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Course Name

Strategic Communication for Sustainable Development

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Lecture 18: Creating a Strategic Communication Plan

Welcome back to the course title strategic communication for sustainable development my name is Aradhna Malik and I am helping you with this course.

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And today we are going to discuss some strategic communication plans and that is again something very systematic very nice something that we can all relate to in the field of communication for development for social development now we have been talking about what strategy is what sustainability is what sustainable development is what communication in

sustainable development is we have also talked about the off for and about sustainable communication.

Now this is sustainable communication inaction and the source of this lecture is.

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A paper by Tennyson and Ray called strategic communication plan that gathers no dust and they have studied the implications or the other you know they have studied they have talked about creating a communication plan in the context of water services, so from the point of view of a utility service but I am going to take whatever they have said and apply it to the context of sustainable development because I feel that any kind of development effort could benefit from whatever Tennyson and Ray have talked about.

So this is and I will give you the complete reference of that paper in the resources.

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Reasons for plans not working as expected

(Tennyson & Ray, 2005)

"unrealistic in terms of the resources needed to carry them out,

are not flexible enough to show practitioners how to adapt to changing conditions,

do not outline specific implementation steps or timelines,

do not have the buy-in of those charged with implementation,

do not include measurement criteria."

Now some reasons why plans do not work I have told you earlier also that when we make plans you know in the real world unexpected events throw us of balance so some reasons why plans do not work are one many times plans are unrealistic in terms of the resources needed to carry them out so we think that we need XYZ but when it comes to real nuts and bolts many times the resources we either have or the resources we thought we would need to carry these plans out are not sufficient or adequate.

The second is they are not flexible enough to show practitioners how to adapt to changing conditions, so when we say plan we have a set unit system of action step one step two step three step four etc...so and many of us are procedure bound many of us like procedure many of us like to be told what needs to be done and how it needs to be done and we you know when we are in the field especially with the risks that are involved depending on the intensity of the risks that are involved.

Many of us do not want to move too far away from the plan that has been proposed that we have all agreed to carrying out so you know in doing that we many times become inflexible we become unadoptable in real situations there many times plans do not outline specific implementation steps or timelines so many times when we make plans we say step one is this step two is this step three is this etc...

But many times we do not set timelines we do not put down specific implementation routines we do not say okay if this does not work out then you may do this or if this is not completed within this timeline then you may do something different, so that is where plans tend to falter or they do not work out as well as they as we expect them to then many times plans do not have the buy-in of those charged with implementation which means that many times plans are not acceptable to the people who are actually going to carry them out.

So somebody else decides the plan somebody else needs the plan somebody has resides a different set of people decides the plan and a totally different set of people carries them out and that is why I have been insisting on participation the participatory model of communication in sustainable development everybody needs to be on board everybody right from the community to the to the implementers to the plan developers to the evaluators to the people who put in the money who are putting in money everybody needs to be on the same page to carry these plans out.

And plans fail because one of these groups has not been told why plans have been made the way they have been made or one of these groups is not sure how to improve what impact will their actions have on the ultimate goal that the plan is trying to achieve they do not include measurement criteria another reason why plans tend to fail is that you know yes we make a plan but we do not write down or we do not discuss we do not decide how whatever we are going to do is going to be evaluated.

Who will say which of these steps worked the way it was supposed to have worked and which of these steps could have done with some kind of improvement, so many times these plans do not have measurement techniques built into them and that is why they tend to fail because once it fails then we do not know how to evaluate where the problem occurred okay.

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Steps to create strategic communication plans that are "realistic, creative, flexible, measurable, and above all else, usable documents that lead to implementation."

Some steps to create strategic communication plans that are realistic, creative. Flexible, measurable and above all else usable documents that can lead to implementation plans are documents we write down a plan we discuss something and then we put everything down in writing and this forms this becomes a permanent record that we can use to go back to whenever we lose track or where we get sidetracked or we forget what we are doing or we are confused or we get stuck in some step we go back to the plan and then we realize.

Okay you know this is what we need to do next, so it is an document now in the real world when unexpected situations come if our plan is not realistic if it is not flexible then it will just remain a document that gathers dust on your office table but if it is realistic then it will be something that we can use as a direction for what we are doing okay, so let us see how we can create these plans this paper is fabulous I will give you the total reference to it is very readable and it is an amazing piece of work.

So you must go through the paper and see how have applied the concept of strategic communication plans to management of utilities and when we take it to the development sector if

we put these plans in action we can always you know these plans can lead to sustainable development efforts they can help considerably with sustainable development efforts.

Okay the first step in this is identification of goals and objectives not the communication goals not who I am trying to influence but what I am trying to achieve at the end of the day okay, so it is not communication goals who should listen to me that is not the goal the goal is what will whatever I am trying to do due to the community what will it do for the community I want to go and speak to the people but ultimately why do I want to speak to the people I want to do a needs assessment.

Why do I want to do a needs assessment that kind of thing so the goals needs to be very, very clear then the second part of this is let us ask ourselves some questions does your utility or action one is going to take have clear goals do we have clear goals that everybody understands if yes where is the utility or action one is going to take going what is the goal what do we hope to achieve what is the future or whatever we have achieved yes I do a needs assessment then what.

What comes next okay what are the challenges and opportunities it will face I go into the community I try and talk to the people and people do not talk to me people do not trust me then people do not want people want to first know what I am doing why I am doing it why should they even sit there why should they leave their feels and come and listen to me why should they leave their house work can come and listen to me.

Why should they spend even one minute listening to me why so the challenges it presents the opportunities it will present maybe in finding out what people's needs are I can also find out what I can do for them maybe in telling me what they need they also end up telling me what they can and cannot do themselves so it could serve as an empowerment after.

Identify audiences (Tennyson & Ray, 2005)

- "An audience can be defined as an individual or organization on which the utility [or action one is planning to take] depends for success."
- Refrain from using the term 'general public' or categorizing audiences as 'general public'.
- Categorize the audience and prioritize these categories.

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That have been suggested by Tennyson and Ray are.

Identify goals & objectives (Tennyson & Ray, 2006)

- Not communication goals but goals of the action one is planning to take
- "Does your utility [or action one is going to take] have clear goals?"
- If yes, "Where is the utility [or action one is going to take] going?"
- "What are the challenges & opportunities it will face?"
- "How is the utility going to meet its goals?"/ How is the action one is going to take related to its goals?
- "Do those charged with communication know what those goals are?"

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Establish messages (Tennyson & Ray, 2005)

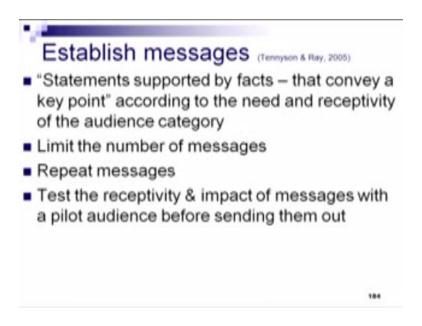
- "Statements supported by facts that convey a key point" according to the need and receptivity of the audience category
- Limit the number of messages
- Repeat messages
- Test the receptivity & impact of messages with a pilot audience before sending them out

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Audiences & message tactics (Tennyson & Ray, 2001
 Ratepayers :
 "Broad group comprising many different levels of education & interest."
"Information should make clear the 'what's in it for me' factor."
 Tactics – Mass media information – "Newsletters, bill insert news releases, website, etc."
 Special interest groups:
"More active in & informed about community issues than most unaffiliated audiences."
"Communication should acknowledge [& cater to] their interest."
 Tactics – demonstration of benefits – "Presentations at monthly meetings, template articles distributed to organization newsletters, workshops, advisory groups, articles, & mailings."
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I will share those categories with you in a minute okay.

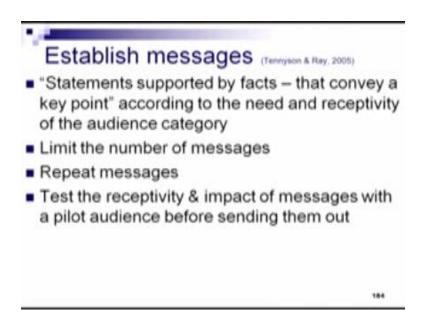
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And then we establish the messages we have talked about some stakeholder categories in the past lectures but there are some more categories that Tennyson and Ray have suggested then we establish messages so we prioritize we categorize our audiences and then we design our messages and how do we the messages are statement supported by facts that can be a key point a message has to have a focus it has to have a clear goal it has to have a central idea.

So we need to identify the central idea and we need to the central idea should be decided according to the need and receptivity of the people who are going to be affected by it of the audience category. Who is going to listen to us who, why should they listen to us, so you know what and what will they be able to relate to will they be able to understand what we are saying or not.

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We should limit the number of messages and we should repeat our messages within a decided period of time, we should test the receptivity and impact of the messages with the pilot audience before sending them out, so when we are deciding on a communication plan when we are trying let us take the example of helping people understand the value of throwing off segregating biodegradable from non biodegradable trash, okay very, very important aspect in today is world and so when we discuss when we think about these things the biodegradable trash needs to be separated out and we need to inform people let us just take that example.

Now telling people why biodegradable trash should be segregated from non biodegradable trash is a very, very important thing. And they should understand what biodegradability is what non biodegradable it is, why should this trash be separated how should we tell them we cannot, we cannot show them a video that made by National Geographic if I want to go into say the villages around my campus National Geographic makes fabulous videos they have come up with such, such beautiful ways of explaining every natural phenomenon.

But unfortunately their videos may not be acceptable to some of the audiences in regions that do not identify with the regions they have focused on, so they may be talking about biodegradable I

do not know if they have a video like this I am just taking a general example this is a very, very credible source, but for people like us amazing educating school children I would not think of a better resource, but would people living in the villages around Kharagpur be able to understand that video even if the translation was in Bengali I taught it, okay or maybe you know some, some organization comes up with a scientific explanation maybe not.

But if we show them that look you bury this, this toffee wrapper in the ground and you take it out a year from then and it will still be the same toffee rapper as opposed to a banana peel you take a banana peel you bury it in the ground and you dig, dig up the same place after maybe six months and you will see that it has disintegrated so the banana peel becomes part of the soil and the toffee rapper does not become part of the soil, the banana peel if you bury a banana peel and on that mud you plant a seed the seed will grow and if you make a layer of off say toffee wrappers and put a thin layer of soil on it and then you put a seed the seed will die, that is a concept that they will follow.

So the receptivity of the audience plus of course the language you use, so that is what we mean by establishing messages. Now Tennyson and we have suggested some categories of audiences the messages that they are receptive to and some of the tactics and we will discuss some category some ways in which we can strategize our message making. They say that one cat the first category they talk about is the ratepayers.

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Audiences & message tactics (Tennyson & Ray,	2005)
 Ratepayers: 	
"Broad group comprising many different levels of educa & interest."	tion
"Information should make clear the 'what's in it for me' factor."	
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The ratepayers are a broad group of audience comprising many different levels of education and interest, so it is what we call as the general public not really the general public but people who could be tangentially related to the topic we are discussing who could contribute in some way they are the latent, you know we were talking about the latent and the apathetic populations when we were talking about the stakeholder, so this is somewhere between the Layton's and stakeholders some people who could make a difference, some people who may not be able to but they are still the affected party.

So they are the ratepayers and they are a very broad group and they represent several levels, and what they need to know is why should they listen to you, what is in it for me that is the question they want from answered by you. So the information that they are going to be receptive to is going to be the information that answers this question, what is in it for me and the tactics we can use or the way we can reach them is by using these tools of mass media like newsletters bill inserts, news releases, websites extra.

So they know what is in it for them why should they listen to you. The second group that tension and we talk about is the special interest group, so we move one level up in the sort of you know

as far as the involvement is concerned. Special interest groups are more active in and informed about the community issues rather than most unaffiliated audiences so these are the people who have special state in the information they already know what they want from the efforts that we are trying to put in as a group that is trying to help alleviate the standard of living or they live with the living situation or that is trying to do help with the development efforts. So they are already there because they have a special interest in that region and.

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The type of communication they are going to be receptive to is communication that acknowledges and caters to their interest, one we accept that they have a special interest they have a reason for listening to us so we understand that we acknowledge it whatever you know we must respect their decision why we want to listen to us maybe it is a politician maybe it is a social worker maybe you know just taking the example of biodegradable versus non biodegradable maybe it is a farmer how will this trash affect my field maybe it is a homemaker maybe it is the, the homemaker who does not know where to dispose of her trash and how to dispose it off so you know it affects me.

So these are the people who already know and they say okay, yes it is going to be converted into soil that my family will use for farming, so what do I do with the trash that does not get converted into soil so this is a special interest group, okay. There in the field so the communication the information we give them should acknowledge that they have an interest we cannot say that okay.

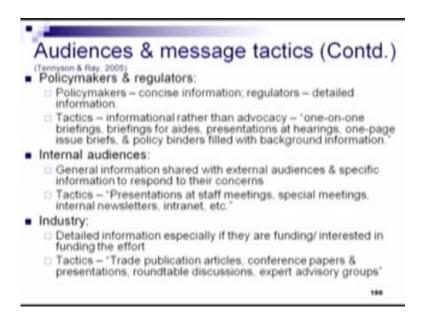
Oh you are a housewife you do not need to know this no, she has an interest in it they get together and they say just tell us what to do with this trash that we have generated, we brought home the flower is available and polythene in polythene bags and in our vegetables come in polythene bags what do I do, how do I throw it in such a way that it does not damage the soil that my family is working on. So we acknowledge it and we get it to their interests which means we talk in a language that they will understand and the tactics here.

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Our demonstration of benefits presentations at monthly meetings, template, articles showing cause-and-effect relationship in some way possible, so and this will vary from group to group the tactic we use will differ from the group that is involved, okay.

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The next group that Tennyson and Ray talk about other policy makers and regulators, policy makers are the people who are actually deciding what should be done, regulators are the ones who are saying how much should be done, and when and where. So policymakers need concise information what needs to be done in the field and why should I be interested in it, why should I be involved in it, okay. I need to know this but I need crisp information regulators on the other hand because they are going to decide the scope and the extent of the activities that we are going to carry out in the field the extent of the development efforts that we need help for they are the ones going to be deciding on how much where, how, when all of those things so they need more detail.

So their information cannot be persuasive it has to be informational the way we will talk to them will be, we do not have to persuade them, we do not have to you know we do not have to advocate any cause they know that it is important to segregate the biodegradable trash from the non biodegradable trash, and the policymakers will know will ask the question what how can I help you. What can I do to help you achieve this goal and the regulator will say how much do you want achieved, this is in my capacity this is not in my capacity.

So they need one-on-one briefings maybe you need to meet them maybe you need to you know they need briefing for the people who are actually going to implement things in the fields they could be you know we could give them presentations at hearings one-page issue briefs and a thick fat binder with detailed information that they can go back to whenever they need more information. Then we have internal audiences, internal audiences are people who are directly affected, so they need the general information that has been shared with external audience and specific information to respond to their concerns.

Because they are the ones who are directly affected by the issue they need specific information and the tactics here again would not be advocacy related but we could give them presentation special meetings, newsletters, intranet or one-on-one meetings you know just going and talking to them. Industry, now these are the people with deep pockets and they need detailed information especially if they are funding in funding the effort or interested in funding the effort so they want to do something for the CSR stuff and they have deep pockets and they say we want to allocate this much money.

How can we help you, so they need detailed information again we cannot it cannot be advocacy related there is, there we cannot it cannot be persuasive we just give them detailed information with a sound logic about why and how they should be spending any time and money on the effort that we are putting it, okay.

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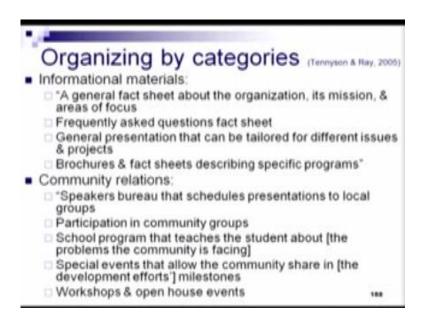
Strategies & tactics (Tennyson & Ray, 2000)	
■ What are strategies & tactics:	
Strategies: "Approach that will be used to meet or more communication objectives."	one
Tactics: "Specific tools" to execute the above approach.	
Methods of strategizing/ tactics:	
☐ Single message, multiple channels	
Organize by categories	
Plan for the unexpected	
Prioritize	
Start small	187

Strategies and tactics, strategies are approaches that will be used to meet one or more communication objectives and tactics are the specific tools that we use to execute the above approach, so how do we approach it is it going to be persuasive, is it going to be informational, is it going to be a request so that is the approach that is the strategy. Tactic is how do we persuade, how do we influence, how do I make a request do I beg with folded hands, do I ask in person do a send them a letter that is going to be the tactic the tool that I use is going to be the tactic the strategy will be how I do it.

And why okay, so okay method of strategizing or you know coming up with tactics when we when we use our tactics or, or the tools that we use need to be especially when dealing with the community it has to be a single message with multiple channels for maximum impact there should be a single message with multiple channels for maximum impact. Then we organize our message by categories of audiences, so one category of audiences will or audience will need one type of message the other category will need a different type of message, then we also plan for the unexpected, we cannot be, you know we cannot plan but we can be prepared.

So I will show you how we how we plan for the unexpected situations, you know we can we can be ready for the unexpected situations we prioritize our goals we prioritize what we do and we start small okay. So we decide that if this kind of a risk comes up this is what we will do if this kind of if this kind of situation comes up this is what we will do and we start with tiny goals that we achieve okay.

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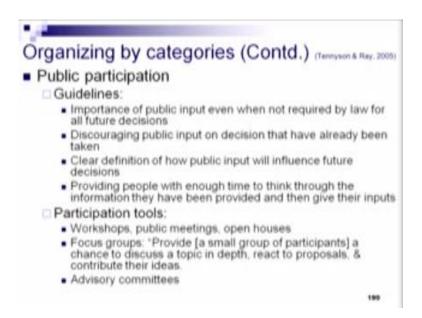


Organizing by categories, how do we organize our message by categories we have informational material to various categories of informational material. So informational materials are one general different examples of informational material could be a general fact sheet about the organization, about the group that is going in with the development effort, its mission and areas of focus, frequently asked questions fact sheet could be one, general presentation that can be tailored for different issues and projects could be one, brochures and fact sheets describing specific programs could be one.

So different types of informational material, the second method is the community relations. So speakers bureau, how do we connect with the community, how do we get their inputs one is we give them information, the second category is we get there, we start with the participation. So we

could have groups of people, we have community groups, we have school programs, we have special events, we have workshops open houses etc., then we have public participation.

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Public participation is, you know can be achieved through different guidelines and some guidelines for public participation are the importance of public input even when not required by law for all future decisions. So we decide that we will get public input whenever even when it is not required by the law, we will discourage public input on decisions that have already been taken, we will we will have a clear definition of how public input will influence future decisions.

We will provide people with enough time to think through the information they have been provided and then give their inputs some rules for participation could be workshops, could be focus groups, focus groups are, you know we provide a small group of participants that represent a community or a special interest group with a chance to discuss a topic in depth react to proposals and contributor ideas so that is a focus group. Then we have advisory committees okay.

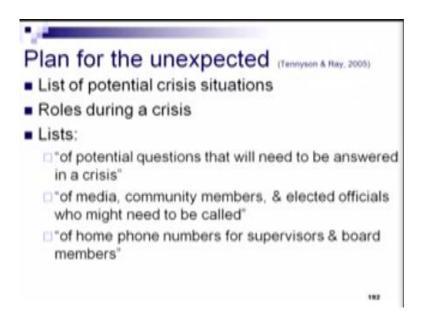
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So some participation tools then we have media relations then, you know this is another category of messages that of the way we can or tactic, sorry some media relations, media relations could be maintaining relationships with beat reporters people capturing a category of events planning media briefing, sending news releases, planning tours or facilities, and projects for the media how do we let the media know what we are doing that is what we do in this planning towards developing ideas for feature or human interest stories preparing spokespeople for media interviews.

So who in our group or team can really deal with the media in such a way that we will get the maximum coverage and benefit out of our relationship with the media and who will help us maintain that relationship with the media writing articles and letters. And then we have government relations, we have internal communication, so this is how we organize our strategies by category.

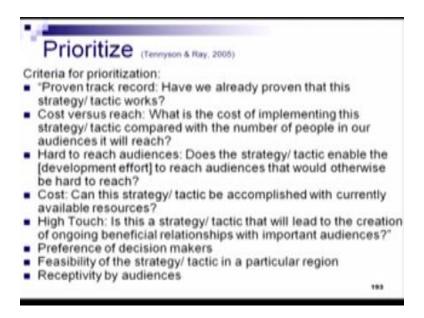
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Now how do we plan for the unexpected, we make a list of potential crisis situations this is what we, we are only preparing we are not planning we are preparing for the unexpected we can make a list of potential crisis situations that we can encounter. We can decide who is going to play what kind of a role during the crisis so who is going to be in the forefront, who is going to be the decision maker etc we can make lists of potential questions that we need to be answered in a crisis.

We can make a list of media community members and elected officials who might need to be called in time of a crisis, we can make a list of home phone numbers of supervisors and board members who will need to be contacted, we can make a list of resources that we can, we can bank on during times of a crisis. So all of that, you know or are the people who could be effect that can be done.

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Then we prioritize, and some criteria that we can use for prioritization or proven track record, have we already proven that this strategy or tactic works, cost versus reach what is the cost of implementing this strategy or tactic compared with the number of people in our audiences it will reach, hard to reach audiences does the strategy or tactic enable the development effort to reach audiences that would otherwise be hard to reach cost high touch.

You know is this a strategy or tactic that will lead to the creation of ongoing beneficial relationships with our important audiences, so are we going to be able to connect with them as well as we are doing now, preference of decision-makers, feasibility of the strategy, or tactic in a particular region so how do decision-makers view that particular strategy or tactic, some decision-makers may not like one strategy or tactic, so that cannot feature in our list.



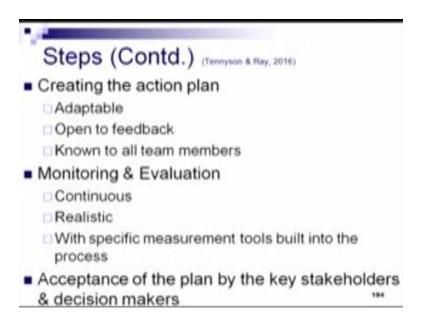
Criteria for prioritization:

- Proven track record: Have we already proven that this strategy/ tactic works?
- Cost versus reach: What is the cost of implementing this strategy/ tactic compared with the number of people in our audiences it will reach?
- Hard to reach audiences: Does the strategy/ tactic enable the [development effort] to reach audiences that would otherwise be hard to reach?
- Cost: Can this strategy/ tactic be accomplished with currently available resources?
- High Touch: Is this a strategy/ tactic that will lead to the creation of ongoing beneficial relationships with important audiences?"
- Preference of decision makers
- · Feasibility of the strategy/ tactic in a particular region
- Receptivity by audiences

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Feasibility and receptivity by audiences.

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Creating and some more the last steps here are creating the action plan, the action plan that we make should be adaptable, it should be open to feedback, it should be known to all the team members monitoring and evaluation is very important we need to monitor the action plan that we put in place in a continuous manner the monitoring should be realistic and measurement should be with specific measurement tools built into the process and ultimately the acceptance of the plan by the keys take holders and decision-makers.

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So to summarize whatever we have done is, you know when we make a communication plan for sustainable development these are some of the steps that we will go through we will identify goals and objectives, we will identify audiences, we will establish messages, we will develop strategies and tactics, we will prioritize, and we will create an action plan, and then we will monitor and evaluate that action plan, and make sure the action plan is acceptable to the key decision-makers. And we will discuss some more things in the next class, so thank you very much for listening.