

Communications plan for your event

Start with a plan. Preparing in advance is key. A communications / cover plan for your event will help you decide the information that should be published and prepare the messaging accordingly. Here are the elements we include in our event communications plan:

- **Goal:** What do you want to achieve through this event?
- **Intended audience(s):** Who are you addressing, aiming to reach?
- **Timeline:** A clear timeline of activities will include the different tasks and who is responsible for each of them.
- **Spaces / platforms**
- **Messaging:** What are the key ideas, highlights that you want to convey to your audience(s)?
- **Indicators:** How will we measure the levels of success of the event?

What does messaging entail?

There is a difference between information and messages. Messages are what you want to convey with the information you give, what you want people to remember or think about. Therefore, your messages will determine the communications tools you choose.

Work on a set of messages in advance, but also leave room for improvisation and for adjusting your content to different formats, spaces and audiences.

Be careful with scheduling messages, as the context may have differed once these messages get sent. This is especially important in the current climate, with events changing rapidly, so if you preschedule social media post make sure to regularly monitor them and delete them if context changes. There is also a risk of the tweets appearing less personal, so if prescheduling social media posts make sure to regularly check how people are interacting with those posts.

When should you start sharing and where?

Share early (2-3 weeks before), not so early (1 week before), and right before the event (day countdown). This is generally a good sharing pattern for social media but avoid replicating it via email, which can be overwhelming and have the opposite effect. Share a final schedule with times, so potential participants can plan accordingly. And try to share at different times, keeping in mind different time zones.

In terms of channels, try different channels to reach different audiences:

- Email (don't abuse it, as most people have a full inbox)
- Different social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, specialised fora, messaging apps...) Choose the ones where you think your audience for this particular event may be, based on demographics, age patterns and online habits. Creating one (or more) hashtag(s) for your event will help you track the conversation around it.
- Press release (journalists tend to pay more attention to press releases, as they are tailored to them).
- When it comes to community based events, some people are strategic in their use of online spaces and might miss out the information on your event that they would otherwise be interested in attending.

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