


#Eval18Niche

 @wheresmalissa

 @innonet\_eval

# Find Your Niche

Using evaluation to improve business communications

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November 1, 2018



# About Innovation Network

*Our work is concentrated in six practice areas:*



Advocacy & Social Movements



Theory of Change & Evaluation Planning



Data Visualization



Health & Health Equity



Social Justice

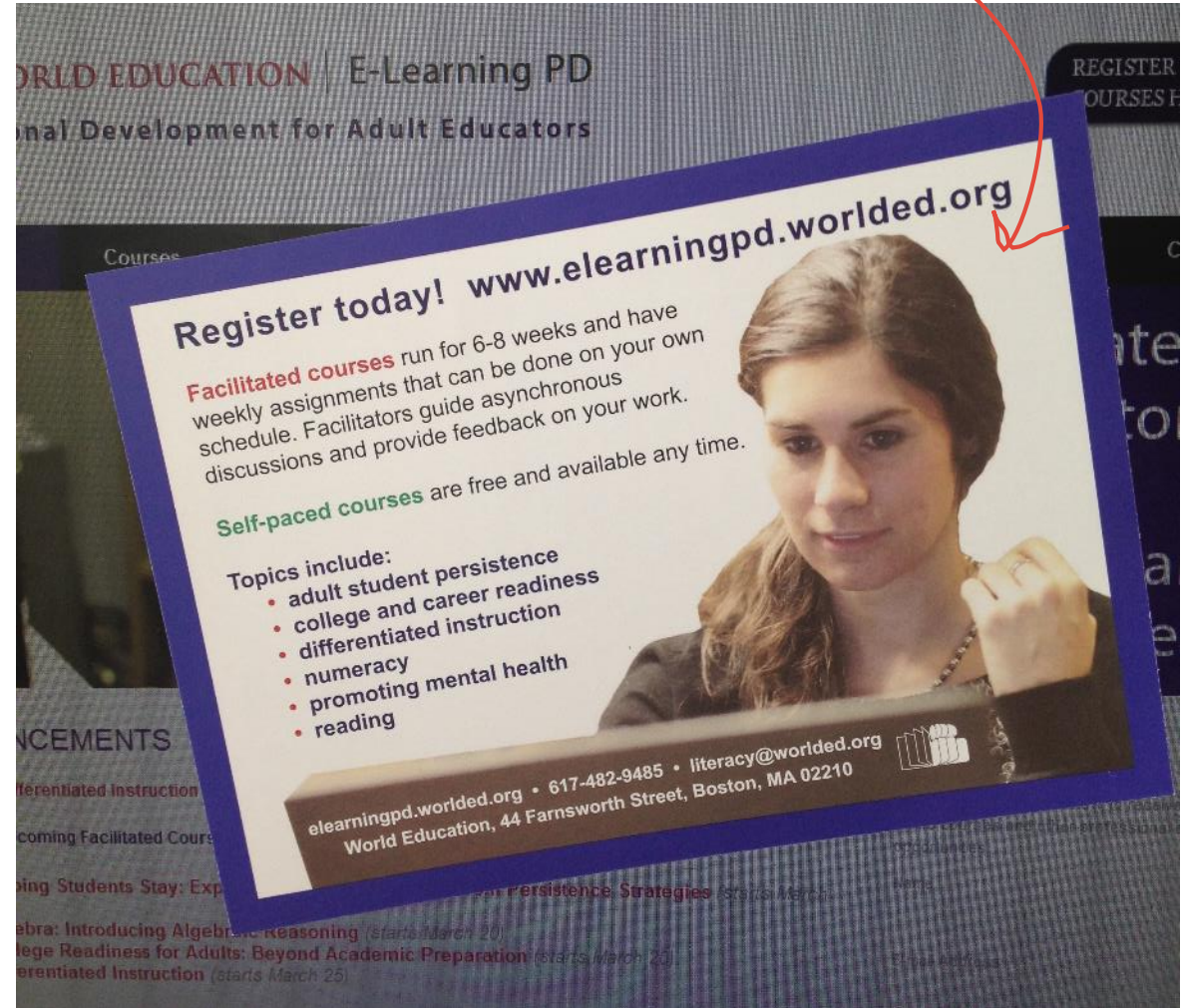


Evaluation Capacity Building

# About Me

- 6 years in communications
- Master's of Social Work
- Evaluator at Innovation Network

That's me!







# DEMONSTRATION OVERVIEW

## 1. Project origins

## 2. Step-by-step approach

- Phase I: **Research**
- Phase II: **Analysis**
- Phase III: **Vision**
- Phase IV: **Strategy**

## 3. Resources

*Please ask questions as we go!*

# Background



# Approach

## PHASE I: RESEARCH

### Evaluation Questions

1. Who is the **audience**?
2. What **content** is put out there?
3. What content are people **engaging** with?

### Competitors/Partners

### Innovation Network

### Streams of Content

- Website
- Newsletter
- Social Media
- Publications (self-published and peer-reviewed)

## PHASE II: ANALYSIS

### Review data

1. What are **our strengths/weaknesses**?
2. Which of our **practice areas** come through?
3. How do we **compare** to others in the field?
4. Where are our competitors' **gaps**?

## PHASE III: OUR VISION

### Define goals

1. What do we want to **achieve**?
2. Are we communicating to **who** and about what we **want**?

## PHASE IV: STRATEGY

### Develop a Communications Strategy

1. What content do we prioritize for each audience?
2. How should it be communicated?
3. How should we change our communications to meet our goals and stay competitive?



# Research

## Phase I



# Approach

## PHASE I: RESEARCH

### Evaluation Questions

1. Who is the **audience**?
2. What **content** is put out there?
3. What content are people **engaging** with?

### Competitors/Partners

### Innovation Network

### Streams of Content

- Website
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- Publications (self-published and peer-reviewed)





# 1. Listed partners / competitors



Who else is working in your space?

Listed:

- Name
- Website
- Location
- Size
- Income (From 990)
- Org Type (private or no?)
- Areas of work
- Client
- Mission

## 2. Identified targets

5

Five targets  
selected



Diversity of  
location



Organizations  
similar to ours, and  
those we aspire to

# 3. Dove into targets' communications

Content			
Topics published	Types of materials posted	Length of content	Amount of content

Engagement		
Popular topics	Popular types of materials	Popular lengths

Audience	
Who is being targeted	Who is engaging with content

# Analysis

## Phase II



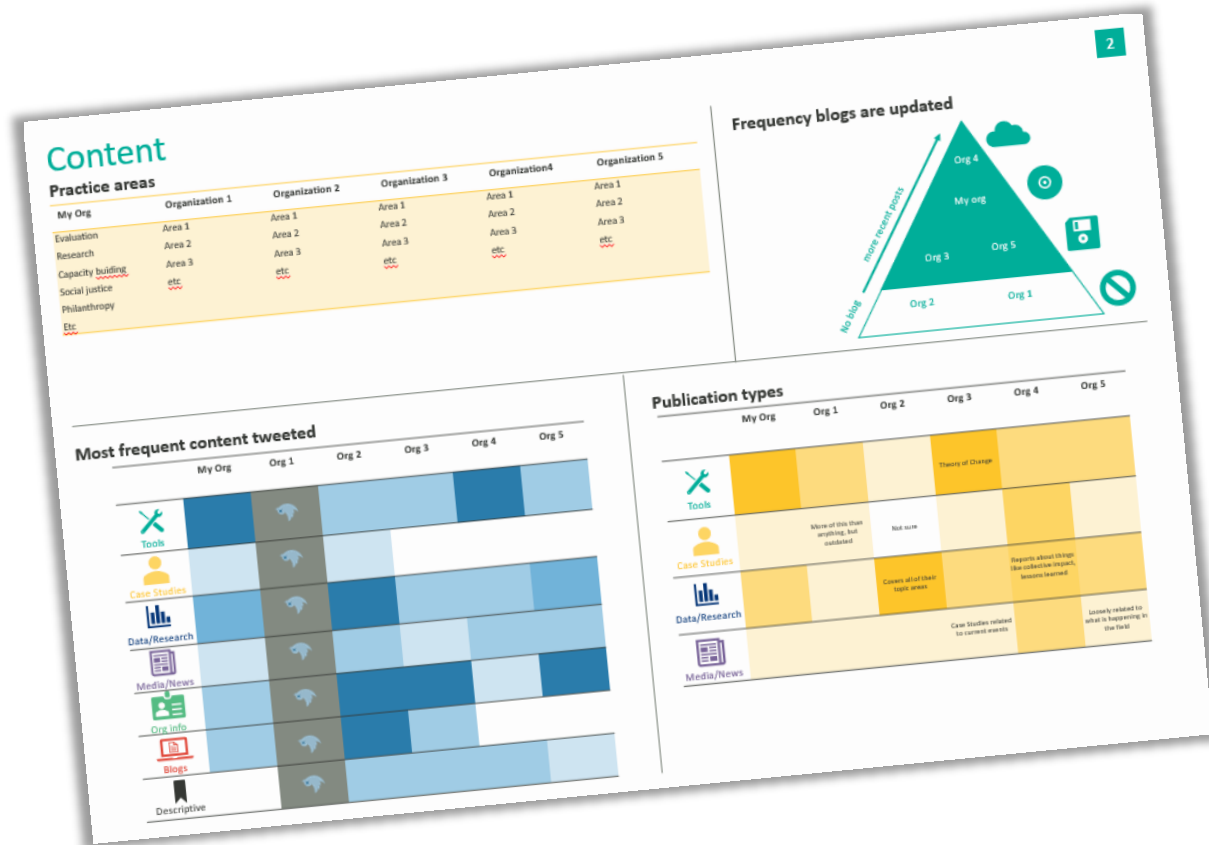


# 4. Reviewed by committee



- Communications Committee pulled out interesting information
- Decided what to include on data placemats
- Initial discussion

# 5. Reviewed by all staff



- Data Placemats at retreat
- Brainstormed takeaways and ideas

# 6. Analyzed all data

## Across all media types:

1. Who do our competitors communicate to?
  - Where are the gaps?
2. What type of content do our competitors communicate about?
  - Where are the gaps?
3. What content are people interested in?
  - What are the gaps?
4. What are our strengths?
  - Where do we fall short?

# Our Vision

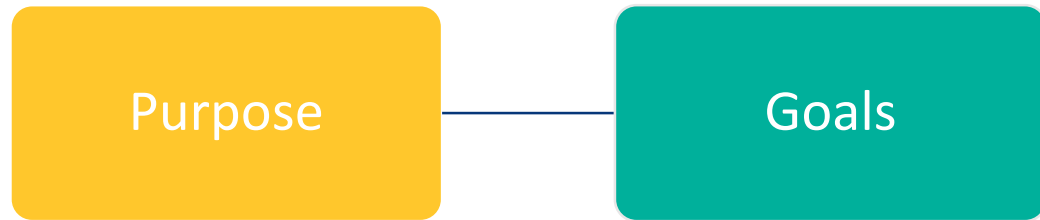
Phase III



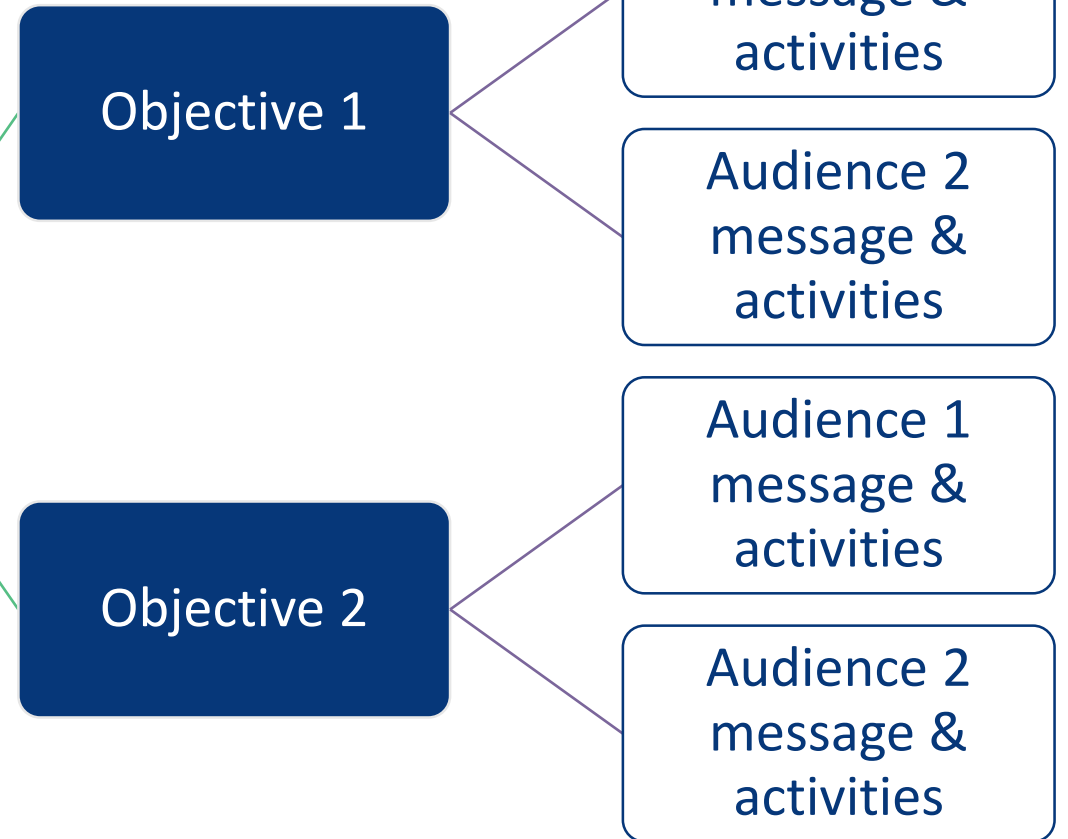


# Communications Plan

## PHASE III: OUR VISION



## PHASE IV: STRATEGY



# 7. Developed a purpose and goals

## Statement of Purpose:

*Why are we communicating in the first place?*

## Goals:

*Specifically, what do we want our organization to achieve in the next 3 years? Consider our organizational goals*

# Final purpose and goals

## Statement of Purpose:

Innovation Network communicates in order to:

- Create **clarity** about who we are and what we do,
- Promote evaluation and **evaluative thinking** in the social sector,
- Showcase our **work** and gain recognition, and
- Engage, build, and sustain **relationships**.

## Goal #1:

Nonprofits are adept at describing their work through a framework such as Theory of Change

# Decision-making process



- Communications Committee brainstorm
- All-staff brainstorm
- Leadership Team refining and approval



# Questions to consider

## Refine goals by asking:

- **Is this a goal** - something we want our communications to achieve in the long run?
- Is this goal **tied to our organizational goals**?
- Does this goal make sense for where we are at as an organization **right now**?
- Is this goal **specific** enough that our small team can make progress towards it?

# Strategy

Phase IV



# 8. Developed intermediate objectives

## Statement of Purpose

### Goal

#### Objective:

*What communications steps can you take to achieve your goal?  
Good objectives should be SMART.*

# Final intermediate objectives

## Statement of Purpose

### Goal #1:

Nonprofits are adept at describing their work through a framework such as Theory of Change

### Objective #1:

By the end of the year, increase by 50% the focus of messages to be on TOC and similar frameworks

### Objective #2:

By the end of year 2, double the number of nonprofits developing a Logic Model through our Logic Model Builder on PointK

# Questions to consider

- Thinking backwards, what steps need to be achieved to meet this goal?
- Who is affected by this goal?
- Is the objective we created SMART?

<b>S</b>	<b>Specific</b> Be as concrete and focused as you can.
<b>M</b>	<b>Measurable</b> Ensure your objective is quantifiable. Can you easily put a number to it?
<b>A</b>	<b>Attainable</b> Is the objective realistic considering your current audience and capacity?
<b>R</b>	<b>Relevant</b> Choose meaningful objectives. Are they directly related to your goals?
<b>T</b>	<b>Time-bound</b> Decide the time period that is most useful.



# 9. Defined messages and activities

Statement of Purpose

Goal

Objective

Audience	What they need to know	Key Comms Messages	Methods/ channel	Timeline	Responsible party	Measures

# Final messages and activities

## Statement of Purpose

**Goal #1:** Nonprofits are adept at describing their work through a framework such as Theory of Change

**Objective #1:** By the end of the year, increase by 50% the focus of messages to be on TOC and similar frameworks

Audience	What they need to know	Key Comms Messages	Methods/channel	Timeline	Responsible party	Measures
Nonprofits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- TOCs are useful</li><li>- We have tools to help</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- We are reliable and provide useful tools</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Newsletter</li><li>- Twitter</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Newsletter article on TOC every month</li></ul>	Jane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>#TOC articles posted</li><li># opens to TOC resources</li></ul>

# Questions to consider

## Defining audience:

Whose knowledge, attitudes and behavior must be changed in order to meet our goal?

Who is affected if we succeed in this goal?

Who else might be able to influence the primary audience?

## Defining messages:

What do they need to know?

What is the basic message we need to get across?

## Defining methods:

What types of media does this audience prefer?

Are there existing forums we can tap into?

What additional materials could be created?

## Ensuring success:

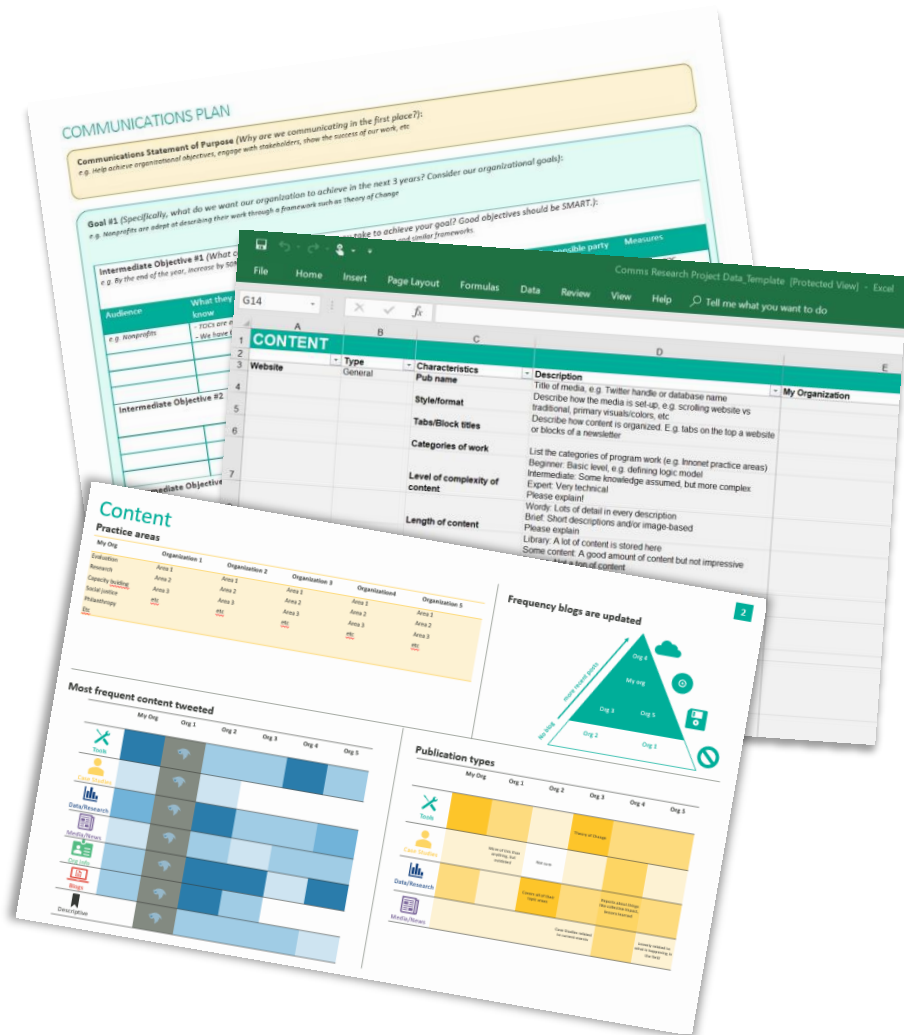
What are some indicators or specific measures to show we are making progress towards our goals?

# 10. Implement!



Visit us @  
Booth #7!

# Resources



1. Research Project template
2. Communications Plan template
3. Data Placemat template
4. Questions to Consider handout

Find these at <http://bit.ly/Eval18Niche>



# Questions?



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