Articulating the Vision: A Communications Strategy for a SET Region

Objectives

- Define the components of a communications strategy
- Conduct a stakeholder analysis to better understand the different communications needs for each audience
- Inventory internal and external audiences and indicate what SET components are relevant to each audience
- Conduct a SWOT analysis as part of an environmental scan to help craft the message
- Determine which channels will be used to reach each target audience
- Create messages that support the regional SET initiative

The Communication Process

Communication is how we let others know:

what we are *thinking* and how we are *feeling*.

It's really *who* says *what* to *whom* in what *channel* with what *effect*.

Feedback Loop

Sender

Channel of Message Delivery

Receiver

Noise

SET
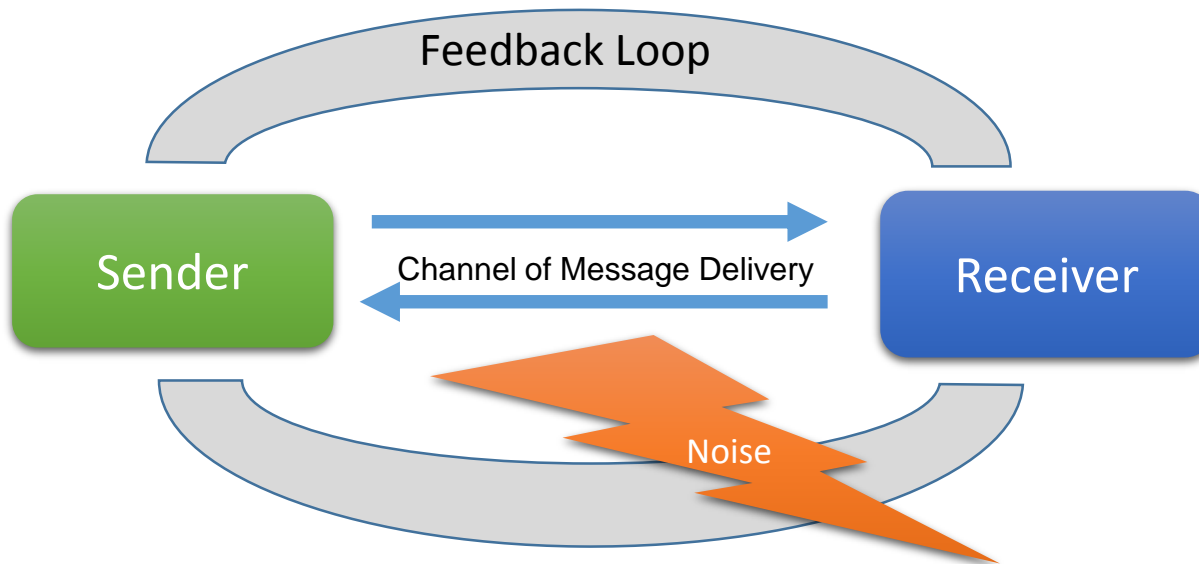
Communications Strategy Benefits

- Creates linkages and consistency among internal teams

- Builds external awareness and credibility

- Generates external support for the project

- Enhances engagement with key stakeholders

- Identifies the proper ways to reach desired audiences

- Aids in crafting consistent and accurate messages

- Showcases achievements

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Communications Strategy Overview

Analyze the situation.

Define the target audience sectors.

Conduct an environmental scan.

Review project goals.

Craft the message.

Select communication channels.

Identify specific activities.

Implement the strategy.

Modify the strategy.

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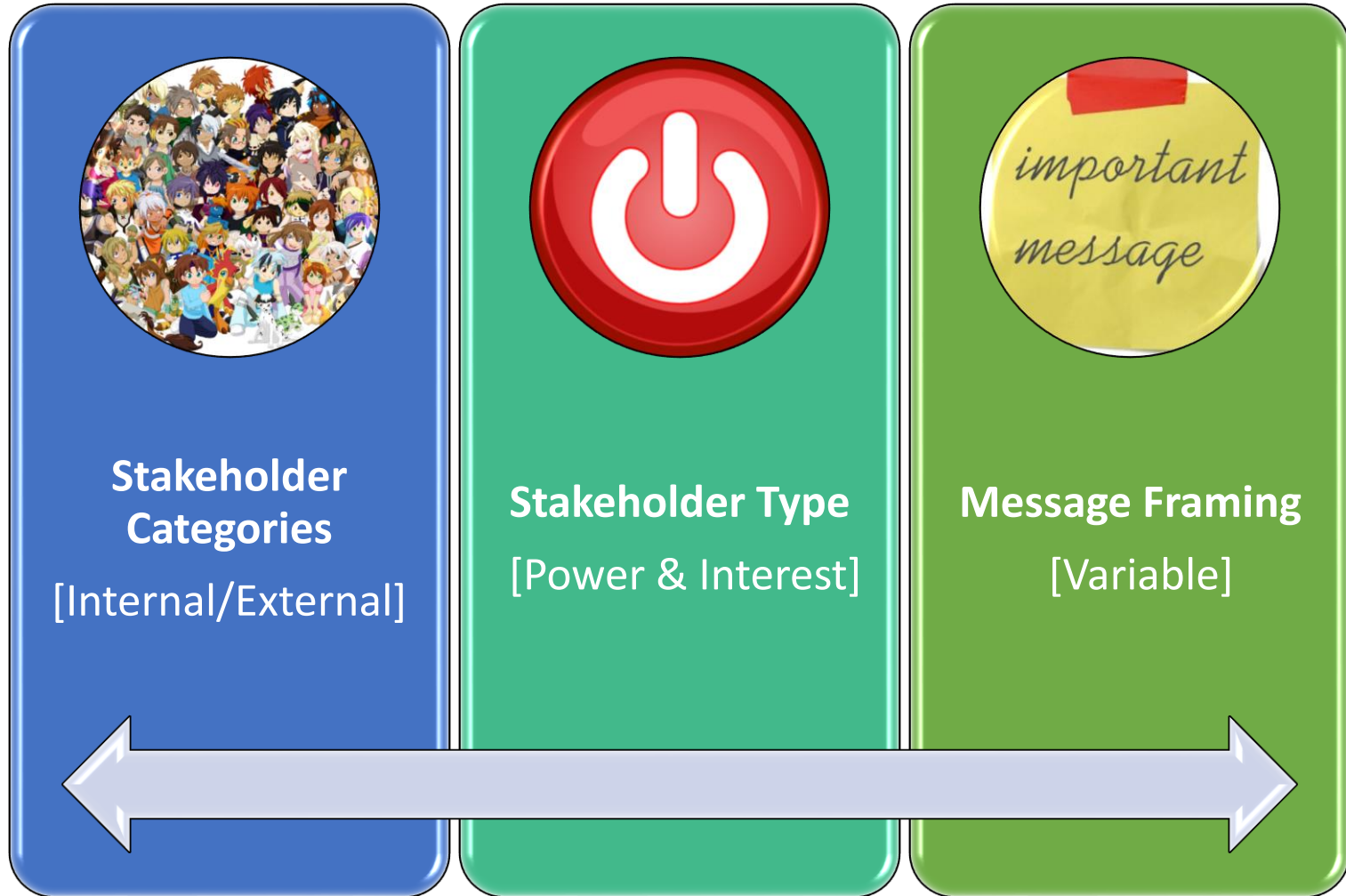
Situation

Who
We Are

What
We Do

Why We Do
What We Do

Who
Cares?

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Target Audience

Stakeholder Categories

[Internal/External]

Stakeholder Type

[Power & Interest]

Message Framing

[Variable]

Audience

Questions for Consideration
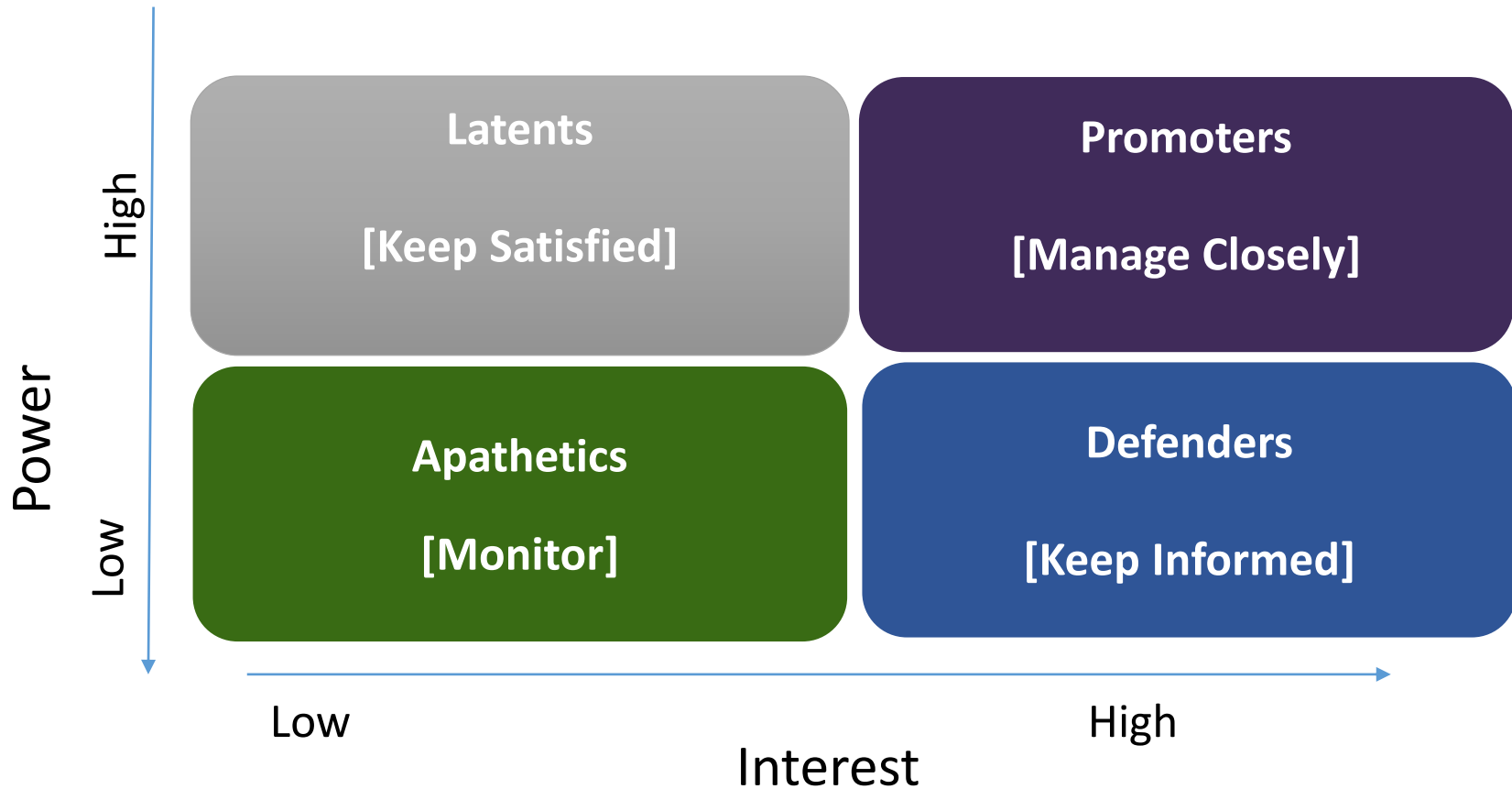
| Internal Audiences	External Audiences
• How do we stay connected with each other? • How do we stay informed and cross communicate our committee work across the larger group?	• What do you need to know about them? • What do you want them to know about you? • What is the best way(s) to communicate with them? • What do you expect in return?

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Stakeholder Matrix

Source: Mitchell, R. K., B. R. Agle, and D.J. Wood. (1997). "Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience: Defining the Principle of Who and What really Counts." in: *Academy of Management Review* 22(4): 853 - 888.

Audience Matrix
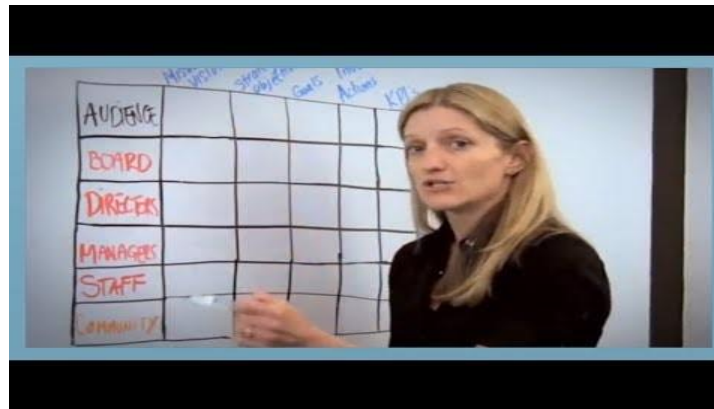
Environmental Scan

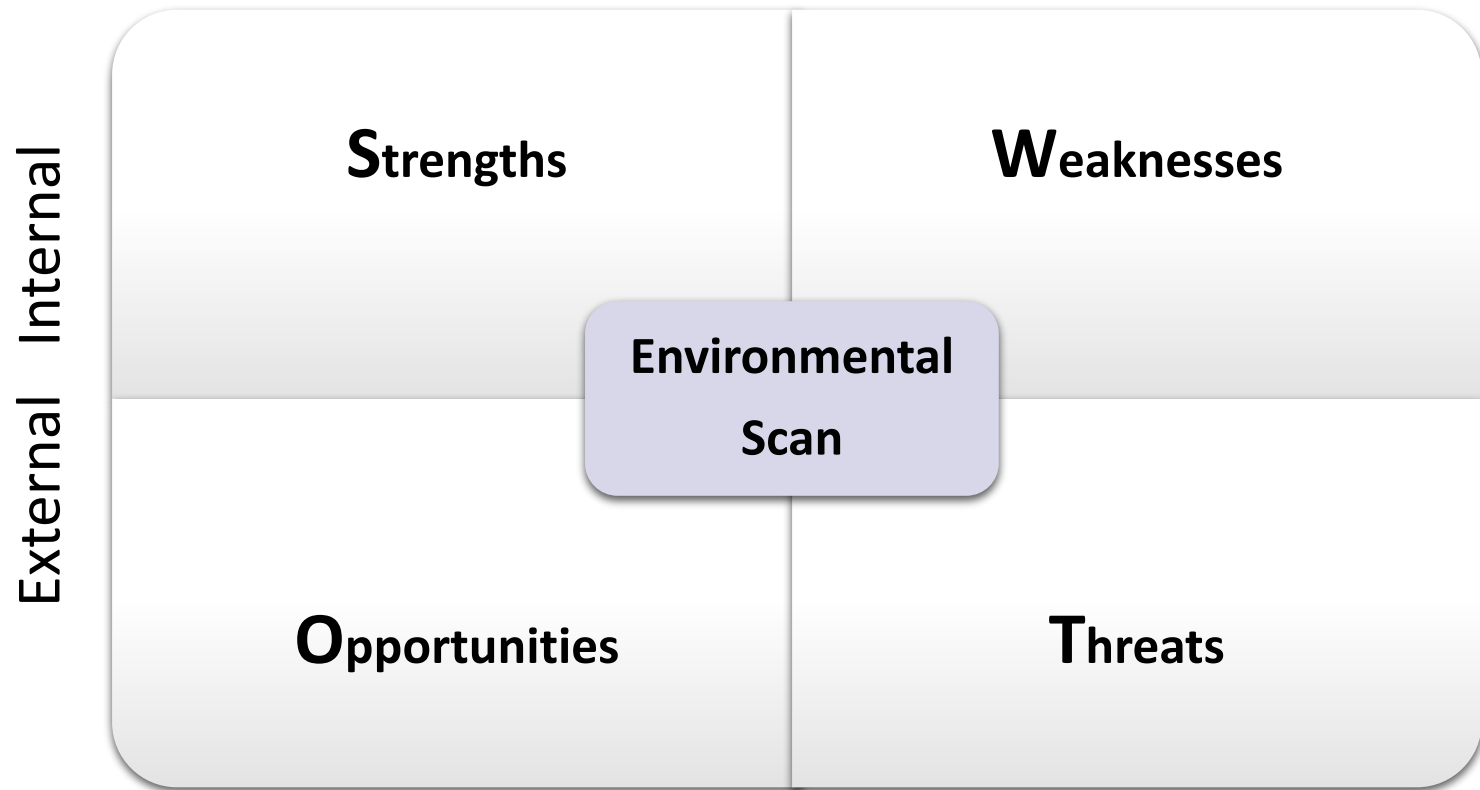| What conditions could impact the communications strategy?	
Internal: Strengths & Weaknesses	External: Opportunities & Threats

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SWOT Analysis

Internal / External (axis labels)

Strengths	**W**eaknesses
Opportunities	**T**hreats

Environmental Scan

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Goals: Questions to Consider

- How can the communication process help support the goals of the SET region?

- What is the primary message that must be conveyed to key stakeholders (internal and external audiences) to help the SET region achieve its goals?

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Message

Great messages:

- Are framed around project goals and objectives.

- Are conveyed clearly and initiated by a credible source.

- Cause people to think, feel, and act in such a way that supports the cause.

- Use different delivery channels for different audiences.

- Keep guiding questions at the forefront:
  - What is SET?
  - Why are we doing SET?
  - Why should it matter to your stakeholders?

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Channels/Delivery Mechanisms

Flyer/Brochure/Fact Sheet	Letter	Poster	Newsletter/e-Newsletter	News Release/Public Service Announcement	Press Conference	Face-to-Face Meeting
Telephone Call/Conference Call	Newspaper/Tabloid	Magazine	Billboard/Signage	Banner	Exhibit	Television, Newspaper, or Radio Event Coverage
Computer/Kiosk	Internet/Webinar/Podcast	Slide Presentation	Website/Social Media	Audio & Video File		

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Activities

Activities are specific action steps designed to deliver the message through the proper channels.

Things to think about:

| Time | Expertise | Budget | Resources |

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Implementation

- Following the communication process strengthens implementation.

- Effective community relations requires organization, attention to detail, and commitment.

- Communication is integral to the overall SET initiative.

Reviewing & Revising the Strategy

The plan should be flexible enough to adapt to changes in:

- The environment both internally and externally.

- Stakeholder groups.

- Resources and barriers.

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Final Thoughts

- Media relations is an important component of a communications strategy, but it isn't the only one.

- You are competing for people's increasingly shorter attention span. Make your messages matter.

- Tap into local resources to help you master your communications goals, and celebrate (and communicate!) success along the way.

Effective Communication

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Questions