



Be Your Own Action Hero
Advocacy Communications
Workbook

Objectives

What do you want people to think, feel or do?

You're not communicating just to hear your own voice. Effective communication is designed to move audiences **to do, think or feel** something. This means building your communication plan to support the **goals of your advocacy efforts**. For example:

- to increase physical activity among seniors in your community
- to drive change in school board policies related to physical activity
- _____
- _____

Be specific. The more specific your objectives are, the easier it will be to make choices about how you'll communicate.

What, not how. Don't confuse tactics with objectives. Objectives are **what** you want to achieve. Tactics represent **how** you'll get there. Ask yourself:

- How will I know if I'm successful?
- What do I want people to think, feel or do as a result of my efforts?

Objectives	Tactics
	To produce a quarterly newsletter.
	To hold a series of meetings.
To increase program participation by girls by 25%.	To run an after school program for girls.

Smart objectives

S _____

M _____

A _____

R _____

T _____

Exercise

Smart Objectives

Turn each phrase on the left into a SMART objective.

	Alternative
To meet with the town council	
To educate people about the importance of physical activity	
To run a walking program	
To raise awareness about <i>in motion</i>	
To send out news releases for every major event	
To develop a program for girls aged 13-17	
To work with the health region	

Audiences

When it comes to audiences, one size does not fit all. Different people need different information and they need it in different ways. It might be convenient for us to give everyone the same briefing document or brochure, but will it be effective? Think about your audiences and what will work best for them.

Primary audiences are those directly affected by your proposal, plan or project.

Secondary audiences are those who may not be directly affected but will have an interest in the outcomes of your proposal, plan or project.

Key communicators are people outside your committee who can help get your message across.

Short on time and resources? Focus on those audiences who can best help you achieve your objectives.

Know your audiences

Take time to consider what you know about your audiences and how that might affect how you communicate with them. Think about:

- Level of interest
- Knowledge and attitudes
- Anticipated reaction
- Motivators (environmental, social, economic or health benefits)

Exercise

Audience Profile Worksheet

Choose one audience and complete the following profile.

Audience	
Level of interest in your plans	
Level/type of participation required (be specific)	
Knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to <i>in motion</i> and physical activity	
Anticipated reaction to your plans	
Any barriers to this group's support or participation	
What or who could motivate change or action in this group?	
Does this audience care about health, social, environmental or economic benefits? Something else?	
Best ways to communicate with this audience?	

Key messages

Sticky stuff – Key messages are not a script. Nor are they everything you will say or write in your communication. They are:

- the phrases you want to people to remember
- the words that will get people to **think, feel or do** what you want
- not a tag line or t-shirt slogan (although these can convey your messages)

Repeat, repeat, repeat – People need to hear a message several times before they digest it. Cut through the clutter with repetition.

Keep it simple – Make sure people can understand and retain your messages. Avoid jargon.

Be consistent – Make sure everyone on your action team delivers the same messages. But remember, they're not a script. Let people make the messages their own.

Use credible sources – Where do your audiences look for information? What will make your messages believable and trustworthy for the audience?

Tone – Frame your messages positively. Talk to audiences, not at them.

Interest – What's in it for your audiences? Speak to what matters to your audience – to their interests not yours. Consider tailoring your messages to different audience groups.

Key message guidelines

- 3-5 messages
- one or two sentences per message (not including supporting detail)
- change messages as your plans progress
- include a call to action

Exercise

Key Message Worksheet

Audience	Message	Supporting points
Children and youth	You need 60-90 minutes of physical activity every day to be healthy. That means you need to be active at school, take part in activities in your community and move with your family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••

Communication tools & tactics

Once you've laid out **what** you want to achieve, you can determine **how** you'll communicate. It takes a variety of communication tools to attract attention.

Make the most of your resources.

As volunteers, you probably don't have a lot of time or money. Follow these tips to choose the most effective tools and tactics:

- Take advantage of existing channels (if they work). Don't reinvent the wheel.

- Do what counts. Make the most of your limited resources by understanding your audiences and the best ways to communicate with them.
- Think about how you can tag onto existing opportunities to communicate (e.g. *in motion* month, the start of school, town council's planning cycle). The right match gives you a hook to hang your messages on.

- Focus on face-to-face. Successful advocacy is about building relationships. Conversations at the grocery store or coffee shop, presentations or face-to-face meetings generally have more impact than any letter, poster or newspaper ad.

I need a brochure. Or do I? This is the most common request most communicators hear. Often a brochure is not the answer. Most pamphlets end up in the trash can. Before you produce a brochure, think about **what you want people to do with the piece**. Does it have a purpose? Is there a more effective use of your time and money?

Exercise

Choosing Communication Tools

Objective	
Audience	
Where does this group get its information?	
Who do they find credible?	
Where do they spend their time?	
Where are they likely to give you their attention?	
Tactics you might use to reach this audience.	

Media relations

Media plays a powerful role in shaping public attitudes and opinions. According to the Frameworks Institute, the news media is the main source of information about public affairs for most of us. As a result, the media also has influence on what issues policy makers and governments address.

If it's in the paper, it must be true. Right?

Follow these tips for working with the media:

- **Get to know your local media** – Who covers what type of story? Who has a personal interest in physical activity?
- **Make sure they understand you** – If your newspaper has an editorial board, ask to meet with them to bring them up to speed on the issues. Alternatively, take the editor or reporter for coffee.
- **Recruit a media representative** – This person doesn't necessarily need to be the chair of your committee. Choose someone that's comfortable with the role and well-versed on the issues.
- **Respect deadlines** – Know and respect deadlines, but don't let them rush you. When the media calls, ask about deadlines and find out what the story is about. If you're not prepared, say you'll call back (make sure you do).
- **Be prepared** – Have the facts and stats at your finger tips. Consider developing briefing notes on the various issues you may need to speak on.
- **Provide sound bites** – Use your key messages. Remember, it all boils down to that 30 second clip or the headline in the newspaper. Give it to them. Always bring your answer back to your key messages when you can.
- **Make it compelling** – The media writes about stories not issues. Suggest stories, illustrate your points with anecdotes and examples.
- **Be positive** – This doesn't mean you can't talk about bad news, but recognize that you won't get anywhere by bashing town council or the Minister of Health. Provide solutions, not just problems.

Media tools

When you're thinking about the media, don't restrict yourself to media releases think about:

- media advisories (inviting the media to an event)
- public service announcements¹ (most media will run these free of charge)
- story pitches
- letters to the editor
- *in motion* column
- challenges

Not just sports reporters. Remember physical activity issues affect all areas of society. Don't forget about reporters who write about or have an interest in:

- the economy
- social issues
- family, youth or seniors
- government
- the environment
- health

¹ Templates are available at www.saskatchewaninmotion.ca/leaders..

Effective presentations

Follow these tips to make your next presentation more effective:

- Speak; don't read. You'll sound more natural and you'll make a far more compelling case if your audience isn't distracted by your reading.
 - Keep it simple. Don't go overboard with fonts, graphics and sound effects.
 - Get to the point. You have only a couple of minutes to get people's attention. Don't spend too much time talking about your group and its history. Get straight to the point.
 - Avoid jargon. YES, there is jargon in the physical activity field.
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PowerPoint rules

- Use no more than **five** short points per slide.
- Use nothing smaller than **20 point font**.
- Stick to a sans serif font (like this one).
- Avoid underlining or ALL CAPS.
- Minimize use of numbers.
- Use contrasting colours.
- Use key phrases only.