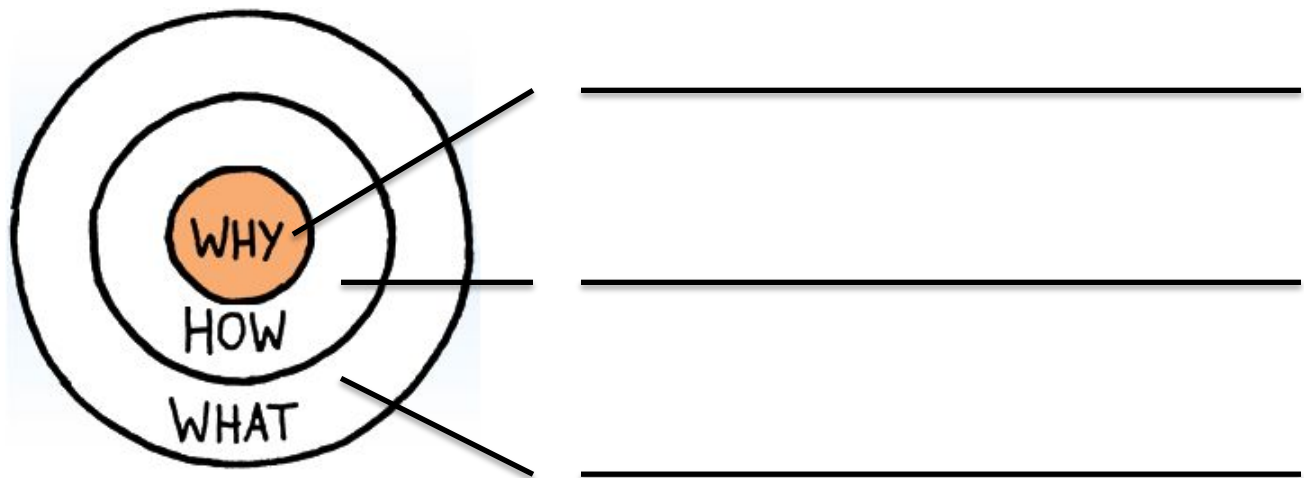


## Communications & Outreach Planning

### Step 1: Know Yourself

Articulate the **Why, How & What** of your Farm to School program.



Write an **Elevator Pitch** for your program – a short (50-100 word) description of what you believe, what you're doing, and why it matters.

Identify a **communications goal** (i.e. increase food awareness, publicize event).

## Step 2: Identify Your Audiences & Networks

Brainstorm the different groups and demographics in your community (however you define it – school community, town, region, etc.) and hone in on the ones that you are trying to reach in order to advance your particular communications goal.

- **Community Network:** Formal (i.e. church members, historic society) or informal (i.e. neighbors, diner regulars) groups of people in your community
- **Connectors:** People who represent “hubs” (connect to many different networks, groups or people) or “bridges” (link disconnected groups) within the community.
- **Audience:** Group or demographic that you are trying to reach (i.e. elementary students, PTO members, parents, city council)

## Step 3: Clarify Your Calls to Action

Identify what you would like each audience to **do** after receiving your message and communications.

Example calls to action:

- Sign up for email list
- Purchase school lunches
- Cook healthy meals
- Follow on social media
- Tell a friend
- Donate money
- Volunteer to help
- Read a story or blog post
- Take a class

## Step 4: Articulate Your Key Messages

Key messages are the main points that you want to convey through your communications activities. They represent a balance between what you want to say or convey and the context or tailoring that will make it relevant to a particular audience. Even if your goal and call to action is the same for different audiences, your key messages may not be.

Example targeted messages for meal program participation:

- **Parents:** meal program is healthy, affordable, and will save you time and effort
- **Teachers:** meals are delicious and your participation will set an important example
- **Students:** meals taste great and it’s cool to eat school lunch

## Step 5: Identify the Best Communications Channels & Opportunities

Now that you know **what** you want to say, choose the communications channels that your audiences use and that will maximize reach, efficiency, and impact.

Potential channels and opportunities:

- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Local newspaper
- School news
- Signs & bulletin boards
- Table tents, placemats
- Connectors
- Posters & postcards
- Blogs & websites
- Tables at events
- Sidewalk chalk
- Listserves & forums
- T-shirts
- Trusted messengers
- Pickup & dropoff times
- Community events
- Community centers (libraries, restaurants, gov)
- Contests & promotions
- Group meetings