

Crafting a Strategic **PR Strategy**

WFF Communications Capacity Building Seminar
July 2024 • Led by Kristen Nicholson, APR



Key Takeaways: Tips and Best Practices for Creating a Strategic Communications Plan

Who is Kristen Nicholson?



- Mom to Palmer
- Wife to Zac
- Dog mom to Finlay and Aila
- 15+ year PR Pro
- APR
- Past-President Arkansas PRSA
- Specialty Areas: Strategic Comms, Crisis Comms, Media Relations, Executive Visibility, Influencer Relations, Direct Stakeholder Engagement

What is “Strategic
Communications”

Strategic Communications **Defined**

Strategic communications is a specialized approach to distributing and receiving information. It means communicating the best message, through the correct channels, to the right people, at the right time and using feedback from this process to stay focused on company goals.

Strategic Communications builds strong relationships for the organization, both internally and externally, by integrating and unifying all communication. These communication efforts not only help benefit the organization and all its members, but the consumers and clients as well, since both parties are better understood.

What should you consider when developing an integrated strategic communications plan ?

Remember RPIE

*Research, Planning, Implementation and
Evaluation*

Strategic Communications: Key elements

- **What is the purpose?** Identify goals and measurable objectives.
- **Research?** What research is helping to inform audiences, messaging, communication channels, etc.?
- **Who are the key stakeholders?** Internal, external, both? How are they defined?
- **What is the message?** And how does the message change depending on the audience and channel?
- **When?** What timeline will this plan take effect?
- **Where? The platform(s).** Where should your communications be delivered? Each audience will have different communication channels. (Tactics)
- **Evaluate.** How are you measuring success? How are you using information to inform future campaigns. What key learnings can be applied to the future?

Step 1: Research

Research: **Quantitative vs. Qualitative**

Quantitative: Numbers, Logic and Objective Stance

- Focused on data
- Objective
- Examples: Surveys, Analytics, etc.

Qualitative: Collecting Non-Numerical Data to Understand Concepts and Experiences

- Gathers experiences, perceptions and behaviors
- Answers whys and hows instead of how many and how much
- Examples: Focus Groups, Open Ended Surveys, Case Studies



Research: **Primary vs. Secondary**

Primary Research: Data Collected Directly

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Observations

Secondary Research : Analyzing, Summarizing, Synthesizing Existing Data

- Google Analytics
- Social Media Data
- Online Research
- Etc.



Step 2: Planning

Developing Goals and Objectives. What's the difference?

A goal is an outcome you want to achieve, while an objective is a specific and measurable action that can be reached in a short amount of time, often related to a goal.

When thinking about objectives, think **SMART**

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Time-bound

Developing Goals and Objectives. What's the difference?

Goal: Enhance online brand awareness and social media presence.

Objective: Increase LinkedIn network by 200 connections within the next three months.

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Relevant

Time-bound

Planning: Define Your Audience

Who are we reaching?

- Internal/External
- Be specific: age, background, socioeconomic status, demographics
- Where are they located? Specify Geography

How will we reach them?

- Internal: intranet, slack, email, direct communication, employee town hall, employee newsletter, etc.
- External: social media, website, email, newsletter, news, advertising, direct communication, speaking engagements, events, etc.



Audience **Platforms: Earned, Owned and Borrowed**

Owned Media

**Your Content,
Your Channels**

Website & Social Content
Blogs
eBooks, White Papers
Thought Leadership
Commentary
Reports & Assets
E-newsletter
Board Meetings
Video Storytelling
Webinars & Seminars

Loaned Media

**Your Content,
Their Channels**

Harnesses the collective reach of your employees, Board members, and your professional networks to distribute your content. Includes speaking engagements.

Shared Media

**Their Content,
Social Channels**

Includes any and all content posted to social media *about* you that isn't created by you. Includes paid influencer content. Includes online word-of-mouth, such as reviews, shares, tagging, reactions, comments, and hashtagging.

Earned Media

**Your Story,
News Channels**

Earns the attention of the news media to relay your story to audiences. Includes proactive pitching, newsjacking, backlinks and published content. Includes others' blogs and pods. Includes awards.

Paid Media

**Your Story,
Ad Channels**

Publishes your content in a space you've purchased. Such space can be in print, video, audio and digital spaces. Allows for controlled storytelling with precise targeting and timing.

Messaging: **Everyone's Favorite Radio Station**

What's

In

It

For

Me



WII-FM

- Shape messaging based on audience
- Messaging may differ depending on the communications channel
 - I.e messaging will look different on email vs text vs website vs social media

Timeline: Action Plan with Clear Deadlines, Deliverables and Budgets

Timeline	Task Type	Owner	Due Date	Assigned Staff / Notes	Task/Event	Status	Project		
January	TIMELY PRIORITIES								
	[CURRENT WEEK]	Week 3 Jan 22-26	Writing	MHP PR Team	Jan 25, Thursday	Jennifer & Kelly working document	Finalize turnkey activations and social prompt communication writing	In Progress	Children's Dental Health Month Awareness
			Design of Assets	RDB Marketing Team	Jan 25, Thursday		Send finalized coloring sheets to MHP		
			Clinic Comms & Coordination	RDB Marketing Team	Jan 26, Friday		Distribute turnkey activations and social prompt comms writing in a special edition of TWT		
			Writing	MHP PR Team	Jan 26		Finalize CDHM press releases - Jennifer sending drafts 1/23	In Progress	Children's Dental Health Month Awareness
			Community Partner Outreach	RDB Marketing Team	Jan 26		Check on workshop planning for Pediatrics. Any we can confirm? Can we help with them or expand? Any that are open to the public that we can publicize?		Dental Health Workshops for Parents
			Design of Assets	RDB Marketing Team	Jan 26		Share handouts for workshops with pediatric clinics		Dental Health Workshops for Parents
			Organic Social - Orthodontics	MHP Content Studio	Jan 26		Finalize February social concepts, incorporating Children's Dental Health Month	In Progress	Children's Dental Health Month Awareness
			Organic Social - Pediatrics	RDB Marketing Team	Jan 26		Finalize February social concepts with Children's Dental Health Month as key themes.		Children's Dental Health Month Awareness
			Ongoing						
Clinic Comms & Coordination			RDB Marketing Team	Ongoing	Whitney R	Provider op-ed approvals	In Progress	Children's Dental Health Month Awareness	
Writing	MHP PR Team	Ongoing	Lauren	Provider op-ed customization	In Progress	Children's Dental Health Month Awareness			
Media Relations	MHP PR Team	Ongoing		Media pitching for op-eds and TV appearances - Jennifer sending TV pitch confirms 1/23	In Progress	Children's Dental Health Month Awareness			
Event Planning & Coordination	RDB Clinic Staff	Ongoing		Arrange for the printing of handouts, brochures, and educational materials as needed for workshops.		Dental Health Workshops for Parents			
Week 5 Jan 29-Feb 2	Media Relations	MHP PR Team			Press release distribution, social starts running		Children's Dental Health Month		
	Organic Social - Clinic level	RDB Clinic Staff	Ongoing		Create content using Children's Dental Health Month templates and share on social.		Children's Dental Health Month Awareness		
	Event Planning & Coordination	RDB Clinic Staff	Ongoing		Execute workshop, share on social and also send photos, attendance results, and any other pertinent details with marketing and PR teams to be used for promotion and potential media coverage.		Dental Health Workshops for Parents		

Step 3: Implementation

Implementation: **Where Tactics Come to Life**

Tactic Examples

- Media Advisories/Press Releases
- Media Kits
- Talking Points/Scripts
- Social Media Posts
- Videos
- Marketing Assets
- Infographics
- Advertising



Implementation: **Where Tactics Come to Life**

Media Advisory and Press Release Best Practices

- What warrants a media advisory?
- What warrants a press release?
- Practice 5 W's: Who, What, When, Where, Why
- Follow AP Style
- Chat GPT as a resource
- Bit.ly links is a great method to link to media kits and measure

5 W's

Implementation: **Where Tactics Come to Life**

Media Kit Best Practices

- Hi Res Images
- B-Roll
- Infographics
- Annual Reports
- Bios and Headshots
- Lives online and linked in press releases



Implementation: **Where Tactics Come to Life**

Infographics

- One-sheeter
- Great for all comms channels: social, website, email, presentations, etc.
- Way to use stats to communicate complex issues or impact
- Great way to create “snackable” content that can be repurposed



Step 4: Evaluation

Evaluation: Documented Key Learnings

Were We Successful? How Do We Apply What We Learned to the Future?

- Detailed Reporting
 - Website Traffic: Google Analytics
 - Meta Business Manager
 - Earned Media Report (Google Alerts or News Monitoring Service)
 - Bit.ly Links
 - Message Pull Through Rate
 - Event Attendance
 - Impressions, Clicks, Views
- Lessons Learned
- Don't wait. Set debrief meeting and document ASAP.

Questions?