IDENTIFYING YOUR AUDIENCES:
a workshop plan

The Health Foundation

In this first stage of finding your audience focus, you will brainstorm all the groups, organisations and individuals who you could reasonably engage with to achieve your project goals.

The recommended way of doing this is to work together with colleagues on the task outlined in this document. Below is a process you can follow for an audience mapping workshop.

Audience mapping: the process

Gather together a group of people who are interested in seeing your project succeed and who have a good broad, knowledge of the potential audiences you could communicate with. Between four and eight people is a good number.

Allow at least 45 minutes to complete the workshop. You may wish to distribute an agenda in advance with an outline of what the task is, and the audience categories, to prompt thinking (ie delivery, peers and partners, beneficiaries, detractors, influencers, power-brokers – see table for definitions).

Audience mapping: how to

The question your group needs to brainstorm is **'Who could we engage to achieve our objectives?'**

The table has been divided into different types of audiences and populated with some generic examples. Use this to prompt thinking, if helpful.

Log all possible audiences with the headings shown in the table during the workshop. Flip chart paper and marker pens are useful for this.

See the full Communications in health care improvement toolkit at www.health.org.uk/commskit

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DELIVERY

Clinical leads in X

Nursing staff in Y

Students in Z

Specialist departments within the organisation

Local authority deptartments

PEERS & PARTNERS

Patient groups

Charities

Think tanks

Departments in other organisations

BENEFICIARIES

Types of patients

Types of staff

Executive board

Policy makers

DETRACTORS

Competitors for resource

Patient groups

Pressure groups

Charities

Media – traditional and social

INFLUENCERS

MPs

Royal colleges or similar

Media, blogs, info sources

Think tanks

Well known individuals

POWER BROKERS

Executive boards

Government departments

Parliamentary groups

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Further explanation of audience types

Delivery – who must you engage in order to ensure the running and delivery of your project?

Peers and potential partners – who else shares your project objectives? Who else is operating in the same space?

Beneficiaries – who will benefit from your projects work?

Potential detractors – who could act as a barrier to the success of your project or be a significant detractor?

Influencers – who influences the agenda and thinking around this issue? Who do your other audiences respect and trust as a source of information?

Power brokers – who has the decision making power associated with your project? Who is responsible for making the financial, practical and policy decisions?

TIPS

Lateral thinking is good. Try to think creatively. Do not attempt to judge or prioritise any audiences at this stage. Simply record all ideas.

Have your communications and project objectives available to help the group focus.

Where possible, be specific (ie try not to put 'The Department of Health' but the particular departments, regions, posts, even individuals you could connect with). Never put 'the public', 'patients', 'health care staff' or other generic groups – this does not help to focus your work.

It may be time-efficient to combine this task with the Prioritising your audiences task (also in this section of the toolkit). You will need to add an additional hour to your workshop if this is the case.

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What you are aiming to produce

At the end of this mapping process you will have a list of potential types of audiences you could engage with to achieve your project objectives. These will be listed under the audience categories outlined in the table (or any amended categories you have created).

Next steps

- Do more research to refine some of the groups if they feel too large and undefined to target effectively (ie Department of Health, carers, patients).

- Move on to the next stage: Prioritising your audiences.