MASTERING PUBLIC HEALTH

ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

EDITED BY BARRY S. LEVY AND JOYCE R. GAUFIN

OXFORD

Mastering Public Health

Mastering Public Health

ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

EDITED BY

BARRY S. LEVY

JOYCE R. GAUFIN

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press, Inc., publishes works that further
Oxford University's objective of excellence
in research, scholarship, and education.

Oxford New York
Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi
New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in
Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece
Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore
South Korea Switzerland Thailand Turkey Ukraine Vietnam

Published by Oxford University Press, Inc.
198 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016
www.oup.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Mastering public health : essential skills for effective practice / edited by Barry S. Levy, Joyce R. Gaufin.
p. ; cm.
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 978-0-19-975397-0 (pbk. : alk. paper)
I. Levy, Barry S. II. Gaufin, Joyce R.
[DNLM: 1. Public Health Practice. WA 100]

LC classification not assigned
362.1068—dc23 2011029793

---

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in China
on acid-free paper

Foreword

"*Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?*
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"
—T. S. Eliot

Seldom do we see a book that so clearly and persuasively presents fresh practical information as in the case in this "labor of love" compiled by two wise leaders—Barry Levy and Joyce Gaufin. As I read the chapters, I continued to say to myself, "That is exactly what public health practitioners need to know now." This book very effectively addresses the needs of public health leaders and managers who will say, "I wish I had this book years ago!" In effect, the book helps all of us to find the wisdom we have lost in the avalanche of information that daily inundates public health practitioners.

Why will *Mastering Public Health* be so useful?

First, the authors are wise and very experienced public health leaders with a wide range of expertise and decades of front-line experience at the local, state, and national level. As I read through the book, I concluded that "they know whereof they speak."

Second, they have taken the time to reflect on these experiences and distill them down into very practical guidance that busy practitioners can put to use immediately. This is a practical book for thoughtful practitioners containing many "best practices" that are succinctly presented.

Third, *Mastering Public Health* clearly stands apart from any existing book dedicated to the learning needs of public health practitioners. It is truly unique. Furthermore, it comes along at a pivotal time in the history of public health practice in the United States. Developing the skills of public health leaders and managers is needed now more than ever before.

This book will be a vital resource for the network of public health leadership and management institutes across the nation, which Joyce Gaufin and others of us have helped to create. Schools of public health and other academic institutions

will now have a book that students will *love* because it will help them prepare for the work they will be doing once they enter "the real world."

The individual chapters of the book—focusing on such topics as communication, organizational development, cultural competency, systems thinking, and leadership and management practice—"cover the waterfront" of public health practice. The authors not only share a wealth of experience but also reference relevant literature. As a result, the book effectively synthesizes a wealth of practice experience with the expertise of researchers and subject-matter experts who have studied these areas of leadership and management practice.

I can hardly wait to use this book! I know many others will use the book as we teach the next generation of public health leaders. It fills a vital niche in the public health practice literature and will become a "must-have" text for those who are committed to building a stronger public health workforce that can effectively take on the challenges ahead.

Congratulations to Barry Levy, Joyce Gaufin, and all of the contributors to *Mastering Public Health* for giving us a book that we need now and will use for years to come!

Edward L. Baker, M.D., M.P.H.
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Preface

Warning: Your reading this book will *not* make you a master of public health. It alone will *not* enable you to achieve mastery in this field. Put it back where you found it if that's what you were hoping to get out of opening the cover.

However, taken together with other education, training, and experience, this book *will* enable you to achieve greater mastery in the day-to-day practice of public health by learning from numerous experienced public health leaders about essential skills for effective public health practice—in government agencies, in non-governmental organizations, in academic institutions, in private-sector organizations, and other work settings.

Mastering Public Health is a "how-to" book focused on "nuts-and-bolts" skills in three broad areas of public health practice: Communication, Administration and Management, and Leadership. This book has three parts corresponding to these three areas. Each part consists of five chapters and additional commentaries on lessons learned from the experiences of leaders and experts in this field.

This book is designed to complement the content-oriented knowledge and skills you have acquired in your education, training, and experience thus far. It addresses many of the practical skills necessary for you to be effective in your work and to lay a foundation for your further career development.

We believe you will find *Mastering Public Health* to be a valuable guide—whether you are an epidemiologist in a state health department, a public health nutritionist or health educator in a community organization, a public health nurse for a city health agency, a faculty member in an academic institution, a public health director of a health-promotion program in the private sector, or any other public health professional—or student in the health professions.

Mastering of skills for public health practice is not a destination, but a journey that lasts for your entire career. We intend that this book will serve you well on this journey.

Barry S. Levy
Sherborn, Massachusetts

Joyce R. Gaufin
Dammeron Valley, Utah

June 2011

Acknowledgments

We greatly appreciate the assistance and support of many people in the development of *Mastering Public Health*. We thank the many contributing authors, who have shared their experience and advice.

We acknowledge Heather McStowe for her excellent work in preparing the manuscript and communicating with authors and the production team.

We are grateful for the outstanding work and support of Maura Roessner, Regan Hofmann, Rachel Mayer, and Leslie Johnson of the editorial and production departments at Oxford University Press; Viswanath Prasanna and Smitha Raj of Glyph International; and Wendy Walker, who copyedited the manuscript.

We express our deep appreciation to our spouses, Nancy Levy and Richard Gaufin, for their ongoing support.

Finally, we express our appreciation to our mentors and colleagues who, over the years, have taught us essential skills for effective practice in public health.

- B.S.L. and J.R.G.

Contents

Contributors

Carol Easley Allen, Ph.D., R.N.
Professor and Chair
Department of Nursing
Oakwood University
Huntsville, AL
callen@oakwood.edu

Myron Allukian, Jr., D.D.S., M.P.H.
Oral Health Consultant
President
American Association for Community Dental Programs
Boston, MA
MyAlluk@aol.com

Edward L. Baker, M.D., M.P.H.
Research Professor
Health Policy and Management
UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC
ed_baker@unc.edu

J. Alan Baker, M.A.
Former Chief of Staff
American Public Health Association
alanbaker09@verizon.net

Ron Bialek, M.P.P.
President and Chief Executive Officer
Public Health Foundation
Washington, DC
RBialek@phf.org

Diana M. Bontá, Dr.P.H., R.N.
Vice President, Public Affairs
Southern California Region
Kaiser Permanente
Pasadena, CA
Diana.M.Bonta@kp.org

Tim Brookes, M.A., P.C.G.E.
Director
Professional Writing Program
Champlain College
Burlington, VT
brookes@champlain.edu

E. Richard Brown, Ph.D.
Professor, UCLA School of Public Health
Director, UCLA Center for Health Policy Research
Principal Investigator, California Health Interview Survey
UCLA Center for Health Policy Research
Los Angeles, CA
erbrown@ucla.edu

Frankie Byrum, R.N.C., B.S.N., LMBT, CNMT
Retired Public Health Nurse Manager
Denver, NC
byrumjr@aol.com

Virginia A. Caine, M.D.
Director
Marion County Public Health Department
Associate Professor of Medicine
Division of Infectious Diseases
Indiana University School of Medicine
Indianapolis, IN
vcaine@hhcorp.org

Esther D. Chernak, M.D., M.P.H., FACP
Director
Center for Public Health Readiness & Communication
Drexel University School of Public Health
Medical Specialist in Infectious Diseases
Division of Ambulatory Health Services
Philadelphia Department of Public Health
Philadelphia, PA
echernak@verizon.net

Martin D. Cohen, M.S.W.
President and Chief Executive Officer
MetroWest Community Health Care Foundation
Framingham, MA
mcohen@mchcf.org

Donna R. Dinkin, Dr. P.H., M.P.H.
Global Health Leadership Consultant and Action Learning Coach
Past Director, National Public Health Leadership Institute
Faculty Advisor, Southeast Public Health Leadership Institute
Greensboro, NC
drdinkin@hotmail.com

Cheryl E. Easley, Ph.D., R.N.
Dean and Professor
College of Health and Social Welfare
University of Alaska Anchorage
Anchorage, AK
ceasley@uaa.alaska.edu

Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director and Health Officer
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
Los Angeles, CA
jfielding@ph.lacounty.gov

Robert García, J.D.
Executive Director and Counsel
The City Project
Los Angeles, CA
rgarcia@cityprojectca.org

Joyce R. Gaufin, B.S., CPM
Executive Director
Great Basin Public Health Leadership Institute
Salt Lake City, UT
gaufin646@yahoo.com

Kristine M. Gebbie, Dr.P.H., R.N.
Adjunct Professor
Flinders University School of Nursing & Midwifery
Adelaide, South Australia
kristine.gebbie@flinders.edu.au

Audrey Gotsch, Dr.P.H., M.P.H., MCHES
Professor, Health Education and Behavioral Science
Past Founding Dean
UMDNJ-School of Public Health
Piscataway, NJ
gotschar@umdnj.edu

Robert M. Gould, M.D.
President
San Francisco Bay Area Chapter
Physicians for Social Responsibility
San Francisco, CA
rmgould1@yahoo.com

Michael R. Greenberg, Ph.D.
Professor and Associate Dean of the Faculty
Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy
Rutgers University
Director
National Center for Neighborhood and Brownfields Redevelopment
Director
Center for Transportation Safety, Security and Risk
New Brunswick, NJ
mrg@rci.rutgers.edu

Diana Halper, B.A.
Managing Director, Communications and Media Services
Southern California Region Public Affairs
Kaiser Permanente
Pasadena, CA
Diana.Halper@kp.org

Paul Halverson, Dr.P.H., M.H.S.A., FACHE
Director of Health and State Health Officer
Arkansas Department of Health
Professor of Public Health and Medicine
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
Little Rock, AR
Paul.Halverson@arkansas.gov

Norman S. Hartman, B.A.
TMT Worldwide, Inc.
Gold River, CA
normh@tmtww.com

Lyndon Haviland, Dr.P.H., M.P.H.
Lyndon Haviland & Company
Lyme, CT
lyndon@haviland.net

Ida Hellander, M.D.
Executive Director
Physicians for a National Health Program
Chicago, IL
ida@pnhp.org

Vonna J. Henry, R.N., B.S.N., M.P.H.
Assistant Professor
State Cloud State University
St. Cloud, MN
rvhenry@aol.com

Darrin K. Hicks, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Communication Studies
University of Denver
Denver, CO
dhicks@du.edu

Omar A. Khan, M.D., M.H.S., FAAFP
Clinical Assistant Professor
Department of Family Medicine
University of Vermont
Omar.Khan@vtmednet.org

Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D., M.P.H.
Distinguished Professor
University of California Davis School of Medicine and Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing
Director
Institute for Population Health Improvement
UC Davis Health System
Sacramento, CA
Kenneth.Kizer@ucdmc.ucdavis.edu

Linda Landesman, Dr.P.H., M.S.W.
Assistant Vice President
New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation
New York, NY
LindaLandesman@aol.com

Carl E. Larson, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus
Department of Communication Studies
University of Denver
Denver, CO
clarson@du.edu

Robert S. Lawrence, M.D.
Center for a Livable Future
Professor in Environmental Health Sciences
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
Baltimore, MD
rlawrenc@jhsph.edu

Barry S. Levy, M.D., M.P.H.
Adjunct Professor
Department of Public Health and Community Medicine
Tufts University School of Medicine
Sherborn, MA
blevy@igc.org

John Loretz, M.A.
Program Director
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War
Somerville, MA
jloretz@ippnw.org

John W. Moran, M.B.A., Ph.D.
Senior Quality Advisor
Public Health Foundation
Washington, DC
Senior Fellow
School of Public Health
University of Minnesota
jmoran@phf.org

Carmen Rita Nevarez, M.D., M.P.H.
Vice President for External Relations and Preventive Medicine Advisor
Public Health Institute
Oakland, CA
CRNevarez@phi.org

Patricia A. Nolan, M.D., M.P.H.
Adjunct Associate Professor
Department of Health Services, Policy and Practice
Public Health Program
Alpert Medical School
Brown University
Providence, RI
Patricia_Nolan@brown.edu

Mary E. Northridge, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Assistant Professor
College of Dentistry
New York University
Professor of Clinical Sociomedical Sciences
Mailman School of Public Health
Columbia University
Editor-in-Chief
American Journal of Public Health
New York, NY
men6@nyu.edu

Magda G. Peck, Sc.D.
Professor and Associate Dean for Community Engagement and Public Health Practice
Director
Great Plains Public Health Leadership Institute
College of Public Health
University of Nebraska Medical Center
Omaha, NE
mpeck@unmc.edu

Fern Percheski, M.B.A., CPHQ
Development Director
HealthInsight
Las Vegas, NV
fpercheski@healthinsight.org

Giorgio A. Piccagli, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Better Multi-Party Decisions
San Francisco, CA
gapiccagli@gmail.com

Robyn Powers, B.A.
Director of Development and Alumni Relations
College of Liberal Arts
University of Nevada, Reno
Reno, NV
rpowers@unr.edu

Shailendra Prasad, M.D., M.P.H.
Assistant Professor
Department of Family Medicine and Community Health
Investigator, Rural Health Research Center
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN
shailey@umn.edu

Charlotte Roberts, Ph.D.
Executive Consultant
Blue Fire Partners, Inc.
Sherrills Ford, NC
charlotter@mindspring.com

Margie Schaps, M.P.H.
Executive Director
Health & Medicine Policy Research Group
Chicago, IL
mschaps@hmprg.org

David J. Sencer, M.D., M.P.H.
Deceased
Former Director
Centers for Disease Control

Melvin D. Shipp, O.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H.
Dean and Professor
The Ohio State University
College of Optometry
Columbus, OH
mshipp@optometry.osu.edu

Victor W. Sidel, M.D.
Distinguished University Professor of
Social Medicine
Montefiore Medical Center
Albert Einstein College of Medicine
Bronx, NY
Adjunct Professor of Public Health
Weill Cornell Medical College
New York, NY
vsidel@igc.org

Sylvester Taylor, M.S.
Director
Assessment, Tools, and Publications
Center for Creative Leadership
Greensboro, NC
taylorsy@ccl.org

Tricia Todd, M.P.H.
Assistant Director
Health Careers Center
Instructor
School of Public Health
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN
todd0002@umn.edu

Walter Tsou, M.D., M.P.H.
Adjunct Professor
Center for Public Health Initiatives
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA
Walter.Tsou@verizon.net

Quentin D. Young, M.D.
Chairman
Health & Medicine Policy
Research Group
Chicago, IL
info@hmprg.org

Part One

COMMUNICATION

1

Communicating with the Public

Diana M. Bontá and Diana Halper

As a public health worker, you often need to communicate with the public for many reasons—to convey knowledge to people about threats to their health and well-being, to inform them about measures that they can take to prevent illness and injury, to warn them about hazardous exposures or unsafe products, or to motivate them.

To communicate effectively, you need to:

- Know your organization, its brand (Box 1-1), and how it is perceived
- Know the purpose of your communication
- Develop clear messages that engage and resonate with your intended audience
- Understand your audience as completely as possible
- Decide which communication strategies and tools will most likely be successful
- Use evaluation tools to measure the success of your communication, and then adjust as needed

Getting Started: Developing a Communications Plan

A communications plan helps you to define your purpose, focus and prioritize your work, meet timelines, stay within your budget, and ensure overall success. When you develop a communications plan, you need to ask the following questions:

What am I communicating?
Why am I communicating?
To whom am I communicating?
What do I want to accomplish through communication?
How will I know that I have successfully communicated?

Box 1-1: **What Is Your Brand?**

Whether you know it or not, your organization already has a brand identity. It's what the world sees and hears about your organization. Kaiser Permanente, for example, has a brand that has resonated with people for many years. One of the strengths of its brand is its belief in preventive health. This is how Kaiser Permanente health-care providers approach health—to keep people healthy, and, when they are sick, help them back to health and a quality life. Kaiser Permanente, through research among its audiences (members, patients, employees, physicians, and employers), realized that this commitment to health was how its audiences perceived it and how it perceived itself. It embraced this aspect of its brand, which remains the foundation of its brand strategy and all of its communications.

Your communications plan should contain the following:

- Situation analysis/overview/purpose
- Research
- Goals
- Audience
- Messages
- Strategies
- Tactics
- Budget
- Implementation plan
- Measurements and evaluation

You will not always need to develop a comprehensive communications plan; sometimes an outline of a plan will suffice (Box 1-2). However, whether you develop a complete plan or an outline, include all of the above elements because they will ensure that your communication remains focused, on target, and achievable. Let's explore each of these elements.

Elements of a Communications Plan

SITUATION ANALYSIS/OVERVIEW/PURPOSE

Explain the current situation, the purpose of the communication, and results to be achieved. Demonstrate how the communications plan is tied to your organization's mission, goals, strategies, and brand.

Box 1-2: **Sample Communications Plan Outline for Launch of a Web Site on Healthy Eating**

Situation Analysis/Overview/Purpose:
There is a high incidence of both diabetes and obesity in the Latino population of the local community, which includes many working parents and young children. Many people eat at easily accessible fast-food restaurants, even though the community has small grocery stores that sell fresh produce. The local health department aims to change food and nutrition behaviors of the population. It will soon launch a "Healthy Eating" Web site in both Spanish and English, with food facts, enjoyable and simple recipes, a blog by a local bilingual Latino chef, and breakfast, lunch, and dinner menus. The blog also features guest bloggers, including a nutritionist, a diabetes specialist, and the mayor. The Web site is designed to encourage daily visits, educate visitors, answer questions, and solicit feedback about families' successes in, and obstacles to, healthy eating.

Research:
This includes: (a) working with a local school to conduct a phone survey of Latino families to determine baseline community use of fast-food restaurants and perceptions about healthy eating, and (b) conducting follow-up surveys every 6 months via the Web site.

Goal:
To motivate Latino families to use healthy recipes and to reduce consumption of fast food through information presented on the Web site about affordable food options and the adverse effects of fast food on their health.

Audience:
Local Latino families

Messages:
1. Healthy families eat a nutritious and balanced diet.
2. Healthy eating can be both more affordable and better tasting than fast food.
3. Involving the whole family in good cooking has lifelong health benefits.

Strategies:
1. Use local chef with media relations to promote Web site to target population.
2. Implement "teaser" campaign via social media that highlights latest recipes, affordable food options, and the blog.

3. Promote interactive component of Web site and food events that provide answers to residents' questions.
4. Use community groups, such as churches and schools, to distribute information about new Web site and food events.
5. Use social media tools to expand usage of Web site and attract attendees to food events and the Web site.

Tactics:
Develop timeline with specific tactics tied to each strategy.

Budget:
Recipe cards, chef appearance fees, and chef blogging fee. (Note: May be able to negotiate chef's fee as "win–win" with chef receiving free publicity.)

Implementation Plan: (Consider using an Excel spreadsheet or other type of grid format to prepare your plan.)

Phase I: (a) Design and build Web site and develop content. (b) Develop survey. (c) Arrange for staff members at school to conduct survey. (d) Engage in the project the mayor and owners of local grocery stores.

Phase II: (a) Pilot-test the Web site and adjust accordingly. (b) Pilot-test the survey and make any necessary adjustments. (c) Conduct the survey to establish baseline measurements on community use of fast-food restaurants and perceptions about healthy eating. (d) Engage local Latino chef and other spokespersons. (e) Develop talking points and train spokespersons. (f) Link social media sites to Web site. (g) Launch social media "teaser" campaign.

Phase III: (a) Plan event to launch Web site. (b) Invite media representatives to event at a local grocery store. (c) Hold the event with the mayor, the local chef, and others.

Phase IV: (a) Develop a flyer with the URL of the Web site and a recipe. (b) Distribute flyers via local grocery stores, schools, and churches. (c) Update Web site daily.

Phase V: (a) Conduct follow-up survey to evaluate the impact of the project. (b) Analyze results of survey. (c) Plan next steps.

Measurements and Evaluation:
Conduct follow-up surveys and modify strategies, as needed. Track data on Web site use, including number and length of visits, specific pages visited, and number of recipes downloaded. Review comments in response to blog.

RESEARCH

Research provides critical information that establishes the roadmap for your strategies and tactics. It will help you to avoid communication pitfalls, such as making false assumptions that can derail you and creating materials that are culturally insensitive. Research also helps you establish a baseline for measuring the success of your communications.

In primary research, you gather—or a contractor gathers—information, such as by performing phone or mail surveys or through interacting with focus groups. Secondary research uses existing information, such as census reports or national polls. While this information is easily accessible and often free, it may not answer key questions and you may still need to perform primary research to fill in the gaps (Box 1-3).

Primary research can be quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative research, generally used for larger groups, often includes interviews with uniform questions and multiple-choice responses to enable you to easily obtain and tabulate data. This format excludes asking open-ended questions. Quantitative research is performed, via the Internet, by telephone, or in person, with surveys that can, for example, measure perceptions of your organization, gauge the effectiveness of your communications program, and gather specific information about important issues. The usefulness of a survey depends largely on the quality of the questionnaire. You should pilot-test it on a sample of the target population to find any problems with it and fix them.

Qualitative research allows people to share emotions, explain their thoughts and opinions, confirm areas of concern, and uncover issues you may not have previously recognized. It includes live and online focus groups, face-to-face meetings, and phone calls. While this research is time-intensive and does not typically provide quantitative data, it nevertheless yields much valuable information.

Box 1-3: **Guide to Performing Research on a Limited Budget**

- Use your Web site. Create a chat room.
- Conduct an online survey. For a small fee, services such as Survey Monkey provide an easy-to-develop and easy-to-administer survey that you can e-mail to your audience. Develop a phone survey that you or your co-workers can administer.
- Include your survey in regular mailings, such as newsletters.
- Create an informal focus group by inviting small groups from your target audience to a meal—a great way to test a new logo or slogan.
- Because social media tools can easily provide feedback that will be publicly accessible, this method won't always be appropriate.

Focus groups are effective tools for testing new publications, marketing programs, and advocacy campaigns. However, you need to be sure that members of the focus groups represent the audiences you will be targeting with your communications.

GOALS

Be specific. Avoid generic goals such as "raise awareness" or "increase media coverage." You can avoid overly general goals by adding a measurement or specific outcome. For example, if your goal is to improve the public perception of your organization by increasing media coverage, then specify which media and how much more coverage, such as "increase coverage in local newspapers by 10% compared to the previous year." If your program's purpose is to increase immunization rates in a specific population within the community by educating parents about the importance of vaccines, then your goal should reflect this: "Increase immunization rates in immigrant children under 5 years of age by 15% compared to baseline."

AUDIENCE

Any group of individuals affected by your organization is an audience—the people whom you serve, donors, government officials, community leaders, employees, and others. Audiences may include communities, customers, stakeholders, and constituents**.** Your audiences comprise the individuals and groups that you want to reach. If you are communicating on behalf of a public health department, your audience may be as large as the population of your city or county—or it may be a segment of the population, such as teens of new immigrant parents. If you want to change public policy, your audience may be a combination of residents of your community, local business and community leaders, and government officials.

Know each of your audiences well—their cultures, their languages, where they live, what they read and watch, how they learn and gather information, and who they look to as leaders and authority figures. By deeply understanding what motivates people in each of your audience segments, what influences them, how they get information, and whom they trust (and don't trust), you will be able to segment and develop strategies and targeted, motivating messages to reach each group. You'll also be armed with information that will help you strategically select the channels or media outlets most likely to disseminate your message to your selected audiences. With social media tools, you can develop channels to receive feedback and more deeply engage your audience. If there is more than one audience, segmenting the audiences will help you develop strategies to reach and engage each group.

Each audience has specific needs. For example, the California Department of Public Health has held forums with representatives of ethnic-specific media to

discuss that, due to an increase in pertussis cases, it was expanding communication with communities of color to increase their immunization rates. The representatives from the ethnic-specific media said that they would need to feature expert spokespeople from these communities to improve their stories.

MESSAGES

To develop strong messages, think of the most important points that you want your audience to remember. Relate these core messages to your organization's mission and purpose. To help your audiences remember your core messages, make the messages simple, catchy, and memorable. And use these key messages consistently in all of your written, verbal, and visual communications.

Once you have developed your core messages, you may want to reframe them slightly so that they resonate with each of your targeted audiences. For example, for health plan members, it may be "Preventive care keeps you healthy and active," while for employers, it may be "Preventive care keeps your employees healthy and at work." Any artwork or photos should reflect the audience and its community.

STRATEGIES

Storytelling is a superb way to convey your message (see Chapter 3). Messages stick when they are communicated through compelling stories. Storytelling can help teach, entertain, and reinforce memories of historical events. If you can explain how people are positively affected by a situation that you are addressing, you can personalize your mission and goals and make them memorable. People remember a message to which they can personally relate or with which they have an emotional connection. Uncover personal stories to support your communication message. Sometimes your story may not be positive and you may need to make difficult choices, such as whether to use in a media communication the story of a parent whose child died of a vaccine-preventable disease.

Your messages should not use jargon. Testing your message for clarity with your intended audience can help you avoid the use of words and acronyms that are unique to your discipline and not widely recognized. For example, instead of saying "Establishing a medical home for transient individuals is a high priority for the safety net clinics," say "Free clinics in the area provide homeless people with ongoing health care."

Translating your message into another language may present a challenge. For example, Spanish may be the language of choice for your target population, but subsets of your audience may have different Spanish accents and slang terminology. Literal translations can also cause disconnects with an audience. Have your materials reviewed by members of the target audience for accuracy and intent. You may need to change your communications approach to meet the needs of geographically diverse audiences (Box 1-4).

Box 1-4: **Adjusting Communications to Meet Realities**

The National Farm to School Network (NFSN) conducted extensive research into marketing and communications needs with input from key local, regional, and national stakeholders to determine how best to address its burgeoning constituency and diverse target audiences. It found that to meet the needs of the communities served, it needed to simplify its messages and tactics, inform its audiences, and connect its audiences with each other.

NFSN simplified all communication, using "how-to" statements and shorter, targeted information. It established a tagline: "Nourishing kids and communities." It developed topical fact sheets and an overview brochure on "Farm to School" that was disseminated to all of its regions. It also made all of its materials available by free download from its Web site.

NFSN has become a nationally recognized source of information and education. Its Web site (www.farmtoschool.org) is a one-stop portal for farm-to-school resources and information with daily updates to program profiles, policies, events, funding opportunities, and news. It distributes a monthly e-newsletter, posts regularly on several blogs, places thousands of farm-to-school articles, and develops template presentations. NFSN created an introductory video on "Farm to School," hosted a video contest for students from kindergarten to college, co-developed the videos "Lunch Encounters of the Third Kind" and "Priceless" to initiate its One Tray campaign, and co-hosted a national "Cooking Up Change" contest to get high-school students involved in improving food served in their schools.

TACTICS

Tactics are specific methods or tools you will use to communicate your message. Typical communication tactics include use of online tools, such as Web sites; hard-copy and online newsletters; hard-copy and online annual reports; and videos. Depending on your audience and message, other tactics to consider include developing a program that incorporates events, collaborating with like-minded organizations, developing a media-relations strategy, and establishing a speakers' bureau that places expert speakers in the community (Box 1-5).

An example of collaboration is when Kaiser Permanente in Southern California partnered with the American Lung Association (ALA) during the devastating wildfires that caused poor air quality in large parts of the area. Kaiser Permanente provided funding as well as design and production for the ALA messages about poor air quality and how residents could prevent exposure by limiting outdoor activities. Public service announcements (PSAs) in newspapers and on radio directed people with further questions to the ALA hotline for more information in multiple languages.

Box 1-5: **Orange County Health Care Agency Tweets Save Beach Days**

The communications team of the Orange County Health Care Agency in California wanted to make it easier for beachgoers to find out which beaches were closed due to public health problems. It was already posting information about the closed beaches, but that wasn't helpful as it required the public to come to its Web site or beach. Most people on the way to the beach don't think about first checking with the local health department for any advisory warnings. If the beach is closed when they arrive, then they are disappointed.

Orange County established a "tweeter handle" posted on its Web site. By following this handle, one can receive the latest updates on beach closings on one's laptop and cell phone.

Sample tweets have included: (a) "OC Health removes warning signs @ North Beach in Doheny State Beach—bacteria levels meet health standards. Visit: http://ocbeachinfo.com *about 21 hours ago* via web"; and (b) "Ocean Water Warning—bacteria levels exceed health standards @ Three Arch Bay in Laguna Beach. Details: http://www.ocbeachinfo.com *2:49 PM Jul 16th* via web."

BUDGET

Your communication plan should match its budget (see Chapter 7). Be realistic about how much you can achieve with the resources you have—something that is especially difficult during challenging economic times, when there are budget cuts. Be creative in seeking ways to keep your budget lean. Use social media to expand your reach and avoid expensive printing and mailing costs. An annual report doesn't have to be glossy, slick, and expensive. You can disseminate it in a condensed format on recycled paper or post it online. Create a unique holiday message online and e-mail it to your constituents. Use viral communications, enhanced with Twitter, to promote your messages and events.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Be prepared for success. Have a distribution plan for each of your communications. Be prepared for increased feedback from communication by phone, mail, and social media. Think through all the steps from developing your concept, to planning to reach your intended audiences, to handling their subsequent responses or actions. Include timelines. Prioritize your tactics.

MEASUREMENTS AND EVALUATION

Before you launch communications, choose how you will evaluate the success of your plan. Embed this evaluation in your communication plan. Measurement

tools to consider include pre- and post-communications perception surveys, media tracking, and online traffic and activity. If the purpose of your communications is to support an advocacy or education program, choose how you plan to evaluate whether your message has changed behavior and in what ways. Have internal processes to review your plans and your communications before they are released to the public.

Media Relations: The Fundamental Strategy of Communication

One of the most important strategies your organization can use to reach its audience is media relations—working with various media to inform your audiences about your organization. Positive coverage in the media—through a trusted news source, such as the nightly news, the morning newspaper, an online magazine, or a popular radio station—is more credible than paid advertising (and less expensive). While you may not personally implement media relations if you work in a large organization, you may be called upon to address the media if you work in a small one. And, if you work in a large organization, you will need to interact with your media-relations department or an external media-relations agency.

Media relations refers only to work with print, broadcast, and electronic media. Public relations (or public affairs) includes not only media relations but also corporate communications, community relations, and government relations.

You cannot control representatives of the media. They will decide if your communication or story reaches a wider audience—and also how it will be told.

A reporter's job is to get the facts and tell the story in a compelling manner. Traditionally, journalists have been neutral and have not informed their audiences of their opinions—letting the facts tell the story. However, today journalists often allow their opinions to inform their stories. News organizations often lean to the left or the right politically.

Understand each media outlet. Learn when reporters are available, what their deadlines are, how they prefer to receive information, and what their areas of responsibility and interest are.

As you form long-term relationships with reporters and facilitate their coverage of your stories, you are more likely to receive coverage. When a reporter relocates to a new media outlet, continue the relationship.

Media events are important. Box 1-6 describes a successful media event.

Today, media relations have expanded to include nontraditional media outlets, such as blog sites. Know the online sites that host content related to your organization's work, including relevant blog sites and bloggers and those that your stakeholders/customers/constituents may be following. If you work for a public health agency, you need to be familiar with (a) government online sites, (b) bloggers who write about public health issues, (c) political sites that comment

Box 1-6: **Ingredients for a Successful Media Event**

Summer pool programs in Los Angeles were suffering from budget cuts. So were city youth, many of whom were "latchkey" kids susceptible to the influence of gangs and at risk for other inner-city threats to their health and safety. Many were facing the prospect of a long, boring, hot summer. Kaiser Permanente gave grants to the city's parks and recreation department to provide for pool chlorine, swimming lessons, and lifeguards so more pools could serve youngsters.

The city government and Kaiser Permanente wanted to let the public know about the summer pool programs—timing of communication and the right elements were critical. The program was announced at a well-organized media event on the last day of school that included the mayor, children in swimsuits, hot weather, a synchronized swim team, and messages about obesity prevention and sun safety—a perfect media event. Called "Operation Splash," it made a big splash with all the major media outlets in the city. And the media event continues to be successfully repeated every year.

on and follow public health issues, (d) health and medical sites aimed at the public, and (e) sites directed to health professionals.

Once you have determined your message and the best media outlets to reach your audience, you need to choose what tools to use. Traditionally, these tools include news releases, "pitch letters," media alerts, video news releases, and phone calls. Today, almost all public health communications to reporters are delivered online, either from public health workers or through wire services, such as Business Wire.

Media Tools

NEWS RELEASE

A news release (or press release) follows an "inverted pyramid" structure, with the most important information first. It answers in its first paragraph the key questions of who, what, when, where, and why—the "5 Ws."

When you write a news release, include all of these crucial 5 Ws. Have multiple people review it before you disseminate it. Most reporters will scan your news release headline and lead paragraph, and, if the release doesn't engage them, they will discard it. Some media outlets, especially those online, may use your news release intact; others may shorten it, so be sure that all of your important information is in the first paragraph (Box 1-7).

Box 1-7: **A Sample News Release**

2007/10/15
CONTACT:
Name
E-mail address
Phone number
FARM-TO-SCHOOL PORTAL ON THE MENU FOR NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH WEEK:

New tool provides innovative approaches to tackle childhood obesity and loss of family farms
October 15, 2007
LOS ANGELES: As a means to support community-based food systems, strengthen family farms, and improve student health by reducing childhood obesity, the National Farm to School Network launched its new and improved Web site, www.farmtoschool.org. This timely release coincides with National School Lunch Week from October 15 through 19.

Farmtoschool.org is a portal for farm-to-school information in the U.S. and includes extensive content with easy access for submitting information about programs, upcoming events, funding opportunities, and online discussion forums to dialog on issues facing farm-to-school programs.

The portal showcases the great work of innovative farmers, teachers, food service directors, parents, and others involved in farm-to-school programs. "It's the first stop for anyone looking to promote future events, discuss timely topics on the forum pages, and share lessons learned across the nation," said Debra Eschmeyer, National Farm to School Network Marketing Manager.

An exciting new feature includes a state profile for each of the 34 states with active farm-to-school programs. For example, click on California on the map, and you can search for policies, farmers, media coverage, funding opportunities, and involved groups specific to the state.

Highlighting key news and events across the nation and also specific to each region, the new Web site vastly improves the ability to stay up to date and involved in grassroots efforts. "Various tools and resources are available for free download to assist in starting a farm-to-school program," said Anupama Joshi, Farm to School Program Director.

The National Farm to School Network is supported in part by a $2.4 million grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. The Kellogg Foundation grant enables the Network to establish a viable and sustainable mechanism to

coordinate, promote, and expand the farm-to-school movement at the state, regional, and national levels. The Network is coordinated by the Center for Food & Justice at the Urban & Environmental Policy Institute at Occidental College (www.uepi.oxy.edu) and the Community Food Security Coalition (www.foodsecurity.org).

A media alert (or media advisory) calls attention to upcoming events, news conferences, or briefings. It describes the event with limited detail, providing information in a bulleted or outline form. It gives the reason for the event; provides information on date, time, and location; and lists spokespeople and their contact information.

Pitch letters or e-mails—short and focused—suggest ideas for feature stories. Explain why these are of interest to the media—and their readers or viewers. Follow up pitch letters with phone calls.

Video news releases or videos can accompany pitch letters or news releases. Using "flip-type," inexpensive, handheld video cameras, you can easily provide reporters with compelling videos, such as short interviews of your spokespeople, that tell your story. Your news release should contain a link to the video, which can be posted either on your Web site or a video hosting site, such as YouTube.

Your press kit should include your news release, a fact sheet about your organization or program, and short biographies of spokespeople. You can place hard-copy format materials in a folder and distribute it to reporters who attend press events. In soft copy, you can make materials available as PDFs and distribute or post them electronically.

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

Use all appropriate social media tools to promote your organization, event, or news story. These tools include the following.

Twitter

Follow and develop a following of the Twitter handles for local reporters and news outlets. If you are providing important tweets that will help them in their jobs, they will begin to follow you. Have a network of people in your organization who tweet to help communicate about important news or upcoming events. Tweet cleverly and judiciously. Keep followers interested, but don't burn them out with irrelevant or excessive information.

Photo Sharing

Make it easy for reporters to obtain photos that help tell your news story by posting related photos on photo-sharing sites such as Flickr. Include links to the site in your news release.

YouTube
Establish a YouTube channel for your organization where videos of your events or other news can be posted. Flip-type video cameras enable you to shoot, edit, and post videos easily and quickly. Include links to videos in your e-mailed news releases.

Facebook
Via Facebook pages, provide more information, post photos, and links to other sites that support your story. As you develop relationships with reporters, they will follow your Facebook sites if they contain information that they can use to help them in their work.

Web Site
You can use your Web site to help reporters learn more about your organization. Include a link to your Web site in all your communication materials.

Getting Ready for a Media Interview

If you are launching a new program, expanding awareness about your organization, or raising funds, you may need a spokesperson for your organization—ideally a leader of your organization or an expert in the subject. Train the spokesperson to be ready for any type of media interview (Boxes 1-8 and 1-9; see Commentary 1-2).

Box 1-8: **Media Tips**

- Establish media policies and procedures for managing media inquiries.
- Make sure your story/message is newsworthy and tailor your story to the specific reporter or media outlet.
- Make it easy for media representatives to reach you.
- Rehearse anticipated media interactions—ideally in situations similar to the "real" scenario.
- Be clear and concise when speaking to the media. Avoid slang, cuteness, and over-explaining.
- Do your homework. Prepare your messages in advance and study them until they become second nature to you.
- Develop a list of "tough questions" and their answers.
- Think before you speak. If you're caught off guard, pause and take a moment to collect your thoughts. Then reply.

- Don't say anything is "Off the record"—presume everything you say is on the record.
- Don't say, "No comment." The public or the reporter may perceive this as dodging the question—or worse, as secrecy.
- Say, "I don't know" if you don't know. And if you don't know, promise to get back to the reporter with an answer. And then do so.
- Never mislead or lie to a reporter.
- Don't ignore a media inquiry—even if you must delay or decline, you must at least reply.
- Don't contact more than one reporter at the same organization about the same story without letting them know.
- Use press conferences sparingly. They are only for groundbreaking news.

Box 1-9: **Tips for Media Spokespeople**

- If you are your organization's media spokesperson, make sure you are appropriately trained. Hire a professional media trainer to provide both general training and training for crisis situations. And, if necessary, do short training sessions before media interviews and take refresher courses.
- Know your message and practice staying on message—no matter what the interviewer asks.
- Make your key points first.
- Know your interviewers. Watch or read other interviews they have done to familiarize yourself with their styles and methods.
- Speak to your audience, not the reporter. The reporter is your conduit to your audience.
- Don't hesitate to correct misstatements by the interviewer—diplomatically, but firmly.
- Never argue with the reporter. Don't be combative. Keep a positive attitude and posture.

Additional Tips for a Radio, Television, or Online Video Interview

- Speak in "sound bites"—short, concise sentences. Make your points succinctly, preferably in 15 to 20 seconds.
- Don't read your messages.
- Stand up when you talk, if possible. Your voice is heartier and you tend to be more alert and focused when standing.
- Speak in a normal, conversational tone—as though you are talking to a friend.