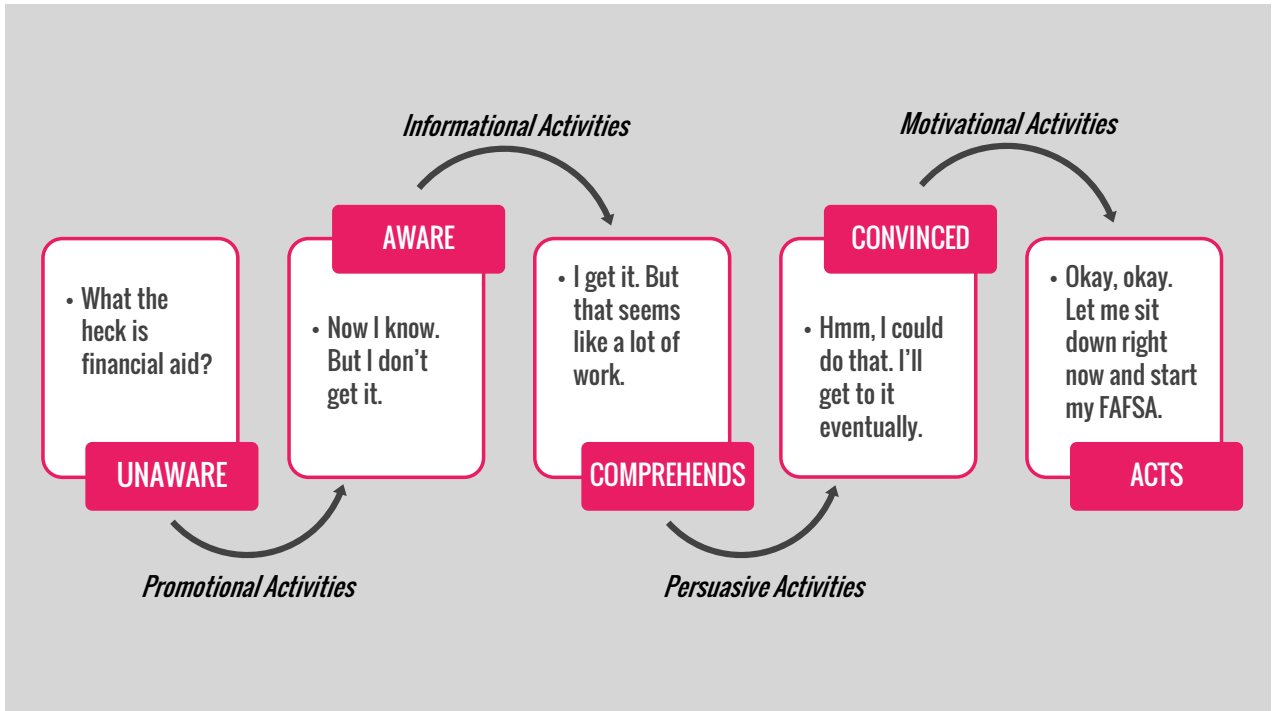
- Identify a single communication topic to work on today
- Work individually
- Add the main idea to your Plan At A Glance (Page 1)
- Share your work with someone at your table

	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Harmful</i>
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2. SET GOALS

Communication goals guide how we move our audience towards a desired outcome.

(Let's use a FAFSA Completion Example)



2. SET GOALS

- Broadly define what you want to promote, change, or accomplish
- Hone in on tangible, observable outcomes
- Consider what activity types will get you there (Promotional, Informational, Persuasive, Motivational)

Specific

What is your core focus?

Measurable

How will you know you've succeeded?

Attainable

Are you being realistic?

Relevant

Is it worthwhile to your broader work?

Timely

When will it happen?

Communications Topic #1: FAFSA Completion		
A.) Broadly speaking, what do we want to promote, change, or accomplish? What will get you there?	B.) What are the tangible outcomes that would define success?	C.) Draft a basic SMART Goal statement to help bring focus to your efforts.
<p>All students able to afford higher education.</p> <p>Financial aid and completing the FAFSA are key.</p>	<p>Within 30 Days</p> <p>All schools know where to track FAFSA completion data and what current % is</p>	<p>FAFSA completion at our schools will increase 20% in one year in part by school's hosting one or more events to help students complete the form.</p>
	<p>Within 90 Days</p> <p>All schools have at least one event to help seniors complete FAFSA</p>	
<p>What activity type(s) will get you there?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Promotional Activity</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Informational Activity</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Persuasive Activity</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Motivational Activity</p>	<p>Within One Year</p> <p>Increased FAFSA submissions at our schools by 20%</p>	

2. SET GOALS

About the Exercise: Step Two (Page 3 of Handout)

- Continue working on your single communication topic
- Work individually
- Add the main idea to your Plan At A Glance (Page 1)
- Share your work with someone at your table

Communications Topic #1: FAFSA Completion		
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3. UNDERSTAND AUDIENCES

**Will they tune in or tune out?
Our success begins with understanding.**

3. UNDERSTAND AUDIENCES

You can't do it all.

You need to prioritize by making smart decisions.

Individuals and groups respond to messages differently.

So a one-size-fits-all approach is likely to fall short.

People don't hide their uniqueness.

So it's our job to tailor our communications to resonate with *them*.

Communications Topic #1: FAFSA Completion			
A.) Who are the most essential audiences to focus on?	B.) What makes them unique?	C.) Why will they care?	D.) What are the unique challenges they present?
<i>Think Return on Investment</i>	<i>Think Attitudes, Beliefs, & Values</i>	<i>Think Benefits & Solutions</i>	<i>Think Barriers & Obstacles</i>
Priority #1 HS Seniors	Want information quickly, digitally Concerned about cost of college	Money for college!	Senior year is overloaded with activities; may have senioritis
Priority #2 Parents	Are under a lot of stress thinking about paying for college and don't know who to turn to Lots of aid/cost misconceptions	Need a trusted, credible source of info May need to be guided in a hands-on-way	Finding time in their schedules Requires a trusting relationship Tough to engage digitally
Priority #3 Educators	Have powerful relationships with students Information is complex & changing	Want better tools and resources they can incorporate easily into their work	Their plates are very full Need support as aid process changes
E.) What are the key commonalities among the audiences?		F.) What are the insurmountable differences among the audiences?	
Everyone has a desire to access aid, but need credible information and better guidance		They need different types of support; the communication methods and opportunities vary substantially; groups have different misconceptions that must be addressed.]	

3. UNDERSTAND AUDIENCES

About the Exercise: Step Three (Page 4 of Handout)

- Continue working on your communication topic
- Work individually
- Add the main idea to your Plan At A Glance (Page 1)
- Share your work with someone at your table

Communications Topic #1: FAFSA Completion			
A.) Who are the most essential audiences to focus on?	B.) What makes them unique?	C.) Why will they care?	D.) What are the unique challenges they present?
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4. DEFINE MESSAGES

While an occasional disinclination to exercise is exhibited by all age cohorts, the likelihood of PHO* makes even mildly strenuous physical activity all the more imperative.

***positive health outcomes**

JUST DO IT.



4. DEFINE MESSAGES



SIMPLE

BRIEF

MOVING

Andy Goodman, *Free-Range Thinking*, November 2003

4. DEFINE MESSAGES

A. THE BASICS



B. RELEVANCE



C. MESSAGE



4. DEFINE MESSAGES

6 PRINCIPLES OF “STICKINESS”

Simple

Unexpected

Concrete

Credible

Emotional

Stories

Chip and Dan Heath, *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*

4. DEFINE MESSAGES

Test your messages!

Communications Topic #1: FAFSA Completion		Priority #1 Audience: Seniors		
A. Define the Basics				
WHAT do you need to communicate? (the key facts)	To WHO?	WHY?	WHEN?	WHAT action do you want them to do as a result?
Financial aid exists and taking the first step is easy.	High School Seniors	To get money for college.	As early as possible, but by FAFSA deadline.	Complete the FAFSA.
B. Add Elements to Maximize Relevance				
What will attract their ATTENTION?	What is the solution you have that will capture their INTEREST?	What will create a sense of urgency to ACT?		
Address their concerns head on. They're stressed and they don't know how easy the FAFSA is.	One form opens access to \$150 billion in financial aid.	Much state aid is first-come, first-serve.		
C. Write Your Message				
You CAN afford college with over \$150 billion available in financial aid. Take 30 minutes today to fill out the FAFSA to qualify. Apply for free at FAFSA.gov.				

4. DEFINE MESSAGES

About the Exercise: Step Four (Page 5 of Handout)

- Continue working on your communication topic
- Work individually
- Add the main idea to your Plan At A Glance (Page 1)
- Share your work with someone at your table

Communications Topic #1: FAFSA Completion		Priority #1 Audience: Seniors		
A. Define the Basics				
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C. Write Your Message				
You CAN afford college with over \$150 billion available in financial aid. Take 30 minutes today to fill out the FAFSA to qualify. Apply for free at FAFSA.gov.				

5. CHOOSE METHODS

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ELECTRONIC

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#GEARUPWORKS



ELECTRONIC

5. CHOOSE METHODS

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

Can or Future College Expenses

Answer: T F F F

It's not decided on when you go to school... You can't get a loan until you're in college...

College is not for everyone... It's a big decision... You need to be sure you can afford it...

The best way to pay for college is to save... You can start saving when you're young...

Can or Future Tuition to Cover Your Expenses

Answer: T F F F

For most people, college is not free... You need to have a plan for how to pay for it...

College is not for everyone... It's a big decision... You need to be sure you can afford it...

The best way to pay for college is to save... You can start saving when you're young...

Can or Future Tuition to Cover Your Expenses

Answer: T F F F

For most people, college is not free... You need to have a plan for how to pay for it...

College is not for everyone... It's a big decision... You need to be sure you can afford it...

The best way to pay for college is to save... You can start saving when you're young...

What aid is available?



FINANCIAL AID LINGO

WHEN FIGURING OUT HOW TO PAY FOR COLLEGE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW THE LANGUAGE OF FINANCIAL AID. THE BASIC CAN HELP YOU AVOID ANY CONFUSION.

WORDS

Financial aid is money that helps you pay for college... It can come from the government, your school, or private organizations...

Financial aid is money that helps you pay for college... It can come from the government, your school, or private organizations...

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WORDS

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Financial aid is money that helps you pay for college... It can come from the government, your school, or private organizations...



PRINT

5. CHOOSE METHODS

Start where you are... College Pathways 2016... The Latest Buzz about the College Scorecard... Includes logos for VSAC and various educational organizations.

A mid-year letter from your first-year college student... Top ten things for parents to remember about the college search... Includes a Facebook link and a list of ten points.

PRINT

5. CHOOSE METHODS



Family & Community Outreach
Monthly Spotlight
 for high schools

One Call Script

Hi, this is Superintendent/Principal [NAME] from [NAME OF SCHOOL DISTRICT/SCHOOL]

Did you know that grades can suffer when 10 percent of the school year is missed? That's just 18 days a year—or 2 to 3 days a month.

As we start the school year, we are shining a spotlight on attendance with a renewed push to get all of our students to school—every day, and on time. Absences add up no matter what grade your student is in—even when the absence is excused!

We know there will be days when your child will miss school, especially when they're sick. But we also know missed school equals missed opportunities. Let's work together as a community to get all our kids to school—every day and on time.

For information and tips to support good school attendance, contact our GEAR UP College and Career Advisor for the family tip sheet on Attendance. You can also find it [INSERT ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS AS APPLICABLE]

PHONE

5. CHOOSE METHODS

Hi is there anyway I can have my acceptance letter faxed to me?

Octavia Reum 7/8/15 1:58 PM

Hi Octavia, I think that is a possibility and I will work on getting it to you. What fax # can I send it to?

Jennifer Pope 7/13/15 9:07 AM

I called and had it sent to me. Thank you!

Octavia Reum 7/13/15 9:08 AM

Great! Have you registered for orientation yet? We will get a chance to meet in person at orientation and talk about anything you might need to start this fall.

Jennifer Pope 7/13/15 11:20 AM

Yes, I'll be going at the end of this month.

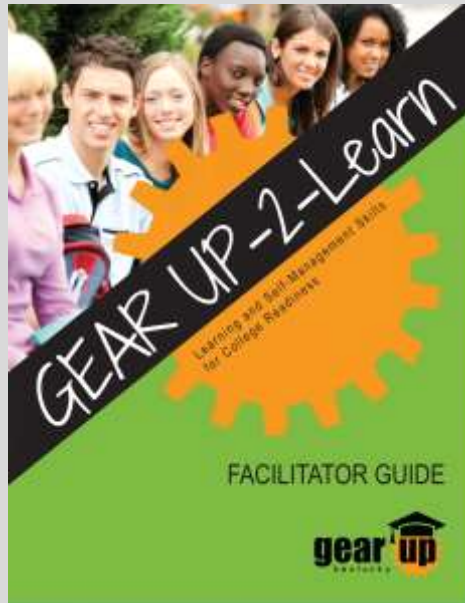
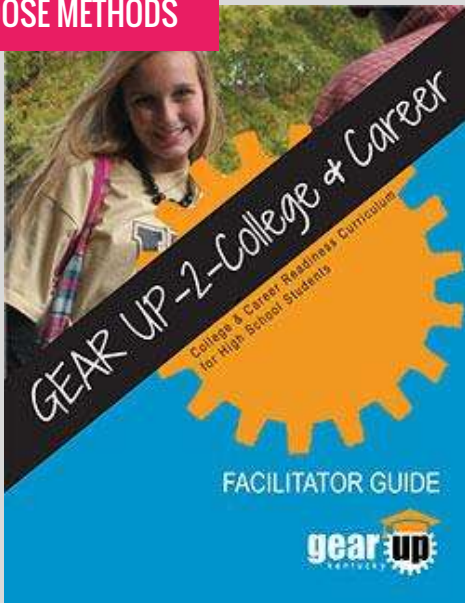
Octavia Reum 7/13/15 11:27 AM

Fantastic...I look forward to meeting you then!

Jennifer Pope 7/13/15 1:16 PM

PHONE

5. CHOOSE METHODS



IN PERSON

5. CHOOSE METHODS



Photo: NCCEP

IN PERSON

5. CHOOSE METHODS

Select the appropriate method(s) for each audience.

- Who do they listen to?
- Where do they spend their time?
- How can you get their attention?

Electronic		Phone	
Methods	Best Audience(s)	Methods	Best Audience(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> E-newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram <input type="checkbox"/> Video	Educators Students	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone calls <input type="checkbox"/> Text messages <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Print		In Person	
Methods	Best Audience(s)	Methods	Best Audience(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> Magazines <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletters <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Class/Workshop <input type="checkbox"/> Legislator Visits <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	

5. CHOOSE METHODS

About the Exercise: Step 5 (Page 6 of Handout)

- Brainstorm communication methods and the best audiences
- Work in small groups or individually
- Add the main idea to your Plan At A Glance (Page 1)
- Share your work with someone at your table

Electronic		Phone	
Methods	Best Audience(s)	Methods	Best Audience(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> E-newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram <input type="checkbox"/> Video	Educators Students	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone calls <input type="checkbox"/> Text messages <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Print		In Person	
Methods	Best Audience(s)	Methods	Best Audience(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> Magazines <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletters <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Class/Workshop <input type="checkbox"/> Legislator Visits <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	

6. MAP MEASURES OF SUCCESS

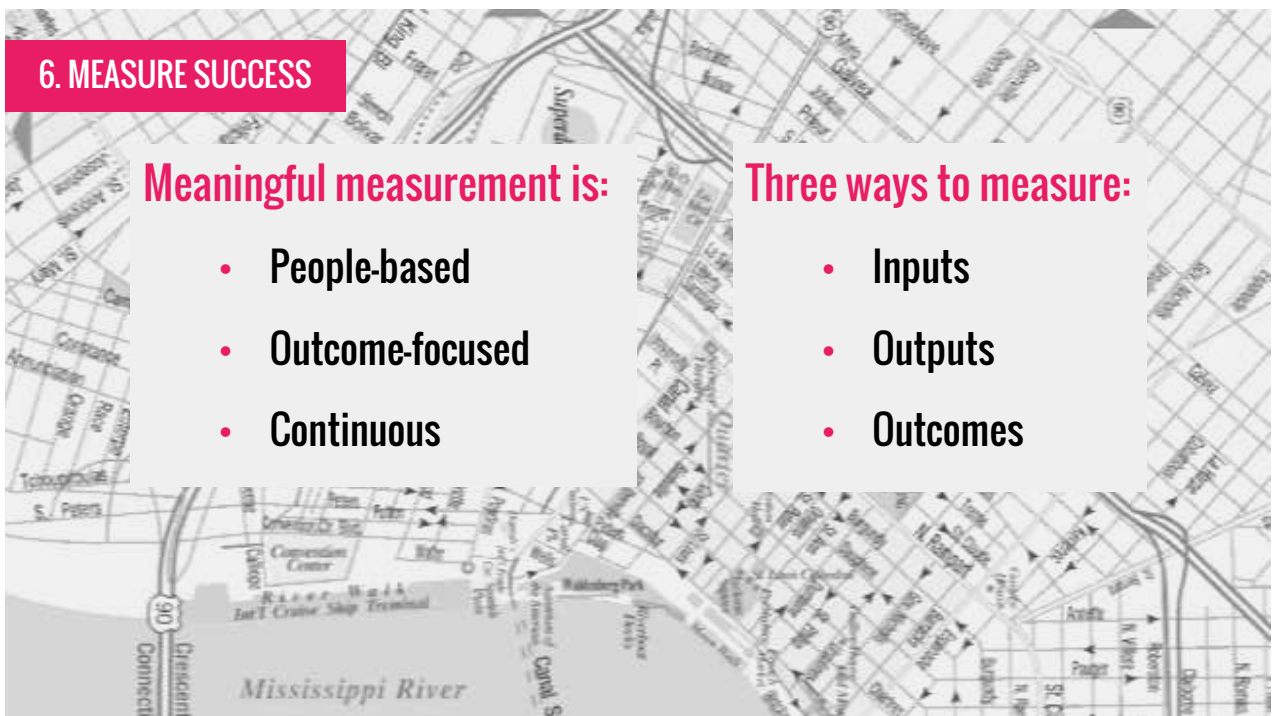
6. MEASURE SUCCESS

Meaningful measurement is:

- People-based
- Outcome-focused
- Continuous

Three ways to measure:

- Inputs
- Outputs
- Outcomes



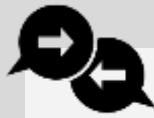
6. MEASURE SUCCESS



INPUTS

Measures **CAPACITY**

CAPACITY: How much time, money and skills do you need to implement methods?



OUTPUTS

Measures **ACTIVITY** and **REACH**

ACTIVITY: Are we doing what we said we would?

REACH: Who and how many of our audience are receiving our message?



OUTCOMES

Measures **ENGAGEMENT** & **IMPACT**

ENGAGEMENT: When and how does audience engage with us/our message?

IMPACT: What behaviors/attitudes have we shifted?

Communications Topic #1:

FAFSA Completion

Priority #1 Audience:

Seniors

Method #1	Measurable Goal	How to Measure
Events for seniors to get help filling out FAFSA	50 seniors attend	Sign-in sheets
	85% finish the FAFSA	Student exit survey to win a prize

Method #2	Measurable Goal	How to Measure
Instagram: tag a friend to tell to complete the FAFSA	25 people tagged	Instagram metrics
	50 likes/photo	Instagram metrics

Method #3	Measurable Goal	How to Measure

6. MEASURE SUCCESS

About the Exercise: Step 6 (Page 7 of Handout)

- Continue working on your communication topic
- Work individually
- Add the main idea to your Plan At A Glance (Page 1)
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Communications Topic #1: FAFSA Completion	Priority #1 Audience: Seniors
---	---

Method #1	Measurable Goal	How to Measure
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	50 likes/photo	Instagram metrics

Method #3	Measurable Goal	How to Measure

7. BUILD A WORK PLAN

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PROJECTS ARE POWERED BY PEOPLE

An effective work plan includes:

- An appropriate level of detail
- A structure aligned to GEAR UP and project goals
- A format for periodic progress reports

7. BUILD A WORK PLAN

SAMPLE						
COMMUNICATIONS TOPIC:					AUDIENCE:	
MESSAGE	METHOD(S)	EXISTING RESOURCES	RESOURCES NEEDED	OWNER	KEY MILESTONES & DEADLINES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Communications Work Plan Template

Communications Topic #1: FAFSA Completion					Priority #1 Audience: Seniors	
Messages	Methods	Existing Resources	Resources Needed	Owner	Key Milestones & Deadlines	Measures of Success
Complete the FAFSA!	FAFSA event (New Years Day Party)	Financial Aid Toolkit from Office of Federal Student Aid	Raffle prizes from businesses Sign in sheet	Alex	Early Dec: send save the date Dec: recruit volunteers, donations print sign in sheets remind students what to bring	50 seniors attend 85% finish the FAFSA that day
	Instagram	Photos from last year's FAFSA event	Instagram account Other stock photos (Flickr)	Kim	Weekly posts throughout December and January reminding students about FAFSA and event, encouraging them to tag a friend	25 people tagged 50 likes/photo

7. BUILD A WORK PLAN

About the Exercise: Step 7 (Page 8 of Handout)

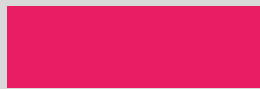
- Continue working on your communication topic
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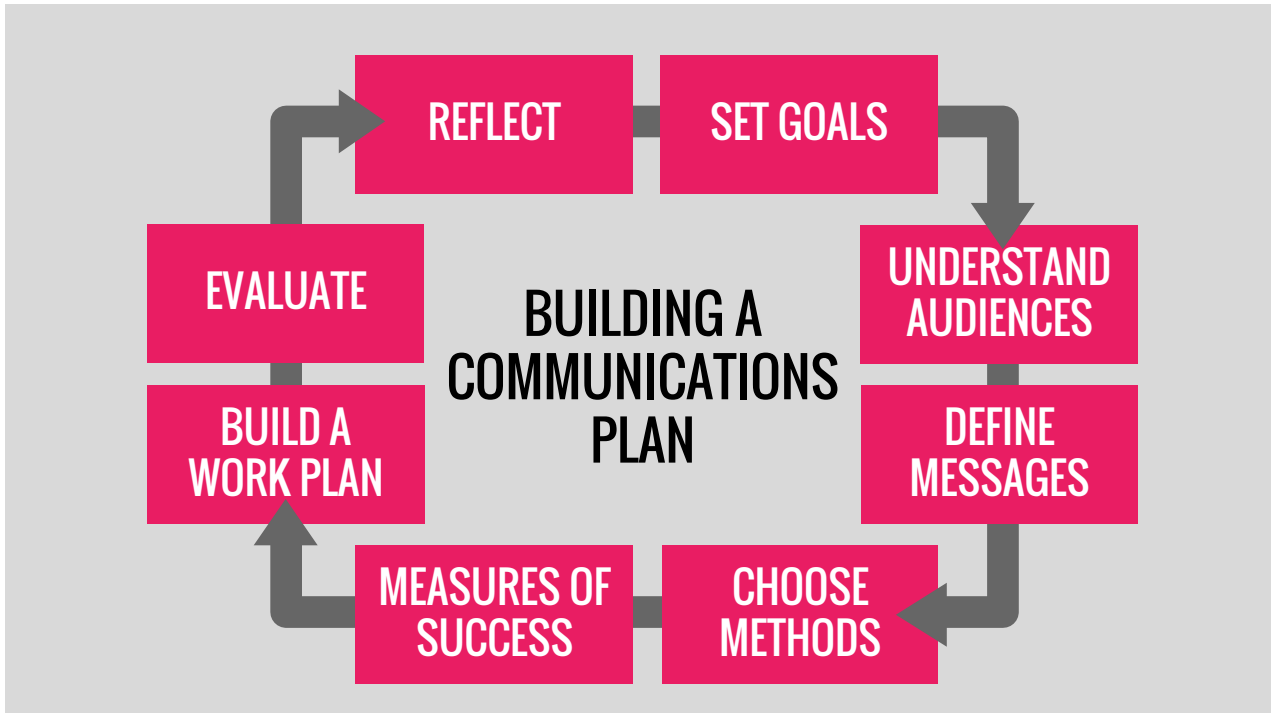
Communications Work Plan Template

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8. EVALUATE

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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