



How to Know If Your Message Is Landing Well

A Practical Guide to Measuring Communication Impact

Why Measurement Matters

We often pour time, creativity, and resources into communication—but how do we know if it's working? Are we building awareness, shifting attitudes, or prompting action? Without measurement, we're flying blind.

Thankfully, the team at Advocacy & Communication Solutions (ACS) has laid out an easy framework for evaluating communication efforts of all sizes in its "[Measuring Your Communication Impact](#)" tool. Read on for tips and then check out the full tool online [here](#).

First: Revisit Your Goals

Before you measure your impact, ACS recommends having a solid [communication plan](#) with SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-focused, and Time-bound). Before moving forward with measurement, revisit your goals to ensure they are still relevant and reflect your organization's current priorities and resources. Then assess your progress, so you can celebrate success, adjust tactics, and strengthen your impact.

Evaluation Doesn't Have to Be Expensive

Many tools are low-cost or free:

- Google Forms for surveys
- Google Analytics for web traffic
- Canva for visual reporting
- Informal check-ins for qualitative feedback

Then: Follow the Steps!

Step 1: Choose What to Evaluate

You may not have the time, staff, or budget to evaluate every tactic. Consider prioritizing:

- The two or three most resource-intensive strategies; or
- Tactics tied to your highest-priority goals; or
- Tactics about which you've received feedback but want more insight

Step 2: Establish Your Baseline

You need to know where you started to measure progress. Look for:

- Past survey data
- Website or media engagement metrics
- Qualitative insights from prior conversations

Even anecdotal baseline data is better than no data (for example, staff observations or meeting notes).

Step 3:
Pick the
Right
Tools

Not all measurement methods are created equal. Choose what fits your goal, timeline, and budget:

Technique	Use When You Want...	Considerations
Interviews	Deep insight from individuals	Labor-intensive; may need a facilitator
Focus groups	Real-time feedback on messaging	Costly and best led by professionals
Surveys	Broader trends or opinions	Affordable and scalable
Observation	Behavioral insights	Good for program-related campaigns
Website and social media metrics	Engagement trends	Requires tracking tools (e.g., Google Analytics)
Content analysis	Media framing and tone	Requires specialized training

Keep a Metrics Tracker Handy:

Use a simple table to organize your goals, strategies, and evaluation methods. That way, your team stays aligned and you can spot gaps or progress immediately.

Tip: Think
in
Milestones

Set incremental checkpoints along the way—like media mentions, website hits, or message recall. That way, you can identify progress (or roadblocks) before your effort wraps up.

Examples:

- **Goal:** Become a go-to source on career readiness for young adults
- **Strategy:** Build relationships with journalists
- **Milestone:** Get quoted in two local media outlets within 12 months
- **Measure:** Count the number of journalist inquiries and article placements

Step 4: Adjust Based on What You Learn

Data isn't just for reports—it's a tool for reflection and refinement. As you review your metrics, ask:

- Which tactics worked well, and why?
- Were any surprisingly costly or ineffective?
- Did our messages reach the intended audience?
- Are we using the right messengers and platforms?

Step 5: Share What You Learn

Too often, evaluation results stay buried in internal reports. But sharing your insights—both wins and lessons learned—builds trust, transparency, and credibility.

Ideas for sharing your findings:

- Staff meetings and all-staff emails
- E-blasts and newsletters (like this one!)
- Community or partner briefings

What You Can —and Can't— Say about Impact

• If shown in the data, you can say, "Support for our issue increased after our communication effort."

You can't say, "Our communication effort caused support for our

- Social media snapshots (“We learned ___ from our last campaign...”)

issue to increase.”

Why? Because correlation isn’t the same thing as causation. Stick to what the data shows.

Final Thought: Progress Is a Process

Even a basic evaluation effort helps you course-correct and grow. Measuring your communication impact isn’t about perfection—it’s about learning what works, why it works, and how to do better next time. To dive deeper, check out ACS’ tool, “Measuring Your Communication Impact” online [here](#).

Want more?

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