

## Communications strategy workbook

Communications strategies follow a set of main themes:

1. **Statement of purpose**
2. **Analysis of the PBC's situation**
3. **Who is the audience?**
4. **What messages are communicated?**
5. **Methods of communication**
6. **Planning communication**
7. **Evaluating success**

### Statement of purpose

This statement should outline why a communications strategy was developed and a short statement about its aims. For example:

"This communications strategy shows how effective communications can:

- help the corporation to achieve its overall organisational objectives
- engage effectively with stakeholders
- show the success of the corporation's work
- make sure people understand what the corporation does
- change behaviour and perceptions where necessary
- keep the corporation's audiences in the loop."

It might also contain a paragraph on the corporation itself, what it does and who its members are.

### Analysis of the PBC's situation

To understand what messages are to be communicated, the PBC might analyse its business environment to understand its strength and weakness, audiences and stakeholders and how to create communication based on goals. Smart Sheet explains commonly used analysis tools and supports them with templates:

Common analysis tools are:

- **PEST Analysis:** PEST (Political, Economic, Social, Technological) analysis, a first step to understanding the business' position, market and environment. This helps

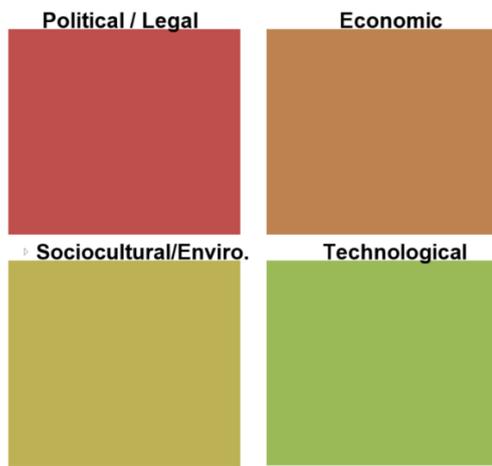


**AIATSIS**



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a PBC see opportunities and potential threats. Free pest analysis template relevant to PBCs.



You can download an example for a PEST Analysis relevant to PBCs is [here](https://nativetitle.org.au/publications/pest-and-swot-analysis-template) (<https://nativetitle.org.au/publications/pest-and-swot-analysis-template>).

- **SWOT Analysis:** SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) is an analysis framework that identifies and examines the internal and external environmental factors that can impact on a PBC and its business. It is a decision-making tool that analyses:
  - Strengths: internal attributes and resources that provide advantages.
  - Weaknesses: internal attributes and resources that are a disadvantage to the organization when compared to others.
  - Opportunities: external factors that a PBC can exploit to gain an advantage.
  - Threats: external factors that could result in danger for the PBC.

Free SWOT analysis template relevant to PBCs.



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- **Competitor's** analysis helps to understand what other PBCs or stakeholders do well. This provides guidelines to shape a pathway the PBC's, or the areas where the PBC can stand out or be different. It also allows the PBC to find opportunities and potential partners. Smart Sheet offers [free competitor analysis templates](#).
- **Create S.M.A.R.T. Objective(s):** this helps provide structure, guidance and a better understanding of what the PBC wants to accomplish with this communications strategy. S.M.A.R.T. goals are:
  - Specific: a mission statement for your goal that clarifies what you want to accomplish.
  - Measurable: think about meaningful metrics that will create a tangible way to measure progress.

- Achievable: you and your team agree on what's attainable.
- Relevant: focus on what makes sense within broader business goals and realistic resources.
- Time bound: target timing of a message, along with a schedule for deliverables.

More information on S.M.A.R.T. goals can be found in this [essential guide](#).

## Who is the audience

Describe the types of audiences that the communications strategy is targeting and what information they might be interested in. For a PBC, the internal stakeholders are its staff, members and board of directors; its external stakeholders are all native title holders, partners, funding agencies, supporters, the wider native title sector, the region and future audiences.

To analyse all these audiences a simple table might help to establish which messages should be communicated and to whom.

The below table is a fictional example of matching audiences with types of information.

<b>Audience</b>	<b>Advice or information</b>	<b>Meetings and events</b>	<b>Policies and practices</b>	<b>Business decisions</b>	<b>Financial accounts</b>	<b>Success stories</b>
<u>staff</u>	yes	yes	yes	yes	possibly	yes
<u>board of directors</u>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<u>PBC members</u>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<u>all native title holders</u>	yes	yes	possibly	possibly	no	yes
<u>partners (e.g. mining, health, ORIC)</u>	possibly	possibly	possibly	possibly	no	yes
<u>funding agencies</u>	possibly	possibly	possibly	possibly	possibly	yes
<u>supporters</u>	possibly	possibly	possibly	possibly	possibly	yes
<u>wider audience</u>	no	possibly	no	no	no	yes

Mapping PBC audiences and stakeholders might be another way of getting a clearer view of its priorities. This involves choosing criteria which are important to your organisation and then ranking your different audiences against those criteria. This can highlight who the most important stakeholders are – the ones the PBC should be spending most effort communicating with. It is often easier to do this analysis with two criteria, so you can highlight the differences between audiences.

## What messages are communicated?

The messages should be relevant to the target audience. This includes the language used in each message. Staff, members and directors might be familiar with abbreviations and a more direct language can be used in contrast with funding agencies or supporters. It is important that the messaging is consistent and links back to your PBC’s key organisational objectives and values.

A simple table might help shape the messages and define what is to be said.

<b>Audience</b>	<b>What do they need to know</b>	<b>Key messages communicated</b>
<u>internal stakeholders</u>	When, where to go for the next AGM.	This means a lot of work in a short timeframe, here are the documents and procedures you need to know.
	A new CEO has started.	This is his background and his vision.
<u>external stakeholders</u>	What services does the PBC offer?	The rangers look after the country. Contact them here.
	Who they should contact?	The heritage team is available for surveys. Contact them here.
<u>funding organisations</u>	How we spent the funds.	Funds are used effectively
	What was achieved?	Promised milestones and goals have been achieved
<u>all native title holders</u>	The plans for the future of the PBC and the native title lands.	If you want to have a say become a PBC member.

## Methods of communication

The easiest way to contact all PBC members is with contact details from the membership register. It is important to keep the membership register up-to-date. ORIC provides a number of [tips on managing a corporations’ membership](#).

What works best for your members depends on your members, where they live and what access they have to computers, internet and how often the mail gets delivered.

Are they responding to information sent via mail or email, or do they want to be informed face to face? Maybe announcements for upcoming meetings can be delivered via the community radio or television station, perhaps posters and leaflets can be distributed in the communities. Also ask how other organisations such as the health clinic or the local shire communicate.

Which communication method is used depends on each corporation, its environment, circumstances, audience type and available staff and resources.

Let's use the announcement of the next annual general meeting (AGM) as an example:

<b>Audience</b>	<b>Platform</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Why</b>
<b><u>staff</u></b>	email	months before the event	to help prepare; that staff know what they have to do
<b><u>board of directors</u></b>	email, mailed invitation, website	months before, reminders	so they can schedule it into their agenda; make travel arrangements, read meeting documents
<b><u>PBC members</u></b>	email, mailed invitations, website, leaflets, newsletter, posters, radio, social media	months before, frequent reminders	so they make time to attend the meeting; make travel arrangements.
<b><u>all native title holders</u></b>	email, mailed invitations, website, newsletter, posters, radio, social media	months before	they can decide if they want to become PBC members in time to be able to vote or make submissions.
<b><u>partners (e.g. mining, health, ORIC)</u></b>	email, website media release, formal letter	months before and after the AGM	to enable them to discuss with board important decisions or suggestions.  to announce major decision made by members.
<b><u>funding agencies</u></b>	email, website	after AGM	announce major decisions for the future of the PBC
<b><u>supporters</u></b>	email, website, media release	after the AGM	announce major decisions for the future of the PBC
<b><u>wider audience</u></b>	website, media release	after the AGM	announce major decisions for the future of the PBC

## **Planning communication**

The next step is to plan communication by generating a table that outlines the communication activities, budget and resources allocated. The work plan should include timeframes, critical dates when announcements need to be made or messages or invitations have to be sent. These critical dates and steps are milestones within your plan that can be monitored and measured. There may be specific projects, events or publications that you know will take place, and these should be highlighted in your plan.

## **Evaluating success**

Keeping track of the strategies used and what was successful or unsuccessful and why is useful to further develop the strategy and save time and effort. It is worth capturing for example, which media outlets ran your story, or how many emails or letters were returned during your last mailout.

For big events like the next AGM or a community festival, the communication strategy may need a bit more planning. The AGM should also be announced early enough that directors and members can keep the date free in their schedules and make travel arrangements. For a festival it might be useful to gain wide ranging publicity well in advance of the date, for example by contacting local, regional and state tourism agencies, inviting media outlets, or running a social media campaign advertising the event.

It is equally important to review communication strategies to make sure they work. This can be done either periodically – maybe once a year or after a big event such as the last AGM. Some easy evaluation measures can be used, including the number of responses to the meeting invite or how many people came to the AGM and feedback from the members at the event. For events like a festival it is also important to capture the levels of media coverage.

Managing social media content can be daunting. Some important steps in using social media are:

## **Plan content**

Draft a document outlining your ideas for what, when and how often you want to post to social media. Discuss your ideas with colleagues and ask them for content and images. Remember to make sure your messaging is consistent, and to plan time-sensitive content, e.g. when announcing meetings or events, involve others as they might also have great ideas or stories to share and can build an archive of ideas and content.

## **Schedule content**

There are a number of social media management apps, [reviewed here](#), that help with scheduling messages. There are some with free components, often limiting the number of users or the number of accounts serviced, like [Buffer](#), [Hootsuite](#), but these might just meet your PBC's needs.

## **Range of content**

Content can range from essential information about the PBC's work, relevant to the PBC and the audience and chatting to the audience. There is a number of opinions regarding the ratio of these different types of content should be applied.

Try it out, learn and get better.

There are no hard and fast rules. The best approach is to get started, see how the audience reacts and learn from successes and mistakes. It might be useful to ask other PBCs how they manage their social media and what their experiences and best approaches are.

Consider asking a staff member or PBC member to be the dedicated social media person for the PBC and whether they need training.

The following sources have been used to compile this workbook: NGVO Knowhow, Smartsheet, Media Trust.