

## Successful Communication Takes These Two Steps

*I've been recently given the Director of Communications position and have been asked to come up with a comprehensive communications strategy designed for our particular church body, mission, and vision, etc. I was hoping to not completely reinvent the wheel and was wondering if you had any white papers that could be used as a framework for developing our strategy?*

If you're writing a communications strategy for the first time or the fiftieth time I'm a big believer in simplicity. **The more pages and detail you have in your plan, the harder it is to execute.** There are so many great, multi-page templates out there that are impressively robust. I've used many of them. I used to write them myself. I've also worked with some of the best and brightest agencies and consultants in the marketplace who have solid, researched deliverables with professionally designed tables, charts and graphs. They are beautiful, comprehensive strategy manuals that NASA scientists would envy. **They hold a ton of great information that's right and true, but not portable or contagious.**

In my experience, the bigger the strategy document, the more likely it is to end up in a binder on someone's desk or lost in a network file folder. Inevitably, in these cases, there also ends up being a stressed out communications person (or team) who lives in a constant state of frustration trying to understand why nobody is following the plan! I've seen it countless times.

Try this approach instead. **Simple rules. Simple frameworks. That's the secret weapon to a successful strategy that everyone owns, not just the communications team.**

I've seen the most effective strategies gain traction and really work for the long run using a small document set of "conversation tools." These one page documents are at a glance tools that serve as the strategy compass for your day to day work and decisions. **I believe 3-5 one page documents are all you need to rally stakeholders, streamline processes and prioritize activity.** It's amazing what you can get done if you don't over design or over produce it.

"Too often, a company's strategy sits on a shelf, gathering dust. A strategy that doesn't influence critical decisions on a day-to-day basis, however, is not a strategy—it is a book report." ? [Donald Sull, \*Simple Rules: How to Thrive in a Complex World\*](#)

Here are two templates to get you started.

- [1. Communications Charter](#)
- [2. Minimalist Communications Strategy Matrix](#)

I guarantee, if you put the work into it, you will never regret this minimalist approach to your communications strategy. It's the best way to equip your stakeholders (your brand handlers) to

happily carry their part of the defined strategy. You'll spend more time collaborating and less time handholding or pulling your hair out.

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