

Communication Strategies

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Brief overview

Communication is a vital component of the technology transfer profession. Done well, communicating the value of a technology, portfolio, or collaboration can elevate the profile of the organization and cultivate productive relationships with researchers, management, and potential partners and licensees.

Professionals in this space have developed numerous communication strategies that work for various types of interactions: investment pitches, networking events, lab visits, and more. Fuentek, for example, has coined the acronym **AMMO**—which stands for **a**udience, **m**essage, **m**echanism and **o**utcome—to represent the central components of any communication strategy. AMMO provides a framework to ensure that practitioners identify not only a target audience but also effective communication strategies to reach that audience.

Use in U-I engagements outside of major metropolitan areas

The value of the AMMO approach is that it works everywhere. Following is an example of AMMO as it applies to a technology marketing campaign:

- **Audience:** Identify the target audience and then ask: What is important to this industry or market? What does it need and how will the technology or offering meet that need? How technically savvy are the individuals to be targeted? Stand in the target audience's shoes to tap into its viewpoint.
- **Message:** Refine the core message to match the audience. Frame the message so it resonates; focus on what's in it for them. A highly diverse audience might require adjustment. If a non-metropolitan area is not a location the audience would typically consider, tailor the message to convey why it brings value and is worth the look.
- **Mechanism:** Select the best tools for conveying the message to the target audience. The choice depends on many factors:
 - o Is this a passive, targeted, or active marketing strategy?
 - o Does explaining the capability of the technology's value proposition require the use of video or other multimedia tools?
 - o Is there a key trade show or other event where most (if not all) prospects will be?
- **Outcome:** Consider the call to action or intended outcomes when evaluating how the marketing effort is progressing. Make outcomes as granular as necessary and set up appropriate tracking mechanisms to measure success. Remember, goals and desired outcomes must align with the audience (e.g., determine whether the target audience have the authority to take the action desired). Outcomes will also influence the message and mechanism(s), so think about outcomes first, not last. Rather than a linear process, developing the AMMO considers all aspects of the strategy concurrently.

Key features

- Intentional communication strategies rather than ad-hoc activities
- Use of the AMMO framework to improve effectiveness

This toolkit is a product of the May 21-23, 2019 event hosted by UIDP and the University of Arkansas, "University-Industry Engagement Outside Major Metropolitan Areas and Megacities: Identifying Issues and Finding Solutions."



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- Creating a matrix of different audiences and messages to gain better efficiency and effectiveness of content

Key takeaways

- Understand the key aspects of interactions with various stakeholders. This will help to understand the engagement process, consider the audience, expand technology applications, create value-based benefits, move forward while protecting intellectual property, and leverage industry feedback for maximum benefit.
- Develop a communications strategy using the AMMO approach to ensure the target audience is effectively reached and their attention is captured.
- Don't re-create the wheel for every technology marketing campaign. Tailor existing and effective collateral mechanisms for the target audience.

Resources required

Below are several resources to help develop effective communication strategies:

- [The Road to Technology Transfer infographic](#). Designed to help technology transfer professionals explain the process to their stakeholders, this infographic lays out a representative path from innovation to product launch. The infographic moves from invention disclosure down the winding road through prioritization/triage, market-based assessment, and the development of strategies that occur before active marketing to targeted prospects.
- [The Audience Message Mechanism Outcome \(AMMO\) concept handout](#). This versatile tool can be applied to any communication with any audience. It helps users:
 - o Identify target audience
 - o Refine core messages to match audience
 - o Select the best tool for conveying messages to audiences
 - o Determine a call to action and metrics for assessing success
- [Communication Strategies worksheet](#). This worksheet helps users develop an AMMO strategy for any communications effort.

Best practice examples

See the blog post at <http://bit.ly/2q1CommStrategies> for additional insights.