



Explanation

A **Communications Strategy** is a document that outlines your food partnerships approach to outreach activities. It should identify clear communication objectives and cover the key messages that you want to convey, the audiences that you want to reach and the methods and resources that you will use to achieve that. Communicating effectively will help your food partnership achieve its overall purpose.

Introduction

- Whether you are going for a Sustainable Food Places award or just wanting to communicate what you do, having a communications strategy can help make sure that branding and messaging is clear across the complex network of partners that are likely to be involved.
- Your communications strategy could cover your whole food partnership; your campaign for bronze, silver or gold award; or a key project or big event.
- Taking time to agree what you want your communications to achieve and making a plan can help you measure your success, learn lessons for the future and greatly enhance your food partnerships impact.

What to do

1. Identify Communications Objectives

Think carefully about what your objectives for your communications strategy are. Is it about raising awareness amongst the general public? Persuading specific groups to take action to achieve a specific goal? Is it aimed at specific groups, individuals or both?

2. Identify your Audience

Who do you want to communicate with? (see the [Stakeholder Engagement](#) guide). You may find it helpful to break your audience down into different categories e.g. non-food businesses, food businesses, educational establishments, partners, general public, community groups, growers and farmers, media organisations, statutory organisations, politicians etc.

3. Develop Key Messages

What are the key messages that you want to communicate? What do you want your audience to know, think and do? Tailor your messages to your audiences in tone and content.

4. Identify Communication Channels

Identify the key communications channels that are open to you (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Website, Mailing List, Press, Events etc), think through which audiences they are likely to reach and which of your communications objectives they meet.

5. Write it Down

You might find it helpful to write it as a table illustrating all your channels and audiences together with outcomes and targets. An example is given below. It can also be helpful to create a schedule to clearly identify activity that will take place month by month.

Stakeholder Communications Kit

- If you have capacity, you may want to create a **stakeholder communications kit**. This can provide stakeholders with the resources necessary to promote your key messages within their own networks. This could include copies of logos, press releases, twitter hashtags, key messages etc.

Top Tips

- Check whether you can access support from a communications professional within your local authority e.g. Communications and Marketing Team, NHS, University or other agency, to help you create your strategy.
- Think about national days of action and events that your communications strategy can tie in with to give it added clout.
- Clear consistent messaging is required to explain to stakeholders and other organisations why you are going for an SFP award. You may need to consider specific messages for different groups e.g. those that are already engaged and understand the agenda, and those for whom it is new.
- Write it down - even if it is just a side of A4.

Example Communications Strategy

Comm.s Objectives	Target Audience	Key Messages	Communication Methods	Frequency / Timing	Who Responsible	Target
<p>A. To raise awareness of SFP Bronze Award & the benefits for the city.</p> <p>B. To encourage organisations & individuals to take action as part of SFP Bronze Award campaign.</p>	Food Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the SFP Bronze award is and why it is important. • Clear steps that Food business can take on each key issue. • Opportunities to showcase their action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event – Sustainable Procurement • Workshops on key themes • SFP Bronze Award Presentation Evening. • Website / Twitter 	<p>Summer 2020.</p> <p>Quarterly. Summer 2021</p> <p>Ongoing</p>		<p>1 event</p> <p>4 workshops</p> <p>1 Awards evening (40 food businesses take action)</p>
	Non-Food Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the SFP Bronze Award is and why it is relevant to non-food businesses. • Actions that non-food businesses can take to support the Award. • Showcase opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations at Business Breakfasts • Articles for business newsletters including profiles of those taking action. • Website / Twitter 	<p>6-monthly</p> <p>Regular monthly column (+6 business profiles)</p>		<p>2 presentations</p> <p>6 businesses profiled showcasing each key area. (30 businesses take action)</p>
	Food Partnership Steering Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to promote the campaign within their networks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder Communications Pack presented at meeting. 	<p>Spring 2020.</p>		<p>8 organisations actively promoting within their networks.</p>
	Food Partnership Membership Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the SFP Bronze Award is and how to take action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events – Going for Bronze Launch • Direct Mailing – Stakeholder Communications Pack. 	<p>Sept 2020.</p> <p>Nov 2020</p>	Partnership Coordinator	<p>70 attendees at launch</p> <p>40 members registering action</p>
	Third Sector/ Community Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the SFP Bronze Award is and the role that community organisations can play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations at third sector events. • Event – Going for Bronze Launch 	<p>Spring 2020</p>		<p>4 presentations</p> <p>20 orgs taking action</p>
	General Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the SFP Bronze Award is and why it is valuable for their place. • Clear actions that individuals can take on each key issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website - blog posts • Twitter • Facebook • Instagram • Press releases on key themes 	<p>Monthly blog</p> <p>Regular Tweets and posts.</p> <p>4 press releases</p>		<p>Increase followers by 50%</p> <p>100 individuals registering action.</p>