

AMP THE STORY

Announce the aim. Mark the milestones. Celebrate progress.
(...and then start all over again.)



NAME _____

COMMUNITY _____

A - Aim

What are you trying to do by when? Put a number on a scoreboard and state the deadline by which you'll hit it.

M - Milestone #1

What small chunk of your overall aim can you achieve in month 1?

M - Milestone #2

What about month 2?

M - Milestone #3

Month 3?

P - Progress

When you accomplish your aim, how will you celebrate? Get braggy, go public.

Pour one out, then run it back.

A - Aim

How do you level up? Target number and deadline.

M - Milestone #1

What small chunk will you knock out first?



TALK TO YOUR AUDIENCE, NOT TO YOURSELVES

Knowing your most important audience helps determine where you communicate and how. Ask these five questions before you choose a tactic or a channel.



1

What is the overarching message we want people to understand?

2

Who needs to hear it?

And why does this audience matter to the longevity of the work, dispelling skepticism about the work, and public confidence and support for the work?

3

What does that audience care about?

4

What proof will make the message credible to them?

5

Who is the best person to deliver it?

Which network does this person belong to (faith group, PTA), and who in it can carry the message?



PLAN YOUR OP-ED

Pick a topic being debated in your community right now. Use each box to build the pieces of a strong op-ed.



NAME _____

COMMUNITY _____

The news hook

What is happening right now that makes this timely?

Clear, single argument

Your op-ed in one sentence.

Your credibility

Who is the right spokesperson, and why should readers trust them?

An authentic voice

How would the author say this in their own words?

Evidence + story

Evidence: what data or facts back you up?

Story: what moment or person brings it to life?

Address the other side

What will skeptics say, and how do you respond?

A call to action

What do you want readers to do?

Where will you pitch it first? _____



CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

Respond quickly, honestly, and with your coalition behind you.



DETERMINE IF THIS IS A COMMUNICATIONS CRISIS

- Are you the villain in the narrative?
- Does the narrative threaten your fundamental value proposition?



ADDRESS IMMEDIATE NEEDS

- Confirm the appropriate team is addressing safety concerns.
- Identify who is affected and what support they need.
- Protect personal information, privacy, and dignity.



ESTABLISH THE FACTS

- Separate verified facts, allegations, and unknowns.
- Confirm the source of each key fact.
- Assign someone to verify missing information.

Language tip: Use "incident" while facts are unclear. Become specific as you learn more.



ORGANIZE YOUR RESPONSE

- Name the response lead, spokesperson, and approver.
- Coordinate facts and responsibilities with partners.
- Set the next internal check-in and public update.



REACH THE RIGHT PEOPLE

- Identify who needs a direct update.
- Inform affected people and staff promptly.
- Acknowledge reporter inquiries and track deadlines.



CHECK YOUR MESSAGE

- Answer the question directly and acknowledge concerns.
- Share verified facts and concrete action.
- Avoid speculation, blame, jargon, and unsupported promises.
- Give a realistic time and channel for the next update.



FOLLOW THROUGH

- Deliver promised updates and correct errors promptly.
- Explain confirmed mistakes and corrective action.
- Check in with affected people.
- Improve procedures, coordination, and relationships.



YOUR FIRST STATEMENT

CONCERN → FACTS → ACTION → NEXT UPDATE

"We understand concerns about [issue].
What we can confirm is [verified facts].
[Responsible team] is [confirmed action].
We will provide another update [time and channel]."

Only describe actions underway and commitments your team can deliver.

