

Community Communication Strategy Guideline

1. Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to assist mines with their communication strategies with communities in order to enhance communication and to ensure that positive impacts are made on socio-economic challenges.

2. Scope

This guideline is applicable to all small surface mines and their stakeholders.

3. Reference Documentation

4. Definitions

5. Procedure

a. Defining the objective

Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). The objectives should align with the community's needs and interests, and be realistic based on the available resources and capacity. Clear objectives guide the strategy and help measure success.

- i) Build awareness
Increase community knowledge about the specific issue or project by ____% in the next ____ months
- ii) Engage residents
Encourage ____% of community members to participate in local events or initiatives within the next year.
- iii) Foster collaboration
Establish partnerships with at least **3** local organisations to address community concerns within the next **12 months**
- iv) Provide resources
Offer regular updates and support to community members on specific topics, such as health or education

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- v) Improve perception
Enhance the community's perception of local leadership or initiatives by 30% in the next 18 months

b. Identify the target audience

Consider the following factors to define your target audience:

- i) Demographics
Age, gender, income level, occupation, education level
- ii) Geography
Specific neighbourhoods, districts, or regions within the community
- iii) Interests
Hobbies, passions, or issues that matter to them, environment, education, support, resources
- iv) Needs
What they require from your communication efforts e.g. information, support, resources
- v) Preferred communication channels
Social media, email, in-person events, print media etc.

Examples of target audiences:

- Young families with children 0-12
- Low-income residents living in public housing
- Small business owner and entrepreneurs
- Seniors ages 65+
- New immigrants or refugees
- Community leaders and influencers
- Local students and youth
- Homeowners' associations

By understanding your target audience, you can tailor your message, channels, and engagement strategies to effectively reach and serve them.

c. Choose appropriate channels

Choosing appropriate channels for your community communication strategy depends on our target audience and objectives. Consider the following channels:

- Social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn etc.
- Email newsletters: Regular updates
- Community events: Town Halls, meetings, festivals, and other in-person gatherings
- Print media: Local newspapers, flyers, brochures, and posters
- Online forums: Discussion boards, comment sections, and online groups
- Text messages: SMS, messaging apps, WhatsApp for urgent updates and reminders
- In-person meetings: One-on-One or small group meetings with community members

- Webinars: Virtual events and presentations on specific topics
- Local media: Partner with local radio, TV, or newspaper for wider reach

Consider the following factors when selecting channels:

- Target audience preferences
- Message type (urgent, informative, engaging)
- Geographical reach
- Resource availability (time, budget, personnel)
- Feedback mechanisms
- Measuring success (analytics, engagement metrics)

Chose a mix of channels to maximise reach and impact/

d. Develop key messages

Developing key messages involves crafting clear, concise, and consistent statements that convey your core ideas, values, and goals. Consider the following steps:

- Define your purpose
 - Clearly state the reason behind your communication
- Identify your audience's needs
 - Understand their concerns, interests, and pain points
- Determine your unique value
 - What sets you apart from others
- Craft your key messages
 - Based on the above create 3 – 5 core statements that:
 - Are concise (1-2 sentences each)
 - Use simple language
 - Focus on benefits (what's in it for the audience)
 - Are consistent across all channels
 - Support your overall objective
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Examples:

- Purpose: To promote a new community center
- Audience needs: Safe space for recreation, socialisations, and skill-building
- Unique value proposition: State-of-the-art facilities, diverse programmes, and inclusive environment
- Key messages:
 - Empowering our community through innovative programmes and services
 - Your hub for recreation, learning, and growth

Key messages serve as the foundation for all your communication efforts, ensuring clarity and consistency across channels and audiences

e. Establish a feedback mechanism

Establishing a feedback mechanism is crucial to ensure that your community communication strategy is effective and responsive to the community's needs. Here are some ways to establish a feedback mechanism:

- i) Surveys
Online or paper-based surveys to gather opinions and suggestions
- ii) Comment boxes
Physical or virtual boxes for community members to submit feedback
- iii) Email address
Designate a specific email address for feedback and inquiries
- iv) Social media
Monitor social media channels for comments, messages, and reviews
- v) Public meetings
Hold regular town hall meetings or open forums for community member to provide feedback
- vi) Phone number
Provide a dedicated phone number for community members to call with feedback or questions
- vii) Online forums
Create a discussion board or forum on your website or social media channels
- viii) Feedback forums
Include feedback forms on your website or social media channels
- ix) Community outreach
Engage with community members through outreach programmes and gather feedback
- x) Analytics tools
Use analytics tools to track engagement and feedback on your website and social media channels

Remember to:

- Respond promptly to feedback
- Analyse and act on feedback
- Share feedback results and changes made
- Show appreciation for feedback providers

By establishing a feedback mechanism, you demonstrate your commitment to listening and improving, fostering trust and strengthening community relationships.

f. Set a schedule

Setting a schedule is essential to ensure consistent and timely communication with your community. Consider the following steps:

- i) Determine frequency
Decide how often to communicate e.g. weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly
- ii) Choose specific dates and times
Select specific dates and times for communication e.g. every Monday morning
- iii) Prioritise consistency
Stick to your schedule as much as possible
- iv) Consider time zones and availability
Be mindful of your audience's time zones and availability
- v) Plan ahead
Develop a content calendar or schedule to organise and prepare content in advance
- vi) Leave room for flexibility
Allow for adjustments in case of unexpected events or urgent communications
- vii) Use automation tools
Utilise scheduling tools e.g. Hootsuite, Buffer to streamline and automate communication
- viii) Review and adjust
Regular review your schedule's effectiveness and make adjustments as needed

Examples:

- Weekly newsletter every Monday morning
- Bi-weekly social media posts on Tuesday and Thursdays
- Monthly community meeting on the first Wednesday
- Quarterly survey sent on the 15th of January, April, July, and October

By setting a schedule, you ensure consistent communication, maintaining audience engagement, and demonstrate reliability.

g. Monitor and evaluate

Monitoring and evaluating is crucial to assess its effectiveness and make data-driven decision. Consider the following steps:

- i) Set metrics and benchmarks
Establish measurable goals e.g. engagement rates, website traffic, survey responses
- ii) Track and analyse data
Use tools like Google Analytics, social media insights, and survey software to collect and analyse data
- iii) Regular review progress
Schedule regular check-ins to review metrics, identify trends, and adjust strategies
- iv) Gather feedback
Collect feedback from the community through surveys, focus groups, or one-on-one interviews
- v) Assess impact and outcomes
Evaluate the impact of your communication efforts on the community and desired outcomes
- vi) Identify areas for improvement
Pinpoint areas that require adjustment or enhancement
- vii) Adjust and refine strategy
Based on findings, make informed decisions to refine your communication strategy
- viii) Celebrate successes
Acknowledge and celebrate achievements and progress made

Examples:

- Metric: increase social media engagement by 20% in 6 months
- Data: Track likes, comments, shares, and followers
- Review progress: Monthly review of metrics and adjustments to content strategy
- Feedback: Biannual surveys to gather community input
- Assessment: Evaluate impact on community engagement and outreach goals
- Improvement: Refine content and engagement strategies based on feedback and data

By monitoring and evaluating your community strategy, you ensure continuous improvement, effective communication, and a stronger connection with your community.

h. Assigning a dedicated person or team to manage the community communication process

Consider the following options:

- i) **Communication Leader**
A single person responsible for developing and implementing the communication strategy
- ii) **Communication Team**
A team of professionals with diverse skills, including communication, marketing, and community engagement
- iii) **Project Manager**
A person overseeing the overall project, including communication, with support from team members and report to the Communication Leader
- iv) **Volunteer Coordinator**
Community members assisting with the communication process
- v) **Public Relations Specialist**
Who will deal with media related communication, this is normally the Communication Leader or the Marketing Department
- vi) **Social Media Coordinator**
This person must manage the social media responses and hits
- vii) **Community Outreach Coordinator**
In small surface mines this is usually the same person as the Communication Leader with the Community Outreach Coordinator

When assigning a manager, consider:

- Communication skills
- Community engagement experience
- Marketing and public relations knowledge
- Project management skill
- Ability to work with diverse stakeholders
- Understanding the community's needs and interest
- Language utilized for bulk of the communication – can the person speak the language?

Ensure the designated person has the necessary resources, support, and authority to effectively manage the community communication process

i. Safety and Security

The Community engagement teams work in isolation away from the mines and in many cases enter volatile communities. It is imperative that you ensure their safety during their engagements, survey processes and visit to projects.

Always communicate up front with community members that the company has strict security protocols due to the care of the team entering the different communities.

~~Consider the following steps:~~

- i) Risk assessment
Conduct a thorough risk assessment to identify potential threats and vulnerabilities
- ii) Safety protocols
Establish and regularly update safety protocols, including emergency response plans and evacuation procedures.
- iii) Training and orientation
Provide comprehensive training and orientation on safety and security procedures, cultural awareness, and conflict sensitivity
- iv) Secure communication channels
Use secure communication channels, such as encrypted messaging apps, to protect sensitive information
- v) Physical security
Ensure secure environments, including offices and vehicles, with adequate access control surveillance, and protection. Where possible stick to neutral meeting places. If necessary, arrange a security escort but ensure to inform community of this arrangement in advance.
- vi) Travel guidelines
Establish and enforce travel guidelines, including restrictions on travel to high-risk areas. Enforce a buddy-buddy system, never send a person alone into an area and other colleagues must know where they travel to and when.
- vii) Monitoring and tracking
Regularly monitor and track team members locations and movements in volatile areas. Make use of apps that can track travel including panic button to immediate response options
- viii) Local partnerships
Collaborate with local partners and organisations to leverage their expertise and knowledge of the local context. And to keep up to date with any new development that could become volatile
- ix) Contingency planning
Develop contingency plans for potential scenarios such as natural disasters, political unrest, or security breaches
- x) Psychological support
Provide access to psychological support and counselling services for team members dealing with stress, trauma, or burnout. Community engagement is highly stressful and, in many instances, persons are being threatened with their lives and verbally abused in their personal capacity.
- xi) Regular check-ins
Conduct regular check-ins with team members to ensure their safety and well-being
- xii) Security briefings
Provide regular security briefings and updates to team members on the local context and potential threats.

Collaborations prior and during the mining right or prospecting right to ensure local support for social challenges (e.g. Gender based violence, substance abuse, health care)

- **Local Health Departments**
Partner with local health departments to provide medical services, health education, and emergency response.
- **Community Health Workers:**
Collaborate with community health workers who are familiar with the local context and can provide culturally sensitive care.
- **Traditional Leaders:**
Engage with traditional leaders to understand community needs and leverage their influence to promote health and social services.
- **Local NGOs:**
Partner with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) focused on health, education, and social welfare.
- **Community Groups:**
Collaborate with community groups, such as women's groups, youth organizations, and disability groups, to understand their specific needs.
- **Traditional Healers:**
Consider partnering with traditional healers to complement Western medical services and promote cultural sensitivity.
- **Local Government:**
Work with local government authorities to access resources, infrastructure, and expertise.
- **Schools and Education Institutions:**
Partner with local schools and education institutions to provide health education and promote healthy behaviours.
- **Faith-Based Organizations:**
Collaborate with faith-based organizations that often have existing infrastructure and community trust.
- **Community Members:**
Engage directly with community members to understand their needs, concerns, and preferences.

By implementing these measures, you can help ensure the safety and security of your team managing community communication in volatile areas

6. Responsibility

Every mine determines who is the responsible person or task team to manage all communication with community members

7. Records

Important records to be kept are:

- Invitations to events
- Information flyers
- Surveys and their outcomes
- Minutes of meetings
- Attendance register
- Monitoring reports
- Phone call records
- Social and Labour plans
- CSIR project information

