



# Colorado State University EXTENSION

## Developing an Effective Extension Communications Plan

Think about how individual programs fit into the overall marketing plan. How do those local efforts fit into the overall outreach efforts of the University and Extension statewide?

At the end of this document, you'll find a worksheet to further develop plans to effectively reach your target audience.

Consider how individual educational programs fit into the overall vision and mission of Colorado State University and Extension.

### *From CSU Extension Strategic Plan*

Vision: *Extension is the front door to Colorado State University providing the extensive knowledge, research capabilities and resources of this premier land-grant university to Coloradans from all walks of life. Extension is dedicated to serving current and future needs of Coloradans by providing educational information and programs that safeguard health, increase livelihood and enhance well-being.*

### Values:

- We build the capacity of people and communities.
- We are accessible to all constituencies and honor diverse viewpoints.
- We are unbiased in who we share our knowledge with and how.
- We foster an organizational culture that has open communication, high performance work and an engaged workforce.
- We are oriented to the future through effective innovation.
- We recognize the equal importance of university research, education and engagement.
- We are good stewards of public resources, increasing our efficiency and quality.

Mission: To provide information and education, and encourage the application of research-based knowledge in response to local, state and national issues affecting individuals, youth, families, agricultural enterprises and communities of Colorado.



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extension.colostate.edu

## Develop an Extension Marketing Plan

1. Define the goal
2. Know the audience
3. State the message
4. Create tactics
5. Assign timelines and responsibilities
6. Evaluate

The following worksheet should be used as you are developing a plan to reach a specific audience with research-based information. *The results should then be compared to overall communications of your office, the state Extension mission and visions, and the brand promises of Colorado State University, two of which are below:*

- Our expert research faculty collaborate with students in the classroom and in the field to tap their highest potential and deploy practical solutions to society's great challenges.
- Colorado State University Extension provides reliable, research-based information, research capabilities and resources to Coloradans from all walks of life. Extension, which is available to residents in 60 Colorado counties, is dedicated to serving current and future needs of Coloradans by providing the information and programs that safeguard health, increase livelihood and enhance well-being.

For assistance with your marketing efforts, contact:

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## CSU Extension Communication/Marketing Worksheet

### 1. Goals

- What are the overall goals for your program or initiative? For example, do you want more phone calls coming into your office or just for more people to know that you exist? Do you want to hire more people or are you trying to find ways to let people go?
  
- What are the goals for each program? (ie reach x number of people, increase membership by x, put on x number of programs)
  
- What is your goal with a particular communication effort? Do you want to draw people into a particular workshop or webinar? If so, are you using the appropriate communication tool?



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### 2. Audience (specific content area/program)

- Who is your audience? Think about age range, educational background, ethnicity, level of income, etc.
  
- What motivates them? You may not know this for a fact, but what's your best guess? Is it money? Convenience? Quality time with family? Being healthy?
  
- Where do they get their information? (This will likely depend on their age.)
  
- Who are the stakeholders, supporters, funders in this area?



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- Who are your competitors and/or partners?
- How is your program different/complementary to what they offer? What's unique about your program?
- How do you define your niche?
- What images come to mind when you think of your program?
- What is your audience's perception of you? How do you know?
- If you don't know this, how could you find out?



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- What are their expectations of your programs?
- Do these match with your perception and what you will deliver?

### 3. For this program/communication effort:

- What is your message?
- What do you want the audience to do? (ie attend a workshop, download an Internet file)
- Does this project's creative concept show consideration for inclusion of all members of a potentially diverse audience (people of various races, genders, socioeconomic classes and other points of human diversity)?



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#### 4. Tactics

- How will you deliver your message? (ie media outlets, flyers, social media, etc.)
  
- How much will it cost? (*from personnel time to ad space*) How will it be paid? Who is going to do what?

#### 5. What is your timeline?



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6. What will success look like? How will you evaluate to determine this? Be specific and define a timeline for when you will have this information.