

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT



**Chief Information Officer  
Human Resources  
Line of Business**

**Migration Planning Guidance  
Information Documents  
Communications Plan**

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*a New Day for Federal Service*

## Table Of Contents

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<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Building the Communications Plan</b> .....	<b>2</b>
2.1 Communication Goals .....	2
2.2 Communication Strategy .....	3
2.3 The Environment and Key Stakeholders .....	3
2.4 Communication Tactics .....	3

## 1. Introduction

Managing the customer agency migration to a selected Shared Service Center (SSC) is a significant undertaking, and it is critical to have clear and frequent communication to key stakeholders during this transition. Key stakeholders are more likely to accept and be supportive of the migration if they understand what is happening; why it is happening; what to expect; how it will affect them; and how they will be supported throughout the implementation process. A well-developed communications plan can help to ensure a successful migration by satisfactorily addressing the issues and concerns of stakeholder groups and providing them with information needed to prepare for and manage the migration process. This document provides guidelines on how to develop an effective communications plan.

The Human Resources Line of Business Program Management Office (HR LOB PMO) strongly encourages migrating customer agencies to work with their SSCs to develop and use a communications plan through out the migration.

## 2. Building the Communications Plan

A comprehensive communications plan includes the following steps:

1. List the primary goals – What do we want this communications effort to accomplish?
2. Create a strategy – Who is the target audience and why do we want to reach them?
3. Understand the environment – Who is impacted and who are we trying to reach?
4. Identify tactics – How do we achieve our goals?

Examples of each step are provided below.

### 2.1 Communication Goals

The first step in creating a communication plan is to identify and define the primary goals. These goals should include the desired outcomes for the plan and specific reasons for communicating. Be sure to develop goals that establish a level of success that can be measured. This will make it possible to track progress against these goals and determine the extent to which they have been achieved. In addition, there may be a need to develop supporting goals to clarify and improve the ability to formulate actions and tasks to accomplish the primary goals of the communications plan.

In developing goals for a communications plan, keep in mind the following:

- What will your communications and dissemination efforts achieve?
- How will your communications efforts change stakeholder awareness, knowledge, attitudes and/or buy-in?
- What is the ultimate result you want the communications plan to have on the migration process?

## 2.2 Communication Strategy

The Communication Strategy identifies and defines the target audience of the communications plan. A strategy establishes an approach to ensure that consistent, accurate, and clear information is being delivered. Be sure that the strategy creates opportunities for feedback since one-way communication is not sufficient for an effective communications plan. There are two main steps for creating a communications strategy:

1. List the stakeholder groups that are relevant to the communications plan
2. Create a message for each group as to why it should be motivated to accomplish the goals of the communication plan.

Specifically, the communications strategy for an agency migrating to a SSC should:

1. Build awareness of the importance of migration to a shared service center environment
2. Create understanding and acceptance among the stakeholders of the changes resulting from migration
3. Involve stakeholders by creating opportunities for dialogue and feedback

## 2.3 The Environment and Key Stakeholders

After the strategy for achieving the primary goals of the communications plan is decided, the next step is to document and understand the current environment. This list may include the HR LOB initiative and its impact on the migrating agency as well as the environment at the agency that is being affected. Below are three examples of research methods that can be used to understand the current environment of a migrating agency.

- Issue research – understand the subject matter involved
- Internet research – use tools such as the Office of Personnel Management HR LOB and Office of Management and Budget E-Gov websites
- Environmental research – study the overall communications context in which communication will be conducted

## 2.4 Communication Tactics

Communication tactics are specific activities used to help reach the primary goals and objectives of the communications plan. They are the “How” and “When.” Timing and costs are often associated with communication tactics. Communication planners should use the most resource-efficient method to carry out a communication tactic. Key questions that drive the development of communications tactics include:

## Communications Plan

1. How can we best communicate to each audience?
2. When must certain messages be delivered to allow time for assimilation of change? .

Since each of the stakeholder groups has unique information needs, key messages identified during the creation of the communication strategy should be mapped to each stakeholder group. The customer agency and SSC should identify the tactics for communicating the key messages. Examples of key messages that should be used during a migration to a shared service center environment are provided below.

- Communicate HR LOB vision
- Communicate migration logistics
- Provide status information at key milestones
- Transfer knowledge related to processes, policy and systems to support ongoing operations
- Engage and maintain full involvement
- Build ownership for migration activities
- Support role as change leader



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