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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
Account
Content
Design
Settings
Help & Feedback

3

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

Don't have one
Kinda Rough
OK
Pretty Solid
Ah-mazing

Men
Account
Content
Design
Settings
Help & Feedback

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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.

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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?

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**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

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**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.

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**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IS A SUPERPOWER**



INFLUENCE  
ATTITUDES



CHANGE  
BEHAVIOR

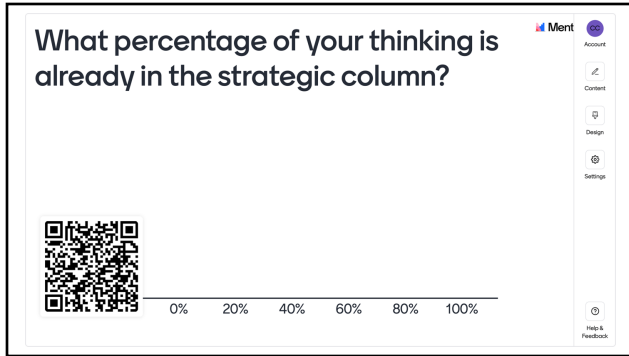


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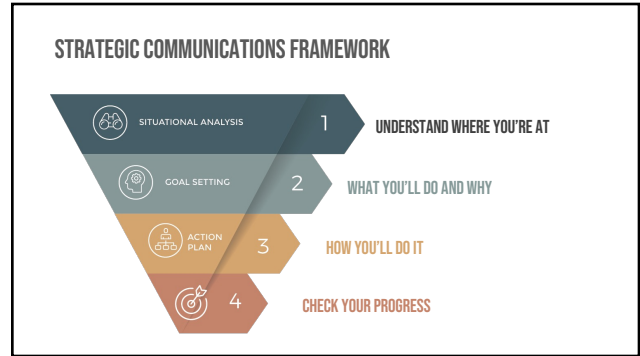
**TACTICAL VS STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION**

| TACTICAL   | STRATEGIC  |
|--|--|
| Focuses on <b>OUTPUTS</b>  | Focuses on <b>OUTCOMES</b>   |
| 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 |

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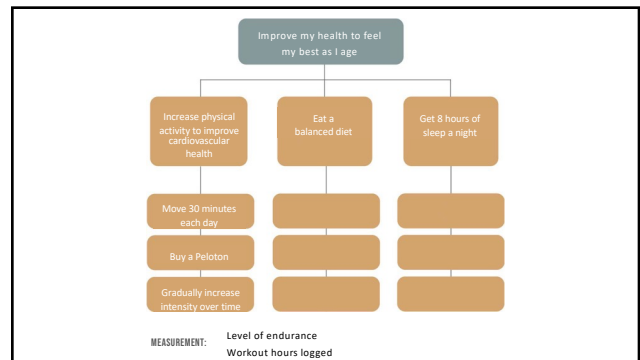
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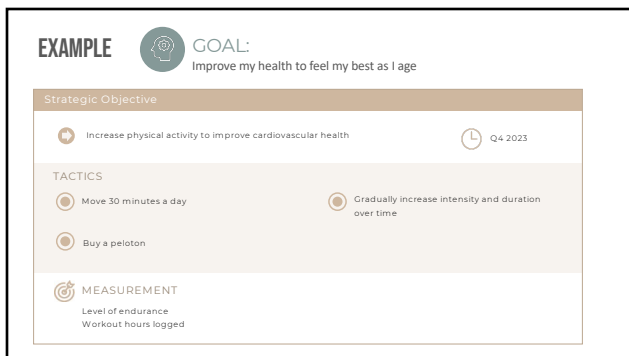
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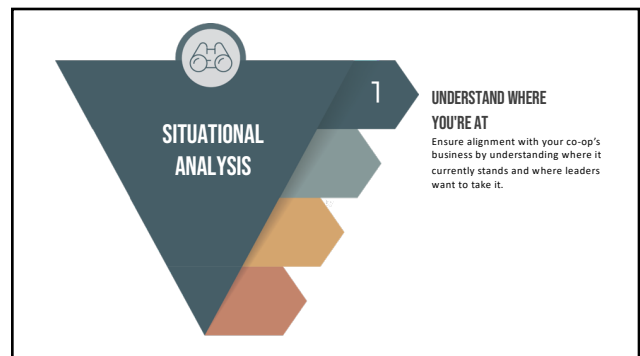
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**ACTIVITY:**  
Where to gather information?

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

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**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

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**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?

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**How often does your co-op do member surveys?**




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

Mentimeter interface elements: Account, Content, Design, Settings, Help & Feedback


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**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

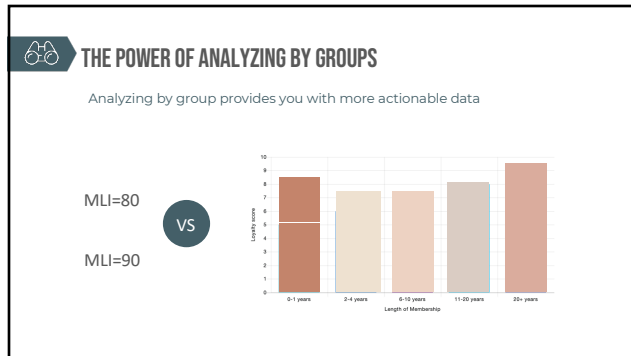
VS

**OPEN ENDED**

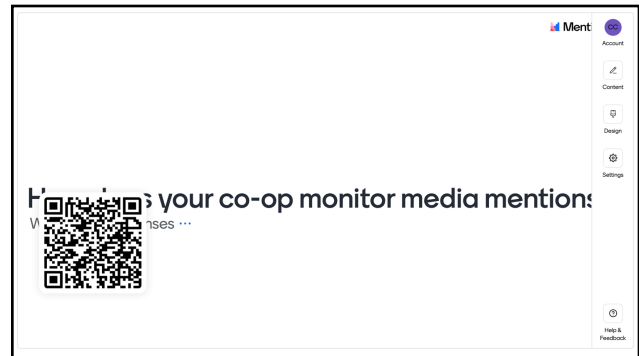
What can we do to improve internal communications at Wolverine?

Use service center TVs for scrolling news and stretching videos

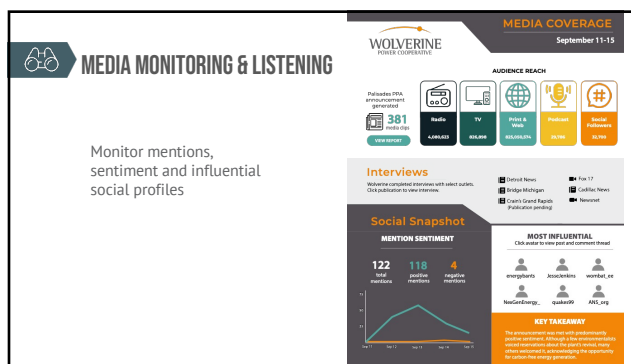
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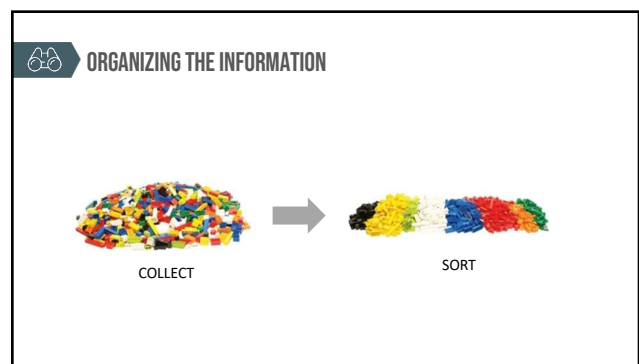
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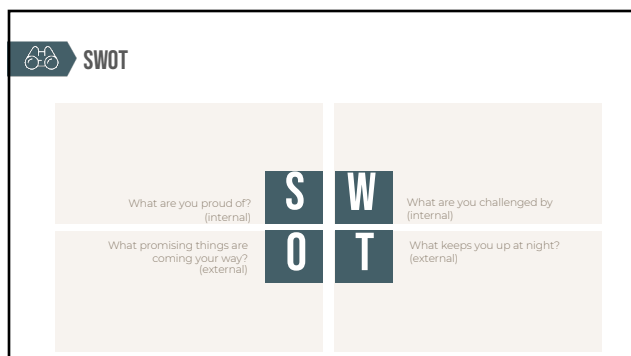
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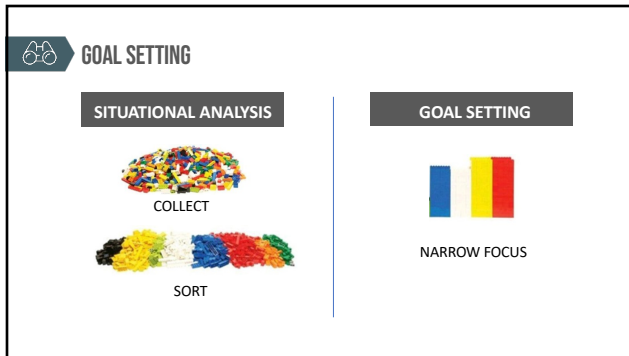
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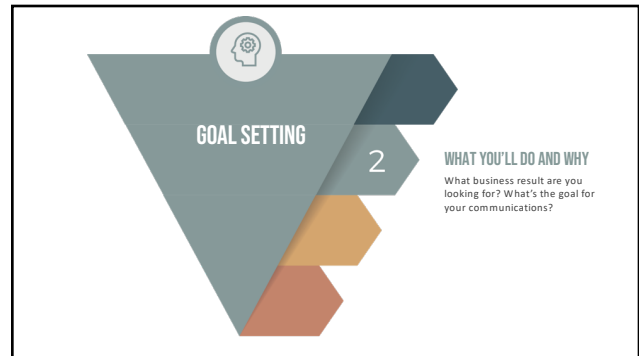
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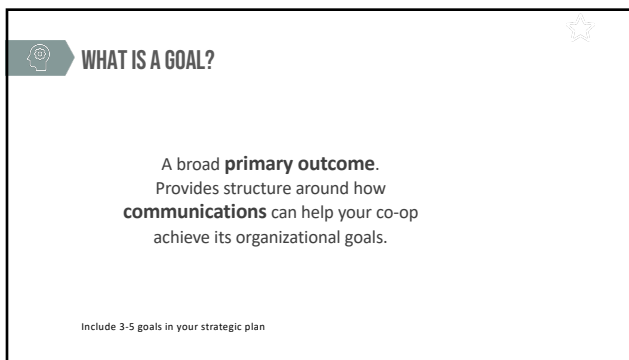
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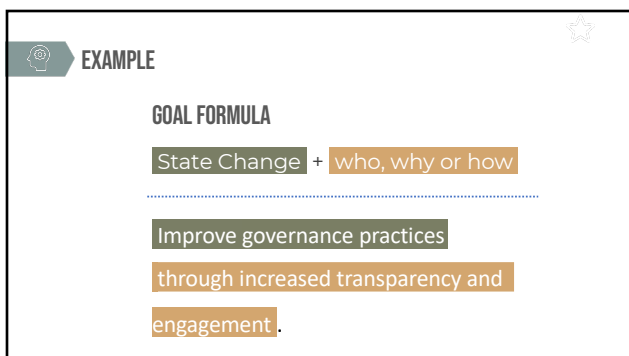
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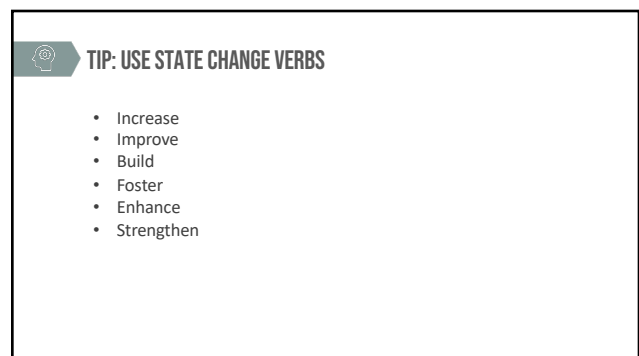
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**TIP: COMMON COMMUNICATION GOAL CATEGORIES**

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

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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!

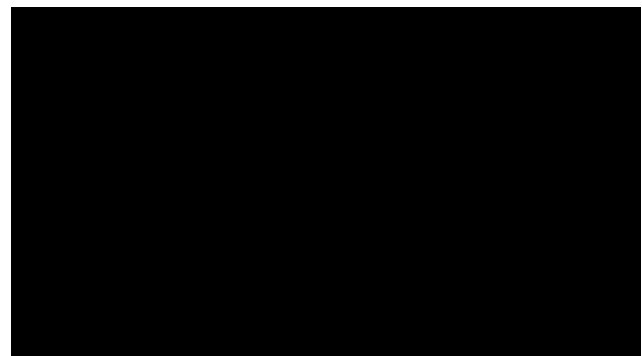
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**ACTION PLAN**

3

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

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## 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

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## 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

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## EXAMPLE

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FORMULA



Action + Detail + Deadline

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

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

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## 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.

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## TACTIC EXAMPLES

**GOAL:** Improve governance practices through increased transparency and engagement


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

**TACTICS**

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

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## Check in: Is this making sense?



Clear as mud    Yep, tracking with you    Crystal clear

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## EVALUATE RESULTS

4

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


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## WHAT IS A METRIC?

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

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## MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK



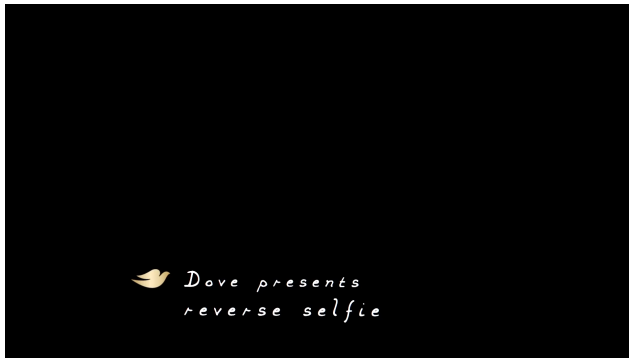
**ACTIVITY**  
Metrics that monitor your output (i.e. produced 10 issues of the magazine, sent 4 press releases)

**AWARENESS**  
Pageviews on a website, podcast listens, email open rate, page scrolls, video views

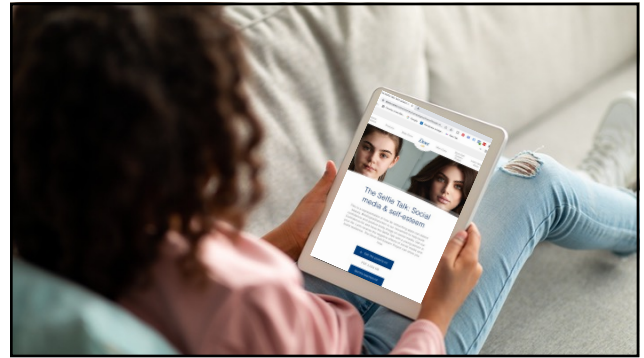
**INTERACTION**  
Social media engagement, shares, downloads, retweets, comments

**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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What level of the framework was the Dove example?

Activity Awareness Interaction Impact

Ment Account Content Design Settings Help & Feedback

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MEASUREMENT TOOLS

SURVEYS & FOCUS GROUPS

MEDIA MONITORING & LISTENING

DIGITAL ANALYTICS

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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**

**Shrinking Electric Demand**  
Electricity demand is growing, but not as fast as supply. This is due to energy efficiency measures and the shift to renewable energy.

**50%** of electricity demand is expected to be met by renewable energy by 2050.

**Disappearing Electric Supply**  
Electricity supply is shrinking, not growing. This is due to the retirement of coal and nuclear power plants.

**5 million** homes are expected to be without electricity by 2050.

**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 for a sustainable future, but it also poses a significant threat to electric reliability. As demand grows and supply shrinks, the risk of blackouts increases.

**66%** of electricity demand is expected to be met by renewable energy by 2050.

**35%** of electricity supply is expected to be met by renewable energy by 2050.

**88%** of electricity demand is expected to be met by renewable energy by 2050.

**So what do we do right now?**

We are collaborating with our power supplier, Wolverine Power Cooperative, to ensure we have enough capacity to meet our needs. We are also investing in energy efficiency measures to reduce our demand.

**BALANCE OF P. WER**

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ESTABLISH BASELINE DATA

**YOU'RE PART OF A LARGER ELECTRIC GRID**

The electric grid is interconnected, meaning that a problem in one area can affect the entire grid. This is why it's important to have a reliable and resilient grid.

**#1 HOW BEING CONNECTED IMPACTS YOU**

**WE SHARE POWER**  
Being connected allows regions to share power and meet their needs. This is why it's important to have a reliable and resilient grid.

**#2 HOW BEING CONNECTED IMPACTS YOU**

**WE SHARE RISK**  
Being connected allows regions to share risk and meet their needs. This is why it's important to have a reliable and resilient grid.


**#3 HOW BEING CONNECTED IMPACTS YOU**

**WE SHARE RESPONSIBILITY**  
Being connected allows regions to share responsibility and meet their needs. This is why it's important to have a reliable and resilient grid.

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

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## Does your co-op use google analytics?



Nope      A little      A fair amount      We're gurus

Ment Account  
Content  
Design  
Settings  
Help & Feedback

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## REPORTING & TRACKING: UTMS

<https://voicesforcooperativepower.com/michigan>

[https://voicesforcooperativepower.com/michigan/?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=vcp-20220606](https://voicesforcooperativepower.com/michigan/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=vcp-20220606)

USE GOOGLE UTM BUILDER

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## REPORTING & TRACKING: UTMS

| Source / Medium       | AWARENESS                    |                              |                              | INTERACTION                      |                              |                                      | ATTITUDE & BEHAVIOR              |                              |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                       | Users                        | New Users                    | Sessions                     | Bounce Rate                      | Pages / Session              | Avg. Session Duration                | Letter Sent Goal % Completed     | Letter Sent Goal % Completed |
|                       | 1,810<br>(% of Total: 8.17%) | 1,784<br>(% of Total: 8.05%) | 2,012<br>(% of Total: 7.74%) | 52.14%<br>(Avg for Site: 18.44%) | 1.15<br>(Avg for Site: 1.23) | 00:01:15<br>(Avg for Site: 00:01:22) | 25.75%<br>(Avg for Site: 18.44%) | 518<br>(% of Total: 8.10%)   |
| 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. e-foro / ad        | 242 (13.36%)                 | 241 (13.51%)                 | 246 (12.23%)                 | 99.19%                           | 1.00                         | 00:00:01                             | 0.00%                            | 0 (0.00%)                    |
| 3. facebook / social  | 144 (7.93%)                  | 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 (0.06%)                    | 1 (0.06%)                    | 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 (2Q 2023)

**TACTICS:**

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

**MEASUREMENT:**

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

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## 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

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**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

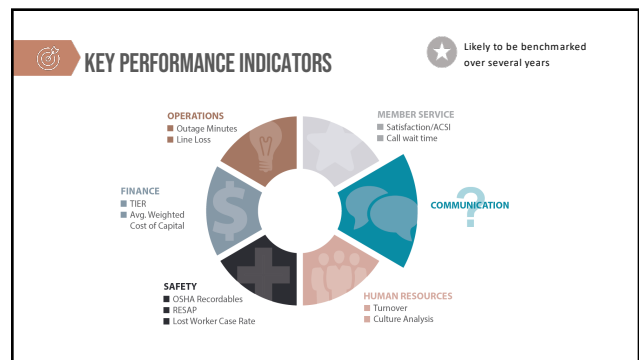
In groups identify strategic objectives, tactics and metrics for your assigned goal.

18 or 22

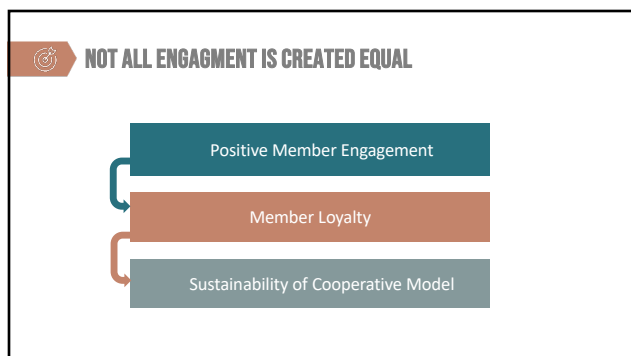
Goal #1 Goal #2 Goal #3  
Goal #4 Goal #5 Goal #6

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**Does your communications department have a KPI?**

Yes No

QR code

Mentimeter interface elements: Account, Content, Design, Settings, Help & Feedback

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What are the top 3 things you  
learned today?

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How can we improve this course?

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### ITS YOUR TURN!



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

Get templates at:  
[Strategiccommunication.blog/templates](http://Strategiccommunication.blog/templates)

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