So many choices, so little time:
Setting strategies to guide your tactics

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ATE: Advanced Technological Education

- NSF Funding – focus on technician education; professional development; community colleges

- Approximately 311 projects & centers currently funded

- Not just a funding program; a real community

- Variety of cross-cutting support for community members

Primary Purpose: Amplify the Impact of ATE

- Information Hub and Portal

- Resource Collection

- Services and Tools

- Outreach and Dissemination

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Brands

Strong
Campaigns

Strong
Teams

POLL QUESTION #1

I would describe myself as:

A. Affiliated with an ATE grant
B. Affiliated with a different NSF granting program
C. Not currently funded, but writing an ATE grant
D. Other

What we'll cover:

‣ Defining strategy

‣ Understanding how setting strategies guide your tactics

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POLL QUESTION #2

Which of the following statements best describes your project or center's current outreach strategies?

A. We don't conduct a lot of outreach.
B. We are actively conducting outreach and it's working, but don't have a documented approach.
C. We are incredibly strategic when it comes to conducting and measuring outreach.
D. Other

What is strategy?

The practice of defining what you want to achieve and identifying the best way to achieve it.

Why should I care?

The ability to create, communicate, and apply clear strategy is essential to the job of anyone communicating about your project or center on major initiatives and everyday moments.

What's your desired future state?

Start with the end in mind

‣ What is the goal I'm trying to achieve?

‣ What does success look like?

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Goals and objectives

Why are you doing this?

‣ Relate to your mission and the goals of your grant proposal

‣ Conduct research (landscape scan, interviews, SWOT analysis)

‣ Set big-picture goal(s) with SMART objectives

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Goals and objectives

‣ **Goal: big-picture statement of what you are striving to achieve**

Raise money to sustain our expanding project or center offerings

Position ourselves as the go-to resource for X

‣ **Objective: measurable outcomes that indicate you've achieved your goal**

Raise 30% more money by the end of 2019

Increase in requests by 50% from ABC audience

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Do you know who you are trying to reach?

Know your audiences

To create effective communications strategy, you'll need to identify who you need to reach.

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Target audiences

Who are you trying to reach?

‣ Consider who already knows you

‣ Challenge yourself to "walk in their shoes"

‣ Focus on one action for them to take

Female students interested in robotics

Community college educators and administrators

Funding agency program officers

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Audience profile (name, group, pic)

Background (education, location, age, etc.)	
Goals (what they are looking for)	
Big ideas (what they need to see/hear)	
Current perception (what do they think of your org)	
Barriers (what's stopping them from engaging)	
Watering holes (ways to reach them incl influencers)	
Actions (what do you want them to do)	

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Bob (potential student)

Background	25, lives in Minneapolis with his wife and 3-year old child. Has a high school diploma + studied for one semester at college.
Goals	Looking for skills so set him up for a career in the high-tech industry.
Big ideas	Wants to earn a good salary and take care of his family.
Current perception	Has heard of our community college, but not about our ATE project.
Barriers	Overwhelmed that he might have to go back to school for four years and how to balance the demands of school and his job, with his family.
Watering holes	Spends time at church and his local community center. Also on Facebook and Instagram.
Actions	Come to an open house event. Follow us online.

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Who's your audience?

This worksheet will help you create a simple profile of a key stakeholder and tell an inspiring and consistent story about your ATE project or center that is tailored to the unique needs and motivations of the individual.
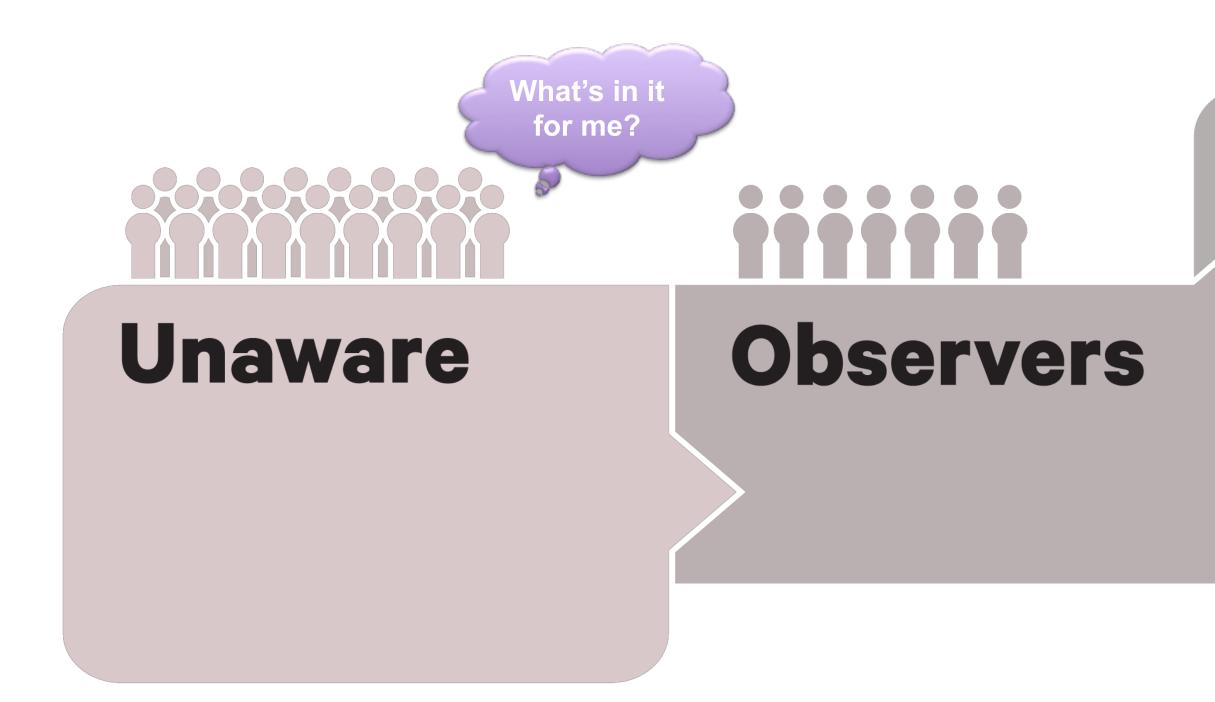
Persona name: _____

1. Describe this stakeholder. What are their characteristics (demographics, values, interests, profession, technical area, etc.)?

2. What would be the best way to describe your ATE project or center to this individual?

3. What are the main points about your project or center they *must* take away from their interaction with you?

Ladder of engagement

Visualize building relationships with new and existing audience members as a path, using every action that your audiences take as an opportunity to connect and move them up the ladder of engagement—from not knowing you to being your most passionate participant.

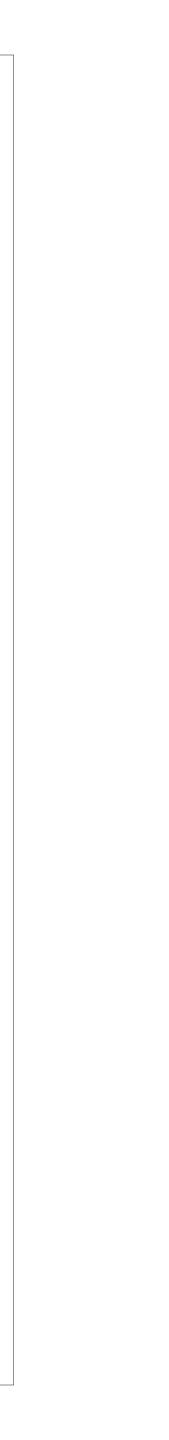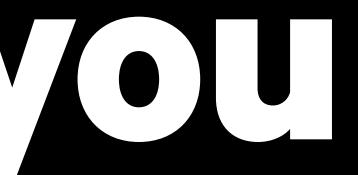|	UNAWARE	OBSERVERS	SUPPORTERS	ADVOCATES
Who is this? (List common attributes or connection to your project/center.)				
What are they looking for? (What do they want to understand better about your project/center?)				
What do you want them to think? (Imagine them completing this sentence: I think [project/center name] is…)				

POLL QUESTION #3

Where on the ladder of engagement does your project or center need to pay the most attention to?

A. Unaware
B. Observer
C. Supporter
D. Advocate
E. Not sure

How will you reach and engage them?

Strategies

What approach will best guide your actions to achieve your goal?

‣ Ask, "how would I do that?" which should lead you to different tactics or actions

‣ Look at the whole picture (SWOT) and focus on best opportunities with your goal in mind
Engage new donor prospects with a non-donation action

Make it easy to get involved

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Tactics

What specific activities or actions will you take to accomplish your strategies?

‣ Be detailed: this is about implementation!

‣ Check ideas against available resources, tools, and capacity

‣ Select channels based on your audience(s)
Add a prominent "share your story" button to our site and e-news

Update identity to be more approachable/inclusive

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Example

Goal: increase participation for [project or center]

Objective: get 15 students to register for the [xyz program] every semester

Strategy: make [project or center] more visible to students before they've declared an interest in technical education

Tactic: host an ongoing introductory series during college orientation week for both new students and transfers

What's the right channel for me?

Channels

Selecting appropriate channels is as important as the content you share. It makes all the difference when reaching, retaining, and growing your base.

The appropriate channel

Craft a plan to reach your specific audience where they prefer to receive information. Here are channels to consider:

- **In-person** (events, classes, exhibit fairs)
- **In-print** (mail, postcards, flyers, newsletters, reports)
- **Online** (website/blog, webinars, email. social media)
- **On-air** (video, podcasts)
- **Mobile** (texting, app)

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Select your channel

How do you go about selecting the right channel?

‣ Review performance of channels you're currently using

‣ Score other potential channels for fit

- What makes sense given your audience(s) and goals?

- What do you have time for?

‣ Select a mix of channels and make time to regularly evaluate

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Putting it all together

Strategy worksheet

Use this worksheet to map out a strategic plan of action.

Problem:

Goal	Objective
A big-picture statement of what you are striving to achieve	A measurable outcome that indicates you've achieved your goal

Strategy	Tactic
A specific approach that guides your actions and decisions in the service of your goal	An action step you take to carry out your strategy

Resources

ATE CENTRAL
SUPPORTING ADVANCED TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATION

HOME   **COMMUNITY**   **RESOURCES**   **EVENTS**   **ABOUT**

Communications Overview

Public relations (PR) is the practice of managing communications between your organization and its audience(s). PR uses topics of interest or news items to promote awareness and it builds rapport with a wide-ranging constituency from internal staff to the general public. Common PR activities include speaking at conferences, working with the media, and social media engagement.

Working with the media in particular can seem daunting at first. But a little homework, planning, and persistence can produce meaningful results. In addition to raising awareness of your organization's work, news coverage supports your credibility in the community, attracts collaborators, and demonstrates your project or center's impact. With some preparation, practice, and persistence, getting good media coverage is not very difficult, and the rewards can be excellent.

Getting Started

The first step is to choose one person to become your **media or outreach** liaison. This person will be the point of contact for media and others who are interested in your project or center. Having one person will make it easier for the media (and other audiences) to find you and it helps to keep your communications consistent.

Next, you should develop tools for a successful communications campaign. Most of these tools can be widely repurposed, so tracking them all in one **master messaging document** will save a lot of time and energy. You don't want to wait until media calls to have the latest version of these materials pulled together. Everyone should have access to the document in the event that the liaison isn't available.

The Communications Guide is organized into eight parts:

- Suggestions for how to develop your organization's **Mission Statement**
- Help with creating your project or center's **Key Messages**
- Tips on how to **Make News**
- A section on how to **Pitch Your Project or Center**
- Guidance on **Creating a Media Kit**
- A section to help with **Choosing Media Outlets**
- Descriptions of **Potential Outreach Paths** for all of your outreach and dissemination needs

This Guide walks you through how to create and work with each of these tools. Don't miss the helpful sources and resources at the end!

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atecentral.net/outreachkit/communication

INTRODUCING

The Smart Communications Podcast

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E-BOOK

Achieve more

Putting strategy to work for your nonprofit