

Communications Issues

Issue 05

A Community Service of Harley House Consultants Inc.



Continuous Communications Evaluation Step 1 – Public Environmental Analysis (Part 2 of 6)

Introduction

At Harley House Consultants Inc. we believe in continuous evaluation. In the previous edition we introduced readers to the concept of Continuous Communications Evaluation. In this issue we outline how to evaluate through Public Environmental Analysis. Over the next four editions of *Communications Issues*, we will explore how to embed evaluation into the final steps of the communications management process. Each issue provides the reader with a brief description of the evaluation process and includes useful checklists. The next issue will deal with Step 2, Planning.

Step 1 - Public Environmental Analysis

This edition explores the types of evaluation issues that would be examined during the Public Environmental Analysis Step of the Communications Management Process. The purpose of evaluating during this step is to ensure that communications activities respond to internal and external environments.

As a result of ongoing public environmental analysis, or as a result of a new government priority, policy or program, a communications requirement is identified. A synopsis of the public environment provides a comprehensive description of what is happening, or what the likely reactions will be to an announcement of a new priority, policy or program. There are a wide variety of primary and secondary research tools that can be employed in carrying out Public Environmental Analysis (PEA).

An ongoing Public Environmental Analysis system should summarize the current public perceptions and sensitivities on the issue and identify national and regional patterns. In preparing this synopsis, it may be appropriate to:

- outline the findings of any special studies or public opinion polls on the topic;
- identify noteworthy attention given to the issue in the House of Commons (e.g. questions, statements);
- summarize both national and regional media coverage of the issue, noting any significant trends;
- specify trends revealed by an analysis of enquiries to the department, and correspondence or petitions to the Minister; and
- indicate unusual lobbying activities, demonstrations or other public pressures.

To aid in evaluating public environmental analysis activities, the Step 1 - Public Environmental Analysis Checklist is provided on the following page.

For more information on how Harley House Consultants Inc. can assist you in:

- Managing internal and external relationships with key stakeholder groups; and
- Improving the effectiveness of your organization's communications and consultation programs,

Please contact Dale Harley at 613-882-5684, or email dale@harleyhouse.com

Making Communicators Better Managers—Making Managers Better Communicators



2. Continuous Communications Evaluation Step 1 – Public Environmental Analysis (Part 2 of 6)

Criteria	Yes	No
1) Is a sufficient body of research available to permit an adequate analysis of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ all internal stakeholders (Minister's office, employees, managers, partners, unions)? ▪ all external stakeholders (taxpayers, clients, special interest groups, media)? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) Are the available research data current enough to permit an accurate analysis of the communications environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) Is the available research data reliable in terms of data collection methods used (e.g. if published, would the data withstand public scrutiny)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) Will the available research data permit an adequate examination of stakeholder awareness, attitudes, interests, and opinions, in relation to major issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5) Can stakeholder values be reliably determined from the available data?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6) Will the environmental analysis produced from the available data contribute a sufficient level of information to carry out strategic communications planning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7) Are sufficient resources being allocated to permit the collection of reliable data to carry out the environmental analysis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8) Does current research exist within a central agency another department or agency that could be used to meet the environmental analysis needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9) Is new primary research required to meet the environmental analysis needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10) Could this new primary research be shared with another department or agency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11) Have all the necessary research approvals been approved?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12) Is there sufficient time to carry out the research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13) Is the Public Environmental Analysis report prepared in a fashion that is useful and easy to interpret?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14) If this Public Environmental Analysis was performed for a specific purpose can it be integrated into the overall Agency Public Environmental Analysis process?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

