



PROGRESSIVE TECHNOLOGY PROJECT

Best Practices in Strategic Communications Planning

1. Set clear, measurable goals and objectives.

Always start with your goals – it's the most important step in the planning process.

Focus first on *what* you're trying to achieve, rather than *how* you'll achieve it.



4. Think carefully about your audience (s).

Be as specific as possible about *who* you want to reach and *why*.

To reach your target audiences you need good data. **Did you collect what you need and is it easily accessible?**



2. Drive alignment.

Think about what your organization is trying to achieve **first** – then consider how communications can help you get there.



3. Set yourself up for success.

Before embarking on any strategic planning exercise, **make sure that you have the right information and insights to guide the process.**



5. See messaging as your core product.

Consider that messaging is ultimately the core product of your strategic communications planning process.

It's not about all the “stuff” to get your messages out – fundamentally communication is about bringing your message to life.



6. Design the tactical mix strategically.

Think strategically about your communications tactics.

Consider what communications activities best meet your needs, based on your understanding of the strategic landscape, your audience profile and your message.



7. Establish the fundamentals.

As part of the strategic communications planning process, take the time to consider the fundamentals for success.

Specifically:

- **Project management**
- **Resources**
- **Buy-in – both with staff and with your members/constituents**



8. Measure, refine, report.

Evaluating your communications program is critical to your value, your success and your internal credibility.

Think about what would let you know you've succeeded. For example, if media coverage is an important indicator of performance, media monitoring is the logical measurement tool required.

Build de-brief sessions into routine project management approaches so that evaluation becomes part of your day-to-day operation and culture.

