We’re thrilled that you are interested in educating, inspiring, and engaging your stakeholders around energy efficiency and ENERGY STAR. Based on numerous requests from our partners, we’ve put together this worksheet to help you plan your next communications strategy.

We recommend that you and your team fill this out first. Once you’ve done that, we’d be happy to work with you on ways that EPA and ENERGY STAR can help.



**Planning a communications strategy:   
An overview**

1. Who can help?
2. How much money do we have?
3. What’s our goal, broadly speaking?
4. What exactly do we want to achieve?
5. How are we going to do it?

*Check out the last page for   
ENERGY STAR communications resources and FAQs!*

1. What do we have to work with?
2. What are we going to do, exactly?
3. How are we doin’?

**Step 1: Assemble a team**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Day-to-day project lead |  |
| Rep(s) from marketing/PR/public affairs department  (These folks are your best chance for success!) |  |
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| Rep(s) from outside advertising/marketing agency |  |
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| Senior management “champion” (not a “team member” per se, but someone who can make things happen) |  |

**Step 2: Define your parameters**

**Budget:** $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Time available:** \_\_\_\_\_\_ hours per week, total

**Step 3: Define your goal**

What are you trying to achieve? You need a clearly defined goal. It’s okay to have two goals, but no more than that. Write your goal below, or choose from common goals.

Example goals:

Business goals

* Reduce utility expenses
* Increase sales
* Increase asset value/rental prices
* Increase shareholder value
* Drive traffic to our sustainability website

Client/customer-centric goals

* Motivate energy efficient behaviors among tenants/guests
* Build brand loyalty among existing customers
* Attract new clients and customers by promoting our sustainability results

Employee-centric goals

* Motivate energy efficient behaviors among employees
* Get recognition from upper management for our efforts
* Attract job seekers by promoting our “green credibility”

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**Step 4: Identify specific objectives for your goal**

Be specific! Set yourself up for success by identifying measurable objectives that are reasonably achievable. Also include a timeframe. You’ll likely have multiple objectives for each goal.

Examples of specific objectives:

* Get 20,000 hits on our sustainability home page by the end of May.
* Get sustainability website featured on 3-5 blogs by end of March.
* Interact with 2,000 customers at ENERGY STAR events across the country the week of 10/15.
* Get 1,000 new “likes” on Facebook during the month of October.
* Increase ENERGY STAR score by 2 points by the end of the year.
* Get 15% increase in energy management budget for next fiscal year.
* Earn EPA’s ENERGY STAR certification for 50% of our eligible portfolio by the end of the year.

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**Step 5: Lay out strategies to achieve objectives**

You’ll probably need multiple strategies to achieve each objective. These should be high-level strategic ideas. Try to include a target audience for each strategy.

Examples of strategies:

**Sample objective:** Get 20,000 hits on our sustainability home page by the end of May.

**Strategies:**

* Get key industry players to promote the site
* Create compelling content that bloggers will want to feature
* Use every available online vehicle to drive traffic to website

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**Step 6: Identify what tools you have to carry out these tactics**

Common tools include:

* Website
* Intranet
* Mass emails
* Press releases
* Advertisements
* Brochures
* Newsletter(s)
* Bulletins
* Monthly meetings
* Sales calls
* Facebook
* Twitter
* YouTube
* Other social media
* PowerPoint presentations
* School board mtg announcements
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**Step 7: List out tactics to achieve each strategy**

What steps are you going to take to make the above strategies happen? Be as specific as possible.

Examples of tactics:

**Sample strategy:** Use peer pressure to motivate employees to make behavior changes

* Create a communal “pledge form” and invite employees to sign up and make a pledge to enable power management settings on their computers
* Hand out small tokens to employees/teachers/students when they’ve made a positive behavior change at their desk/in their office/in their classrooms.
* Print up pads of “citations” and encourage employees to write up their colleagues for violating energy saving behaviors.
* Conduct a survey of energy behaviors among employees. Post the results in a common area. (87% of employees shut their computers down at the end of the day. Do you?)

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**Step 8: Measure and assess**

Are you achieving your objectives? If not, then adjust your strategies and tactics. If so, then report your results to your management!

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| --- | --- |
| **Objectives** | **How we’ll measure success** |
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**ENERGY STAR communications resources**

[Bring Your Green to Work](http://www.energystar.gov/work)

This is a suite of fun, off-the-shelf employee engagement tools that you can use as you please. Includes interactive animations, a “Test Your Energy IQ” quiz, a video featuring green lifestyle guru Danny Seo, a green team checklist, posters and tip cards, and a ready-made PowerPoint presentation you can host.

[Energy Efficiency Competition Guide](http://www.energystar.gov/buildings/tools-and-resources/energy-efficiency-competition-guide)

This step-by-step workbook walks you through every detail and decision to help you create a competition that is right for you, and was designed to be used during actual working sessions with your competition committee.

[Ideas for promoting your ENERGY STAR certified building or plant](http://www.energystar.gov/buildings/tools-and-resources/ideas-promoting-your-energy-star-certification)

Browse through these ideas and suggestions for ways to celebrate earning EPA's ENERGY STAR for your building or plant. This document also includes a sample itinerary for an event or ceremony.

Sample press releases

Just add your organization name and a few details about your announcement, and you can send this off to members of the press.

See them all at:

<http://www.energystar.gov/buildings/tools-and-resources/communications-resources>

**Frequently asked questions:**

**Q: Can EPA put out a press release about our achievement?**

*A: Unfortunately, we can’t issue press releases specifically about our partners’ activities.*

**Q: Can EPA help us get our press release out to the media?**

*A: Unfortunately, we’re not able to promote our partner’s announcements to the media.*

**Q: If we share our announcement through social media, can you help us amplify?**

*A: Just include “@EnergyStarBldgs” in your tweet or tag “Energy Star” in your Facebook post and we’ll be sure to see it. If we think it’s something that our followers would be interested in, we’d be happy to retweet it or share it on Facebook.*

**Q: If an article gets written about us, can you share that on social media?**

*A: Once you have a link to the media hit, let us know. If we think it’s something that our followers would be interested in, we’d be happy to tweet it or share it on Facebook.*

**Q: Can I use the ENERGY STAR logo and other ENERGY STAR materials?**

*A: Yes! As long as you use the ENERGY STAR logo appropriately (you must follow the* [*ENERGY STAR brand identity guidelines*](https://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=logos.pt_guidelines)*), you can leverage the ENERGY STAR. And all our materials are there for you to use!*

*Remember, the ENERGY STAR is recognized by more than 85% of consumers, and is a trusted, well understood symbol of environmental protection and financial value. Using the ENERGY STAR in your materials will strengthen your own brand and add credibility to your efforts.*