



Template: Generic Communication Plan

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Communication Plan

TEMPLATE

This template was developed to provide a starting point to document a plan for the communications strategy and activities to support statistical activities and advocacy. It provides key elements to consider and examples. A separate communications plan template, which focuses its examples on Census, is also available.

Note: This census communication plan template was developed based on a similar one created by Census Communications experts from PRASC for the Statistical Institute of Belize in June 2018.

(insert organization name)
(insert date)

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Purpose

Identify what you wish to communicate, to whom, and why this plan is being prepared. (1-2 sentences)

Example:

The purpose of this communication plan is to outline a strategy to promote the importance of (include survey name), to target optimal participation.

Background

Include information about the program or event for which you are developing a communications plan: history, current situation, response rate target, collection period and methods, the scope, the topics covered and general considerations etc., as well as its importance and benefits. (Maximum 2-3 paragraphs)

Example:

The Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) is an autonomous body created to collect, compile, extract, analyze and disseminate official statistics related to demographic, social, environmental, economic and general activities of Belize.

SIB is responsible for conducting the Census of Belize, and for analyzing and disseminating the results. The next Census of Belize will be conducted in May 2020.

Communication Objectives

Provide specific, measureable, achievable, realistic and time-related (SMART) objectives to reflect the organization's purpose with this plan. (about 3 objectives)

Example:

With this framework for census communications and statistical advocacy, (insert organization name) aims to support the following operational goals:

- *Increase awareness of job opportunities related to the census.*
- *Complete the recruitment of (insert number) employees by (insert date).*
- *Increase awareness of the census and engage respondents to increase participation.*
- *Maintain or increase the previous census response rate of xx%.*
- *Reduce the census collection period from (insert number) months to (insert number) months.*
- *Decrease census costs by x%.*
- *Increase use of census data and foster statistical literacy.*

Strategic considerations

Identify the key concerns related to this initiative/survey. You should highlight the ideas and concerns that need to be addressed or considered while implementing the communication plan. What are the things that may directly influence communications positively (strengths or opportunities) or negatively (weaknesses or threats)? What are the pros and cons?

- Are new methodologies being introduced? (less or more in-person enumeration)
- Are new operational procedures being introduced? (i.e. use of tablets to collect information)
- Are the topics sensitive? (i.e. new questions being added)
- Are there concerns about privacy and confidentiality? (i.e. increased use of administrative data)
- Are there elections or public debate that may impact public perception?

Example:

- *For the 2020 Census of Belize, canvasser methodology is the preferred collection method. The alternative - mail-out methodology - is not feasible due to the lack of accurate address information, and the distances between dwellings in rural areas.*
- *While testing is being done prior to the census, consideration should be given to factor in pilot tests during the 2020 collection period to explore potential efficiencies in the census program (e.g., self-completion in select mail-out areas, modifying the web-based subscription form to collect demographic information on the data users to allow for targeted outreach).*
- *Encourage the use of consistent messaging to support recruitment, collection and dissemination activities of the 2020 Census. This will allow a uniform interpretation of SIB's key messages.*
- *Actively seek partnerships with stakeholders to expand the reach of key messages. This collaboration will leverage the established networks and maximize use of resources.*
- *Operationally, revise the call-back form (that allows respondents to indicate the best time for the enumerator to return) in order to reduce the number of visits, collection time and costs.*

Communication Strategy & Approach

Describe the strategy and approach you will take for the communications. You should identify whether communications will be proactive or reactive, low-key or high visibility along with any strategic communication options and their advantages and disadvantages. (3 to 4 sentences)

Refer to the Census Communication Plan Template to see an example.

Audiences

Identify the target groups for the key messages

Example:

- *Employees*
- *Stakeholders*
- *Governments and governmental agencies*
- *Business communities*
- *International partners*
- *Community influencers*
- *Religious leaders and faith-based organizations*
- *Universities and colleges*
- *Trade unions*
- *Educators*
- *Interviewers*
- *General population*
- *Media*

Communication Activities & Products

Now that you have determined your communication objectives and target audiences, you need to figure out how to get there. Have a good brainstorming session to explore communication opportunities (in person, online and media) to establish a list of communication activities and products. You may also think about incentives to encourage participation and increase response rate. It is important to always remember the purpose of your communication and your target audiences. It may also help if you think of your communication in three stages: pre-collection, during collection and post-collection/dissemination.

Key messages

Identify your key messages for each campaign. They should:

- be simple, clear, transparent, easily understandable and retainable.
- be developed for each campaign and tailored to specific audience groups.
- align with the specific survey/initiative phase (i.e. pre-collection, during collection and post-collection/dissemination and identify the purpose and/or with the purpose of the message: awareness, call-to-action, reminder, final reminder etc.).

Examples

Recruitment

- *By supporting the census, you are transforming your community.*
- *Your community benefits through your involvement.*

Collection

- *The census is coming on May 12, 2020.*
- *The Census of (insert country name) is mandatory.*
- *The census is confidential/your information is protected.*
- *The census provides high-quality information that supports evidence-based decision-making.*
- *The census is here/it's census time*
- *It's not too late to complete your census questionnaire*
- *The census benefits your community, your region and your country.*
- *The census tells the story of our changing country.*
- *Thank you to all citizens who completed their census questionnaire.*
- *Thank you to all the census supporters in the community.*

Dissemination

- *The data collected during the census benefits your community, your region and your country.*
- *Policy makers, community groups, businesses and individuals use census data to benefit our country.*
- *Statistics support evidence-based decisions.*

Evaluation

Determine the success criteria and evaluation of the pre-established objectives. How will you measure success? What and how can you improve? What will be the source of your evaluation criteria?

Examples

Phase	Objectives	Evaluation criteria	Source
<i>Recruitment</i>	<i>Increase awareness of job opportunities related to the census.</i>	<i>Job opportunities are communicated in all regions, in a variety of formats and platforms.</i>	
	<i>Complete the recruitment of (insert number) employees by (insert date).</i>	<i>(insert number) employees are recruited and trained by (insert date).</i>	
<i>Collection</i>	<i>Increase awareness of the census and engage respondents to increase participation.</i>	<i>Increase # of Facebook followers by (insert %) by (insert date).</i>	
	<i>Maintain or increase the previous census response rate of xx%.</i>	<i>Overall response rate is xx% (maintain) or xx% (increase).</i>	

	<i>Reduce the census collection period from (insert number) months to (insert number) months.</i>	<i>Collection activities are completed by (insert date).</i>	
	<i>Decrease census costs by x%.</i>	<i>Census costs are x% lower than previous census.</i>	
<i>Dissemination</i>	<i>Increase use of census data and foster statistical literacy.</i>	<i>Identify 3 new platforms to enhance visibility of census data.</i> <i>Increase partnerships with stakeholders by 5%.</i>	

Calendar

Complete a campaign component calendar to identify communication activities for every phase.

Activity/product	Audience	Timeline	Lead	Support
Pre-collection				
During collection				
Post-collection				

Budget

Identify the budget allocated for the development of certain activities and products, if needed.