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Communications Planning for Hospitals

presenter

[date]



What is a communication Plan

- A communication plan is a written document that addresses:
 - What you want to accomplish (objectives);
 - Ways in which those objectives can be accomplished (goals)
 - To whom you will communicate (the audience)
 - How you will accomplish your objectives (tools and timetable)
 - How you will measure the results of your program (vleresimi)



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What do you need a Communications Plan

- The hospitals have limited resources in both time and money, and a communications plan will help the hospital to set priorities and focus the resources on the most important tasks.
- Without the plan, the hospitals run the risk of letting external events dictate how the hospital uses its communications resources.
- A good plan will help ensure that everyone in your organization is on the same page when they communicate inside or outside of the hospital.



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Why do you need a Communications Plan

- Strategic planning will help your hospital integrate all its communications work on a particular issue, such as media activities, government relations, fundraising and communications with internal staff, patients and their families;
- A targeted strategy will help develop better media plans. And a well-developed media plan is important because the media is the primary source of education and information in communities.



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When you need a communications plan

- Whenever you are communicating with the public, stakeholders and policy-making;
- The best time to develop (an annual plan) is in conjunction with your annual budgeting;



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The elements of a Communications Plan

- Internal Analysis (organizational background)
- External Analysis (public and environment)
- Communication Objective
- Target Audiences
- Key messages
- Strategies
- Tactics
- Timeliness
- Spokespeople



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Internal Analyses

- Whether your hospital is developing an overall communications plan or a specific campaign, it is important to consider how your hospital is positioned within the community it serves. Considering the value of each point:
 - The history of your organization
 - The history/facts about the issue you are addressing
 - Why is it an important issue? (include statistics if people)
 - The services your organization provides to the community



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Internal Analyses

- The people who benefit from your services
- The function your organization serves
- Your mission statement
- Your organizations role in health care delivery in your community
- Where do you fit compared to other services in your market?
- Performance Indicators



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External Analyses

- The environment where you will be making your case should be considered and be aware to the external threats so the following issues should be considered:
 - What is the current district/region perception of your hospital, program and issues?
 - Your credibility?
 - How do you want to be positioned?
 - Is there a history of media stories? How much exposed is your hospital?



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External Analyses

- How has it been positioned within the media to date?
- Have any health care studies or surveys been carried out in you district/region?
- Is more research required to understand attitudes and public opinion toward your organization?
- Who are your allies? Who publicly support your position?
- Do certain groups disagree with new initiatives at you hospital?
- What are their messages? Do they have any effect in the hospital work or your work?



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Communication Objectives

- Objectives (results) you want to achieve should be concrete, measurable and specific. Some of the following questions can help :
 - What is your basic objective?
 - What reactions are you trying to provoke in your target audience?
 - How will you measure success?
 - Do you want to provide your audience with new information?



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Target Audiences

- Listing individuals or groups that have an interest in or an influence on the hospital is key to delivering a focused communications plan
- List all the audiences that your hospital serves, might contact or attempt to influence;
 - E.g policy makers, patients and their families, media, academics, the health care industry, minority groups, community groups etc.



Key Messages

- There are many ways of communicating about the same issue. It is important to choose words that resonate with your audience and frame ideas in ways the public will embrace.



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Strategies

- Strategies should not define the plan, but otherwise;
- The strategy that needs to be selected depend entirely on the situation, objectives, and a clear understanding of who constitutes the target audience and what will move them to act.
- Consider the following question when developing your strategies:
 - Is your strategy proactive or reactive?
 - What are the major communications opportunities?



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Strategies

- What communications strengths are available in your organization?
- How creative can you be?



Tactics

- Tactics depend on:
 - How big is your budget?
 - What personnel resources are available to you?
 - How much time will they be required to spent on communications efforts?



Timeline

- Once the objectives, goals and audiences and tools have been identified, the results should be quantified in a calendar grid that outlines roughly what projects will be accomplished and when.



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Spokespeople

- Determine who within your group will project the most credible voice to your key audiences.



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Evaluate the results

- The evaluation might take the form of:
 - A monthly report on work in progress
 - Formalized department reports for presentation at staff meeting
 - Periodic briefings to the director and departments heads, and
 - A year end summary for the annual report



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NOW use the plan!!