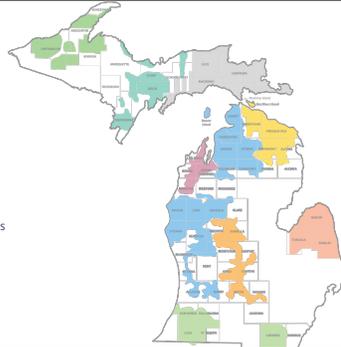


Casey Clark
 V.P. Communications, Wolverine Power Cooperative
 @caseyleeclark | www.memberloyaltyindex.com

Rachel Johnson
 CEO, Cherryland Electric Cooperative
 rjohnson@cherrylandelectric.coop
 @RachelOnEnergy | Coop Energy Talk | www.memberloyaltyindex.com

1

about
 MECA & Wolverine



- 5 Distribution Co-ops
- 1,600 miles of line
- 280,000 Member Consumers
- 1,360 MW of power

2

Our communications program in one word

0 responses



Menti interface with Account, Content, Design, Settings, and Help & Feedback options.

3

How is your co-op's strategic communications plan?



Response scale: Don't have one, Kinda Rough, OK, Pretty Solid, Ah-mazing

Menti interface with Account, Content, Design, Settings, and Help & Feedback options.

4

today's agenda



Strategic Communications
 What is it and why do you need a plan for it?

Strategic Communications Framework
 Your guide to analyzing where you are and planning for where you want to be.

5

today's agenda



Situational Analysis **Goal Setting** **Action Plan** **Metrics**

Case Study: Northern Lights Cooperative
 Putting the Framework to Work

6

today's agenda



Department Workplan Tools
So you have a strategic plan, now what?

7

FOLLOWING ALONG TODAY



Slide Deck (strategiccommunication.blog)
PPT with space for notes

Workbook
Templates for in-class activities

★ **Quiz Hints**

8



ACTIVITY:
Getting acquainted



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- Identify a characteristic that defines you
- Identify an animal that collectively reflects the characteristics of your team
- Provide justification for your choice of animal using the characteristics you've identified

9

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

A strategic communications plan articulates the strategies and initiatives you will use to meet your cooperative's goals.

★ A strategic communications plan is not the same as a marketing plan.

10

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IS A SUPERPOWER



INFLUENCE ATTITUDES



CHANGE BEHAVIOR



11

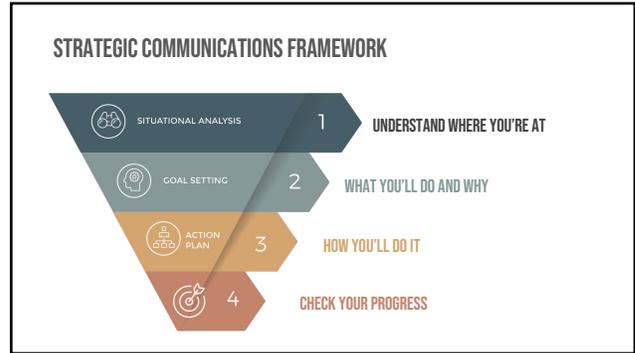
TACTICAL VS STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

TACTICAL	STRATEGIC
Focuses on OUTPUTS	Focuses on OUTCOMES
Sees communication as an end in itself	Sees communication as a means to an end
Aims to raise awareness	Aims to change attitudes and behaviors
Measures success by levels of awareness and satisfaction with channels	Measures success by achievement of business objective
Helps communicators be seen as producers and service providers, who can be brought in once business decisions have been made	Helps communicators be perceived as business people and problem solvers, who should be involved from the start

12

What percentage of your thinking is already in the strategic column?

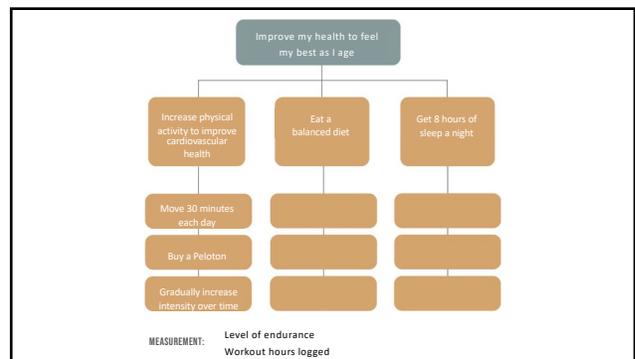
13



14

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN TEMPLATES

15



16

EXAMPLE **GOAL:** Improve my health to feel my best as I age

Strategic Objective: Increase physical activity to improve cardiovascular health (Q4 2023)

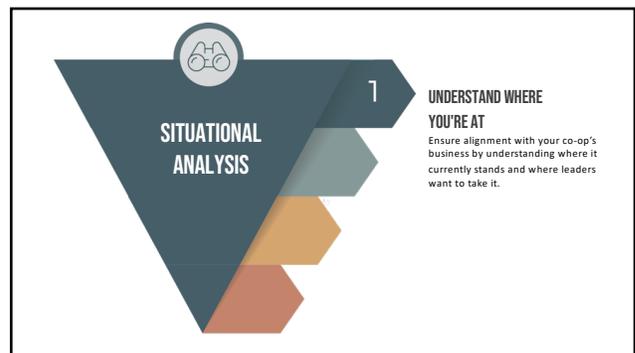
TACTICS

- Move 30 minutes a day
- Buy a peloton
- Gradually increase intensity and duration over time

MEASUREMENT

Level of endurance
Workout hours logged

17



18



ACTIVITY:

Where to gather information?

8

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In groups, brainstorm what resources you can review to inform your research.

19



WHERE TO GATHER INFORMATION

- Co-op's mission, vision, values
- Market research
- Social media
- Co-op's strategic plan
- Survey results
- NRECA resources
- Communications audit
- Interviews
- Focus groups

20



INTERVIEWS

Ask Department leaders:

Communications specific questions

- Your thoughts on member/internal communications at Wolverine? (what's working, what's not, ideas for improvement)
- Your thoughts on external communications at Wolverine? (what's working, what's not, ideas for improvement)
- In your opinion, what's the one thing Wolverine could do in the communications space, in the next 6 months, that would have the most impact?

General questions

- What are the goals for your co-op/your department?
- What challenges is your co-op/your department facing?
- What are the biggest strengths of your co-op/your department right now?

21

How often does your co-op do member surveys?



Never Every 5-10 years Every 2-5 years Every year

Ment Account
Content
Design
Settings
Help & Feedback

22



SURVEYS

How to get the most out of your survey



Ask open ended questions



Analyze by groups
(demographics/psychographics/behavior)

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THE POWER OF OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Neglecting open ended questions can leave valuable info out

LIKERT/MULTIPLE CHOICE

Our Company keeps employees well informed

1 2 3 4 5 6

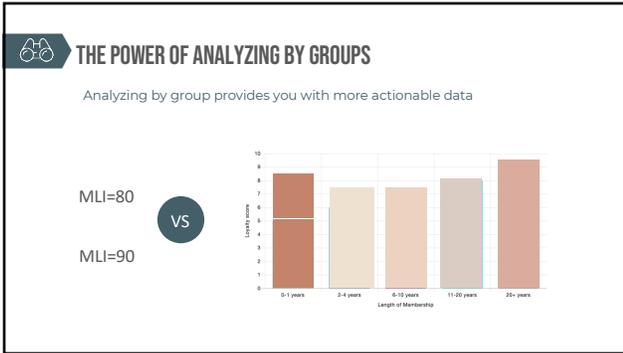
VS

OPEN ENDED

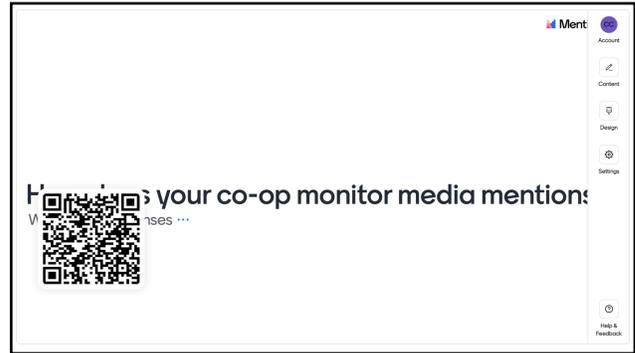
What can we do to improve internal communications at Wolverine?

Use service center TVs for scrolling news and stretching videos

24



25

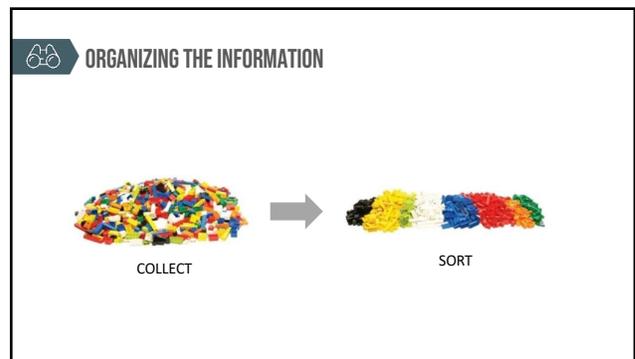


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MEDIA MONITORING & LISTENING

Monitor mentions, sentiment and influential social profiles

27



28

SWOT

What are you proud of? (internal)	S	W	What are you challenged by (internal)
What promising things are coming your way? (external)	O	T	What keeps you up at night? (external)

29

ACTIVITY: Situational Analysis

Using your notes from the case study, complete a SWOT in your group for Northern Lights Electric Cooperative.

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GOAL SETTING

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

COLLECT

SORT

GOAL SETTING

NARROW FOCUS

31

GOAL SETTING

2

WHAT YOU'LL DO AND WHY
 What business result are you looking for? What's the goal for your communications?

32

WHAT IS A GOAL?

A broad **primary outcome**.
 Provides structure around how **communications** can help your co-op achieve its organizational goals.

Include 3-5 goals in your strategic plan

33

HOW TO WRITE GOALS

CONNECT TO THE WHY
 Your goals should reflect the insights gained from your situational analysis. Link the goal to your cooperative's strategic priorities.

KEEP IT SHORT
 Aim for no longer than 10 words.

FOCUS ON STATE CHANGE
 Focus on where you are and where you need to go. What state change needs to happen?

34

EXAMPLE

GOAL FORMULA

State Change + who, why or how

Improve governance practices through increased transparency and engagement.

35

TIP: USE STATE CHANGE VERBS

- Increase
- Improve
- Build
- Foster
- Enhance
- Strengthen

36

TIP: COMMON COMMUNICATION GOAL CATEGORIES

- 1**
REPUTATION MANAGEMENT
Identity and perception of the cooperative
- 2**
RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT
How the cooperative connects with its stakeholders
- 3**
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
How the cooperative uses its communication resources

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ACTIVITY: BRAINSTORM Goals

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In groups, let's brainstorm as many goals as we can for Northern Lights Electric Cooperative.

State Change + who, why or how

Improve governance practices through increased transparency and engagement

11

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PRIORITIZING GOALS

When deciding which goals to focus on, plot the two questions below on 1-10 scales.

- How important is this goal to the co-op?
- How successful are we today at achieving this goal?



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ACTION PLAN

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS



COLLECT



SORT

GOAL SETTING



NARROW FOCUS

ACTION PLAN



TIME TO BUILD!

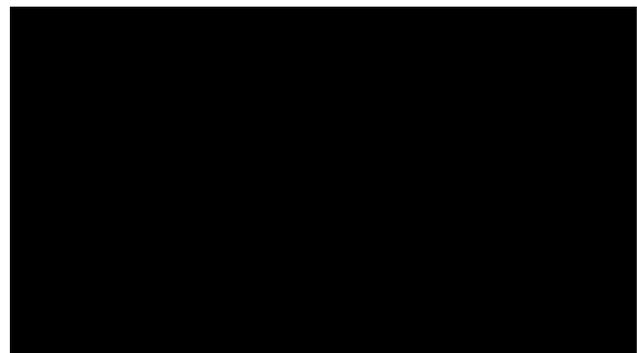
40

ACTION PLAN

3

HOW YOU'LL DO IT
Map out strategies, tactics and measurements to support your goals.

41



42

WHAT IS A STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE?

Strategic objectives are an **approach** you take to achieve a goal. They represent what you want to **accomplish**. They are reasonably high level but should have a deadline attached.

Include 3-5 per goal in your strategic plan

43

HOW TO WRITE A STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE



KEEP IT SIMPLE
They should be easy to remember and understandable by everyone in your co-op.



ONE SENTENCE
Aim for no longer than one sentence.



FORMULA
Action + Detail + Deadline

44

EXAMPLE

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FORMULA

★ **Action + Detail + Deadline**

Increase awareness of board business among co-op members by July 2023.

45

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE EXAMPLES

GOAL: Improve co-op governance practices through increased transparency and engagement

Strategic Objectives	
➤ Increase awareness of board business among co-op members within 1 year	🕒 2Q 2023
➤ Increase participation in board elections by 10% within 2 years.	🕒 4Q 2024
➤ Generate interest in board leadership from a diverse set of members within 2 years	🕒 4Q 2024

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TIP: USE RESULT VERBS

- Achieve
- Increase
- Acquire
- Maximize
- Attain
- Reduce
- Complete
- Decrease

47

WHAT IS A TACTIC?

A tactic is much more **specific** than the strategic objective it links to, and it clearly **details** what you will do to achieve the strategic objective.

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HOW TO WRITE A TACTIC



STATE ACTION
State what action you are going to take.

49

TACTIC EXAMPLES

GOAL: Improve governance practices through increased transparency and engagement

Strategic Objective #1	Time Period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase awareness of board business among co-op members within 1 year 	2Q 2023

TACTICS

- Add "Your Board in Action" section to monthly magazine
- Publish quarterly podcasts with board members/board president
- Create governance center on website with information about board meeting content, board members and other pertinent governance issues

50

Check in: Is this making sense?



Clear as mud Yep, tracking with you Crystal clear

51

EVALUATE RESULTS

4

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS
Constantly monitor and track your results to understand if you are achieving your goals.

52

WHAT IS A METRIC?

A metric is how you **track progress** toward your goal.

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MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

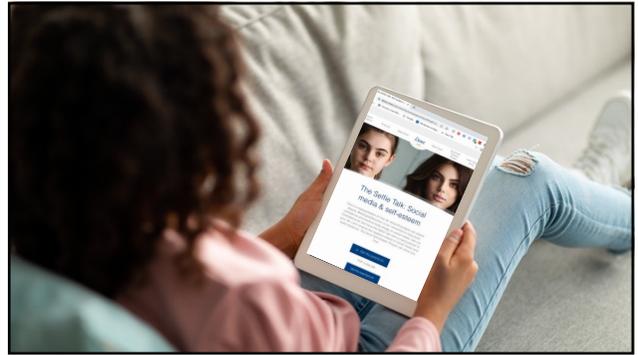


- ACTIVITY**: Metrics that monitor your output (i.e. produced 10 issues of the magazine, sent 4 press releases)
- AWARENESS**: Pageviews on a website, podcast listens, email open rate, page scrolls, video views
- INTERACTION**: Social media engagement, shares, downloads, retweets, comments
- IMPACT (attitudes & behaviors)**: A shift in attitude or desired behavioral outcomes (i.e. program sign-ups, event attendance, election participation, etc)

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55



56

What level of the framework was the Dove example?

Activity Awareness Interaction Impact

Ment Account Content Design Settings Help & Feedback

57

MEASUREMENT TOOLS

- SURVEYS & FOCUS GROUPS
- MEDIA MONITORING & LISTENING
- DIGITAL ANALYTICS

58

ESTABLISH BASELINE DATA

In a rapidly changing energy world, I trust my co-op to make sound decisions to balance reliability, environmental impact and affordability

THE CLEAN ENERGY BALANCING ACT
Shrinking electric supply, growing electric demand

THE BROADENING GAP BETWEEN SUPPLY AND DEMAND

- Rising Electric Demand:** Growing demand, weather-related outages, and droughts lead Michigan electric use and generation to grow dramatically.
 - 50% increase in electricity demand in Michigan since 2010
 - 50% increase in electricity demand in Michigan since 2010
- Declining Electric Supply:** Limited new capacity, rising prices, and coal plants faster than they can replace them, resulting in a significant power supply shortage.
 - 5 million fewer megawatts of capacity in Michigan since 2010
 - 5 million fewer megawatts of capacity in Michigan since 2010

WE SUPPORT CLEAN ENERGY, BUT THE GROWING IMBALANCE BETWEEN SUPPLY AND DEMAND POSES A SIGNIFICANT THREAT TO ELECTRIC RELIABILITY

The clean energy transition is essential to a sustainable future, but it also poses a significant threat to electric reliability. As demand grows, the limited supply of clean energy can lead to power outages and blackouts. To ensure a reliable and affordable energy future, we must invest in a mix of clean energy sources and modernize our grid.

So what do we do right now?
This is why we support the Michigan Clean Energy Transition Act. We believe electric cooperatives in Michigan should:

- Invest in clean energy infrastructure
- Invest in clean energy infrastructure
- Invest in clean energy infrastructure

BALANCE OF P. WER

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ESTABLISH BASELINE DATA

YOU'RE PART OF A LARGER ELECTRIC GRID

THE ELECTRIC GRID IS INTERCONNECTED

#1 HOW BEING CONNECTED IMPACTS YOU

WE SHARE POWER

#2 HOW BEING CONNECTED IMPACTS YOU

WE SHARE RISK

#3 HOW BEING CONNECTED IMPACTS YOU

WE SHARE RESPONSIBILITY

Rate [Co-op Name]'s performance for keeping members informed on power supply and grid reliability information

60

Does your co-op use google analytics?



Nope A little A fair amount We're gurus

61

REPORTING & TRACKING: UTMS

<https://voicesforcooperativepower.com/michigan>

https://voicesforcooperativepower.com/michigan/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=vcp-gle&utm_content=20220606

USE GOOGLE UTM BUILDER

62

REPORTING & TRACKING: UTMS

Source / Medium	AWARENESS			INTERACTION			ATTITUDE & BEHAVIOR	
	Users	New Users	Sessions	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration	Letter Sent (clicks / Conversion Rate)	Letter Sent (Goal / Completed)
	1,810 (8.1%) (% of Total)	1,784 (8.0%) (% of Total)	2,012 (7.2%) (% of Total)	52.14% (Avg for Name: 18.44%) (3.27%)	1.15 (Avg for Name: 1.23) (7.17%)	00:01:15 (Avg for Name: 00:01:01) (6.44%)	25.75% (Avg for Name: 18.44%) (10.01%)	518 (8.34%) (% of Total)
1. newsletter / email	1,415 (78.09%)	1,401 (78.02%)	1,583 (78.68%)	43.71%	1.17	00:01:27	31.02%	491 (94.79%)
2. w-toro / ad	242 (13.34%)	241 (13.51%)	246 (12.23%)	99.19%	1.00	00:00:01	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
3. facebook / social	144 (7.95%)	134 (7.51%)	163 (8.10%)	62.58%	1.17	00:00:43	13.50%	22 (4.33%)
4. offline / postcard	10 (0.55%)	7 (0.39%)	16 (0.80%)	50.00%	1.25	00:05:24	31.25%	5 (0.97%)
5. tiktok / social	1 (0.04%)	1 (0.04%)	4 (0.20%)	75.00%	1.25	00:02:39	0.00%	0 (0.00%)

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PICKING YOUR METRIC(S)

Choose 1-3 key metrics per goal

- Quantify goal if can (often you can't)
- Quantify strategic objective if can
- Tactics easiest to measure

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EXAMPLE

GOAL: Improve co-op governance practices through increased transparency and engagement

Strategic Objective: Increase awareness of board business among co-op members within 1 year

TACTICS:

- Add "Your Board in Action" section to monthly magazine
- Publish quarterly podcasts with board members/board president
- Create governance center on website with information about board meeting content, board members and other pertinent governance issues.

MEASUREMENT:

- Visits to governance page of website
- Number of podcast listens
- Increase scores on board awareness survey questions

65

GOAL ASSIGNMENTS

- Improve onboarding process to build relationships and increase engagement with new members
- Improve cooperative culture through enhanced internal communications
- Improve outage communications to meet evolving member expectations
- Increase adoption of electric vehicles in service territory to support load growth
- Establish reputation as a trusted energy advisor through owned, earned and shared media
- Grow awareness and participation in co-op member-facing programs to strengthen member engagement

66

ACTIVITY:
Complete action plan and metrics

In groups identify strategic objectives, tactics and metrics for your assigned goal.

18 or 22

Goal #1



Goal #2



Goal #3



Goal #4



Goal #5



Goal #6



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CHAT GPT AS A BRAINSTORMING PARTNER



Prompt
You are an expert on strategic planning for electric cooperatives and electric utilities, especially strategic communications. Write me three strategic objectives to support this communications goal: *insert goal*

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ACTIVITY:
Back into groups for objective 2

In groups identify strategic objectives, tactics and metrics for your assigned goal.

18 or 22

Goal #1



Goal #2



Goal #3



Goal #4



Goal #5

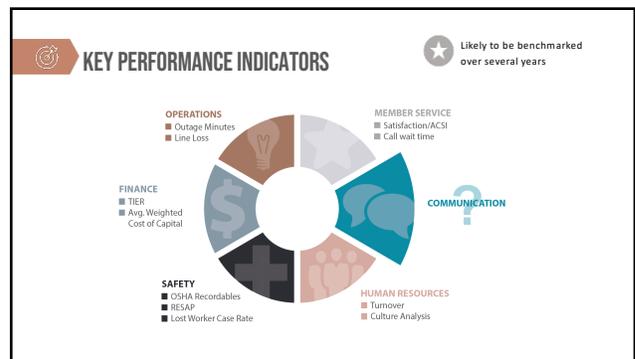


Goal #6

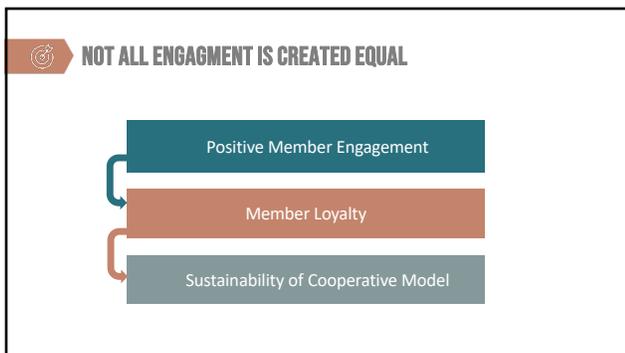


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70



71

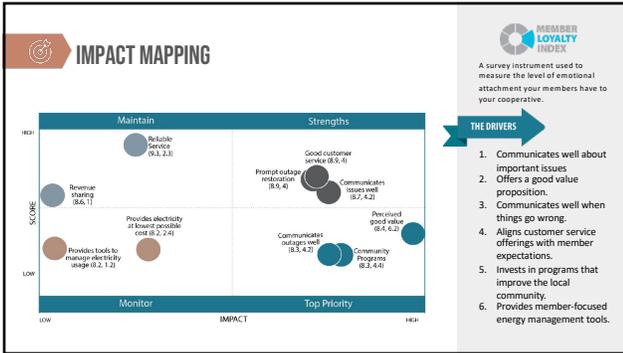
Does your communications department have a KPI?



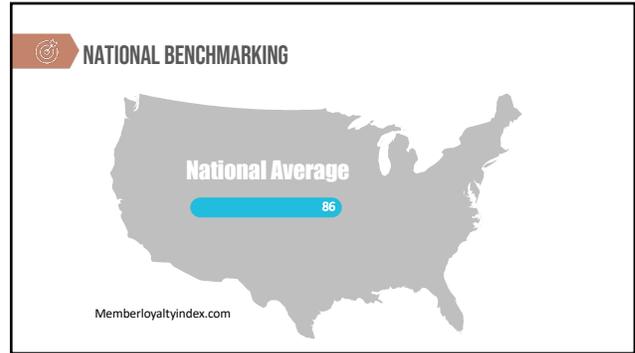
Yes _____ No _____

Ment Account
Content
Design
Settings
Help & Feedback

72



73



74

REPORTING: BOARD COMMUNICATION

Get the Canva template for this report strategiccommunication.blog/templates

75

WORK PLAN

CREATE AND MANAGE CONTENT

Plan how you will create and distribute elements to support your plan.

76

RESPONSIBILITIES & DEADLINES: GANTT CHART

Task	Start	End	Responsible
2023 Strategic Projects and Priorities			
... (Detailed project tasks and timelines) ...			

77

ACTIVITY:

Show & Tell (Channels, Programs, Campaigns)

Get ideas for your plan from your colleagues

78

What are the top 3 things you learned today?

79

How can we improve this course?

80

ITS YOUR TURN!



Put together a strategic communications plan for your co-op.

Get templates at:
Strategiccommunication.blog/templates

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