COCOREADO H2020 PROJECT

FOOD SYSTEM INNOVATOR TOOLKIT

CH3 Communicating change

The contents published are licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0) as standard

COREADO connecting consumers and producers to rebalance farmers' position

THIS PROJECT HAS RECEIVED FUNDING FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION'S HORIZON 2020 RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PROGRAMME UNDER GRANT AGREEMENT NO 101000573

Index

1 Introduction

2 Development of a Communication Plan

3 Communication on Social Media

4 Oral communication and presentation

5 Video making

6 Podcasting

3.1- Introduction

Development of novel food initiatives involves engagement with other people: gaining visibility, reaching out to relevant stakeholders, and allying them with the initiative as informed citizens, active supporters, customers, or partners. Informing and persuading people, creating relationships, collaborative decision-making, and problem solving are all functions of communication. Hence, this chapter outlines key elements of **how to develop effective communication**, provides **practical communication tips,** and **gives in-depth insights on communication** through selected contemporary channels, such as social media, video, and podcasts.

3.2- Development of a Communication Plan

A Communication Plan is a support tool for reaching an organisation's goals through strategic outreach activities. It helps to identify, manage, and apply an organisation's communication resources in an organised and strategic manner in the medium- and long-term, in the most efficient and profitable way possible. It helps to optimise an organisation's resources through a series of communication actions planned over time and in the channels closest to its target audience.

A **Communication Plan involves several elements** and steps:

- **Objectives** or setting communication goals: Why do you want to communicate?
- **Audience** or identification of relevant target groups: Who needs to be communicated with?
- **Messages** or formulation of a message: What needs to be communicated?
- **Channels** or selection of appropriate communication channels: Where/How will the message be communicated?
- **Timing** or setting a communication timeline: When should this be communicated?
- Improvement or **monitoring and evaluation** of communication efficacy: How well is the message communicated? How many people will it reach?

Figure 1. Template of a communication plan.

Objectives

You must define **what you want to achieve** with the communication and outreach activities. Setting the objectives of the Communication Plan allows you to be clear about where you are heading and to develop communication activities accordingly. To achieve the best results, the objectives should be realistic in terms of what available resources will allow. This means that the objectives should be **SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bound.**

Figure 2. The objectives set to achieve through communication must be SMART.

Audience

To communicate, you must clearly know **whom you are addressing** or what your target audience is. The target audience is the group of people who are the most relevant and interested in the implementation of the initiative, and its products and services. This group can influence, support, or benefit from it. The identified target audience or potential customers determine everything regarding the communication, starting from the chosen channels to the tone of communication; hence the importance of **defining who they are**. It is helpful to learn about their communication habits, and habits in relation to the planned initiative, products, or services.

Messages

For the communicated message to be as effective as possible, it must be **consistent with the values** of the organisation and **respond to the needs of the defined target audience**. It should specify the main differentiating characteristics of the initiative, product, or service. The message must be **clear and precise**, with **language and tone appropriate** to the target audience.

Channel

The Communication Plan's channel strategy should detail concrete communication actions to implement, the communication objective each action contributes to, and on which channel, platform, or medium it will be communicated. Messages should be transmitted through channels **where the target audience is usually found**. Possible channels include email, newsletter, meeting in person, participation in events, social media, local mass media, and many others.

Timing

To develop a timeline for communication actions, you need to know what communication resources are available and decide **how they can be distributed in the most effective way** possible. Having an action plan allows you to organise each action over time, detailing the **chronogram or timing** of an organisation or initiative. In short, it describes exactly what you will do and when.

Keep in mind that when people receive multiple messages that do not seem relevant to them, they can begin to devalue these messages. To avoid this issue, make sure communication timing and frequency are aligned with your messages and stakeholder groups.

Improvement

The action plan must be **measurable**. Established control indicators, based on the set objectives and actions to be carried out, can help to quantify and monitor the results. Measuring communication results helps to evaluate efficacy. The **evaluation of results** should be performed **periodically** (weekly, monthly, or quarterly, for instance) and **methodically**, using the same monitoring methods and indicators depending on your initiative, project, organisation, and objectives.

3.3- Communication on social media

Social media provides a platform for organisations to reach out to their target audience, share and gather information, and build community.

The main purpose behind social media content is to:

- Increase brand awareness
- Generate leads: capture interest in a product or service
- Help learn more about customers from their feedback
- Potentially drive traffic to your website
- Assist in collaborations with influencers
- Give a human touch to your digital company
- Boost sales
- Establish more informal communication with potential clients
- Stay on top of all industry-related news
- Place you ahead of your competitors

But, how to have an impact on social media? Below are 5 rules to maximise your social media impact:

1 Create high-quality, versatile content

- High-quality content that would likely be shareable.
- Make sure your content reflects your values.
- Do not forget to include versatile content. Here are some ideas of what you can include:
- Images, memes, infographics, videos, quotes, GIFs, or attractive Instagram stories. Combine your visuals with some interesting captions and voila – you've got a winning combo!

2 Find your "authentic" voice and style

On social media (and the internet overall) **content and authenticity** must go hand in hand.
Developing a **unique, memorable** voice and **style** is crucial. Your voice and style should directly **reflect your brand** and **mission**.

3 Use the right hashtags

Using the right hashtags can make or break your social media strategy and content reach. Hashtags can help you get your content in front of the right people at the right time.
Keep your hashtags **short and memorable** (unless there is an important one that doesn't comply with these "rules"). It is important to note that when it comes to using hashtags, the same things don't apply across all social media platforms.

4 Share testimonials and reviews

Sharing customer testimonials and reviews is not only great for days when you have nothing else to post, but is useful for **attracting potential clients** too.

5 Make your content interactive

Ask questions, include clear CTAs (Call to Action*), and create a welcoming social media profile by posting content that draws attention. The more **engaged** your audience is and the more they **comment and like** your posts, take part in discussions, and so on, the higher your brand's perceived value and trust are.

* A Call to Action (CTA) seeks to attract potential users until they become end customers through a link with a strong power of attraction.

Some extra tips when posting...

X (TWITTER)

- Limit to 1-2 hashtags per Tweet.
- Be conversational.
- Keep your copy short, easy, and attractive.
- Use images, GIFs, and/or videos whenever possible!

LINKEDIN

- Make your titles between 40 and 49 characters long.
- People like to read long-form content – up to 2,000 words long.
- Include pictures.
- Maximum 2 hashtags.

FACEBOOK

- No more than 100 characters.
- Pose a question, this works very well on Facebook.
- Share relevant images.
- Include a Call to Action, and a link.

INSTAGRAM

- Maintain a consistent feed of high-quality visuals.
- Stay on top of Instagram changes and updates.
- Use hashtags to boost content discovery (8-10).
- Include a Call to Action, a link, in your stories.

3.4- Oral communication and presentation

Strong verbal communication skills are important for everyone in their personal and professional life. When speaking clearly and confidently, you are much more likely to command the respect of others and build rapport. This is particularly important in business interactions. For verbal communication to be effective, it should be clear, relevant, concise, informative, and tactful in phrasing and tone.

Nonverbal communication elements such as posture, gestures, and facial expressions are also important factors in developing good verbal communication skills. Your outward appearance mirrors your inner mood. Good posture suggests confidence; stand neither at rigid attention nor with sloppy casualness, but upright with your weight equally distributed on each foot. Some movement may be helpful to hold listeners' attention or to increase emphasis, but constant shifting or pacing should be avoided.

Good speakers should make frequent eye contact with the audience, let their facial expression show their interest in the ideas they are presenting, dress in a way that is appropriate for the occasion, and keep their energy levels high.

Below you can find **7 effective verbal communication factors:**

1

Think before you speak

By organizing your thoughts in advance, you can eliminate many of the awkward pauses that occur when speaking. It will also help you relay your information more concisely.

2

Speak with confidence

Speaking in a confident manner will help you build trust and command the respect of your audience.

3

Be clear and concise

Avoid using complex, convoluted sentences, and try to state your argument in direct language.

4

Be aware of your non-verbal communication signals

Pay attention to the gestures, facial expressions, and body language that you make, to ensure they align with the message you are trying to get across.

5

Be a good listener

Being a good listener will improve the quality of your verbal interactions. This enables you to build trust and rapport much more quickly.

6

Think about the perspective of your audience

Just because you have a strong command of a topic does not mean the people you are speaking to have the same knowledge. Try to think about how someone else will understand what you are trying to communicate, particularly if they lack the technical knowledge about a subject.

7

Vary your vocal tone

Speaking in a monotone voice will likely bore your audience. Instead, use voice inflection to add emphasis to important points, and vary the pitch of your voice to express emotion. This will help keep your audience engaged in your message.

Information obtained from ***https://www.callrail.com/blog/7-tips-to-improve-verbal-communication-skills***

11 rules for a good PowerPoint presentation

PowerPoint presentations support oral communication; they can help to systematize and organize information and deliver memorable messages, thus enabling effective communication.

1 Include only one idea per slide

Each slide should have one central message to deliver. Often, this means breaking complex ideas down into manageable pieces. You can create separate slides for each piece of information and then include a final slide with the entire diagram.

2 Spend only 1 minute per slide

When you present a slide, it should take 1 minute or less to discuss. This rule is very helpful for planning purposes: a 20-minute presentation should have somewhere around 20 slides. Also, frequently giving your audience new information helps keep them engaged. While practicing, if you find yourself spending more than one minute on a slide, there's too much information for that one slide: reduce until you get to a single message clearly described.

3 Include only one idea per slide

When each slide conveys only one message, use the heading of that slide to write exactly the message you are trying to deliver. Think of the slide heading as the introductory or concluding sentence of a paragraph.

4 Include only essential points

While you are speaking, audience members' eyes and minds will be wandering over your slide. If you have a comment, detail, or figure on a slide, have a plan to explicitly identify and talk about it. If you don't think it's important enough to spend time on, then don't have it on your slide.

5 Give credit, where credit is due

An exception to Rule 4 is to include proper citations or references to work on your slide. When adding citations, names of other researchers, or other types of credit, use a consistent style for adding this information. Your audience will then be able to easily partition this information from the other content.

6 Use graphics effectively

You should almost never have slides that only contain text. Build your slides around good visualizations. It is a visual presentation after all, a picture is worth a thousand words. However, on the other hand, don't muddy the point of the slide by using too many complex graphics. One way to ensure that you use graphics effectively is to make a point to introduce each figure and its elements to the audience verbally, especially for data figures: "This graph here shows, ...the graph demonstrates..." If you have put too much on one slide to present in 1 minute, then the complexity or number of graphics is too much for just one slide.

7 Design to avoid cognitive overload

The type and quantity of slide elements, as well as how you present them, all impact the ability of the audience to take in, organize, and remember the content. As presentations are an exercise in listening, and not reading, do what you can to optimize the ability of the audience to listen. Use words sparingly as "guideposts" to you and the audience about major points of the slide. In fact, you can add short text fragments, redundant with the verbal component of the presentation, which has been shown to improve retention. In addition to the use of short text, white space, and the effective use of graphics/images, you can further improve ease of cognitive processing by considering color choices and font type/size. Here are a few suggestions for improving the experience of your audience:

- Use high contrast colors and simple backgrounds with little to no color.
- Use sans serif fonts and large font sizes, and avoid italics or underlining (instead, use bold font for emphasis).
- Use color combinations that can be easily understood.

8 Design the slide so that a distracted person gets the main takeaway

It is very difficult to stay focused on a presentation, especially if it is long or part of a longer series of talks at a conference. It's important to look at your slide and ask, "If they heard nothing I said, will they understand the key concept of this slide?". If you are worried about not having enough details, keep a slide at the end, after your conclusions, with the more detailed information that you can refer to during a question-and-answer period.

9 Iteratively improve slide design through practice

The best way to ensure that you nailed slide design for your presentation is to practice, typically a lot. The best type of practice is in front of an audience.
The most important aspects of practicing a new presentation are the following 2 key points:

1. Practice to ensure that you hit the most important points each time through.
2. Practice to ensure that as you conclude the end of one slide, it leads directly to the next slide. Slide transitions, what you say as you end one slide and begin the next, are important for keeping the flow of the story.

10 Design to mitigate the impact of technical disasters

The real presentation almost never goes as planned. Maybe the speaker before you went over time and now you need to adjust, or some technical problem has happened. For that, you can design your slides to limit the impact of certain kinds of technical disasters by creating and preparing alternate approaches.

11 Create slides that are accessible to everyone

Creating accessible slides involves incorporating various elements to ensure inclusivity for individuals with disabilities. Start by providing clear and descriptive titles for each slide, using headings and bulleted lists to structure content, and adding alternative text to images for screen reader users. Maintain high contrast between text and background, avoiding reliance on color alone to convey information. Opt for accessible fonts and font sizes, and include closed captions for videos and text transcripts for audio content. Avoid automatic slide advancement or provide control options, and test the presentation for accessibility using built-in features and screen reader software. Additionally, consider providing navigation shortcuts and a table of contents for easy maneuverability. By implementing these strategies, you can create presentations that cater to a diverse audience and ensure that information is accessible to all.

3.5- Video-making

In the following section, you can find some guidelines to make great videos for the internet. Videos are a great way to spread a message because they make a message easier to remember. The attention span of a human being is just 8 seconds, so it is very important to catch the viewers' attention!

How to correctly structure a message

A well-structured message has three parts: an introduction, ideas, and a conclusion. This is mostly universal, and there is something humanly digestible about it. This concept is visible in the world of marketing: "three ways our product can help you," "three ways our product works...," etc. In theatre, there is an opening act, where the characters and the scenarios are set, the second act, where the drama and conflict happen, and the final act, where there is a resolution. More than three parts usually gets confusing and more difficult to remember, and you want to be clear and straightforward.

1. INTRODUCTION: It is very important because it is where you must catch our viewers' attention. People do not usually give away their time, so if someone opens your video, it is your duty to make them stay. Wake them to develop their curiosity.

There are three questions people usually ask themselves about things: **what, how, and why.** What are they, how do they work, and why it can interest me?

Example: You want to speak about plant-based diets and protein intake. You are already a vegetarian, and you know that you can get all the protein you need from plants, but the person watching you might not know that. So, you can tell them something like...
"Protein is one of the most important nutrients, and there's a misconception that you can't obtain protein from plants. But that's not true, find out how to achieve this!" You see? There's a hook there, you've got to work on that hook!

2. DEVELOP YOUR IDEAS: Three ideas are a good amount, because just one idea is too weak and too many ideas are too much information. It's important to find and summarize a few ideas of what we are trying to communicate.

Example: You are trying to argue that Lord of the Rings is the best fantasy movie. If you say, "it's the best because there are elves, dragons, or whatever..." it just feels weak. However, you could say that there is an epic battle between good and evil, there's a history of impossible love, and that even the most unimportant person can change the history. That's a better argument, isn't it?

3. CONCLUSION: Ask yourself what you want to stick in the minds of people that listened to you. There is an opportunity here; they listened all the way to the end, so they are interested.

Do not just finish the video, you have the power now, so you should:

- Make an **outline** of the ideas you shared.
- Include a **CTA (Call to Action)**: It is the time to ask the viewer to do something. You can also ask them to comment on your video, which is going to give you more visibility and better engagement with your audience. Don't just ask for a general opinion, ask easy questions because people love to talk about themselves.

More ideas to include in your video:

- Add graphics: Add graphs, charts, or images to support what you're saying.
- Use humour if possible: It's always important to keep your content fun.
- Tell personal stories: Tell a personal story about yourself if its relevant, people love stories.
- Add quotes: Add a relevant quote from someone respected, as it validates what you're saying, shows respect, and gives your idea another point of view.

Example: If you're going make videos about farming, talk about how your grandparents used to make the things you're showing.

Include a good title

Finally, think of a good title! It is less important on social media, but very important, for example, on YouTube. There are two wrong ways to write a title:

1. **CLICKBAIT:** you see a title that says something so stupid that you must click on it. This is unwise because when you trick someone into watching, they will be disappointed when you don't deliver the expected content.
2. **ANTI-CLICKBAIT**: you are so anti-clickbait that you make the most boring title in the world. This means zero views.

There's a middle ground between these approaches, and it may be helpful to look at what newspaper editors have been writing.

Video applications

There are free applications available to create videos on your mobile phone:

- **Adobe Premiere Rush**
- **CapCut**
- **Filmora**

Here are some examples of the COCOREADO Ambassadors' Videos!

3.6- Podcasting

Podcasting as a communication tool

Over the past 10 years, the number of weekly podcast listeners has risen every year. For example, 35% of Spanish internet users will now listen to at least one podcast episode per week. The rise in popularity is partly due to the unique nature of podcasts – you can find a specific podcast on almost any topic. The beauty of podcasting is letting listeners choose a niche topic that is specific to their interests. This creates a unique opportunity for campaigners to create a communication tool that targets a niche audience.

Podcasts are intimate. They give you the opportunity to dive deep into a topic and communicate the complex nature of a certain subject, that simply can't be communicated via fast-paced social media platforms.

Several of the COCOREADO partner organisations have their own podcasts to disseminate their information to members, partners, and the general public. For example:

- **Rural Voices – the Rural Youth Europe Podcast**
- **MIJARC Europe – The Interview Series**
- **CEJA – FARMRes podcast on mental health**

Getting started

- **Choose your niche and target audience:** Think about who you want to listen to the podcast. Is it the general public? Is it policy makers? You need to have the target audience in mind before you plan any content.
- **Write a plan:** What structure will use? Will it be interview based? A solo speaker sharing their views? Or a panel discussion between a group of individuals? Work out the beginning, middle, and end of the episode so you have a plan before you get behind the microphone.
- **Practise recording:** You don't need a fancy microphone to get started – the microphone on your phone is good enough to get going. Practise recording yourself and practise interviewing people on the topic.
- **Don't make it too long:** research has shown that 22 minutes is the optimal listening time. After 22 minutes, listening figures tend to drop off.
- **The edit:** Once you've recorded your audio, you can edit it using free online software (Audacity, GarageBand). Add some music at the start and end, and record an intro and outro to make it sound more professional.
- **Share it:** You can upload to Spotify and Apple Podcasts via a podcast host platform. Buzzsprout is a great hosting platform, but you can create a free account on SoundCloud to quickly get your content accessible.
- **Promote on social media:** Recording a podcast gives you lots of content. Think about how you could use this content in other ways, such as Reels on Instagram or TikToks. Interviews can also be transcribed to form blog posts for your website. If you want to target policy makers, perhaps think about sharing a clip of your podcast on LinkedIn.

Interview tips

- LISTEN! If the interviewee says something interesting, don't be afraid to ask more. You may not have prepared a certain question or topic, but if you think you can find something interesting in the moment, don't be afraid to go down a different avenue of discussion.
- Have a beginning, middle, and end planned. But make sure to let the conversation flow in an informal and relaxed way. The charm of a podcast is that it feels like you are eavesdropping on a conversation.
- Have a few key questions prepared just in case you lose track of the conversation and want to bring it back to the topic.
- Don't interrogate - keep it informal and conversational.
- Show your passion for the subject. Enthusiasm is infectious - show your energy for the topic in your *voice*.

Example: Listen to the COCOREADO Riga podcast episode here.
This podcast episode is co-hosted by the ambassadors, and they talk about how they are 'campaigning for change' in the context of the COCOREADO project. Hear more about the ambassadors, what they've learnt from the training, the power of campaigning and the strength of the COCOREADO network.