

# **NSPRA Communication Audits**

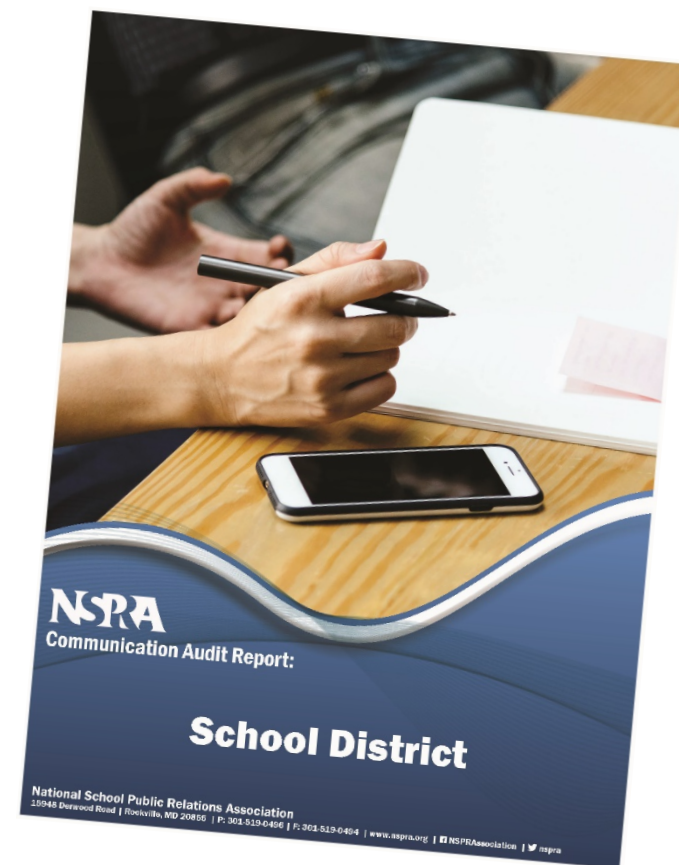
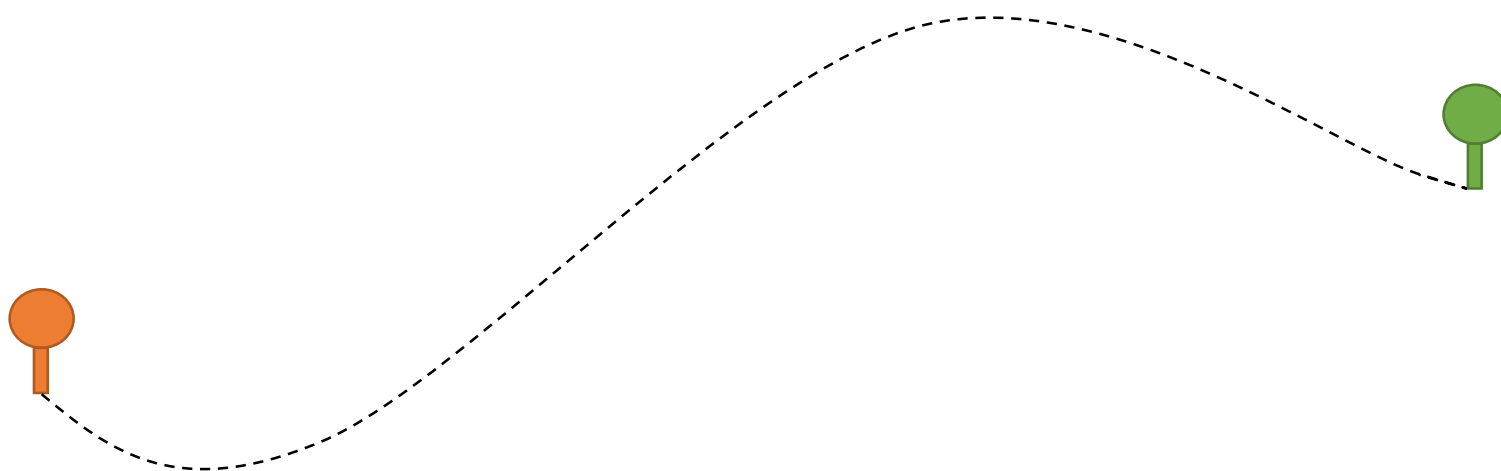
*Effective Communications Program – Or Not.  
How Do You Know?*

**NSPRA**

National School Public Relations Association  
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# Are you on track or off course?

An NSPRA Communication Audit  
is your communication program GPS.



# You're in the RACE, but did you miss a step?

- Conduct **R**esearch
- **A**nalyze and plan
- **C**ommunicate
- **E**valuate

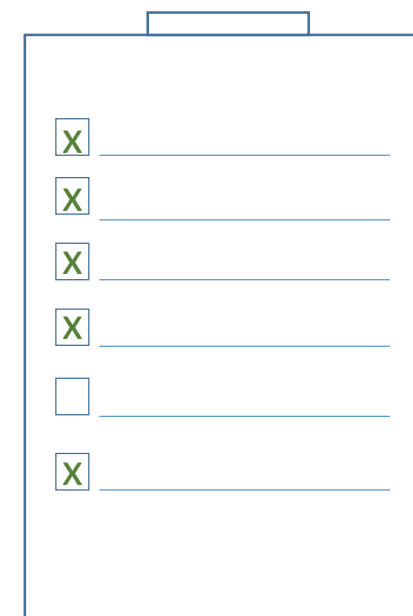
# You're in the RACE, but did you miss a step?

- **Conduct Research**
- Analyze and plan
- Communicate
- **Evaluate**

*... the two steps most often skipped!*

# What is a Communication Audit?

- **A comprehensive assessment of current communication efforts** and the effectiveness of the overall program
- **A snapshot of current perceptions** about your schools, district and leadership
- **A tool for maximizing your communication dollar.** It provides baseline research to evaluate progress and a framework for developing your communication plan



# What can a Communication Audit do for you?

- Help to define the communication vision and focus
- Demonstrate accountability
- Build trust and credibility with stakeholders
- Raise the visibility of the communication/PR function
- Recommend proven, best practice strategies to improve and enhance the communication program

# Identifying the “Gaps”

- Is your message clear?
- Is your message resonating?
- Who or what is your audience’s primary source of information?
- Are your information delivery vehicles meeting audience needs?
- Are you delivering the information your audience needs and wants?



# Trends from NSPRA Communication Audits

- **Communication planning** is more reactive than proactive.
- **Internal communication** is still the weak link.
  - No clear vision/expectations for communication.
  - Message inconsistency is a problem.
  - Administrators don't always see their communication role.
  - Guidelines and protocols are needed.
  - Face-to-face is important.



# Trends from NSPRA Communication Audits

- **Publications** are moving to electronic delivery, but...
  - Communication still must be multi-layered.
  - Balance print and electronic.
  - Combine “push” and “pull” strategies.
  - Video is increasing in importance.

# Trends from NSPRA Communication Audits

- School-to-home communication is still #1 for parents.
- Stakeholders want more “just in time” communication.
- Districts and schools are slow to adopt social media tools.



# Trends from NSPRA Communication Audits

- Engagement efforts are improving.
- Branding and marketing are now components of communication programs.
- Need for multi-lingual communication with diverse cultural groups continues to grow.

# Information stakeholders say they desire:

- **Specifics about school finances.**

*“I’m not interested in stories about the new milk containers. I want to hear about the bigger issues that impact property values.”*

– community member in Nebraska



- **The rationale behind board and administrative decisions.**

*“Communicate why things don’t happen. Let us know if it’s money, state or federal mandates, or something else. Don’t just tell us what was decided, but what is being done and why.”*

– staff member in Oregon

# Information stakeholders say they desire:

- People want to know about problems and challenges as well as successes.

*“The district needs to behave as if the schools are owned by the community.”*

*– parent in Arizona*

*“Don’t sugarcoat information. We need to know what is going on to be able to answer questions and help fix problems.”*

*– staff member in Missouri*

- Close the communication loop.

*“Sometimes we’re asked what we think in a survey or on a committee, but then the district makes a different decision without getting back to us about why.”*

*– staff member in Missouri*

# Opportune times to conduct a Communication Audit

- When a new superintendent is hired
- When a new communications director is hired
- When the board majority shifts
- Prior to starting a long-range strategic planning process
- When there are contentious issues or unrest in the district
- Bond elections and other initiatives have failed
- No changes made to the communications program in 10 years or more

# Making the case for investing in communication

- Many NSPRA resources at: [www.nspraprofessional.org/nspra-communication-audits](http://www.nspraprofessional.org/nspra-communication-audits)

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## NSPRA Communication Audits

### Your blueprint to school community support

An **NSPRA Communication Audit** takes a snapshot of your current communication efforts, the climate for communication, the issues and image perceptions you are facing, and the communication needs and patterns of your target audiences. Each communication audit is different as it is tailored to your needs.

When you call to find out more about the auditing process, you will be asked, "What do you want an NSPRA Communication Audit to accomplish for your district, service agency, association, etc.?" NSPRA auditors review all current communication materials and techniques at the district and building level. They talk with key representatives from target audiences; seek their honest opinions on the communication process, role and

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