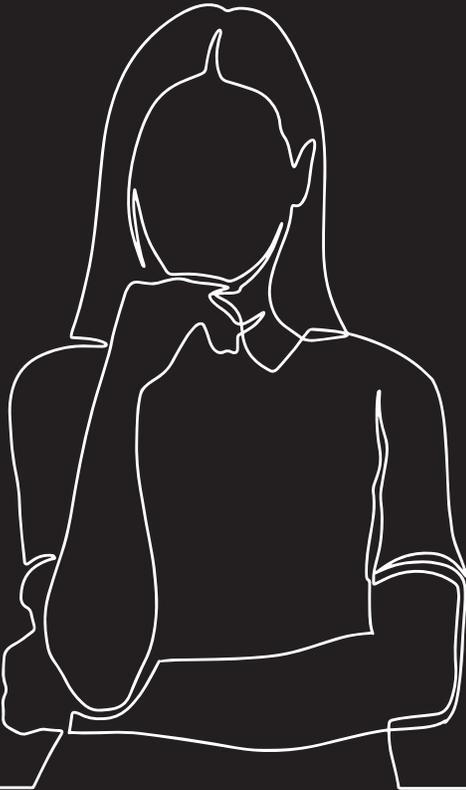


Making Hard-to-Understand Issues Understandable

Know **what** you'll say, **who** you'll say it to and **where** you'll say it. Don't just jump to tactics – emails, collateral, social media posts, videos, etc. That's especially true when communicating complicated issues.

You can make hard-to-understand issues understandable when you have a strategic communications plan (**remember RPIE**) and the right **messaging**. Here's how.



R Do your **research**

- » Research doesn't have to be time-consuming, expensive or formal – it can come from social media and community forums, media coverage and employees.
- » Understand what people already know about an issue – and what they think they know.
- » Ask yourself **what** opportunity or issues you are trying to solve – to educate and increase awareness? Persuade public opinion? Alleviate fears or mistrust?
- » Then ask **who** you want to reach (your audiences) and what you **want** them to do – *for example: understand, feel, take action.*

P Start your **plan**

- » Communication planning begins with goals and objectives, followed by strategies and tactics.
- » Set goals to focus on the longer-term.
- » Make your objectives SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-specific.
- » Develop strategies to reach your objectives and tactics to implement them.
- » **Clearly articulate your message**
 - Develop an overarching message and points to support it.
 - Use simple everyday language.
 - Be proactive – always get ahead of an issue.

I Implement your plan (**yes, finally!**)

- » Use timelines to help you manage your tactics and deliverables.
- » Delegate to-do items and track them to reach deadlines.

E Evaluate the outcomes – not just the outputs

- » Track how your outcomes (the number of people who signed up for a meeting, for instance) measure against your objectives.
- » Are you meeting your pre-set objectives? If not, go back and adjust your messaging, strategies and tactics.