

Sample Communications Plan

Why Do I Need A Communications Plan?

A communication plan acts as proactive measure to ensure that everyone has the right information in a timely manner. The plan can also describe what information will be shared and how it will be distributed. The plan can also identify goals, target audience, key messaging and a timeline for rollout.

In the following areas, delete the example text and replace it with your own.

Business Walks Communications Strategy

1. Communications Infrastructure

[A detail of the communications capacity– staff & time? Who will do the work?]

*Example: COEDC staff to develop all internal & external messaging. Partners asked to assist in delivery through their networks e.g. board communications, newsletters, social media & direct contact to clients. *see implementation timeline attached*

2. Goals

[A place to describe why the communication efforts are being launched in the first place. In this area, be sure to describe what you want to do]

Example:

- *Gather intelligence to help businesses grow*
- *Prepare businesses to receive volunteer walkers*
- *Create a 'buzz' about the Business Walks pilot project*
- *Create awareness about COEDC & its programs*
- *Create awareness about business service providers in the region e.g. chambers, DKA, URBA, WEC, CFDC etc.*
- *Identify businesses which require one-on-one assistance e.g. expansion plans, lay-offs, diversification etc.*
- *Facilitate linkages between the business community and municipalities*

3. Target Audience

[In this space, define who you are trying to reach with your messaging and what you need to know about them]

Example:

- *Businesses in Central Okanagan (targeted areas) - Consideration(s):*
- *Most businesses in identified zones are retail, restaurant, financial and legal services & primarily operated with 0-5 employees.*

4. Message

[The messaging described in this space will be the key calls-to-action for your initiative]

Example:

“The COEDC working in partnership with _____ is gathering intelligence to help businesses grow”

Additional Messaging:

- **Problem** – *Cities are perceived to be weakly connected to business community. “Lack of business friendly environment”*
- **Solution** – *Connect with as many businesses as possible to facilitate dialog*
- **Action** – *Improve understanding of opportunities and challenges facing business – ‘pulse of the business community’. Identify businesses requiring follow up assistance*

5. Hook/Teaser(s)

[Create a teaser in subject line of your press release & other communications to get the reader to want more]

Example:

- *“Did you know a dog groomer can help a tech start-up?”*
- *“Who knew businesses could help other businesses”*
- *“How Can”*

6. Spokesperson

[Who are the best individuals/messengers to help reach target audience with your messaging?]

Example:

- *COEDC Staff as assigned*
- *Lead Partner Organizations*

7. Communications Channels & outlets

[In this section, describe how you intend to reach your target audience]

Example:

- *Press releases distributed to media channels & business networks*
- *Social media (COEDC, Chambers etc.)*
- *Local champions (COEDC board, DKA, URBA, Chambers); COEDC staff (Corie) to present to community stakeholders Aug. & Sept.*

8. News Media

[Rank and list the top 10-15 outlets you want coverage in and identify the reporter from each outlet whom you want to target]

Example:

- *Newspaper/TV station #1: Name of Contact*

9. Pitch Reporters

[Think about, and clearly articulate what you would like to pitch to the above reporters? Theme? Tagline / graphics?]

Example:

Answer questions of how this benefits the community – e.g. the leaders throughout the Central Okanagan are committed to supporting businesses.

- *First Business walks project of its kind in Canada*
- *5 minute conversation could result in saving a business*
- *Okanagan Mayoral and Westbank First Nation leaders 'hitting the streets' to support business*
- *Provide high res graphics to media with all press releases*
- *Tell media what you want – e.g. photos of volunteers walkers walking the streets etc.*

10. Deliverables / Collateral/Event

[What deliverables/collaterals /events are required to communicate with reporters? List the possible variety of information that would support your communication efforts]

Example:

- *Date & Time of event(s)*
- *Key message(s)*
- *Art / COEDC logo, photos etc.*
- *Who will be in attendance – e.g. politicians*
- *What we expect – e.g. on event day photos of teams, mayors walking etc.*

11. Timeline

[The timeline clearly describes when the information will be rolling out to individuals and groups through your identified communication channels]

Example

- *See communications implementation timeline*
- *Track Coverage*
- *System to capture media hits?*
- *COEDC admin staff to review newspapers (hard & electronic versions) and google alert sources throughout communication campaign*

12. Evaluation

[The post-event evaluation of your communications strategy is a key component in learning what worked well and what did not. Use this information as an opportunity to learn from experience. Clearly state who will be facilitating the conversation and who will be participating]

Example:

- *Post event meeting to be facilitated by COEDC with project partners to evaluate program success & challenges*