

TOOL: Communicating with culturally diverse audiences

This tool will help you to successfully communicate with culturally diverse communities.

Engagement with diverse communities in any organisational plan ensures maximum reach and coverage. By investing in multicultural consumers, organisations can stay competitive in an increasingly multicultural market.

Achieving success will depend on a clear understanding of:

- the target audience
- the cultural issues that may affect the service being promoted
- appropriate types of communication tools that connect with the target audience.

An effective culturally diverse communication approach benefits any organisation wanting to develop and provide services to culturally diverse communities.

Planning and assessment

A plan that identifies goals and the steps needed to reach the identified culturally diverse communities ensures successful engagement with diverse audiences. To start developing a communication approach, consider undertaking the following steps:

1. assess your organisation's existing services against the potential needs of a diverse audiences
2. assess current organisational approaches to communications
3. identify the relevant aspects of a target diverse audience to understand the benefits of marketing to diverse communities
4. implement a strategic approach during the planning and assessment stage to develop a communication strategy that informs future engagement.

Developing a communication strategy

Key points to help you develop an effective communication strategy are:

- **Research:** Understand the target communities by researching their demographic data and key strengths and determining their barriers to accessing your service
- **Advertising:** Ensure the use of appropriate and effective media including traditional press/radio, online and social existing community networks



Multicultural NSW

- **Direct community engagement:** Direct engagement, including community partnerships, provides an insight into community lives and captures their needs
- **Information responsiveness:** Monitor responses to the delivered communications and identify strengths and weaknesses. This allows you to develop future goals and strategies that ensure effective implementation
- **Evaluation:** Identify unmet communication needs or improvement to the communications approach and method. Evaluate the approach to identify what communities thought of the approach and if anything needs to be changed.

Effective communication

Achieving effective communication is dependent upon several components that may be relevant at varying organisational levels. This will require you to consider each of the following and determine where it may be applicable within your organisation.

What to consider when undertaking appropriate evidence-based targeting

- what is the language and cultural profile of the service area?
- are there particular language groups that stand out for their size in the data sets?
- what is the time of arrival and English language competency of the identified group, especially as it applies to any applicable age groups?
- do these priority communities have key organisations that can be consulted about their needs? Are these specific to the age or issue group?
- is there available research to identify the applicability of the issue/service to the priority language groups?

What to consider when assessing cultural issues and sensitivity in the approach

Considering the research or consulting the target group can help to understand potential consumers' culture, reflected in their values, attitudes and cultural sensitivities:

- **Low:** Not sensitive and approach can be directly translated communication
- **Medium:** Communications need to consider cultural and linguistic considerations in how information and messages are developed and delivered
- **High:** Need to consider a community engagement approach to addressing cultural barriers that would prevent or stop service access.

Appropriate selection of information media

Develop information that is written in the language and style required by the community:



- develop messages that are sensitive, relevant to target communities and designed to create inclusion
- test strategies with the target communities

Media considerations

Consider using various media to get your message across to the target audience.

Direct media engagement

- **Face to face:** Service providers visit organisations and communities in a proactive fashion to promote the service
- **Issue specific briefings:** Service providers attend community organisations and other places to provide issue and service-specific briefings
- **Presentations:** Community members are invited to attend a presentation by the service provider on the service offer (in-language).

Physical collateral media tools

- **Direct mail to intermediary organisations:** Information is sent to community organisations and other mediators to promote the service
- **Pamphlets:** Are distributed to key mediators or made available at the service. They are designed to provide an overview of available services (bilingual)
- **Posters:** Can be prepared and displayed in various community settings and offered to key mediators. They could also be sited where families gather, such as council libraries and shopping centres (bilingual)
- **Notices in local information areas:** notices can be prepared and displayed in high-traffic and public places such as libraries to announce a service initiative specific to community segments (bilingual).

Electronic/digital forms of media

- **Website:** Information can be placed on organisational websites and other media can drive traffic to the site (in-language)
- **Social media:** For communities with high IT literacy, social media is becoming a key engagement tool (in-language)
- **Email network:** once contact is established, online networks can be developed.

Audio/visual forms of media

- **Applications:** Service specific interactive information (bilingual)
- **DVDs/CDs:** DVDs and CDs on the service (bilingual).

Media platforms

- **Local paper:** Promoting a specific service/initiative through advertisements/notices in a local paper
- **Local radio:** Promoting a specific service/initiative through an announcement on a local radio station
- **Ethnic media:** Formal announcements about new services or programs through paid advertising on ethnic media platforms
- **General media engagement:** Developing media relations approaches and partnerships.