

What is strategic communications?

Strategic communications in the context of higher education and nonprofits uses all the tools of the trade, namely, multiple media (print, broadcast, web, face-to-face milestone meetings, events) to advance your organization's goals.

- Marketing is usually about building an audience for a program, an array of services, or, sometimes, an idea.
- Communications involves the careful selection of the “who, what, when, and where.” It's not about how to write a good press release. It is about designing an enduring communications campaign for success. How best to communicate, to whom, when, and how many times are critical factors to consider.
- Public relations encompasses image making, effectively raising the profile of an organization, and branding. A branding campaign is typically integrative (it includes the whole organization)—it is much, much more than just a logo or “visual identity.”

Why think strategically? This process is a good one because it necessitates identifying goals, setting priorities, deciding on the main messages, making a human and financial investment in a continual effort, and measuring outcomes.

In short, thinking strategically typically narrows the scope of work and enables focus, increasing the chance that the planned outreach or promotion will be successful. The process also forces clarity concerning who contributes, who is accountable, who does the work, and when the work is carried out.

Clarity, creativity, consistency, and timing are everything. These attributes lead to success.