

Preparing a Work Plan

The Work Plan is an executive summary of your communication strategy that clearly outlines the strategic scope of your project.

Technical Specifications: Work plans must not exceed two typed pages (8.5 x 11, ½-inch minimum margins, minimum font size is 10 points.)

Label your Work Plan with the following information at the top of the plan:

1. Entrant's Name
2. Title of Entry
3. Division, Category and Subcategory
4. Entrant's Organization
5. Client Organization (if applicable)
6. Time Period of Project (When communication and evaluation took place)
7. Brief Description (One or two sentences describing the entry.)

Communication Management and Communication Skills

In Divisions I and II, provide the following information in your work plan:

1. Need/Opportunity – How clearly does the plan identify the business need/ opportunity and its effect on the organization?
 - Clearly define the problem or opportunity the organization faced, outlining any impact on performance, reputation, image, profit, participation, etc.
 - Explain how this project addresses the identified need or issues.
 - Highlight research, either formal or informal, that supported your analysis of the need/opportunity.
2. Intended Audience – Identify your primary audience and any others. Describe audience characteristics that were considered in developing your solution.
 - Describe audience key characteristics (needs, preferences, demographics) and needs and the relation to tactics and strategy.
3. Goals and Objectives – Goals describe what you want to accomplish. They should be few in number, broad, future-oriented and aligned with organizational needs. They do not necessarily have to be directly measurable. Objectives should be realistic and measurable by outcomes such as quantity, time, cost, percentage, quality or other criteria.
4. Solution Overview – Summarize the project, outline the solution and the logic that supported it.
 - Why did you do what you did? The solution should demonstrate your thinking, imagination and approach to problem solving.
 - Discuss how you involved stakeholders in developing the solutions.
 - Identify key messages.
 - Present the tactics and communication vehicles you used.

5. Implementation and Challenges.

- Explain how you sold the plan to management/client, etc.
- Provide timeframes.
- Describe any limitations or challenges you faced in selling or implementing your ideas (judges are looking for flexibility and willingness to resolve problems and negotiate solutions).
- Be sure to include your project budget. You will not be judged on the amount, but you should show efficient use of money.
- Note any special circumstances that affected the final result and discuss how they were addressed.

6. Measurement/Evaluation – How did you measure results?

- Results should be linked to one or more of your stated objectives. Results must be legitimate, thorough and convincing.
- Measurement should demonstrate outcomes, not outputs. For example, if your media relations campaign was supporting a product roll-out, your measurements should be tied to sales targets, increases in qualified leads or other bottom-line measures, not just to number of clips or impressions, advertising value equivalents or other output measures. If your challenge was to improve employees' understanding of a major issue, you must show that their knowledge increased in part or in whole as a result of the communication plan you implemented.

Communication Creative

In Division III provide the following information in your work plan:

1. Project Summary – Provide an overview of the project. What business need or opportunity did your creative solution address?
2. Intended Audience – Identify your primary audience and any others. Describe the key characteristics (needs, preferences, demographics, etc.) that were taken into account in developing your solution.
3. Objectives – What were your creative objectives? What outcome did you target? How did your creative solution contribute to the business need or opportunity?
4. Key Message/Themes – What was most critical to convey? State your key messages or theme.
5. Creative Rationale -- Summarize the creative solution and the logic that supported it. Why did you do what you did? How does your solution demonstrate insight and imagination?
6. Results – In what way did you achieve your objectives? How did your solution affect the business need or opportunity? Demonstrate the effectiveness of your creative solution by showing increases in sales, traffic, participation or other quantifiable outcomes. Discuss your budget, resources and timeframes, and show efficient use of each.