Communication Channels

Channel	At its best	Potential downsides	Think about
Media release	• Low/no cost in $ • Stronger more believable message that advertising • Potential to spread • Helps build media relations	• Must be a strong story that is newsworthy • You lose control of the message, the final article may also include an opposing view • A good media release takes time and thought • Approvals may take time • Coverage (readership) is difficult to measure	• A media release is an invitation to call. Be prepared for following contact from journalists • Get help with the distribution of the media release • Investing in good photography to accompany the story
Placed article	• You control the message • Low/no cost in $ • Stronger more believable message that advertising	• Must be a strong story • A good story takes time and thought • Potential cost of photography • Approvals may take time • Coverage (readership) is difficult to measure	• Investing in good photography to accompany the story • Ensure the article is in the right place for your audience
Field day/workshop	• More intensive information transfer • Opportunity to customise messages for the audience • Opportunity for two way communication – Q&A sessions	• Group dynamics can take over • Usually high cost in time and $ • Limited audience	• Consider the skills of your event facilitator • Ensure you target the right audience with the right information
Conferences	• More intensive information transfer • Opportunity to customise messages for the audience • Can be prestigious	• High cost in time and $ • Less opportunity for two way communication • Usually time limited	• Consider 'rich content', such as images and video to enhance your presentation • Consider your audience – how can they find out more post-conference
Brochure	• Make the project 'seem real' • Information that can be left behind • Key messages to the fore	• Limited word count (you can't say everything) • Costly in design time and printing costs	• Always include further information and contact details • Invest in good imagery • Consider other project partners – what acknowledgement will they require
Email	• Can reach mass audiences fast • Cost effective and simple to use • Consistent and controlled message • Reaches the recipient directly • Good for information, awareness or instruction	• Not everyone may have access • Impersonal and open to misinterpretation • Can result quickly in information overload • Can't tell if messages have been read • Doesn't prioritise messages • Can't generate dialogue or discussion	• Controlling access to mass distribution lists • Using the subject box to get across your key message • Keeping it short and simple • Using headings and bullet points for key messages and to break up the text

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Websites/ email newsletter	• Fast and consistent • Possibilities are endless – can be entertaining and visually snappy • Good for information store, reference and rising awareness • Noticeboards are good for involvement and discussion • Web stats shows who is reading and how	• Not everyone may have good, consistent access • Relies on people seeking out information • Email newsletter distribution relies on up-to-date database	• Including 'rich content' to draw people in e.g. great images, videos • Ensure you have an up-to-date database of email addresses
Social media	• Shares information quickly with interested audiences • Can provide a forum for two-way communication • Free platform • Can easily be shared by interested users with their networks	• Need regular posts/ updates, so suits topics with on-going developments • Often engagement with social media has limited depth – may not be suitable for complex content	• Need to regularly update page so people see value in following • Need to write/ present material in a very clear and engaging way to connect with audience • Good quality visuals and videos can be more engaging than text – consider how this will be accessed or prepared
Video	• Creative and entertaining • Can show real people talking about their experiences • Can show a real experience as it happens • The camera never lies – can show proof of progress • Makes people and places accessible for a mass audience • Consistent, controlled message	• Potentially expensive if using external expertise • Can be seen as glossy, corporate propaganda • Talking heads alone are rarely engaging • Can look amateur if attempted yourself	• Do you have the right equipment, software and expertise to film and edit yourself • Do you need professional help?
Text message	• Good for reaching remote audiences • Good for alert or crisis communication • Can be used to direct people to further sources of information	• Will annoy people quickly if overused • Relies on an up-to-date database	• Ensure you have access to an up-to-date database of numbers
Webinars	• Opportunity for science experts to reach a mass/engaged audiences with a consistent message in real time • Opportunity for two-way conversation – Q&A sessions	• May be expensive • Need the right technology in place on both sides • Location needs to be considered (noise levels)	• Find out about new technology continually emerging in this area