

The background of the entire page is an underwater photograph of a coral reef. The water is a deep, vibrant blue, and the coral structures are visible in the lower left corner, appearing as green and brown patches against the blue. The lighting is soft, creating a serene and naturalistic atmosphere.

Strategic COMMUNICATION *for* CONSERVATION

A PLANNING GUIDE FOR MARINE MANAGERS AND
PRACTITIONERS TO BUILD SUPPORT FOR CORAL
REEF CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION.



Content in this workbook is from the Reef Resilience Network's online Communication Module. To view videos, take quizzes, download worksheets, and access content not available in this workbook, visit: <https://reefresilience.org/communication/communication-planning-process/>

Please contact resilience@tnc.org with questions.

Workbook developed by Kristen Maize, The Nature Conservancy, with support from Cherie Wagner, Petra MacGowan, and Evelyn Wight, The Nature Conservancy, and Katherine Frisch, Rare. Worksheets were developed based on the Smart Chart strategic communications planning tool from Spitfire Strategies.

Suggested Citation: Maize, K. 2019. Strategic Communication for Conservation. The Nature Conservancy, Arlington, VA.



CONTENT

4	COMMUNICATION PLANNING PROCESS
7	STEP 1: GOAL & OBJECTIVE
12	STEP 2: CONTEXT
17	STEP 3: AUDIENCE
23	STEP 4: MESSAGES
33	STEP 5: MESSENGERS & TACTICS
43	STEP 6: MEASUREMENT
48	STEP 7: SUMMARY PLAN
53	ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

COMMUNICATION PLANNING PROCESS

WHAT IS STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION?

Strategic communication is the purposeful use of communication to achieve a specific goal or outcome. It is about getting the right message to the right person (or audience) at the right time through the right channel to achieve a goal.

It can be used to:

- Build support for a specific action or policy
- Raise awareness about a specific issue or policy

- Frame and change public policy
- Influence behavior around a specific topic or issue
- Impact public opinion about a specific topic, issue, or policy
- Strengthen relationships with specific audiences



Watch a short presentation about strategic communication and the planning process

<https://youtu.be/Sdqk76dMvHI>

WHY DO WE NEED IT?

People are increasingly bombarded with information—too much information to absorb and process, so much of it is simply lost. Recent studies in the U.S., for example, show that an average American is inundated with as many as 30,000 messages a day, and a whopping 5,000 of those are ads. Strategic communication helps us be thoughtful and deliberate in how we communicate, so our messages stand out and reach our audience, rather than become part of this “information clutter.” It also provides clarity on where we want to go (i.e. our goal) and guidance on how to get there, while helping us manage our time and limited resources.

HOW CAN I MAKE MY COMMUNICATION STRATEGIC?

To develop a successful communication strategy or plan, a series of strategic decisions need to be made. In this guide, we will walk through key decision points, prompting you to ask the right

questions that will lead to the right answers for your project. This planning process is based on Spitfire Strategies’ Smart Chart® strategic communications planning tool and a number of other planning tools and resources (see Additional Resources page 53).

WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

This guide is intended to help marine resource managers and conservation practitioners with little to no communication training become more effective communicators. Anyone can use this guide – on your own, in a small group with colleagues from your own organization/agency/community group, or with partners. All you need to get started is a project – this can be an idea, mandate, a goal, an initiative, etc. – and time to walk through the planning process. We recommend you set aside at least one full day to write your plan.

For a communication strategy to be most effective, it is helpful to include someone with communication experience on your project team. You can also reach out to other managers, practitioners, and experts on the **Network Forum** (<http://forum.reefresilience.org/network/>) for feedback, ideas, review, and moral support.



PHOTO: RESILIENT REEFS INITIATIVE

HOW DOES THIS GUIDE WORK?

Strategic communication planning starts with identifying or clarifying your goal, then moves to defining your audience, developing effective messages, and identifying methods or tactics for delivering those messages to your audience. The final step is measuring the effectiveness of your efforts and making adjustments to your strategy if needed.

For each stage in the planning process, you will be introduced to key concepts, then you will be able to apply what you learned to your own project through an activity. To briefly test yourself on the information you just learned, visit reefresilience.org to take quizzes.

Activity worksheets are included in each section. To complete the worksheets, you'll need writing and timing devices.

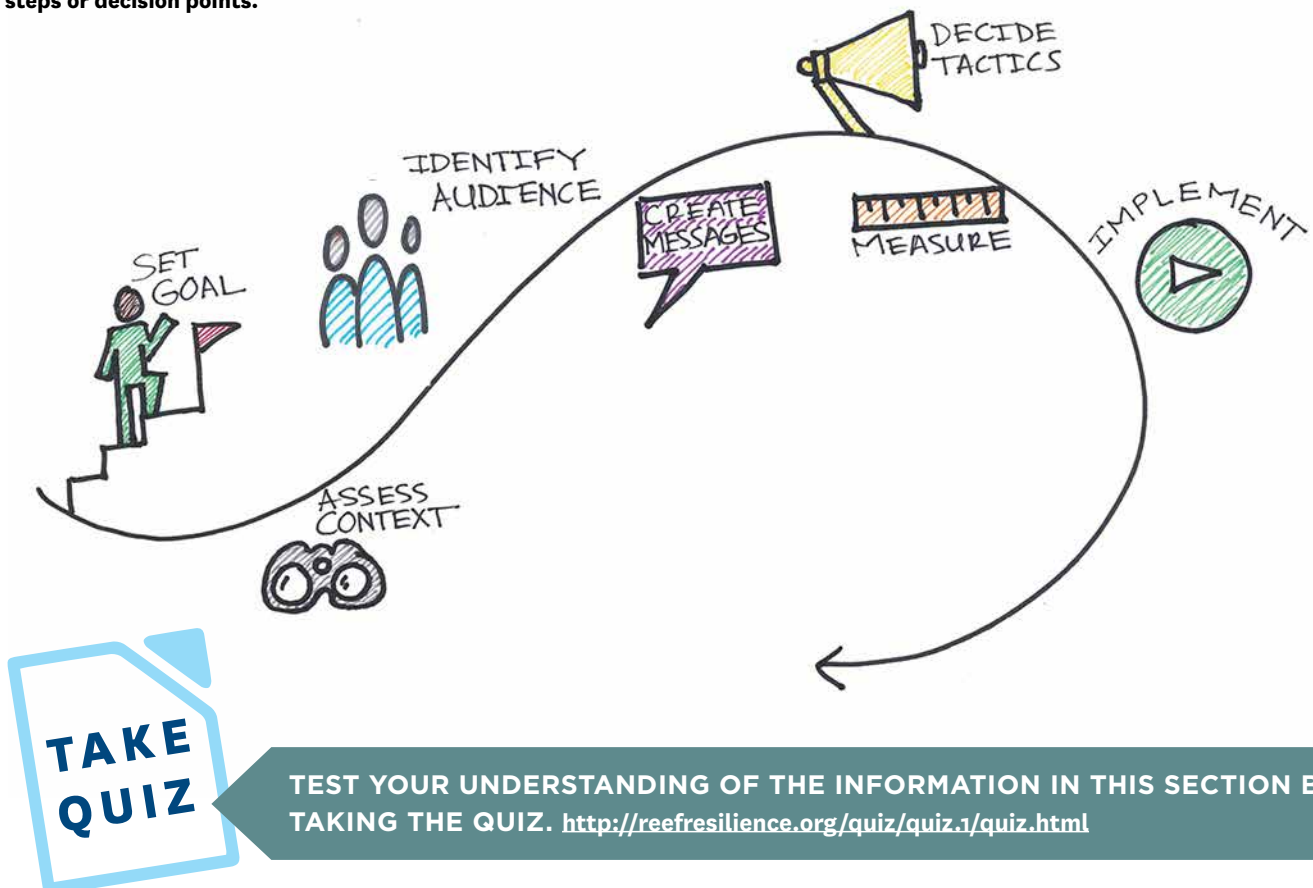
PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

The strategic communication planning process presented is linear and features seven main steps or decision points, with each step building on the last:

1. Establish your goal and objectives
2. Assess the context for your efforts
3. Identify your target audience(s)
4. Make your message(s) matter
5. Identify messengers and tactics for communicating your message(s)
6. Measure your impact
7. Create a summary of your plan

This framework helps you advance toward a goal in a structured, thoughtful way. It also allows you to respond to changing circumstances and new information—an essential part of successful communication—and measure the outcomes or impact of your communication.

The Strategic Communication Planning Process features seven main steps or decision points.



Step 1

ESTABLISH YOUR GOAL & OBJECTIVES



STEP 1: ESTABLISH YOUR GOAL & OBJECTIVES

Watch a short presentation about establishing your goal and objectives
<https://youtu.be/UqfGvYGOWd8>



THE FIRST STEP IN THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS IS TO ESTABLISH A STRONG, CLEAR GOAL that defines your vision so you know where you want to go. Then you define the objectives – the steps for how you are going to get there. Identifying a clear goal and specific objectives is the most important part of a good strategy and will guide the rest of your efforts.

GOAL

To help articulate your goal, think big picture. Describe what the world will look like when you reach your goal. What will be different? Many of our conservation goals are long-term and can take 5, 10, 20 years or more to reach. For an effective and relevant communications strategy, think shorter term – focus on a goal that can be achieved in 3-5 years and objectives that can be achieved in the next 12-18 months.

Your goal should be specific. It should state exactly what needs to happen, where, when, and with whom. A well crafted goal gives clear direction to the planning process and narrows the focus of your project in measurable ways, such as by geography, audience, and timeline. In other words, it's SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. It will likely take a few tries to write a SMART goal. (Don't be discouraged –this is the toughest part!)

EXAMPLE:

Goal: ***"Increase lobster stocks at Klemit Reef Atoll."***

That's a good goal, but it could be "SMARTer."

SMARTer goal: ***"By 2025, increase commercial lobster stocks within Klemit Reef Atoll by 25%."***

Examples of goals that aren't SMART:

"Stop global warming"

"Stop illegal fishing"

"Get the legislature to fund more 'green programs'"

COMMUNICATION TIP

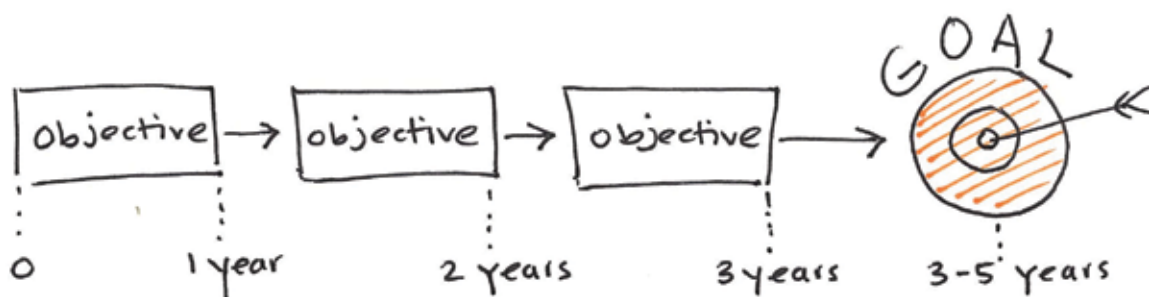
Regularly reminding yourself (and your team) of your goal can help prioritize your day-to-day activities to make sure the work you are doing is helping to move you closer to your goal.

OBJECTIVES

Once you have identified your goal, your next step is to divide it into "bite-size" objectives, the steps you will take to reach your goal. Objectives should also be SMART and can be created based on the audience you're trying to reach, action you're trying to make happen, or the stages in your planning process.

EXAMPLE:

Objective: If your goal is to ***"increase commercial lobster stocks within Klemit Reef Atoll by 25% by 2025,"*** an example objective could be: ***"Engage 30% of fishers from St. Coral in the decision-making process to establish a new marine protected area for Klemit Reef Atoll by 2020."***



Raising public awareness is not a SMART goal. The public is too large an audience, and awareness is usually only a step toward a behavior that will actually affect a goal. To get more specific, ask “Why do I want to raise awareness?” “What behavior do I want to change with what audience?” “Who do I need to sign a policy or bill into law?” If you find yourself saying your goal is to raise awareness, we encourage you to dig deeper to get at the true action you’d like to achieve. What is the underlying reason more awareness is needed?

EXAMPLE:

If your goal is about improving coral health in an area with a lot of runoff, a first draft objective might be *“raise awareness of mountain farmers near reefs about the importance of corals.”* But to have a positive impact on coral reefs, a more effective strategy might be to promote farming practices that reduce runoff from reaching reefs, so a better objective is: *“By 2022, convince 40 farmers in the mountains to stop land clearing practices that contribute to runoff.”* Or: *“By 2021, sign up 30 mountain farmers to an incentive program so they commit to avoiding a landscaping practice that contributes to runoff.”*

TAKE
QUIZ

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF
THE INFORMATION IN THIS SECTION
BY TAKING THE QUIZ.

<http://reefresilience.org/quiz/quiz.2/quiz.html>

YOUR TURN

USE THE WORKSHEET ON THE NEXT PAGE TO WRITE
DOWN YOUR GOAL AND OBJECTIVES. >30 MINUTES
RECOMMENDED

GOAL

Guiding questions for writing your goal:

- What is the issue or problem you are trying to solve? What are the most common or serious consequences of the issue?
- What is the change you are trying to achieve over the long-term and the short-term?
- What will be different in your place (community, organization, etc.) after you have achieved your goal?
- Is your goal SMART (i.e. specific, measureable, achievable, relevant in terms of resources/capacity, and time-bound)?

OBJECTIVES

Objectives are the steps needed to achieve your goal. They should be complementary to one another, but do not have to occur sequentially.

Once you have a list of objectives, you’ll need to prioritize them. Think critically about what will help you accomplish your goal and use that one objective to work through the rest of this planning process. To be effective, a strategic communication plan should focus on one objective at a time, since each objective can have a different audience which could require different messages and tactics. This doesn’t mean you can’t tie all of this information together into one master plan. It just means that you need to walk through the strategic communication planning process for each objective.

Guiding questions for selecting and prioritizing objectives:

- Are any time-dependent?
- Do any have to happen in a specific order? Can any happen simultaneously?
- Which audiences are objectives tied to?
- Which objective will have the greatest impact on key audiences?
- Which objective is most cost-effective?
- Would any of the objectives cause a negative impact if not completed right away?
- Are some easier than others to execute?

Communication Planning Worksheet 1: Establish your Goal and Objectives

→ **Broad Goal:** What do you want to achieve over the long term? What is the change you are trying to create? What will be different after you achieve your goal? (Think 3-5 years.) Can you make your goal SMART (i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound)?

Example: *By 2025, increase commercial lobster stocks within Klemet Reef Atoll by 25%.*

Your Turn:

→ **Objectives Brainstorm:** What are some of the steps that can help you achieve your goal? (List the objectives you need to achieve to reach your goal. Think 12-18 months and make them SMART.)

Example: **Objective A:** *Engage 30% of fishers from St. Coral in the decision-making process to establish a new marine protected area (MPA) for Klemet Reef Atoll by 2020.*

Objective B: *Decrease illegal activity in existing MPAs by 50% by 2020.*

Objective C: *Secure alternative livelihoods for 20 fishers from St. Coral by 2022.*

Your Turn:

→ **Objective:** What's the first measurable step you need to accomplish within the next 12 months to move toward your goal? Think highest priority or objective you'd like to tackle first. (This is the objective you will focus on for the rest of the planning process.)

Example: *Communication plan will focus on Objective A: Engage 30% of fishers from St. Coral in the decision-making process to establish a new MPA for Klemet Reef Atoll by 2020.*

Your Turn:

An aerial photograph of a crowded beach. The ocean is a vibrant green, with white waves breaking onto a golden sand beach. Numerous people are scattered across the scene: some are swimming in the water, others are walking along the shoreline, and many are sunbathing on the sand. Colorful beach umbrellas are open, and people are seen relaxing in groups. The overall atmosphere is one of a busy, sunny day at the beach.

Step 2

ASSESS THE CONTEXT FOR YOUR EFFORTS

Watch a short presentation about assessing the context of your efforts
<https://youtu.be/tfZvAxSHevc>



THE NEXT STEP IS TO ASSESS YOUR RESOURCES AND ASSETS, clarify what conversations are happening about your issue or topic, identify potential opportunities or road blocks, and identify places where you can leverage opportunities and mitigate challenges. It's essential to look both within your organization, agency, or community group, as well as beyond it. What do these internal and external landscapes look like and, more importantly, how will they affect your efforts?

Your job is to understand the current conversation about your topic or issue so you can decide where your organization/agency/group fits in. Does it make sense to join the current conversation or should you start a different one? You have an opportunity to shape the way people see your topic.

Take the example of Bolthouse Farms, who started a new conversation about carrots. In 2008, a group of carrot farmers worked with an advertising agency to reframe baby carrots, precut bite-sized carrots. Baby carrots were rebranded as the new, edgy junk food. "The original orange doodles!" and "Eat 'em like they're junk food" advertisements generated buzz. This flipped the conversation from carrots as healthy, to carrots as cool. As a result, the sale of baby carrots rose significantly.

Changing the conversation like this, also called reframing, is not easy. It takes time and money, and cooperation from many. But if you see no way to achieve your objective within the current debate/conversation, it might be a worthwhile investment.

To assess the context, you need to find out what your audience and the media are saying about your organization, topic, and goal. This will help you determine how to present your messages and whether and how to change the conversation to reach your audience and achieve your goal. To do this, you can conduct formal or informal research or assessments.

Examples include:

- Conduct a media scan/analysis, i.e. read about how your topic is covered in the media, what words and headlines are being used, what kinds of stories are being told, and how often your topic is being covered.
- Review existing research, e.g. polls or studies that have already been conducted.
- Conduct new public opinion research, e.g. interviews, focus groups, surveys, and more.
- Talk with partners, colleagues, and community contacts.

COMMUNICATION TIP

Good news! Information gathered during this step can serve as baseline data. Later when you're measuring your impact, you can refer back to this initial research and see how your project or campaign may have changed the environment, conversation, or public opinion.

**TAKE
QUIZ**

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE INFORMATION IN THIS SECTION BY TAKING THE QUIZ.

<http://reefresilience.org/quiz/quiz.3/quiz.html>

STEP 2: ASSESS THE CONTEXT FOR YOUR EFFORTS



YOUR TURN

CONDUCT AN INTERNAL SCAN OF YOUR ORGANIZATION'S/AGENCY'S/GROUP'S ASSETS AND CHALLENGES. USE THE **CONTEXT WORKSHEET** TO CAPTURE THE RESULTS OF A BRAINSTORMING SESSION. A SIMPLE BULLETED LIST IS SUFFICIENT. >20 MINUTES RECOMMENDED

Guiding questions for internal scan:

- Is your group/organization/staff in agreement on its goals and objectives?
- What resources does your group have available, e.g. people, budgets, reputation, relationships/partnerships, etc.?
- What are you/your team/partners good and not-so-good at?
- Do you or your partners have media relationships?
- Are there other projects or communications efforts addressing the same issue?
- What kind of budget, staff, time, and management support can you expect?
- Does your group have allies (or opponents)? Who are they and what is their capacity and willingness to participate? If you have partners/allies, what are their reputations like, i.e. good/bad?
- What challenges does your group face within your community? Are there social or political concerns that could draw attention or budget away from your goal?

Next is an external scan to assess what's happening outside your organization/agency/group. These external factors may impact your assets, challenges, and strategy, so give this careful attention.

Guiding questions for external scan:

- What issues are being talked about in the community, state, island, and media? Specifically, what's happening that could have an impact on your project?
- Who are potential experts that should be contacted to get more information about the problem?
- Are there active supporters or opposition for your topic/issue?
- Is your group, organization, or topic widely known and/or being discussed? If so, what are people saying?
- Are there misconceptions or misinformation surrounding your issue?
- What voices are being heard? Are they in support of your topic?
- Where are you in the political cycle, e.g. elections, legislative session? Is the political landscape favorable?
- Are there any policies or laws that might affect your strategy?
- What current events could affect your project – either attract positive or negative attention? (Is there an external event like the Olympics or an extreme weather event that gives you a chance to raise an issue that couldn't be raised before?)

Communication Planning Worksheet 2: Assess the Context for your Efforts

→ **Internal Scan:** What are your organization's/agency's/group's **assets** and **challenges** that may impact your communication efforts?

→ **External Scan:** What is already happening outside your organization/agency/group that may impact your strategy or efforts – both **assets** and **challenges**?

NOTES



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 15 horizontal blue lines.

Step 3

IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

STEP 3: IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Watch a short presentation about identifying your target audience
<https://youtu.be/ZCmj3EW-PY8>



WHEN DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION PLAN, THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP AFTER DETERMINING YOUR GOAL AND OBJECTIVES IS IDENTIFYING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE. In order for communication to be strategic, a specific audience needs to be targeted. There are three steps in this section: defining your target audience(s), identifying their core values and concerns, and listing any connections you may have with your target audience.

TARGET AUDIENCE

THE PUBLIC IS NOT A TARGET AUDIENCE

If we try to target everyone, we fail to target anyone. The smaller and more specific the target audience, the easier it is to create focused communication that will move your audience to action. Try to picture your audience and describe who they are, what they look like, and what they do. Segment your audience using categories most relevant to your work, such as demography, geography, and lifestyle.

EXAMPLES: *Urban males under 25 who own a truck; businessmen who travel frequently to Tanzania; or subsistence farmers in Palau.*

DECISION MAKERS AND INFLUENCERS

Your most important audience is the one who can make your goal a reality – the decision maker. This is the person whose behavior will directly impact your goal. It's possible to reach them directly, or indirectly through the people they listen to the most – the influencers.

EXAMPLE: *If your goal is to stop teenage smoking in your town by 2025, then the decision makers are the teenagers in the town, and one influential audience might be other teenagers.*

FOCUS ON THOSE YOU CAN PERSUADE

Targeting those who oppose your goal is likely to result in frustration and failure. It's extremely hard to change someone's mind, but when someone is on the fence it's possible to influence them in one direction or the other. A good first step is to identify like-minded people who are paying attention and interested in your goal. They can help influence the "fence-sitters" who may be slightly interested or supportive but not informed, or who may not have made up their mind.



"THE 'IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE' STEP ALLOWED ME TO PUT MYSELF IN THE SHOES OF THE PEOPLE I AM TRYING TO REACH AND SEE HOW THEIR PERCEPTIONS AND DAY-TO-DAY RESPONSIBILITIES AFFECT MY OUTREACH."

– PARTICIPANT, CARIBBEAN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION LEARNING EXCHANGE, 2017

STEP 3: IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE



Examples of how people can see the same thing in different ways based on what they value.



CORE CONCERNS AND VALUES

LEARN WHAT YOUR AUDIENCE CARES ABOUT SO YOU CAN SHOW HOW YOUR PROJECT RELATES

Start where your audience is. You have to meet them where they are, not where you want them to be. People care more about an issue when it's packaged in a way that aligns with their values, concerns, and beliefs. Ask yourself what does my audience care about and value? What do they want and enjoy? Peoples' values come from personal experience, history, attitudes, needs, and beliefs. Shaping your strategy around your audience's values and showing how it is connected to the things they already care about will help gain their attention and support.

EXAMPLE: *A fisher likely values fish as food, whereas a SCUBA diver might value fish for aesthetics or recreation.*

CONSIDER POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO YOUR AUDIENCE TAKING ACTION

If your objective involves an action – and in most cases it will – then you need to identify potential barriers that may stop or delay your audience from taking action, so you can address and overcome the barriers. For example, if you ask someone to properly dispose of

a car battery, but the desired disposal method is inconvenient for them, that is a barrier to overcome. Your job is to identify potential barriers and figure out creative ways to minimize barriers or provide incentives that make it worth it for them to take the action, even if it's inconvenient.

HOW TO LEARN ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

If your audience is an individual or small group you/partners/colleagues know well, you may be able to answer some of the questions about their core concerns and values based on your personal knowledge and basic online searches.

If your audience is a larger or less familiar group, you can likely find existing research on characteristics such as gender, age, education level, beliefs, etc., available for free online.

Should you choose to invest in conducting new research, which can be expensive, be sure to assess research methods carefully so you choose the method(s) that will best meet your needs. In addition, consider any evaluations that will be done at the end of your project. That way, you can include questions in pre-testing that will establish a baseline for evaluation.

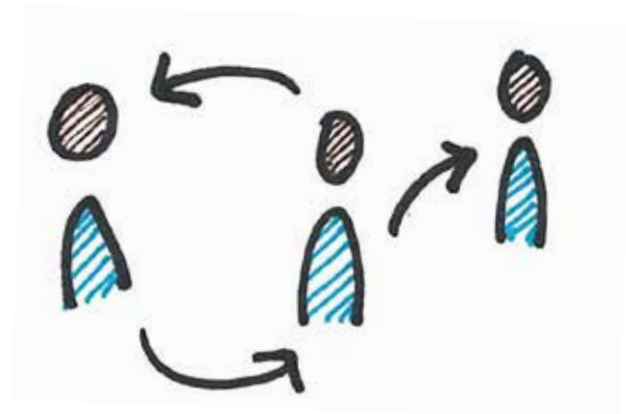
There are two broad categories of research – qualitative (e.g., not in numerical form) and quantitative (e.g., in numerical form). Qualitative tools, such as focus groups and interviews, can be more effective with smaller target audiences, while quantitative tools like opinion polls and phone surveys are more effective for larger audiences. For a detailed overview of qualitative and quantitative research including when to use these techniques, how they work, and potential drawbacks, see Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research Overview (Additional Resources page 47).

STEP 3: IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE



TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE INFORMATION IN THIS SECTION BY TAKING THE QUIZ.

<http://reefresilience.org/quiz/quiz.4/quiz.html>



CONNECTIONS

IT'S ALL ABOUT CONNECTIONS

Once you've identified the audience you need to reach, the next step is to determine if you have any connections to them. If you are working in a small community or with a relatively small audience, you may be able to reach them directly or share your messages through someone with a more direct connection to them, such as a friend, family member, acquaintance, or colleague. Your job is to identify who your audience will be most influenced by. If you are working in a larger community or city or with a larger audience, these kinds of direct connections may not apply, and you may have to recruit the media or a well-respected/celebrity messenger, which we'll elaborate on more in the Tactics section.



YOUR TURN

USE THE **AUDIENCE WORKSHEET** TO WRITE DOWN SPECIFIC AUDIENCES, THEIR VALUES AND CONCERNS, AND YOUR CONNECTIONS TO THEM. >25 MINUTES RECOMMENDED

1. Identify your decision maker(s) – individual(s) or group(s) who can make your objective a reality by taking a specific action or changing a specific behavior. (Actually write down peoples' names if you know them.) Consider the following questions:

- Who are the people most affected by the problem and/or your project?
- Are specific groups/individuals causing the problem?
- Which audiences have the most political or social influence?

2. Then think about this person or group and what they care about (their core concerns) by answering the following questions:

- What is their greatest concern/priority in life?
- What do they believe about your issue/project?
- Who/what do they respect and enjoy?

3. Next, consider potential barriers that might stop your audience from taking action/supporting your cause. What excuses will they have, e.g. it's too far to drive, too expensive, not enough time? Note: list those in the same section with core concerns.

4. Finally, consider what connections you have with this person/people. Will you reach out to them directly or reach them through someone else? Consider the following questions:

- What is their background?
- Who are their trusted friends, associates, family members?
- Who do they count on for advice? Who do they trust and listen to?
- If you can't influence this person, who can?

Communication Planning Worksheet 3: Identify and Assess your Target Audience

- **Decision Maker(s):** Who can make your objective a reality by taking a specific action? This person or group is your target audience.
- **Core Concerns:** Think about who this individual or group is and what they care about by answering the following questions: what is their greatest concern/priority in life; what do they believe about your topic or project; who do they listen to/respect/trust?
- **Potential Barriers:** Consider what potential barriers might stop your audience from taking action/supporting your cause.
- **Connections:** Consider what connections you have with this person/people. Can you can reach out to them directly or through another connection (e.g., an influential person they listen to/respect/trust)?

Example objective: *Engage 30% of fishers from Ville and St. Coral in the decision-making process to establish a new MPA for Klemet Reef Atoll by 2020.*

Target Audience, i.e. Decision Maker	Core Concerns and Potential Barriers to Taking Action	Connections and Potential Influencers
Example: Approximately 100 fishers from St. Coral who use the Atoll as a fishing ground for lobster.	<u>Core concerns:</u> -Catch enough to provide for family -Teach children how to fish -Save money to buy a house <u>Barriers:</u> - No free time to participate in meetings - Doesn't think their contributions will influence MPA design and doesn't see value of MPA	-Most fishers are members of a fishing association and you went to the same school with one of the association presidents -You've been buying lobsters from fishers in St. Coral for years -You're friends with a few well-respected fishers from both communities

NOTES



Handwriting practice area with 15 horizontal lines.

Step 4

MAKE YOUR MESSAGE MATTER

STEP 4: MAKE YOUR MESSAGE MATTER

Watch a short presentation about making your message matter
<https://youtu.be/nT5a2UJMoBY>

THE NEXT STEP IS DEVELOPING KEY MESSAGES, which include the action(s) desired (also referred to as the “call to action”) from the target audience. If effectively crafted, your messages will influence the attitudes and affect the behaviors of your target audiences.

Follow these 8 guidelines to craft effective messages:

1. Make an emotional connection
2. Provide the rationale for taking action
3. Be clear about what you want people to do (i.e. call to action)
4. Make your message concrete
5. Make your message simple, avoid jargon
6. Highlight the benefits
7. Be credible
8. Tell a story



“EVEN IF YOU HAVE REAMS OF NUMBERS ON YOUR SIDE, REMEMBER: NUMBERS NUMB, JARGON JARS, AND NOBODY EVER MARCHED ON WASHINGTON BECAUSE OF A PIE CHART. IF YOU WANT TO CONNECT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE, TELL THEM A STORY.”

— ANDY GOODMAN, STORYTELLING AS BEST PRACTICE

MAKE AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

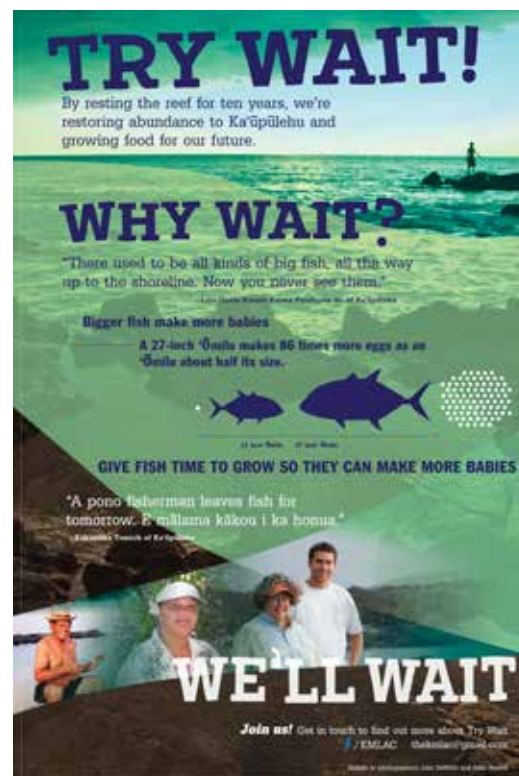
EMOTIONS ARE MORE LIKELY TO SPUR ACTION THAN REASON/LOGIC

The human brain processes information either experientially or analytically. The experiential processing system controls your survival behavior, and is your source of emotions and instincts. Your analytical processing system is where you analyze scientific information. The experiential processing system is the stronger motivator for action, so keep that in mind when you’re developing your messages. That being said, we recommend creating messages that apply to both types of processing, i.e. appeal to your audience’s emotions while also providing the facts/science.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

Emotional messages that link your cause/action to what your audience cares about – to their core concerns and values – are more likely to motivate listening, action, and behavior change. Make it clear how your action affects and benefits your audience personally.

Poster created by the Ka’ūpūlehu Marine Life Advisory Committee to build support for a ten-year marine reserve.
Example of a personal, positive message.



PROVIDE THE RATIONALE FOR TAKING ACTION

Key messages must explain why your audience should change their behavior or support your cause. It must be clear both what's in it for them and that it's urgent for them to act now. These guidelines will help you distill technical and scientific information for your key audiences.

OFFER SCIENCE, BUT KEEP IT SIMPLE AND VISUAL

Most people see and understand the world through images, not lists of numbers or graphs, and so it's best to communicate through images, simple graphics, or one or two thoughtful statements. Translate and interpret technical language in scientific reports into simple, engaging summary statements. Keep visuals and graphics simple, so it's clear to your audience what information you want them to focus on.

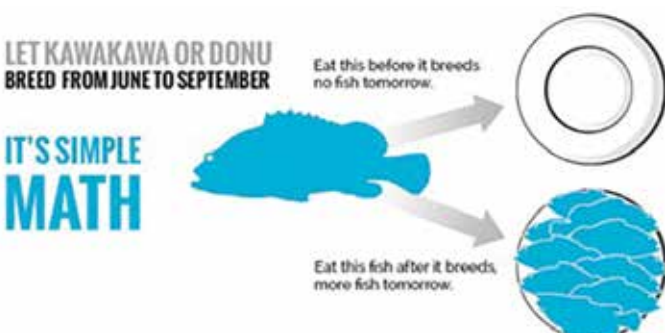
EXAMPLE: *"In the last 40 years, we've lost over half of our reef."*

SHARE PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

Personal observations are a powerful way to share "why" people should care or act. There's nothing quite like getting information directly from the source, especially when messages are coming from someone your audience respects. One or two facts with emotional power from a trusted messenger can add significant weight to your message. (We'll come back to this idea when we talk about messengers later.) These observations paired with scientific data help paint a more complete picture for your audience of what's really happening.

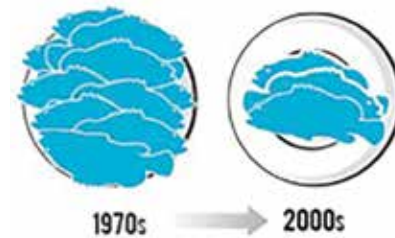
BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT PEOPLE TO DO

Remember to include your call to action in your key messages. What is the behavior you are trying to change or promote? What action do you want your audience to take? Be sure to have a clear understanding of what action you'd like people to take, so you can effectively communicate it to them. One of the biggest communication mistakes we can make, is getting our audience's attention and missing the opportunity to ask them to act.



above: Simple graphic illustrating an unprotected area versus marine protected area from the Ocean Conservancy.

below: Example of a simple infographic illustrating the decline in grouper (fish) populations from the 4FJ Campaign, an initiative in Fiji to protect grouper during spawning months.



above: Example of sharing personal observations from the Ka'upulehu Marine Life Advisory Committee "Try Wait" brochure.

left: Another example from the 4FJ Campaign. This graphic illustrates a clear 'call to action' and the benefit the audience can expect.

MAKE YOUR MESSAGE CONCRETE SO IT CAN BE EASILY UNDERSTOOD AND WILL STICK

A good way to help your audience remember your message is to explain it in terms of things they already know, see, and feel by being concrete rather than abstract. To make your message more concrete, link intangible concepts to something tangible or concrete.

- Intangible = concepts, beliefs, emotions, values, attitudes
- Tangible = things we see, smell, hear, touch, and taste

EXAMPLE: *Grouper (tangible) are an important part of our heritage and lifestyle as Pacific Islanders (intangible).*



One way to share tangible concepts and build off things people already know is to use analogies or metaphors.

EXAMPLE: Which option helps you understand the size of a grey whale more easily? *A) A grey whale can reach a length of 45 feet and weigh up to 40 tons. B) A grey whale is as long as a school bus?*

Option “B” right? By comparing a whale to a school bus, we’re making numbers relatable and memorable, which is more effective than listing statistics.

EXAMPLE: Which option has more of an impact? *A) There are 65,000 gun shops in the United States. B) There are more gun shops in the U.S.A. than the number of Starbucks, McDonald’s, and supermarkets combined.*

MAKE YOUR MESSAGE SIMPLE, AVOID JARGON

Every profession has jargon that is well known to insiders, but confusing to others. To help keep your message simple and memorable, avoid jargon. Conservation jargon includes words like species richness, biomass, and prime spawners. If you must use jargon, make sure you explain what it means in simple language.

EXAMPLE: *“Spillover” is when the benefits inside a marine reserve, such as more fish and more larvae, spill into – or extend to – areas outside a marine reserve.*

Use familiar words to connect with your audience and help make your message stick:

- Use vs. Utilize
- Ocean vs. Marine Environment
- Human-caused vs. Anthropogenic
- Approach vs. Methodology
- Healthy vs. Robust

HIGHLIGHT THE BENEFITS

To motivate your audience to support your cause and take the action you want them to take, it’s important to let them know what they will get out of it – the short, medium, and long-term benefits that matter to them. Try to put yourself in their shoes – what do they care about? Is it coral reefs or is it the economy, religion, children, health, or island pride?

For the same reasons mentioned earlier, keep the focus on the positive. For example, if you are talking about a marine reserve, focus on what people can do, such as swim, snorkel, dive, etc. A benefit might be more fish in a nearby area, or in the future. Or, depending on the audience, a benefit might be improved tourism which increases revenue for small businesses.

Select words that serve as solutions and avoid words that may have negative associations or triggers for your audience. For example, a fisher may be more likely to support a “Fish replenishment area” than a “no-take area.”



Example of highlighting the benefits of protecting fish habitats from the Mapping Ocean Wealth Project

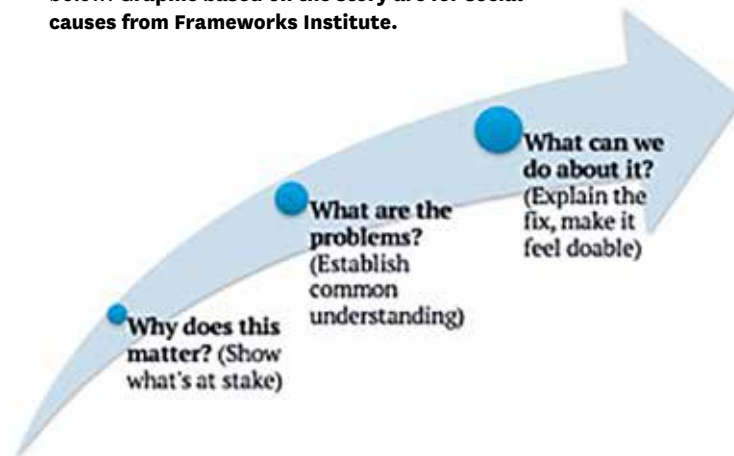
MAKE SURE YOUR MESSAGE IS CREDIBLE

A credible message is simple, clear, and addresses issues up front. It doesn't over-dramatize, offer facts that are premature, exaggerate, over-promise, or demonize others.

TELL A STORY

Humans understand the world through stories. Storytelling has been an important part of the human experience—from the etchings of cave dwellers millennia ago to 21st century internet-based storytelling. Research has shown that the human need to communicate in a coherent story is hardwired in our brains. To tell an effective issue-related story, you should begin with why the issue matters (values), then present the problems associated with that issue, ending with what the audience can do about it (illustrated right). Learn more about Storytelling for Social Change from Frameworks Institute (www.frameworksinstitute.org). Remember to make sure your story clearly articulates what you want people to do and helps build support for your mission.

below: **Graphic based on the story arc for social causes from Frameworks Institute.**



WRITING YOUR MESSAGE

HOW TO CREATE A MEANINGFUL, CONCISE, TANGIBLE MESSAGE THAT RESONATES WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

Meet the Message Box, a tool to help you condense information about your work/project into four or five sentences that explain the overarching issue(s), problems that have occurred because of the issue, how your work relates to your audience, the solution (and your audience's role), and the benefits to your audience. You begin by identifying your central issue and your target audience. Then streamline the most important aspects of your work into a series of concise messages by answering the following questions:

- What are the problems associated with the overarching issue?
- Why does this information matter to my audience?
- What are some of the possible solutions to this problem?
- What action would you like the audience to take?
- What are the potential short-, medium-, and long-term benefits of resolving this problem?

The Message Box can be used for a variety of communication needs. Here are just a few:

- Writing your strategic communication plan, a story, or a press release.
- Preparing for a media interview, community meetings, or one-on-one discussions with key decision makers.
- Designing outreach materials such as brochures and posters.

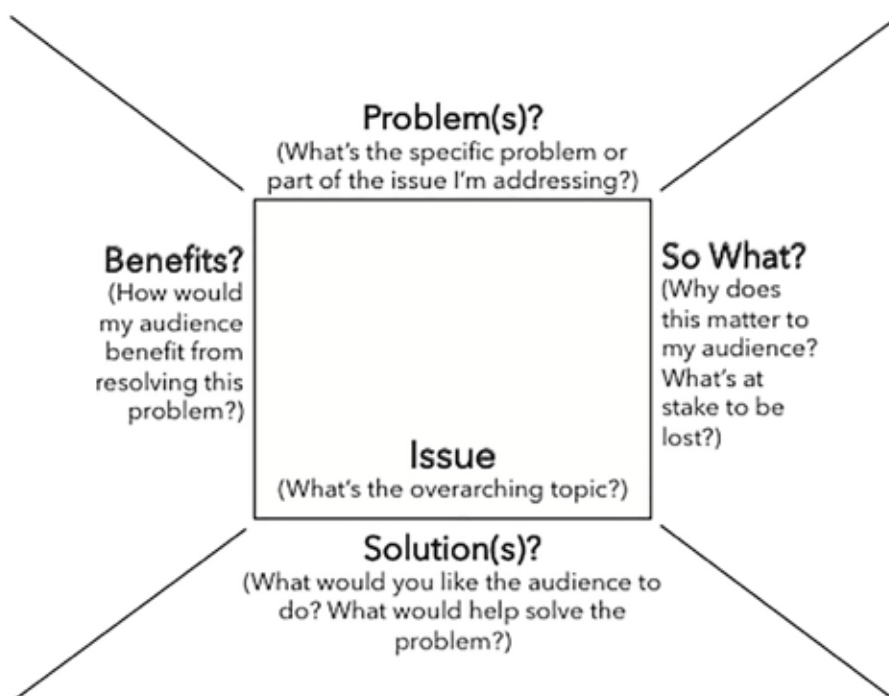
Developing a message using the Message Box is a continuous process. It takes at least two, and possibly as many as five or six iterations to refine it. Feedback from colleagues and peers, as well as test audiences, and input from research and evaluation, will likely lead to revised versions of your Message Box.

COMMUNICATION TIP

We recommend practicing reading your Message Box out loud pretending you are talking to your target audience. Messages sound different when spoken versus read, and a practiced message can sound more natural.

MESSAGE BOX

Audience: _____



"I FOUND THE MESSAGE BOX VERY USEFUL AND USE THIS TOOL IN MY WORK TODAY. I'VE USED THE MESSAGE BOX TO HELP DRAFT CONCRETE MESSAGES FOR VARIOUS PROJECTS I AM WORKING ON."

— SELENI CRUZ, CONSERVATION COORDINATOR, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY BELIZE



PHOTO: KIM MOA, KUA

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE INFORMATION IN THIS SECTION BY TAKING THE QUIZ. <http://reefresilience.org/quiz/quiz.5/quiz.html>

**TAKE
QUIZ**

PRE-TESTING

Once key messages and calls to action have been developed, we recommend pre-testing the messages using the tactics you identify for specific target audiences. Pre-testing helps determine whether a message will be understood and effective in achieving the desired action. It is also used to understand the target audience's trust in various communication tactics and their response to proposed behavior change requests (i.e. the call to action). Pre-testing can be done on a representative sample of the target audience through telephone or mail surveys. It can also be accomplished more simply by assembling a small group from the target audience and showing and discussing messages and the communication tactics with them. For example, a manager could gather a small group of fishers, show them a presentation or brochure, then take notes on the group's feedback. By pre-testing, the manager can adapt messages and tactics if needed, and avoid mistakes and unintended effects from communication.

YOUR TURN

USE THE **MESSAGE BOX** WORKSHEET TO DEVELOP MESSAGING ABOUT YOUR WORK. >45 MINUTES RECOMMENDED

We recommend filling out the Message Box at least two times to start. Draft 1 should capture the results of your initial brainstorm. Draft 2 is to help you edit down to the most important messages for your audience.

DRAFT 1

(recommend at least 30 minutes for first draft)

1. Begin by identifying your target audience – who is the message intended for? Pick one audience from your previous worksheet and

write it down on your Message Box. This is who you're developing your messages for.

2. Then identify your overarching issue. What is the issue your project/solution is trying to address? Tip: Because previous activities did not have you identify an "issue," this step can be confusing. To identify your issue, think about the root cause your solution will address, e.g. overfishing, coastal development, polluted runoff, etc. This is an important step, because if you are too focused on the problems, e.g. less and smaller fish in a bay, then it's harder to convince your audience that a marine reserve is the solution if the decline in fish is due to poor water quality rather than overfishing. It's o.k. to have more than one issue to start, you'll refine in the second draft.

3. Next, fill out the other sections of the Message Box, i.e. the problems, so what, solution, and benefits. Jot down your ideas in bullet format.

DRAFT 2

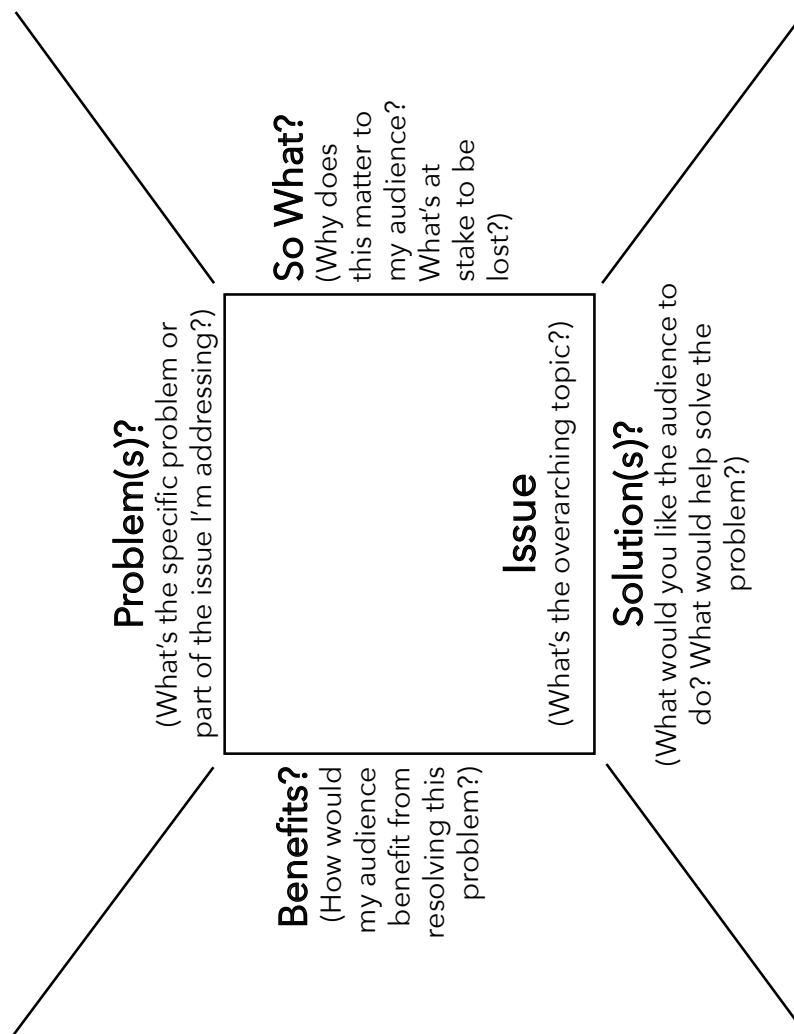
(recommend at least 15 minutes)

On your second Message Box worksheet, refine your messages through the lens of your audience. The goal for this step is to condense the contents of each Message Box section into one or two sentences. Consider the following questions:

- What does your audience really need to know?
- Will your audience ask "so what?"
- Is your audience's role in the solution clear, i.e. do they know what you are asking them to do?
- Does your message emphasize reward and convey hope toward success?
- Did you phrase your message using clear, concise language that your audience will understand?

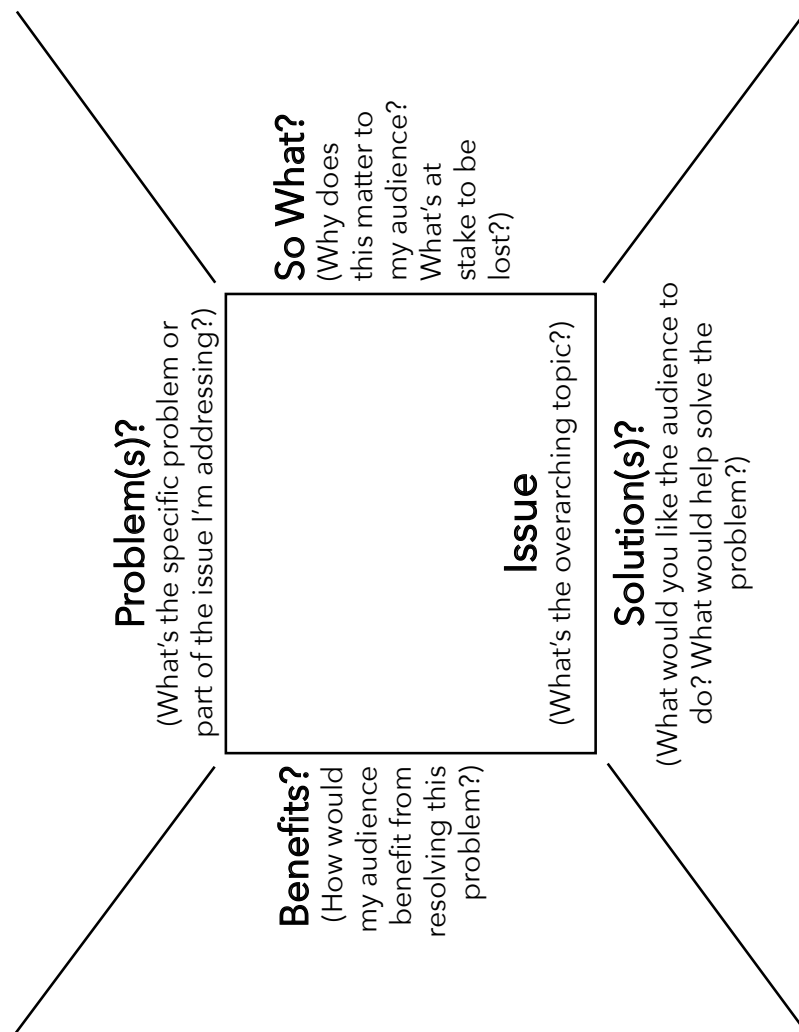
Communication Planning Worksheet 4: Make your Message Matter (to your Audience)

Audience: _____



Communication Planning Worksheet 4: Make your Message Matter (to your Audience)

Audience: _____



NOTES



Notes section with 15 horizontal lines for writing.

Step 5

IDENTIFY MESSENGERS AND TACTICS

PHOTO: SURATMAN ALIMUDDIN/TNC PHOTO
CONTEST 2019



STEP 5: IDENTIFY MESSENGERS AND TACTICS FOR COMMUNICATING YOUR MESSAGES

Watch a short presentation about identifying messengers and tactics
<https://youtu.be/EgE4XGDtpFQ>



AFTER IDENTIFYING THE GOAL, THE AUDIENCE, AND KEY MESSAGES, THE NEXT STEP IS TO IDENTIFY HOW YOU ARE GOING TO DELIVER YOUR MESSAGE TO YOUR AUDIENCE.

MESSENGERS

Who delivers your message is just as important as what you choose to say. The right message conveyed by a messenger your audience trusts is likely to be heard; the opposite is also true. To identify an effective messenger, consider who your audience respects or looks up to and who they will listen to. Then find out if you have a connection to this person/people and if they are willing to share your message with your audience. Potential messengers may need encouragement and practice to become comfortable and effective in delivering your message.

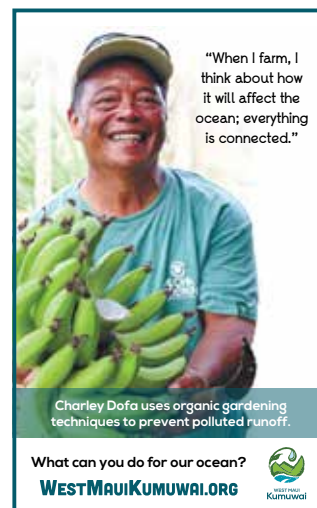
Examples of people who can be excellent messengers:

- Community leaders such as church leaders or cultural practitioners
- Friends and family
- Celebrities such as local musicians or radio or TV personalities
- Your staff, partners, colleagues
- Someone already participating in the activity/action you want to promote
- Peers that are in – or will relate to – the target audience

COMMUNICATION TIP

Refer back to your Audience Worksheet to determine if any of the influencers listed there might make good messengers.

right: On Maui, Hawai'i, the West Maui Kumuwai campaign highlighted community members already partaking in the polluted runoff-reducing behaviors the campaign wished to promote.



above: The Our Laolao campaign in the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI) engaged respected community leaders who represented different social and cultural groups as messengers for its anti-litter platform.

STEP 5: IDENTIFY MESSENGERS AND TACTICS FOR COMMUNICATING YOUR MESSAGES



TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE INFORMATION IN THIS SECTION BY TAKING THE QUIZ. <http://reefresilience.org/quiz/quiz.6/quiz.html>

**TAKE
QUIZ**

YOUR TURN

USE THE **MESSENGER WORKSHEET** TO BRAINSTORM AND LIST INDIVIDUALS YOU THINK WILL BEST CONNECT WITH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE(S), THEN WRITE HOW AND IN WHAT WAY THESE MESSENGERS WILL APPEAL TO AND/OR CONNECT WITH THEM.
➤15 MINUTES RECOMMENDED

Guiding questions for selecting messengers:

- Who does your audience trust?
- Who do they look to when forming an opinion?
- Does that person have your target audience's interest in mind?
- If you're speaking about a specific place, did they grow up, live, or have a special relationship with the area?
- Does the person have a personal interest, knowledge, and/or experience in the issue, i.e. credibility on the subject?
- Do they bring an authentic tone that people will feel is sincere?
- Will they model the behavior you want to see take place?
- Is it important to have a person with similarities in age, gender, race, etc.?
- Does this messenger have potential risks or controversy that should be considered?

Communication Planning Worksheet 5: Identify your Messengers

... List individuals who will best connect with your audience(s) and state why you think they will appeal to and/or connect with your audience. I.e. How will this messenger reach your audience?

Example objective: *Engage 30% of fishers from Ville and St. Coral in the decision-making process to establish a new MPA for Klemet Reef Atoll by 2020.*

Audience	Messenger(s)	Audience Perception of Messenger
Lobster fishers from St. Coral	Example: Prominent fishing boat captain from St. Coral who has seen the benefits of MPAs first hand.	Most St. Coral fishers look up to this captain. He is an excellent fisherman with a reputation for being hard-working, honest, and humble.

TACTICS

The best communications efforts use the most direct tactics. Start with learning how your audience gets information and choose a tactic that reaches them as directly as possible. For example, if you're trying to reach a small group of older fishermen who don't use the Internet, a social media campaign would not be an effective tactic to reach them. Instead, a good tactic may be meeting the fishermen at the docks after they are done fishing to talk, or placing articles or ads in a local publication they actively read.

It is important to select a variety of tactics to engage your target audience multiple times and in multiple places – repetition helps break through the information clutter. Typically, the more times a message is heard, the more likely it is to be believed; though it's also important to make sure you don't overshare your message and cause message fatigue. A few other things to consider:

- Does your tactic reach your audience in a way that demonstrates your shared values?
- Does your tactic effectively convey what you want them to do (“the call to action”)?

Brainstorming tactics can be fun! Keep in mind that your budget, staff, and circumstances can affect which tactics you can implement. Be thoughtful about timing, with regard to events or holidays that could enhance or hinder your message. Consider these questions to assess which tactics are right for you:

- Can you afford it?
- Can you sustain it?
- Will you be able to change tactics if you need to?

TACTICS IDEAS FOR AUDIENCE TYPE

The sections below provide high-level examples of effective communication tactics for various target audiences and tips for successful implementation. This is to give you a taste of the kinds of tactics that may be appropriate for your audience. Tactics can include meetings, formal or informal presentations, a press conference, a website, social media, e-newsletters, mailed letters, phone calls, paid advertising, community events, field trips, mascots, and more.

DECISION MAKERS

Examples: Governor or Director of Fisheries Agency

Objective example: By 2010, get the Director of Fisheries to increase the budget for coral reef management by 40%.

Key tactics:

- Face-to-face meetings
- Briefings
- Media engagement
- Constituents as messengers



above: **Paco Lopez, graphic design artist and Board Member of Arrecifes Pro Ciudad Inc., Puerto Rico, created an informational coloring book for children to learn about local marine life. He also uses art to help keep pollution off reefs.**

- Compelling booklet highlighting benefits of increasing budget for reef management

Recommendations:

- Provide information early
- Present actions and solutions
- Make sure your audience has the necessary information and materials to advocate for your cause

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Examples: Fisheries cooperative or neighborhood board

Objective example: By 2018, two fisheries cooperatives are using and promoting the use of a sustainable fishing practice.

Key tactics:

- Meetings
- TV/radio shows
- Newsletters
- Skits or plays
- Community members (peers) and respected leaders as messengers

Recommendation:

- Choose culturally-appropriate methods

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Examples: Dive shop operators, surfers, or tourists

Objective example: By 2020, all of the dive shops in the region are implementing sustainable dive practices, like Green Fins.

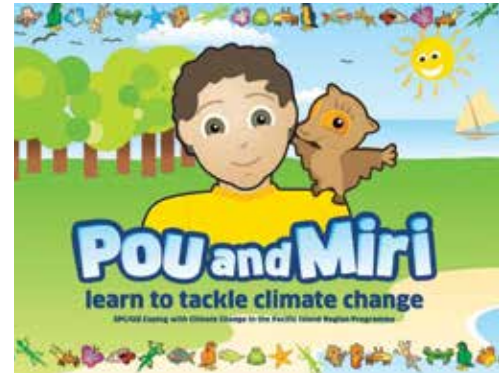
Key tactics:

- Radio/TV/newspaper
- Internet
- Social media

STEP 5: IDENTIFY MESSENGERS AND TACTICS FOR COMMUNICATING YOUR MESSAGES

right: **Example of guerilla marketing**
–a seaweed eating contest to draw
attention to the value of herbivores as
reef-grazers.

far right: **Story example from Secretariat
of the Pacific Community, 2011. Story
and Illustrations by Dom Sansom.**



- Posters
- Meetings
- Participating dive shop acts as messenger for other shops

Recommendations:

- Decide on the most cost-effective way to reach a large number of people
- Use trade or affinity associations

MEDIA

Examples: Editor at a local paper or radio host

Objective example: Before the legislative session starts, editors and staff of all major newspapers understand the value of coral reefs and are prepared to write stories promoting actions to improve reef health.

Key tactics:

- Face-to-face meetings, interviews
- Journalist workshop
- Press releases
- Conferences
- Trips/site visits

Recommendations:

- Use success stories to inspire positive change
- Help audience see or learn about your issue firsthand

PARTNERS

Examples: Government agencies or non-profit organizations

Objective example: By 2018, coordinate communication efforts of all partner organizations working to support the expansion of a marine protected area network, and make sure all staff are prepared to share key messages.

Key tactics:

- Telephone
- Email
- Websites
- Presentations
- Print materials such as a fact sheet or brochure

Recommendation:

- Use the Message Box to collaboratively develop shared messages for consistency

IDEA BANK

Skim the Idea Bank below for some inspiration and check out NOAA's Communicating for Success booklet for guidance on media, events, exhibits, videos, podcasts, list serves, online communication, and print materials, including brochures, fact sheets, and posters. The Idea Bank below was developed collaboratively with Rare.



GUERILLA MARKETING

Get attention through guerilla marketing, a communications tactic that uses fast, creative methods, often combined with a sense of humor, to get an audience's attention and move them to action quickly. Examples include art installations in public places, stencils on sidewalks, and flash mobs, like the one the 4FJ campaign organized to raise awareness about declines in fish populations and ask onlookers not to eat grouper during spawning months.

Another example from Maui, Hawai'i is a seaweed-eating contest the West Maui Kumuwai campaign organized to draw attention to the role parrotfish, and other algae-eating animals, play to keep corals healthy. The event drew a new audience into the discussion and landed the campaign on the front page of the local newspaper.

STORIES

Tell a story like Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, a talented poet from the Marshall Islands, did when she wrote and performed the expressive poem "Dear Matafele Peinam." Jetnil-Kijiner's poem about climate change and the threat it poses for many low-lying Pacific Island nations was performed at the United Nations Climate Summit to capture the attention of international media and build support for climate change mitigation policy.

STEP 5: IDENTIFY MESSENGERS AND TACTICS FOR COMMUNICATING YOUR MESSAGES



top left: **Priscilla the Parrot Fish** is a 16-foot-long sculpture made of marine debris.

top middle: **Hands-on beach profiling activity** during a **Climate Change Adaptation Tools Training** in Seychelles.

right: **Hands-on learning through citizen science** with **Hui O Ka Wai Ola** on Maui, Hawai'i.

left: **Murals painted in public places**, like this one on a park water tank, can motivate, inspire, or remind people to take a specific action.

Instruct through storybooks and coloring books which capture children's attention and serve as prompts, reminding them (and their parents) of the desired behaviors. Stories can help simplify complex ideas and concepts that are difficult to explain and understand, such as climate change. For example, The Pou and Miri series of storybooks were designed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the German Overseas Development Agency to help children understand climate change causes, impacts, and solutions. These books reinforce behavioral changes by linking the abstract concept of climate change to real, tangible everyday actions. The books also act as prompts or reminders for behavior adoption. Reaching children at an influential life stage through interactive media increases the likelihood that they will remember concepts and messages long after your campaign has ended.

ART

You can use art to educate people about your issue and solution. This should be in a visible, public space in order to normalize the desired behavior and remind people to adopt it. Best yet, get the community to help create it! Priscilla the Parrot Fish (above) is a 16-foot-long sculpture made entirely of marine debris by the conservation organization Washed Ashore. Priscilla went on display at a Sea World park in order to raise awareness of the problem of marine pollution. Sharing messages and influencing behavior through visible reminders can be even more helpful when incorporated into regularly used items, such as notepads, pens, fridge magnets, light switch covers, buckets, etc.

MUSIC

Create a catchy song to draw awareness to your issue. For example, Bahamas' "Conch Gone" song has raised national awareness about the decline in the country's conch populations as part of the Conchservaion campaign. The campaign asks Bahamians to make sure conch are a certain size before catching them in order to ensure there are conch to catch in the future.

The Coral Song created by A.J. Jenkins, video by KidsTV123, is a fun song for kid's about coral reefs, why they are important, and what actions kids should take to help keep them healthy.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

Engage stakeholders – such as fishers, government officials, and youth – in discussions and demonstrations about your topic/project by making learning hands-on and interactive. This can include playing games, enlisting them as citizen scientists, or hosting field trips so they can "see for themselves." For example, "What's the Catch?" is an interactive game that allows players to experience the ups and downs of fishing and fisheries management. By managing the fan-tailed goldfish fishery, players learn first-hand the failures of conventional fisheries management and the benefits of catch share management. This is a great tool to facilitate discussion in communities that are interested in improving fisheries management.

Stakeholders can be directly engaged in collecting information to inform management decisions. For example, you can involve your community in observing, measuring, and analyzing changes in the

STEP 5: IDENTIFY MESSENGERS AND TACTICS FOR COMMUNICATING YOUR MESSAGES



beach environment. This is a great way to directly engage people on the issue of climate change, help them see changes for themselves, and empower them to take action.

Another example of citizen science is Hui O Ka Wai Ola, a group of volunteers who measure and share the status of Maui's water quality. The Nature Conservancy scientists and partners train volunteers on scientific monitoring protocols. The information they compile helps the State of Hawai'i fill critical data gaps and inform management.

PLEDGES

Ask people to pledge their support and publicly commit to action as a way to inspire others and help with follow-through. (Research has shown that individuals who make a public commitment are far more likely to adopt change.) For example, through the West Maui Kumuwai campaign, Maui residents pledge to take action to stop polluted runoff from reaching the ocean. Pledgers decide what action they will commit to, fill out the pledge board, and pose for a photo which is displayed on the campaign's website. This public display of commitment makes it far more likely that individuals will engage in the desired action.

Similarly, individuals in Saipan, CNMI, pledge to not litter as part of "Our Laolao" anti-litter campaign. Pledge photos are added to a display board and showcased during community events.

Another great way to showcase community support for an action is through public art, such as a mosaic of individually painted tiles with commitments, a public mural with sea creatures made from handprints that represent a pledge, or perhaps driftwood fish swimming around a save the reef slogan.

These attractive displays can be a great tool for capturing personal commitments and making them visible beyond the life of your campaign. Consider a permanent (or semi-permanent) space where people can pledge to adopt reef-friendly actions.

**TAKE
QUIZ**

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE INFORMATION IN THIS SECTION BY TAKING THE QUIZ.

<http://reefresilience.org/quiz/quiz.6/quiz.html>

left: "Commitment fish" is part of an art installation showcasing positive actions people are taking for reefs.

middle: West Maui Kumuwai pledge participant.

right: "Our Laolao" anti-litter pledge display board at a community event.

YOUR TURN

USE THE **TACTICS WORKSHEET** TO BRAINSTORM AND LIST TACTICS you think will best connect with your target audience(s). Leave the third column on this worksheet blank for completion in Step 6. Have fun thinking about tactics, but remember your objective and where/how your target audience gets information. Start with the easy stuff and get your ideas down on paper. Brainstorm what you and your audience have access to. Don't be afraid to think outside the box and get creative! >25 minutes recommended

Guiding questions for selecting tactics:

- Are the tactics you listed within your organization's capability?
- Will your tactics reach your audience?
- How do people in your target audience communicate with one another?
- Does your audience read news or watch TV news or get their news via social media? Which paper, station, or site do they use?
- Who does your audience trust?
- Is this communications tool/tactic appropriate for your topic, issue, and message? Is the tool/tactic culturally sensitive and does it demonstrate your shared values?
- Does your timing consider key dates and events? Is there any event or holiday/anniversary coming up that you could build a tactic around?
- Are you being realistic about what you can accomplish given the people and dollars available to support your effort?

Communication Planning Worksheet 6: Identify Tactics for Communicating your Messages

What activities or tactics will help you connect your messages with your audience and achieve your objective?

Example objective: <i>Engage 30% of St. Coral fishers in the decision-making process to establish a new MPA for Klemmit Reef Atoll by 2020.</i>	
Audience	Tactics to Reach your Objective
Lobster fishers from St. Coral	Examples: - Host community meetings at popular hangout with food and refreshments creating an opportunity for a prominent St. Coral fisherman – who has experienced the benefits of MPAs – to speak directly with St. Coral fishers about MPAs and how they can participate in establishing one for Klemmit Reef. - Create ads or a news story featuring this lobster fisher and publish it in a popular local paper or magazine that you know your target audience reads.

Step 6

MEASUREMENT



STEP 6: MEASUREMENT

Watch a short presentation
about measuring your impact
<https://youtu.be/8oLLcp1oWEU>



EVALUATION WILL SHOW YOU WHETHER YOU NEED TO MAKE CHANGES OR ADJUSTMENTS to achieve your goal and when (or if) you've reached your objective.

WHEN TO MEASURE

Measurement should begin before your communications strategy is implemented. The good news is, you started some preliminary measurement in Steps 2 and 3 when you assessed your context and started examining your audiences. That initial data can serve as your starting point – which is important because you can't measure where you end up without knowing where you started.

Don't wait until the end of your project to collect and review statistics. Collecting data as you go will help you learn what works and what doesn't, so you can revise your approach as needed. If your strategy of reaching a specific audience with a message and getting them to take action is not working, the sooner you know, the sooner you can make changes so you can reach your goal.

At a minimum, you should evaluate at least once, approximately midway through your project timeline, and then again at the end. Interim measurements can also be motivating to share with people around you such as staff and volunteers, with your target audiences who are supporters, and with managers, funders, or other important allies. Measuring the effect of your project, even if you didn't achieve your goal, will help improve future projects, and enable you to use limited resources more effectively next time.

WHAT TO MEASURE

When thinking about what to measure consider:

- Did your message reach your target audience? How much of your target audience did you reach?
- Did your target audience respond to your message? If not, does your message need to be changed?
- How has the behavior of your audience changed?
- Did you convert new supporters or develop new relationships?
- Did you achieve your goal and how do you know?
- How much money did you spend, and what were the results?
- If you used a tactic for the first time, how did it perform? Would

you use it again? Modify it?

- If you made a significant investment in a tactic, how did it perform? Can you assess if the investment was worth it?

TYPES OF MEASURES

Outputs are the things you do (i.e. actions you take, products you make, etc.) to move your strategy forward. For example, if you are encouraging people to buy and use yard products that are less harmful to the ocean and you stickered products to alert customers which products to buy, one project output could be “labeled 1,000 bottles of fertilizer ‘Ocean Preferred.’” If you host events, you can track the number of people who attend or the number of brochures handed out.

Outcomes are the changes that occur because of your efforts, such as a change in awareness, attitude, or behavior, or a new policy or law. For example, an outcome of our effort to sticker bottles of fertilizers is “sold 1,000 bottles of ‘Ocean Preferred’ fertilizer.”

Most outputs are relatively easy to measure and are often quantifiable – something that can be counted. Outcomes may or may not be countable, but can be anecdotal, such as a personal observation or story. One example is a quote from a hardware store customer sharing how the ocean preferred stickers influenced their behavior: “I was debating about what fertilizer to buy and I noticed a sticker that read ‘Ocean Preferred.’ It was the deciding factor in my purchase.”

Anecdotal information is powerful in telling a story, and when used in conjunction with numbers and stats, makes your project results personable – showing the faces behind the statistics – and more compelling.

Measuring outcomes is trickier. You can measure outcomes by working backwards from your objective. For example, if your goal is to get people not to litter, you could measure the amount of litter on a beach monthly before your project started, then measure the amount of litter during and afterwards to see if the amount of litter decreased.

A strategy that has a mix of output and outcome measures, both quantifiable and anecdotal, can result in a more accurate and compelling evaluation.



"I WAS DEBATING ABOUT WHAT FERTILIZER TO BUY AND I NOTICED A STICKER THAT READ 'OCEAN PREFERRED.' IT WAS THE DECIDING FACTOR IN MY PURCHASE."

— CUSTOMER, WEST MAUI
KUMUWAI CAMPAIGN

left and above: **Example of an anecdotal measure – a quote from a hardware store customer about how ocean preferred branding influenced her to buy ocean friendly yard fertilizer.**

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE INFORMATION IN THIS SECTION BY TAKING THE QUIZ. <http://reefresilience.org/quiz/quiz.7/quiz.html>



YOUR TURN

1. USING THE **TACTICS WORKSHEET**, WRITE DOWN THE KINDS OF MEASURES YOU WILL USE TO ASSESS YOUR TACTICS. If you can't measure a tactic, make note of this.
>25 minutes recommended
2. Once you have filled out the worksheet, review your list of measures. For the tactics that can't be measured, how important are they to reaching your objective? If they aren't important and can't be measured, they should probably be cut from the plan. (Conserve resources when possible!)
3. Decide if any tactics can be cut.

Guiding questions:

- Will your outputs and outcomes show whether you have made progress towards achieving your objective? Do you have measures you can count?
- Is data available to track these measurements?
- Have you considered free online tools such as Facebook tracking or Google Analytics?
- Have you included a measure to collect anecdotal results, such as informal interviews?
- Are your measurements a mix of outputs and outcomes, both quantifiable and anecdotal?
- Have you included measurements that can be reviewed throughout your communications effort and not just at the end?

Communication Planning Worksheet 6b: Identify Measures to Assess your Tactics

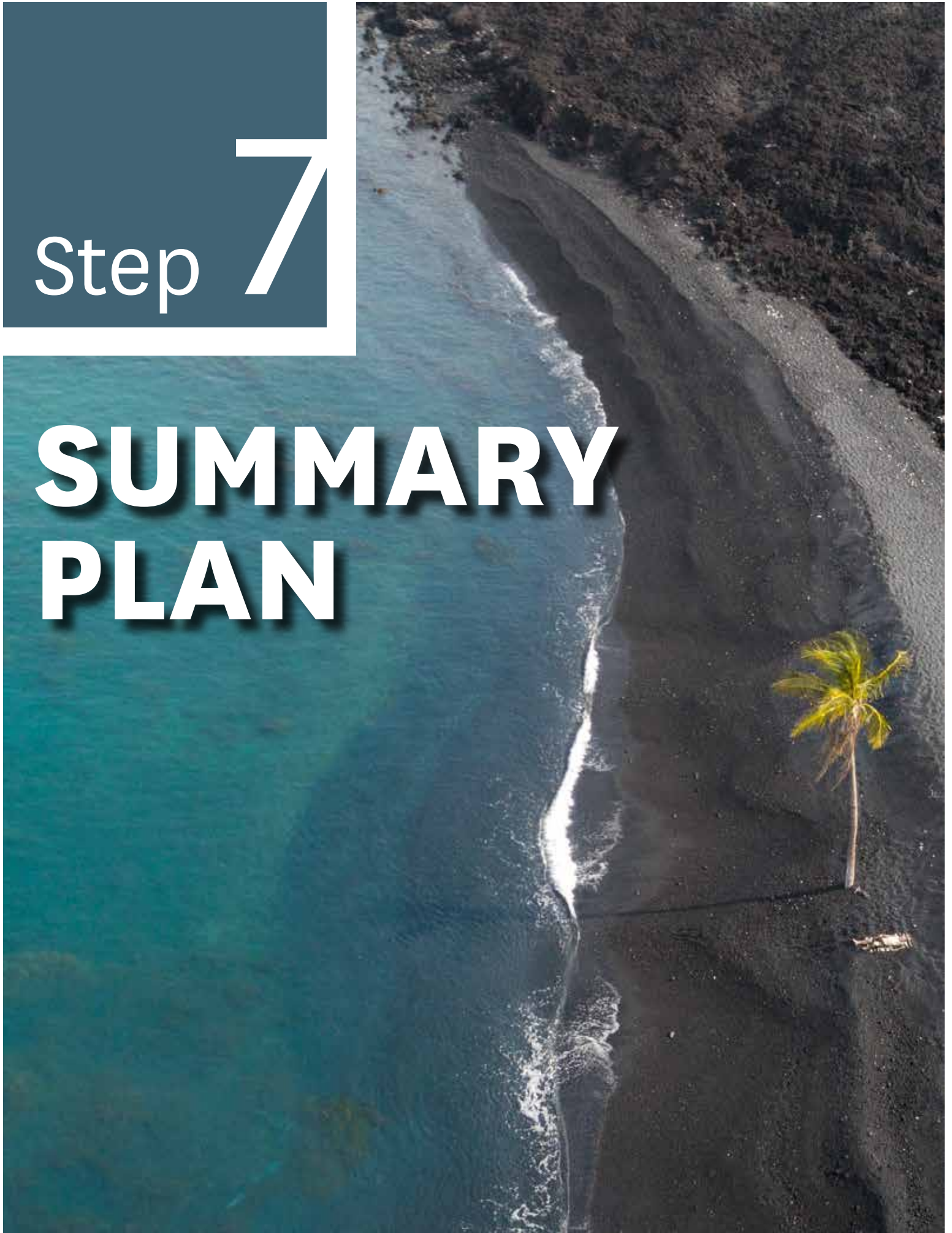
Building off your previous Tactics worksheet, consider how you will measure your tactics or communication activities to know if you are making progress (i.e. reaching your audience and getting closer to your objective)?

Example objective: Engage 30% of St. Coral fishers in the decision-making process to establish a new MPA for Klemet Reef Atoll by 2020.

Audience	Tactics to Reach your Objective	Measures
Lobster fishers from St. Coral	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Host community meetings at popular hangout with food and refreshments creating an opportunity for a prominent St. Coral fisherman – who has experienced the benefits of MPAs – to speak directly with St. Coral fishers about MPAs and how they can participate in establishing one for Klemet Reef. - Create ads or a news story featuring this lobster fisher and publish it in a popular local paper or magazine that you know your target audience reads. 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of fishermen the prominent fisherman speaks with - # of fishermen who attend an MPA meeting - # of news stories

Step 7

SUMMARY PLAN



Watch a short presentation about creating a summary of your plan
https://youtu.be/WZVG8QU-X_U



NOW IT'S TIME TO REVIEW YOUR STRATEGY BEFORE YOU PUT IT INTO ACTION. Write down a summary of the steps you've identified so far to make sure they build on one another and/or compliment each other and to see if anything is missing. A written plan will help you focus your efforts and stay on course and make it easier to engage others in your project.

Use the Summary Template provided to capture your decisions and the details described in each worksheet. We recommend downloading the Word version of the template at www.reefresilience.org/communication/communication-planning-process/summary-plan/. On this webpage, you'll also find an example of a summary plan.

Remember to be concise – less is more. This is a high-level document meant to provide a snapshot of what you want to achieve and how you are going to achieve it. Remember what you learned about the power of simple and concrete messages and apply that here.

Once you've summarized your plan, do a reality check. Ask yourself:

1. Do the steps flow into a cohesive plan, does your audience match your objective, will the messages resonate with your audience, will your tactics be effective in reaching your audience, and will your measures tell you if your strategy is working?
2. Does the tone of your messages and tactics reflect your audience's values/concerns and your goal? For example, if your subject matter is serious, then messages that are funny may not be appropriate.
3. Are there new partners you can get involved in the project?
4. Is your first next step clear?
5. Who needs to see and approve your plan?
6. Will you be able to secure the resources, support, and/or funding you'll need to implement your plan?

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE INFORMATION IN THIS SECTION BY TAKING THE QUIZ. <http://reefresilience.org/quiz/quiz.8/quiz.html>



A Summary of your Key Communication Project Decisions

(Combine your communication planning steps into a cohesive summary.)

Project Title:

Background/Context:

(Project overview, what's the issue you're addressing, what's happening internally and externally that could affect your communication efforts, etc.)

Goal:

(Simply state your big picture goal – why you're doing what you're doing.)

Objectives:

(List your main objectives or steps to help you reach your goal.)

Objective A:

Objective B:

Objective C:

Priority Objective Selected for this Plan:

Target Audiences:

(List key decision makers and influential audiences. If relevant, include a brief description of this individual/group, i.e. their core concerns and potential connections.)

Research:

(What do you need to know about your target audience to verify the draft messages and tactics below? How will you get the information?)

Key Messages:

(List key messages from your final Message Box and note which audience these messages are geared towards. Remember these messages will likely change and evolve.)

Messengers:

(List potential messengers or characteristics you'd like a project/campaign messenger to have. If relevant, include a brief description of these messengers and why you've chosen them.)

Tactics:

(List the communication tactics and tools you plan to use to help you achieve your objective.)

Measurements:

(List measures that will help you monitor results and revise your approach accordingly, and track actions that were not in place prior to your project/campaign.)

Timeline/Action Items:

(This list of dates should include your plan for executing your tactics, upcoming events, and relevant deadlines. Be sure to identify a point person responsible for each action.)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A COMMUNICATIONS EVALUATION GUIDE

<https://www.issuelab.org/resource/are-we-there-yet-a-communications-evaluation-guide.html>

BIODIVERSITY BRANDING AND MESSAGES

http://www.wearefuterra.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Branding_Biodiversity.pdf

COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING WORKBOOK

<http://www.resource-media.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/ResourceMediaCommunicationsPlanningWorkbook.pdf>

COMMUNICATING FOR SUCCESS: ENSURING MPAS ARE VALUED

<http://reefresilience.org/wp-content/uploads/communicating-success-ensuring-mpas.pdf>

COMPASS MESSAGE BOX WORKBOOK

<https://reefresilience.org/wp-content/uploads/COMPASS-The-Message-Box-Workbook.pdf>

CONSERVATION OUTREACH MANUAL Tips for Building Public Awareness:

<http://reefresilience.org/wp-content/uploads/Campaign-and-Outreach-Manual.pdf>

DISCOVERING THE ACTIVATION POINT® <http://www.spitfirestrategies.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Activation-Point.pdf>

ESCAPE FROM THE IVORY TOWER A Guide to Making your Science Matter (*book for purchase*)

<https://islandpress.org/books/escape-ivory-tower>

MAKING YOUR MESSAGE STICK (*book for purchase*) <http://heathbrothers.com/books/made-to-stick/>

MINDFUL MESSAGING™ <http://mindfulmessaging.spitfirestrategies.com/>

PLANNING TO WIN® Roadmap for Creating a Successful Campaign: <https://planningtowin.org/>

PSYCHOLOGY OF CLIMATE CHANGE <http://cred.columbia.edu/guide/>

SMART CHART® An Interactive Tool to Guide Smart Communication Choices: <https://smartchart.org/>

STORYTELLING AS BEST PRACTICE (*book for purchase*) <http://www.thegoodmancenter.com/resources/>

WHEN TO USE QUALITATIVE VS. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH IN COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN

http://reefresilience.org/wp-content/uploads/CCBP_overview.pdf

WHY BAD ADS HAPPEN TO GOOD CAUSES <http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/files/rwjf-web-files/GranteeResources/BadAds.pdf>



BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF MARINE MANAGERS TO EFFECTIVELY
CONSERVE AND RESTORE CORAL REEFS AND REEF FISH BY
CONNECTING THEM WITH PEERS, CONTENT EXPERTS, TOOLS, AND
OPERATIONAL KNOWLEDGE.

WWW.REEFRESILIENCE.ORG

