

## Working with your Communications partners

- **Get to know them!** They can help advise and strategize on communication approaches, and help coordinate the development of certain types of communication materials. They can also help ensure communication products meet agency standards and guidelines.
- **Find out what kinds of communications they typically help with,** and which ones they don't.
- **Familiarize yourself with their processes and timelines** for communications plans and other kinds of internal and external communication materials.
- **Discuss roles and responsibilities,** and explore ways to work together on upcoming projects.

## Collaborating on the work

- **Be prepared to draft messages.** You know the subject best. Start with “what are the three key things people need to know.” Think like your audience, and create messages with them in mind.
- **Be brief, clear and concise.** Everyone's busy. Use plain language, and include only relevant information. The average email is read for 10 seconds or less.
- **A communications consultant can help develop a communications plan,** if it's needed. Start by thinking through the key elements that go into most communications plans:
  - **Objective:** What are you trying to accomplish with your communications?
  - **Audience:** Who do you need to communicate with? Identify and prioritize.
  - **Key messages:** What are the main points you need to communicate? Try to limit it to five main points/messages. Avoid jargon and acronyms.
  - **Activities/deliverables and timeline:** What types of communications might help you achieve your objectives? Who needs to be involved in developing/reviewing/approving? What's the best order and timeline? Example:

Audience	Key messages	Proposed Channel	Comms Consultant	Drafting	Editing	Approving	Sending	Due date
Project team	Milestone! Next steps	Email		You	Comms consultant	Project sponsor	Project sponsor	12/7
Etc.								