



CHANGE TOOLKIT

Tool: Key Message Builder

Used in:
PLAN
Also good for:
GAIN ENTRY

My Notes

What is it?

The key message builder is a model to help build a series of four key messages for any project or communication.

It looks like this:

The practicalities		When and how
Rationale and context		Why we're doing this
What it means for you		What's in it for the audience
Single, memorable point		The foundations: the master take-away

Why use it in a change process?

One of the challenges communicators face is that people say they get bombarded with too much information, but they don't hear enough about the issues that really matter to them. They want help to distinguish the information that's relevant and important from the stuff that's well-intentioned but, ultimately unhelpful chatter.

During times of change, clear communications are vital to inform and reassure stakeholders, and to influence behaviour and/or attitudes. Developing strong key messages will help you hone in on the most important points of your communication, frame them clearly and memorably, and use them in ways that are most likely to catch people's attention.

During the **Plan** stage you can populate the message builder with the practicalities and the key 'what's in it for me' benefits. During the **Gain Entry** stage you need to have this message scheme in mind so that you understand the sorts of message which will engage your different stakeholder groups.

What do I need to do?

- Using the Key message builder model is simple. Working alone, with the communications lead if your project has one, or even with the full project team, you start at the bottom and work upwards through each stage until you have crafted a series of four key messages:
 - The single, memorable point** is the master take-away – the essence of your project or activity boiled right down. If you asked somebody in your target audience "what's this project about?" what would you want them to say?
 - What it means for you** is the message about why this project is relevant and interesting for this audience. Make it as practical and concrete as possible, so

that people can understand instantly why this is important enough for them to pay attention.

- **The rationale and context** is about why you're doing this. This is where corporate jargon can creep in, so beware if you find yourself waxing lyrical about "strategic operational initiatives" and "streamlining market-leading propositions."
 - The **practicalities** are about the when and how. What do you actually want people to do? When will something happen that affects them?
2. Once you have developed your four key messages, develop "proof points" – facts, examples, stories or anecdotes that will support each message and help bring it to life.