

Developing a Communication Plan

A communication plan contributes to a successful Total Worker Health® (TWH) program. When developing your communication plan, consider the size of your workplace, who and what you are communicating and the resources you have available.

Key elements

Goals

What do you want your communication plan to achieve? Your goal may be to:

- Raise awareness about the program
- Encourage employees and management to participate in the program or activity

Objectives

Develop objectives for each goal that describe the measurable steps to achieve your goals. Objectives should be SMART—specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely. For example:

- Raise awareness of the program among employees by 60% within six months
- Increase knowledge of healthy lifestyle behaviors by 30% within six months
- Have 10% of the workforce participating in at least one program or activity within three months of the TWH program commencing

Target audience

Who are the people you want to reach? Identify and list your target audiences. Examples include:

- Primary audience—employees and management
- Secondary audience—industry groups, shareholders, unions, families of employees, customers

Understanding the health needs and interests of your audiences will help you to tailor your communication strategies.

Strategies

Your strategies outline what you are going to do to achieve your objectives. For example, you may plan to develop a TWH program website as a central information source for employees. You could include factsheets, posters, frequently asked questions (and answers), employee feedback, information about employee successes, and contact information.

Key messages

What do you want to tell your target audience? How do you want them to respond to your messages? Identify three to five high-level short, clear statements about the program. Use your key messages throughout the program and keep them simple and easy to understand.

Communication channels

Use a variety of channels to reach your target audience.

Examples include:

- Websites (intranet and internet)
- Workshops
- Brochures
- Forums with guest speakers and organizational broadcasts
- Payslip messages
- Team meetings
- Email
- Management-led focus groups
- Posters and signage
- Talks from 'champions' and 'success stories'
- Newsletters

Budget

Build a budget by estimating costs for each strategy of your communication plan.

Examples may include:

- Graphic design
- Web design
- Printing
- Focus testing
- Photography
- Evaluation

Marketing and communication tips

Build a Total Worker Health brand

Give your program a creative name with its own logo, color scheme, and tagline—for example, 'Get Active.' This will attract employees' attention and motivate them to take action. Test your brand name with a few employees before you launch it to the rest of the organization. Apply your branding to all your communication materials.

Launch your program

Generate interest in the program before it starts. Raise awareness about the upcoming program and highlight the benefits. Ensure that communication flows both ways and give employees the chance to provide feedback and make suggestions. A launch is a good way to introduce the program and generate interest. Ask management to launch and endorse the program. Add some fun to the formalities with a healthy lunch or free tai chi lessons.

Leverage special events

Time your launch with other health initiatives—for example, Mental Health Awareness Month or National Bike to Work Day. Use a calendar and mark key dates so it's easy for employees to know what's happening.

Ongoing communication

Ongoing communication is vital. Communication should feature throughout all stages of your program. Promote activities well before the actual event to maximize participation. Acknowledge employee efforts and highlight achievements through stories in internal publications or newsletters to keep people motivated. The stories may be of interest to industry sector publications as well as local papers, council newsletters, and radio stations.

Review and evaluate

Review your communication plan. Measures can include:

- What employees know about the program
- How they found out about an activity
- How effective was the communication
- What information they need in the future