Maximizing Engagement with a Strong, Effective Communication Strategy

Successful engagement requires ongoing commitment, strategy, and execution — and is critical to improving population health. Knowing how and when to communicate with your stakeholders is imperative. This fact sheet features four communications best practices and an exercise to help your team maximize engagement and make the strongest impact in your community.

BEST PRACTICES

1. Tailor Communications Strategies to Increase Engagement
   - Define the goal(s) of your communications.
   - Tailor the message to your target audience(s) by testing each message to determine whether it resonates.
   - Layer communications across the community and align messages to the needs and values of the targeted stakeholder group.
   - Select the best communication vehicles to share that messaging with key stakeholders.

2. Regularly Communicate Data to Facilitate Change
   - Capture, share, and use data from diverse sectors to effectively plan, implement, and measure impact. Keep in mind that different data will resonate with and impact audiences differently.
   - Report results regularly to key stakeholders at every level, to give them a sense of cumulative activity and help them understand improvement in specific health measures.
   - Tailor messages to ensure impact and relevance.

3. Build a Strong, Pervasive Brand Strategy
   - Engage the target audience in building the brand and align shared values as a part of the brand.
   - Position the brand as a service to the target audience and ensure it is a recognizable resource in the community.
   - Establish the initiative as the trusted resource.

4. Use storytelling as a Winning Formula for Engagement
   - Use storytelling to engage people and help audiences remember key messages.
   - Disseminate messages that reinforce how the entire community wins when everyone works together.
   - Solicit stories from individuals, organizations, community groups, work teams, participants etc. to aid in building a supportive community.

HIGHLIGHT SUCCESS

If Tom or Mary can do it, so can you! Communications highlight personal success stories of people in the community whenever possible to help inspire others and increase engagement. Stories emphasize how small steps lead to success!
EXERCISE

The table below is designed to help you start thinking about your key stakeholders – and how and when you should communicate with them to keep them engaged. Keep in mind, engagement is an iterative process, so you will likely need to revisit this as your project evolves.

**Key Stakeholders** – Insert key stakeholders you are hoping to reach. Examples may include providers, community influencers, media, funders/administrators, residents, participants, etc.

**Level of Engagement** – Identify the level of engagement you desire from each key stakeholder group. Examples may include contributing by participating, owning, leading and observing, etc.

**Engagement frequency/tools** – List the tools and level of frequency needed from each stakeholder group to ensure success. For your steering committee, this may include reports at monthly meetings. For media this may include regularly published news releases and columns.

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<th>KEY STAKEHOLDERS</th>
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