



Effective Communications Essentials Checklist

We think there are eight steps or components you should pretty much always go through as you develop your strategies, activities, and messages. We call them **The Essentials**:

1. GOALS: What do you want to accomplish?

- Be as concrete and specific as possible
- Develop clear measures for success
- Refer back to your goals regularly to help keep you on track

Always identify:

- What you're trying to do
- Why it's important
- What outcomes you want to achieve

2. AUDIENCE: Who do you want to reach?

- Why? How can they help you meet your goals?
- What do you want to accomplish in reaching your target audience?
- Is there anything you *want them to do*?

3. PLAN: Have you thought everything through?

- Figure out the best way to reach your audience, both physically and emotionally. What's the best mechanism to reach your audience (email, phone, cell phone, face-to-face...)?
- What are the best frames, stories, messages, memes to engage them?
- What emotion or tone you want to convey?
- What's the best mode of delivering the message (story, facts, video, picture...)
- What activities do you need to carry out to reach and engage your audience?
- Who needs to be involved?
- Do you have the skills in-house, or do you need to find someone outside the organization to help?
- What's the work plan and timeline?

4. FRAMING AND MESSAGING: Do your frames and messages pass the ACID test?

- **Aligned** with your overall mission and goals
- **Coherent** – clear and easy to understand
- **Integrated** into your work so you're constantly reinforcing them
- **Durable** so they work for your organization over time, not just for the short-term

5. TEST, RETEST, AND TEST AGAIN: Did you test with your target audience and not just yourselves?

6. REFINE: Did you test?

7. EVALUATE: Did you meet your goals?

8. BUILD on what you learned. Everything you do should inform what you do and try next.