

**How to create a communication plan**

The role of communication is to provide assistance in order to ensure that decisions can be carried out, that projects and changes can be completed, and objectives can be fulfilled. When people are involved and affected, you also need to consider how communication should work. By planning the communication you create conditions for ensuring that what you say, visualise, discuss or give feedback on has the desired effect. Below are suggestions for headers that help structure your communication plan in a good way. All headers don’t have to be included, however. Adjust the plan to suit your needs. Remember that more detailed and rigorous preparations reduce the risk of misunderstandings at later stages. Each header comes with a short description of what could be included.

**Background and aim**
Briefly describe the background and the aim of the planned communication activity. Also state the goal/s that the communication is meant to support.

**Analysis**

* Provide a brief analysis of the current state of things.
* What message/information/ do you want to communicate?
* What is the situation right now? What are the challenges? What possibilities are there? Which other internal or external processes do you need to take into account? Can you benefit from some of them?
* Define the scope of the project.
* What are we not trying to solve with these communication efforts?

Make sure to match the level of ambition with the available resources, in order to get a communication plan that can realistically be implemented.

**Target groups**
What are the intended target groups? Which groups are prioritised? What needs and how much knowledge do they have on the subject? What do they want to know? What is their situation like? What is their relation to the information/message you want to convey? Are you directing your communication inward at an internal target audience or to an external one?

For your communication efforts to be successful, you should refer to the interest, knowledge and engagement with the topics and issues in question. The level of success is measured by how the target audience reacts to your communication efforts.

**Message**
What message do you want to communicate? Who will act as the spokesperson in various specific contexts? Why these specific persons and how will they carry out their duties? There are often several target groups, which means that the message must be adjusted both in terms of content and tone. Prioritise that which is particularly important to your target audience, the organisation and the staff, in order to ensure that what you’re communicating is relevant.

*Primary message:* What is the most important message you want to convey? What is the core message relevant to all target groups?

*Secondary messages and support arguments:* What are the secondary messages and support arguments? Is there a need to adjust the messages for different target groups? Do you need to create an FAQ to assist in the project?

**Impact goals**
State what your impact goals are for each target group. Define your goals clearly, to make them possible to measure. Is it enough that the target audience is aware of what it is you want to communicate, or should they gain more in-depth knowledge and change the way they work? Your chosen impact goals affect what kind of activities you choose to conduct.

*Knowledge goals*
What do you want the target group/s to learn? This could include a scale ranging from “awareness of” to “listing main aspects” and finally “understanding”.

*Attitude goals*
What do you want the target group/s to think? A scale ranging from “tolerate” to “engaged”.

*Action goals*
What would you want the target groups’ motivation to be? A scale ranging from “considering action” to “actively fighting for”. Do you want people to try something once (temporary change) or do you want them to change their way of working (permanent change)?

**Channels**
Choose the manner in which to convey a message depending on the desired impact. Sometimes it’s enough to just inform people, then one-way communication is enough, in order to describe or explain something. In such cases, an article on Inslaget and/or Karlstad University’s external website be the right channel. If your goal is to create understanding and engagement, as well as have some kind of impact you need two-way communication. In such cases you also need to have meetings and discussion sessions to varying degrees.

**Activity plan**
Describe what, specifically, is to be communicated, when, through which channels and who is in charge. An activity plan can be simple or detailed depending on the complexity of the project and the number of target groups.

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| ***What*** | ***Target group*** | ***When*** | ***Channel*** | ***Person in charge*** | ***Comments*** |
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| **Date of approval / Revision** |  |
| **Main person in charge**  |  |

**Spokesperson**
Who will act as the spokesperson in various specific contexts? Should it always be the same person across all parts of the process, both internally and externally? Decide beforehand who will make the statements, as well as what the message is. Inform Karlstad University’s press secretary who the spokespersons are.

**FAQ**
Sometimes it can be beneficial to ahead of time try and think of what kind of questions might arise. What kind of answers can we prepare? Try to see things from different perspectives and write down questions and answers in an FAQ. For example, what questions might journalists, students and/or staff have?

**Evaluation**
Monitor the communication and make adjustments to the plan as needed throughout the process. When the project is finished, assess the impact of the communication. This could include speaking with people from the target audience, or more thorough investigations.

**Budget**
What does the communication plan mean in terms of costs? Material? Evaluation? If the project is externally funded, time spent must also be accounted for.

*This template was created by the Communications Office in 2024*