

## STRATEGY DESIGN TIPS

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**Strategy design should concentrate on the Objectives and the Evaluation Framework.** Once the beginning and end are solid, the rest will naturally fall into place.

**Focus on “Outside In” thinking.** Look at the issue from the audience’s perspective to gain fresh insights, identify patterns and opportunities for a more targeted and impacting result.

**Don’t reinvent the wheel.** Use existing successful strategies, particularly the corporate communications strategy for cues on direction and alignment.

**Resist creating a laundry list of tactics.** Aim to focus your tactical activities toward high-gain initiatives designed to meet the audience groups’ informational needs.

**Treat strategy design as an iterative process.** The writing very often goes back and forth between sections as the thinking evolves. This is particularly true once performance indicators and measures are defined, as they can trigger a need to refine the objectives/tactics.

**Focus your strategy on results, as opposed to process or activity.** To help frame the strategy toward results, consider the Results-Factor Question: What has to happen for you to be satisfied with your progress a year from now? Use the answer to shape the definition of the objectives and evaluation framework.

**Validate the cohesiveness of the strategy.** Are the tactics mapped to the defined target markets? Are the performance measures tied logically to the objectives? Make adjustments as needed to ensure a sound strategy design.

**Carefully define an Evaluation Framework** using a simple questioning technique — identify what you want to know in order to assess the success of the strategy (performance indicators), and then think about how you will know it (measurement tools).

**Don’t confuse the Evaluation Framework with the Objectives.** Remember that the Evaluation Framework is a neutral structure designed to assess the success of the strategy in order to facilitate continuous improvement.

**Worry less about wordsmithing, and focus more on analysis and insight.** Keep in mind that the core value of a strategy is not in the document itself, but rather in the thinking and organizational development/alignment work that it triggers.

**Consider the strategy as a living document** — while the core direction should be consistent, the strategy should also allow for calibration in order to respond effectively to changes in the issue environment.