EAB

The IRM Leader's Communication Companion

A Toolkit to Support Institutional Risk Management Communication Efforts

Ways to Use This Toolkit

Use this toolkit to orchestrate an initial school-wide communication strategy, address potential roadblocks, create ongoing messaging to maintain stakeholder involvement.

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Executive Summary

The IRM Leader's Communication Companion

Change is always difficult. We are naturally hesitant to change processes and habits that appear to be working and therefore may be more challenging to change. Thus, it is important that you build a strong communication strategy when implementing institutional risk management (IRM).

Poor communication can slow or even sabotage institutional changes. To combat this, you will want to prepare your communication strategy for the introduction of IRM, as well as utilize an ongoing communication strategy to maintain long-term school-wide interest and involvement in the process.

Effective communication eases the path for institutional change. Communication should be clear and resonate with the intended audience. Targeted messaging for all stakeholder groups on your campus allows for content that will address their unique concerns, interests, and goals. It is important to note that, like the process itself, **communication about IRM does not end with the initial roll-out**. You will want to continually monitor stakeholder involvement and share the positive impact of IRM with your campus.

This toolkit will help you to craft an effective, multifaceted communication strategy to support the successful implementation of a comprehensive IRM process.

✎ How To Use This Toolkit

Use this resource to help refine ongoing messaging and foster support for the institutional risk management process. Tools included within this toolkit will also assist you in preparing your school to respond to concerns with the risk management process.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Communication Key When Instituting Change

The implementation of any new initiative cannot be over-communicated. In fact, research has shown that **poor communication is one of the biggest obstacles to change management** and can have extremely detrimental results, including the failure of the initiative.

Potential Results of Poor Communication

Slow Adoption of Changes

Stakeholders are slow to adopt changes without clear reasoning and concrete outcomes.

Active Resistance to Change

Stakeholders are known to resist changes when they do not believe the change will be beneficial to the organization.

Frustration in Response to Change

Stakeholders become frustrated because of unclear communication. Their productivity and satisfaction suffers as a result.

To institute change, however, **schools must engage in effective communication practices**, not only avoid poor communication. Effective communication requires a clear message, appropriate delivery methods, and a message that resonates with stakeholders.

Components of Effective Communication

Clear Message

- Messaging should be presented clearly and with appropriate detail, including clear goals and expectations for involvement

- Reason for change, its impact, should be communicated

- Messaging should make explicit the benefits of the change

Thoughtful Delivery

- Delivery channel for the change should be appropriate for the intended receiver

- Message should be delivered using varied methods of communication to ensure it can be understood by all stakeholders

- For example, for certain messages, both in-person announcements and email might be appropriate

Resonant Messaging

- Message should resonate with the receiver

- Tie the change in with school mission for a more powerful message to school stakeholders

- Messaging should be tailored for each unique stakeholder group

- Messaging should be unique to stakeholder groups and address their concerns

Source: Susan M. Heathfield, "Communication in Change Management," January 19, 2019; Boston Consulting Group, "Communications in Change;" Sarah Stebbins, Change Management Methodology And Strategic Communication: An Essential Partnership," June 19, 2017; Elsbeth Johnson, "How To Communicate Clearly During Organizational Change," June 13, 2017; Tim Creasey, "The Costs & Risks of Poorly Managed Change;" EAB interviews and analysis.

Guide to Tool Implementation

On this page we outline how the tools in this Communication Companion fit together to create a strong communication strategy. An effective communications strategy should ~~be~~ include a comprehensive plan outlining all messaging on a topic from implementation to final goals. Your communication~~s~~ strategy will move from the implementation of IRM, to early results of the process, to maintaining engagement in the process.

The best communication plans use a variety of channels to reach all members of the community and suits the individual organization's culture and personality. You might want to talk to your school's marketing and communications team about what types of messaging works well with your community members for some school-specific tips. For example, the team would be able to offer guidance on what types of messages should be delivered in person or by email.

Use the information below to guide your use of each tool included in the toolkit.

Initial IRM Rollout | **Ongoing Progress**

Who: CFO, Risk Committee Leadership should use this resource

What: Message Map will result in a clear communication strategy for all stakeholder groups

When: This tool should be used when implementing the IRM process

Phase I: Message Map

Initially, your communication~~s~~ strategy will be focused on educating stakeholders about their role in the IRM process and gaining buy-in by clearly illustrating the value of IRM. For support ~~at~~ during this step, use the **Message Map***.*

Who: CFO, Risk Committee Leadership should use this resource

What: Diagnostic will allow user to identify and address potential human disruptions to the process

When: This tool should be used to test your messaging, respond to concern about stakeholder support for IRM

Phase II: Disruptive Stakeholder Diagnostic

Once you have begun education about IRM, you will want to address any nay-sayers in the community by employing the **Disruptive Stakeholder Diagnostic.** *This tool should also be used to test the effectiveness of your initial messaging, and verify that your messaging will address potential concerns about the process.*

Who: All members of the Risk Committee should use this resource

What: Tool will allow committee to create ongoing messaging to maintain stakeholder involvement

When: This tool should be used at regular intervals after IRM implementation

Phase III: Promote IRM Wins Schoolwide

Lastly, plan to expand your communication strategy to continually build interest and maintain engagement in the IRM process. For this step, use the **Promote IRM Wins Schoolwide** *tool at this step.*

1 | Tool 1: Message Map

Refine Communication Strategies to Educate, Engage Stakeholders

Overview

As you engage in the IRM process, this tool will help you to refine message delivery and gain buy-in from various stakeholders. CFOs and risk committee leaders should use this tool to customize their messaging for all stakeholder groups.

Stakeholders will respond more positively to tailored language because it directly relates to their role at the school and reflects their concerns. You should begin the IRM process by completing the Message Map to create a unique message plan for each distinct group at your school.

How to Use the Message Map

Use this tool to design clear messaging for all stakeholder audiences. Fill in each box according to the categories described; each row should correspond to a specific group that you need to engage in the risk management process.

The map is organized into the following categories:

Audience: This is a particular group that will be impacted by IRM. Remember, risk management is most effective if you involve the entire school community so once complete, the Message Map should include all stakeholders. *Consider, are all campus stakeholders included?*

Challenges: Consider what would cause stakeholders to shy away from engaging in the process. Be as specific as possible. *What would be a unique hindrance for that group in particular? How does this differ from other groups?*

Opportunities: Consider what will motivate each stakeholder group to enthusiastically support the IRM process. Be as specific as possible. *What would be a unique benefit for that group in particular?*

Information: Determine what information each stakeholder group needs in order to understand the IRM process. Consider building on what you included in the initial roll-out. *Is there any additional background information on risk management you feel is relevant for this specific group of individuals?*

IRM Contribution: Be as concrete as possible in determining what actions the audience needs to take in the IRM process. Having the outcomes written down will help you to clearly communicate the needs and expectations for each stakeholder group's involvement. *What is an ideal level of involvement for that group? What tasks will they need to complete?*

1 | Tool 1: Message Map

Audience	Challenges	Opportunities	Information	IRM Contribution
What group are you targeting? Ex: Faculty, athletics department, head of school	What barriers exist to gaining this group's buy-in?	What will this group view as a positive outcome?	What does this group need to know about institutional risk management?	What are the next steps for this group? What part should they play in the IRM process?
1 Faculty	IRM takes time away from teaching for "administrative duties"	IRM gives faculty knowledge, language, tools to address school risks, guide change	Faculty proximity to students & experience is unique, critical to IRM success	Faculty should participate in risk identification workshops and report risks
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

| # Tool 2: Disruptive Stakeholder Diagnostic

How to Identify and Manage Disruptive Behaviors

Overview

When introducing IRM, you should expect some resistance. Use this tool to help identify potential challengers to the process. This tool will help you to determine if a stakeholder is displaying typical resistant behavior, or conduct that requires additional intervention.

First, use this resource to test the messaging outlined in the Message Map.

- Think of stakeholders across your school who might be resistant

- Use the diagnostic to imagine their reaction to the process (tip: use previous examples of resistance to change as sample behaviors)

- *Ask yourself: Does our messaging, as outlined in the Message Map, address the concerns surfaced in this exercise?*

Then, as implementation continues, CFOs or Risk Committee leaders should use this tool whenever a stakeholder exhibits negativity toward the IRM process to determine if the stakeholder requires additional attention.

The diagnostic provides guidance on how best to confront stakeholders on their disruptive behavior.

How to Use the Disruptive Stakeholder Diagnostic

1: Complete the worksheet on the following page for each person displaying signs of resistance to the IRM process. You should answer each question using the scale provided:
- 0 points for each "Never"
- 1 point for each "Occasionally"
- 2 points for each "Often"

2: Follow the recommendation alongside the corresponding score.

3: Use the **Common Deflection Techniques and Suggested Responses** to prepare to address disruptive stakeholders. Although it is important to respond to all resistance, it is especially important to identify those whose resistance might derail the project. Leaders should intervene to prevent potential derailment.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Disruptive Stakeholder Worksheet

	Question	Never	Occasionally	Often
1	Is this person noticeably more upset about IRM implementation than others in a similar position?	☐	☐	☐
2	Does this person's behavior make others uncomfortable?	☐	☐	☐
3	Has this person resisted education on the benefits of IRM?	☐	☐	☐
4	Has this person's behavior been disruptive in the past?	☐	☐	☐
5	Has this person been argumentative?	☐	☐	☐
6	Has this person spread rumors or inaccuracies about the change?	☐	☐	☐
7	Has this person attempted to convince others of their thinking?	☐	☐	☐
8	Have this person's actions appeared to be deliberate or pre-meditated?	☐	☐	☐
9	Does this person exhibit more anger than stress?	☐	☐	☐
10	Has this person openly predicted that IRM will fail at the school?	☐	☐	☐
11	Does this person speak in "us" and "them" language?	☐	☐	☐
12	Does this person question the honesty, motives, or ability or management or executives?	☐	☐	☐

Scoring Guide

0-7 ➡ This person is likely exhibiting only typical resistance. Speak with them one-on-one to determine if further action is needed.

8-12 ➡ Caution. Approach this person as a typical resistor, but be prepared to alter course if they are unresponsive to you.

13-26 ➡ This person needs additional attention. Remind them of the reasoning behind IRM implementation, seek to understand sources of their frustration, and try to mitigate their dissenting actions or opinions. Do not hesitate to ask the Risk Management Committee leadership, or other senior leaders at your school to intervene.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Common Deflection Techniques and Suggested Responses

The Subject Changer

How They Deflect — Distracts from IRM with a new topic of discussion

Example — "Have you tried the new breakfast sandwich in the cafe?"

Suggested Response — Do not engage in the tangent:

"I have, they're delicious. However, today I need to talk to you about risk management…"

The Denier

How They Deflect — Claims that the incident did not occur as alleged

Example — "Hmm, sorry I don't recall that happening."

Suggested Response — Provide concrete and well-documented accounts of events:

"During the IRM Workshop last week you interrupted…"

The Blame-Shifter

How They Deflect — Points finger to avoid responsibility

Example — "That wasn't my fault--actually [colleague] is responsible."

Suggested Response — Force individual accountability for their role:

"After speaking to everyone else involved, it seems clear that primary responsibility lies with you."

The Apologizer

How They Deflect — Jumps to confession before hearing the message

Example — "My apologies, I won't do that again."

Suggested Response — Verify sincerity of the apology and ensure that they intend to change their behavior:

"I appreciate your candor and commitment to not repeat this. What can we do to help make sure it doesn't happen again?"

The Rationalizer

How They Deflect — Offers excuses to justify behavior

Example — "My staff needed more lead time before committing to the IRM process."

Suggested Response — Indict behavior in spite of rationale:

"Your department missed the initial IRM workshop; what can we do to ensure you have the information necessary to participate?"

The Negotiator

How They Deflect — Bargains for alternative course of action

Example — "I'm not sure IRM is necessary, we've been handling risks for years this way."

Suggested Response — Remain firm and clear:

"We see IRM as a tremendous benefit for the community. Here's why…"

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

3 | Tool 3: Promote IRM Wins School-wide

How to Maintain Engagement Through Ongoing Communication About IRM

Overview

Once IRM has been introduced and implemented it will be critical to build on positive momentum, as well as foster continuous stakeholder interest and engagement. The most compelling support for change often comes from one's peers, rather than top-down mandates. Use your school community as a source of information about what's working well and help maintain interest by showcasing their success stories.

This tool will help you to gather and share stories in support of IRM at your institution. It is intended to help risk management leaders produce a list of tangible examples that demonstrate the value of participating in the IRM process for your institution. This should be a continuous process to maintain investment in IRM, so your plan should be sustainable over the long-term.

How to Use Showcase IRM Success Stories

To use this tool, begin by brainstorming ideas to identify IRM success stories, then develop ways of sharing those stories with the greater community. Start with supportive stakeholders, determine what resources are at your disposal, and what places are best to post results.

Brainstorm some ways that you might share positive stories of IRM in action. What resources will you use to spread the word? Who on campus can be relied on to share the story? What is the best timeline to begin to spread the word?

Then, outline your next steps.

Communicate IRM's Value to All Stakeholders

Identify IRM Success Stories

Identify and build on current support among colleagues for the process by identifying success stories

Tip: Talk to those who submitted potential risks to the institution to learn about the outcome to mine for success stories

Share IRM Success Stories with Community

Select and share some of the positive risk management experiences with the greater school community

Tip: Consider finding unique ways to share updates with the school community, for example, an engaging video

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

3 | Tool 3: Promote IRM Wins Schoolwide

How to Maintain Engagement Through Ongoing Communication About IRM

Identify IRM Success Stories

Use existing opportunities to identify success stories

- Which opportunities are present on your campus for sharing information?
  - ❑ Regular department meetings
  - ❑ Risk Committee meetings
  - ❑ Staff check-ins with supervisors
  - ❑ All school meetings
  - ❑ Other(s): _____

- Include space for anecdotes or reflections on the process at the beginning of each Risk Management Committee Meeting to surface their experiences

- Ask all Risk Committee members to set aside a few minutes in their respective department meetings for participants to share their experiences with IRM

  Who can help make this happen: _____

Build new channels to gather IRM success stories

- Which channels will you institute at your school?
  - ❑ Check-ins with risk reporters
  - ❑ Coffee and chat
  - ❑ Staff check-ins with supervisors
  - ❑ IRM success email address
  - ❑ IRM complement box
  - ❑ Other(s): _____

- Institute a formal check-in or follow-up routine with each person who reported a risk, to gather their reactions and surface positive stories

- Host a coffee and chat event for an informal chance to talk about the IRM process with those outside of the Risk Management Committee to surface potential success stories from the greater school community

- Create an email address or "compliment box" for community members to report stories of success

> Are there any school-specific channels you use to collect success stories? If so, list them below.

3 | Tool 3: Promote IRM Wins Schoolwide

How to Maintain Engagement Through Ongoing Communication About IRM

Share IRM Success Stories

Use existing opportunities to share success stories

- Which processes and events can you use to share IRM stories at your school?

  - ❑ Regular department meetings
  - ❑ Risk Committee meetings
  - ❑ School Newsletter
  - ❑ Official web page
  - ❑ Other(s): _____

- Include space for faculty and staff anecdotes or reflections on the IRM process in your regular newsletter

- Choose an impactful story to share during departmental meetings

- Build a page on your website for community members to view success stories and learn more about IRM

- Use opportunities to share positive outcomes of IRM; for example, perhaps include in the Risk Management team in congratulations associated with strong performance during a drill

Tailor communication methods for various stakeholder audiences

- What resources on campus will you use to share updates?

  - ❑ Coffee and chat
  - ❑ Staff check-ins with supervisors
  - ❑ School newspaper
  - ❑ Other(s): _____

- Establish a coffee and chat time, encouraging casual conversations with colleagues

- Arrange for an interview with a Risk Committee Member to be included in the faculty and staff profile in the student newspaper

- Incorporate how community members at your school usually share good news

> Are there any school-specific channels you use to share success stories? If so, list them below.