



## Communicate Shortcut

**What you say** and how you say it can motivate the right people to take the right action at the right time. How will you get your most important messages to the people who matter? The purpose of this step is to develop strategic messages and deliver those messages effectively.

Here is a step-by-step guide to help you focus on strategic communication.



### Step 1: Identify Your Audiences - Be Specific

Who needs to hear your messages? Take some time to brainstorm your audiences. Each audience will have a different view of your work and what they need to hear about your efforts.

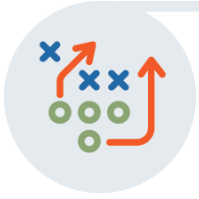
“When you are clear about your goal and find the right strategy, your target audience may be as narrow as a single person.” *(Christiano and Neimand 2017)*

Once you’ve gotten specific about your audience(s). Get to know them. It’s important to consider demographic characteristics, like age, gender, race, and where they live. It’s also important to understand their attitudes and interests.



## Step 2: Use the Rankings as a Communication Tool

The *County Health Rankings* are a data tool, but they are also a communication tool. They help start the conversation about health in your community. Use the *Rankings* as a hook to ignite or re-ignite conversations about health in your community.



## Step 3: Create a Communications Game Plan

A communications strategy will help you persuade the right people at the right time to take an action that will lead to meaningful change. Your communications game plan should be specific about

- Your purpose,
- Your audience,
- How you'll deliver your message, and
- How you'll know if your messages are working



## Step 4: Develop Compelling Messages with Clear Calls to Action

So, what are you going to say? How will you motivate your audience to listen, to care, and – most importantly – to act? Your messaging can make or break your communication strategy. There are lots of tips out there for crafting effective messaging, most include some common elements.

- **Problem** – What's the problem and how does it align with your audience's values?
- **Solution** – What you or others can do to overcome the problem.
- **Ask** – One specific thing you want people to do. Be specific.
- **Vision** – Help your audience understand the “so what?” What will the world look like if your audience does what you want them to do? It should reflect their values.

Use the power of story to make your message more compelling. Stories spark curiosity, create empathy, and can make your work come alive to the people you want to influence.



## Step 5: Deliver Your Message

It's not what you say, it's what your audience hears. The how and who of message delivery matter.

- **How** will you deliver your message?
- **Who** will best connect with your audience?

As you consider these questions, keep in mind your goal, what resources you have to support your tactics (e.g., budget, time, skills), and what's appropriate for your audience.

**Ready for more? Check out the full step at [countyhealthrankings.org/communicate](https://countyhealthrankings.org/communicate)**