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## 4.3 Communicate benefits in order to scale

### What?

By now, you should have a tangible product/service with full functionality and ready for roll out and scale up. You need to market and convince the target users/stakeholders to use your product/service, or to consider using it by telling them the benefits.

### Why?

Without users, no benefits. This is actually the most crucial step in your impact journey. Many innovators are too focused on developing their technology and testing it in one setting, but without a good communication plan it will never reach a broader population, even though the benefits are obvious. If “location, location, location” are the three keys to success in real estate then the equivalent in innovation implementation is “communication, communication, communication.” Communicating benefits of your health technology innovation impacts health, healthcare and health equity.

### How?

The communication can be done through government agencies, advocacy groups, media organizations, researchers, patients, healthcare clinics or any other stakeholders. Below is a step-by-step guide on what to think about as you plan to communicate the benefits of your innovation.

## Step by Step!

1. First, identify your stakeholders. Hopefully this has already been done along the journey of developing your innovation, and some of them have probably been actively engaged in the development process (See [tool 1.3](#) Map Stakeholders). Think about any additional influencers/partners who can amplify your message and put them on board. The most important thing is to have credible advocates on board, for example the people who are suffering from the problem (ie. your main beneficiaries) and who have experienced the benefits of your innovation, health care staff who can convey the message to peers and colleagues, key opinion leaders within the field and not least decision makers.
2. Think about the main message you want to put across, and package it accordingly.
3. Identify and plan for any sensitivities or risks around your dissemination e.g. intellectual property issues, regulatory issues, cultural and political climate etc. Consider how your dissemination might be perceived by different groups.
4. Next, identify the befitting channels of communication and the respective communication formats. These should aim at targeting and tailoring the message to the intended recipients. Besides networking and one-to-one meetings, which shouldn't be underestimated, below are a set of channels and communication formats that can be adopted to disseminate or communicate your innovation to a broader audience.

	Channel	Communication Formats	
1	Public Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dissemination Series</li> <li>Professorial Inaugural Lectures</li> <li>Conferences</li> <li>Exhibitions</li> <li>Public Presentations</li> <li>Workshops</li> <li>Open days</li> <li>Memorial Lectures</li> <li>Symposiums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seminars</li> <li>Doctoral Seminar Series</li> <li>Meetings</li> <li>Community engagements especially those involved in the research</li> <li>Research weeks</li> <li>Conference proceedings</li> <li>PhD public defences</li> </ul>
2	Academic Journals and Published Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Books</li> <li>Book chapters</li> <li>E-books</li> <li>E-journals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Journal articles</li> <li>Posters</li> </ul>
3	Traditional Mass Media Print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulars</li> <li>Notices</li> <li>Newspapers</li> <li>Magazines</li> <li>Brochures</li> <li>News releases</li> <li>Fliers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy Briefs</li> <li>Commissioned articles</li> <li>Factsheets</li> <li>Supplements/Inserts</li> <li>Posters</li> <li>Calendars</li> <li>Photographs</li> </ul>
4	Radio & Television	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documentaries</li> <li>Media campaigns</li> <li>Media appearances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>News features</li> <li>Talk shows</li> <li>Adverts</li> </ul>
5	Social/New Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E-mail</li> <li>Websites</li> <li>Blogs</li> <li>Wikis</li> <li>E-newsletter</li> <li>Podcasts</li> <li>E-LED screens/monitors</li> <li>Researchgate</li> <li>Mak platform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E-magazine</li> <li>YouTube</li> <li>Facebook</li> <li>Flickr</li> <li>Other appropriate social media</li> <li>Twitter</li> <li>Whatsapp</li> <li>Linkedin</li> </ul>
6	Media Appearances/ Briefings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Media/press conference</li> <li>Monthly media conferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Researchers/Innovators hosted on media shows</li> <li>Expert opinions</li> <li>Commentaries</li> </ul>
7	Public Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Billboards</li> <li>Annual reports</li> <li>Project reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Posters</li> <li>Notice boards</li> <li>E-billboards</li> </ul>

Figure: A sample of channels and communication formats adopted from the Makerere University research dissemination strategic plan

It is also important to note how many people you are targeting, because this will determine the communication channel and format to be used.

5. Identify **resources** to carry out the communication plan. Do you have the expertise needed within your team or will the person(s) in charge need to undergo some training on how to frame and communicate with the various target groups e.g., policy briefs for the decision makers, writing for the mass media etc.? You might need additional help with dissemination or benefit from liaising with others.
6. Decide on the frequency of the communication and how often you want to analyse and act on feedback as you plan for scale up.

## Resources/Sources:

<https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/health-communication-and-health-information-technology>

<https://www.ideatovalue.com/inno/innovationcoach/2016/10/key-innovation-implementation-business-success-communication/#:~:text=Effective%20communication%20leads%20to%20collaboration,forces%20of%20your%20innovation%20collective.>

<https://knoww.net/en/social-human-sciences/communication-sciences/innovation-communication/#:~:text=In%20general%2C%20innovation%20communication%20is,communication%20objectives%20must%20be%20addressed.>

<https://rgt.mak.ac.ug/sites/default/files/file-attachments/Makerere-University-Research-Communication-Policy.pdf>

[https://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/medical-evidence-communication\\_research-protocol.pdf](https://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/medical-evidence-communication_research-protocol.pdf)

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/how-to-disseminate-your-research/19951>

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