IDENTIFICATION OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES FOR COUNTY EXTENSION EDUCATORS: A DELPHI STUDY

DISSertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
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The purpose of this study was to identify strategic communication competencies for county Extension educators nationally as perceived by a panel of experts. The objective of the study was to obtain consensus regarding strategic communication competency statements for county Extension educators in the United States. The researcher used a modified Delphi Technique to identify the competency items essential for county Extension educators to perform strategic communication functions. A purposive sample of twenty professionals familiar with Extension and communication served on the panel of experts. The researcher collected data from May 6, 2005 to July 24, 2005. During three rounds of quantitative questionnaires, a panel of experts indicated its level of agreement on 69 competency items regarding whether it is desirable for county Extension educators to demonstrate those competencies over the next five to ten years. The panel of experts indicated their levels of agreement for each competency item based on a six-point Likert-type scale where: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = moderately disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = somewhat agree; 5 = moderately agree; and 6 = strongly agree. Round I yielded consensus on 18 competency statements. Members of the panel of experts added 17 additional competencies to the questionnaire. Round II yielded consensus on 27
additional competency statements. Round III yielded consensus on ten additional competency statements. Overall, fifty-five competency items achieved consensus. Fourteen competency items failed to achieve consensus. Two areas of implications for Extension stemmed from this study relating to professional development and organizational structure. This study has provided evidence to support the view that county Extension educators should develop competence in strategic communication in the next five to ten years. This study was exploratory and provided a list of strategic communication competency items that may be used to develop training for county Extension educators. The results of this study might be a useful guide for developing seminars, training programs, and workshops for county Extension educators to help gain competence in strategic communication. Conclusions from the study indicated that there are four strategic communication competency areas including: research, strategy, tactics, and evaluation. The panel of experts agreed that county Extension educators should demonstrate nine strategic communication research competencies including: the ability to systematically segment community members of clients into need-based demand-driven Extension groups; the ability to analyze political issues that affect Extension communication at the local level; and the ability to assess external factors such as political, social, and economic trends that might affect county Extension organizations. The panel of experts agreed that county Extension educators should demonstrate 18 strategic communication strategy competencies including: the ability to set communication task management goals; the ability to relate the organization’s mission into its communication plan;
and the ability to target special publics with specialized messages. The panel of experts agreed that county Extension educators should demonstrate 21 strategic communication tactical competencies including: knowledge of communication experts in the Extension organization who can assist with the communication aspect; knowledge of how to work with local media agents; and the ability to display professional interpersonal communication skills. The panel of experts agreed that county Extension educators should demonstrate seven strategic communication evaluation competencies including: the ability to determine shifts in public opinion about the Extension organization; the ability to measure communication impact at the cognitive level; and the ability to evaluate behavioral communication outcomes.
Dedicated to my mother, Mrs. Cassie Tucker Caldwell and my father, the late Rev. Dennis Napoleon Caldwell
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

“Do not judge me by where I am in life. Judge me by depths from which I have risen.”
- Booker T. Washington

Nobody told me that the road would be easy. I don’t believe He brought me this far to leave me. I first heard these inspirational words in my father’s church. As a child, I sang along with the rest of the congregation, simply because I knew the words. After I became an adult, I truly understood their meaning and the impact they would have on my life. I have experienced many uneasy times while on this journey. No matter the circumstance, these words always gave me comfort and inspiration. I always managed to overcome challenges and continue my quest for excellence. This is a testament to the tenacity that ultimately flowed from God’s blessings and guidance. I am grateful to Him for blessing me in incomprehensible ways.

While there is much to be said about one’s faith and perseverance, greater attention must go to the individuals who offered assistance, support, and encouragement along this journey. The following individuals are angels because of their consistent dedication to helping me achieve my academic, career, and personal goals.
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home while I lived in Columbus. For all of your compassion and wisdom, I thank you. I look forward to working on projects with you in the future.

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Nobody told me that the road would be easy. With the assistance of the angels that I mentioned above, the road was much smoother. My goal moving forward with my personal and professional pursuits is to help others the way so many have helped me. I will strive to be a beacon of hope and inspiration for others as they strive to achieve their dreams.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The importance of communication in social change has never been greater. The Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) identified the need for Extension to recognize that clients are becoming more diverse. This diversity mandates strategic thinking to determine whether communication with diverse audiences is successful. Because of this socio-economic diversity, Extension should find ways to strategically engage and communicate with these diverse stakeholders (Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, 2002). Gray-Felder, Vice President of The Rockefeller Foundation, observed that “while there is demand for a new type of professional communicator in social change . . . the supply of communicators for social change, those that can apply strategic thinking in communication to issues of social development, is very limited” (Rockefeller Foundation, 1997, p. 4). The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the CHANGE Project, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Pan-American Health Organization held a conference in Rome, Italy to review the academic literature on future trends in the field of communication for social change. Gray-Felder also indicated that there are hundreds of universities in Europe and North America, as well as in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, where thousands of professionals graduate each year in journalism studies (radio, television, press) or public relations and marketing. Less than one percent of schools that offer
studies on communication for social change or communication for development (Rockefeller Foundation, 1997).

A number of universities now recognize the need for strategic communication training and have begun offering courses in this area. The University of Iowa was among the first to do so in the early 1980s. The University of Iowa established a Development Support Communication (DSC) graduate program in 1983 to train professionals for communication roles in developing countries (Brody, 1984). A decade later, in the mid-1990s, Iowa recognized that the demand for these communication professionals was also present in the United States and transformed its Public Relations (PR) Program in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication into a program emphasizing strategic communication. In 2000, the Department of Communication at The Ohio State University created a strategic communication sequence for the undergraduate PR program (Glynn, 2003).

Agricultural communication programs at Land Grant Universities (LGU) that have always provided communication support to Extension practitioners are also realizing the need for strategic communication training. The National Agricultural Communications Summit (2004) revealed, “the need for professionalism, that is, the responsibilities of agricultural communicators to their clients, communities, society and future agricultural communicators” (p. 2.2). Of particular concern was whether agricultural communication should continue to produce communication technicians to perform entry-level jobs such as writing press releases, producing videos, publishing newsletters, and organizing displays or whether the emphasis should be on strategic communication that is
producing graduates who can manage the overall communication needs of an organization. Smith (2004) stated:

No longer is it enough merely to know how to do things. Now the effective communicator needs to know what to do, why and how to evaluate its effectiveness . . . . Now the profession demands competency in conducting research, making decisions and solving problems. The call now is for strategic communicators (p. 1).

Smith went on to differentiate between tactical and strategic communication decisions. Tactical communication managers, such as those in Information and Applied Communication Units of LGUs, make daily decisions on practical communication concerns, such as whether to send a news release, hold a news conference, produce a brochure, or build a web page. Strategic communication managers are concerned with management trends, issues, policies, and corporate structure. These managers are concerned with what problems are likely to face the organization over the next several years and how to solve them.

Smith (2004) noted that, in the workplace, public relations practitioners often find themselves functioning in both the technician and the managerial roles, but the balance is shifting:

Today’s environment—and more importantly, tomorrow’s—calls for greater skill on the management side of communication. The job of strategic communication planning calls for four particular skills: (1) understanding research and planning, (2) knowing how to make strategic choices, (3) making selections from an expanding inventory of tactical choices, and (4) completing the process by evaluating program effectiveness (p.1).

Strategic communication is about applying social scientific communication methods in assisting organizational managers to make solid and informed decisions. Strategic communication is intentional communication undertaken by a business or
Strategic communication has many terms such as: marketing communication, social marketing, event planning, strategic public relations, risk communication, crisis communication, reputation management, health communication, communication for development, integrated marketing communication, integrated communication, or behavior modification communication (Smith, 2004).

Smith (2004) noted that the essential element in strategic communication is enabling organizational leaders to see the big picture and recognize the value of a coordinated and strategic approach to communication problem identification and problem solving. An integrated communication approach focuses efforts at three levels: (1) external communication focusing on customers; (2) vertical internal communication between senior management and frontline workers; and (3) horizontal internal communication across departments, business units, and geographic boundaries.

Smith went on to cite numerous reasons why organizations of the 21st century must adopt strategic communication, such as: the need to be accountable to their publics, demand for open communication, the need for customer loyalty consistently and continuously, customer-driven response, lean resources, proactive and two-way communication, and the need for reputation management. Radtke (1998) summarized the meaning of strategic communication as strategic thinking and managing the communication process to realize organizational goals. The thesis of this doctoral dissertation research was to determine what strategic communication competencies could help county Extension educators manage the communication process in order to realize organizational goals.
Background to the Study

A strategic communication plan is an important part of an organization’s daily operations. The plan frames media activities, including internal and external communication, and clarifies the organization’s priorities, target audiences, resources and staff assignments. Leaders of the Communications Consortium Media Center (CCMC) in Washington, DC recognize that strategic communication cannot occur without careful planning and direction. Bonk et al. (1999) formulated a process for bringing nonprofit organizations and their intended audiences together. Weaving a comprehensive communication plan into an organization’s large-scale goals and daily activities is essential for sustaining growth. This growth includes elements such as listing goals, crafting a mission statement, incorporating values, identifying appropriate recipients, developing a message, assessing resources, managing crises, and evaluating success.

Bonk et al. (1999, pp. 7–8) claimed that if the nonprofit organization’s goal is “enhancing visibility and name recognition, increasing fundraising, recruiting more members and volunteers, reforming public institutions, improving and increasing service delivery and awareness of public concerns, [or] turning around media coverage,” then there are concrete steps to follow to draft a communication plan. To spread a particular message, the nonprofit must examine media trends to discover appropriate story placement and connections, analyze levels of public awareness, match campaigns with appropriate media formats, employ new technology, and provide high-quality written materials.
Radtke (1998) offered a similar approach to strategic communication for nonprofit organizations. She developed the key components of a mission statement, one that worked as a beacon for the organization. She addressed three fundamental questions that point toward the purpose, business, and values of the group. Once the endpoint is clear, Radtke explained how to distill a basic message that can fit multiple arenas such as lobbying, public education, fundraising, and publicity.

The heart of strategic communication is the development of a comprehensive communication plan (Radtke, 1998; Bonk et al., 1999; & Jensen, 2003). Essential to this plan are elements that help shape the strategic direction of all organizational communication (Bonk et al., 1999):

1. Identification of the target audience
2. Researching past media coverage and public opinion about the issues
3. Determination of what messages will be delivered
4. Delineation of what materials need to be produced
5. Identification of financial resources for staff and equipment
6. Construction of a written work plan
7. Evaluation of the written plan

Bonk et al. (1999) and Radtke (1998) discussed strategic communication largely through traditional media outlets such as radio, television, and print, and only touched on newer technologies. However, Kent and Taylor (1998) advocated incorporating dialogic relationships via the World Wide Web to enhance strategic communication in ways that “will contribute to the development of true organization–to-public discourse” (p. 323). The authors encouraged a communication plan that goes beyond eye-catching
graphics and static web pages. The “negotiated exchange of ideas and opinions” (p. 325) using feedback loops, that is, tools for responding to “concerns, questions, and requests” (p. 327), will strengthen the organization’s relationship with the public.

Applying strategic communication in any format requires the commitment of time and resources. Salzman (1998) noted that restricted budgets lead many nonprofit organizations to disengage from media-seeking endeavors. Salzman argued that nonprofit organizations’ failure to provide journalists with well-timed and well-prepared opportunities to highlight critical issues is responsible for the neglect of important causes. He supported focused attempts to increase media coverage, such as using simple messages, holding news conferences, and developing organization-reporter relationships, as the only way to enhance nonprofit organizations’ standing in the media community.

One reflection of the validity of such theories is the fact that many nonprofit organizations have turned their attention to strategic communication by creating groups that facilitate the process. Media Alliance (www.media-alliance.org) is a San Francisco organization that teaches nonprofit organizations and political activists techniques for turning the spotlight on their causes. In their media guidebook (Manilov, 1999), they suggest devising sound bites associated with anecdotal recitations to increase long-term awareness of a problem. Similarly, the Strategic Press Information Network, or SPIN, Project (www.spinproject.org) trains nonprofit organizations in strategic communication as a survival skill. Their goal is to enable grassroots leaders to sway public opinion by teaching them to become media savvy.
According to the Cleveland Foundation, communication budgets for nonprofit organizations are small and most communication efforts are internal with limited success (Batyko & Hirt-Marchand, 2002). Bonk et al. (1999) reiterated this trend of ineffective internal communication efforts by nonprofits. The authors attributed ineffective communication efforts to the lack of specialized skills in strategic communication by nonprofit organization staff members. A limited number of consultants specialize in providing strategic communication technical assistance for nonprofits, but consulting fees make these services cost prohibitive.

The benefits have been substantial for nonprofit organizations that employ strategic communication practices. Multiple nonprofit organizations’ success stories underscore the benefits of employing the carefully scripted, pointed approach of strategic communication. The Rochester branch of the Society for Technical Communication, the largest nonprofit professional society geared toward the technical community, drafted a strategic plan to guide its volunteers (Boyd, Marra & Swanson, 1997). The strategic plan’s usefulness prompted the group to write a second, five-year plan that included many components such as: goals, a mission statement, and expanded public relations, advocated by strategic communication experts (STC Rochester Strategic Plan, 1999).

Coffman (2002) explained how strategic communication can connect research and advocacy to achieve better outcomes than either avenue could independently. In the case of a New Jersey court decision regarding early childhood education, low-income districts, and the public schools, affected parties were able to influence public
opinion and policy when they matched advocates with target audiences, held well-timed press conferences, and facilitated relationships with the media.

Bonk and Griggs (2002) demonstrated how complex, sophisticated strategic communication works to gain broader acceptance of largely ignored issues, such as biodiversity and global population. In this situation, the “main tools for framing the debate and targeting audiences and messengers were public opinion research in the form of scientific surveys, mathematical analysis of the surveys to identify population clusters with shared attitudes, and in-depth focus groups” (pp. 163 - 164). While this extensive approach may not be feasible for small, local groups, the basic lessons apply nevertheless: “know your audience, know the messages and messengers they will respond to, and tailor your public activities and media outreach accordingly” (p. 169).

The Research Problem

A core set of strategic communication competencies have not been identified for county Extension educators. The identification of competencies for strategic communication for county Extension educators is important for the following reasons.

The Extension System faces many challenges that strategic communication may help address. For example, the audience for Extension is growing increasingly diverse in terms of ethnic, geographical, and educational levels. “Ensuring equal access to and participation by minorities and diverse groups within the community is equally, if not more, important. Extension managers are expected to be socially responsible and are held accountable for their actions” (Buford et al., 1995, p. 33). Strategic communication
enables Extension to recognize its diversity of clientele and develop effective strategies for serving them.

Continually shrinking budgets will require Extension and agricultural experiment stations to adapt their programs and staff to specific audiences, delivery methods, and operating structures. Extension has to prioritize its programs to meet limited resources and develop new communication techniques to reach a growing variation of clientele (Swanson et al., 1990). Ludwig (1995) stated that a critical issue for Extension was understanding how to communicate with diverse clientele. A more diverse clientele base continues to evolve in Ohio that makes client communication critical to the organization’s success (Walker, 2000).

Communication is a critical component of the work Extension educators conduct, but the exchange of ideas and feedback goes both ways in an effective model. One example, outlined by Rewerts and Timm (1996), is Colorado State University’s Cooperative Extension that appreciates the valuable contribution that community feedback gives to the program: “In many cases, this multi-channel communication system drives the research and educational programs conducted at Colorado State, contributing to Colorado's social, economic and environmental well-being” (p. 3). In order to develop effective channels of communication within the organization, three steps must be taken: (1) communication must be openly valued within the organization, (2) opportunities for communicating directly with those in authority must be given to all staff members, and (3) an atmosphere of trust must be fostered within the organization (Grensing-Pophal, 2000).
Effective interpersonal skills involve more than simply being able to express ideas openly and freely. Communication, particularly in Extension programs, needs to be flexible (Ludwig, 1995). As Extension programs change to meet the needs of their communities, their faculty must also learn how to communicate with a variety of people. “Our youth program with 75,000 4-H members is very visible at the fair, but people don't know about our inner city clubs and after school programs in Albuquerque, where we are working with at-risk youth, teaching life skills classes. In the southwest part of the state we're in welfare to work programs. We work with people from 6 years old to those in their retirement years. Our master gardener program has a lot of people who are retired and want to learn about gardening” (O'Hara, 2000, p. 52). Strategically communicating with such a diverse group of clients requires unique interpersonal skills that promote trust and good will among all involved.

One of the barriers to effective communication is technology itself. Jimmerson (1989) warned that by placing too much confidence in the abilities of science and technology to solve the problems of society, Extension faculty and people in general “neglect the importance of information coming from the people [being] served” (p. 4). The danger is that instead of viewing communication as a two-way street, it becomes a one-sided road where the Extension staff views itself as “information providers and technology experts” instead of as “educators working with people to promote personal, community, and societal change based on carefully examined values and beliefs” (p. 5).

Despite emerging technology, communication skills will continue to be important for Extension educators (Patterson, 1991). He also speculated that the role of a communicator will change to include the ability to utilize technology effectively in order
to send messages to learners. Extension educators will need to be knowledgeable about the sending and receiving ends of the communication process (Patterson, 1991).

Extension organizations across the nation work to improve the quality of life for communities through research-based educational programming (Sanderson, 1998). In trying to fulfill their missions, many organizations tend to focus solely on the day-to-day operations that primarily include the design and implementation of programs and overlook the essential strategic visioning component that all organizations need to survive and thrive (Bonk et al., 1999; Connors 2001). Maddy & Kealy (1998) note that Extension’s future success lies in its ability to apply integrated communication. A similar sentiment was echoed by the Kellogg Foundation (2000) when they identified the ability to communicate and engage diverse audiences as one of the challenges for Extension. The Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (2002) indicated that the Extension system should develop integrated strategies to communicate with diverse groups of stakeholders and strategically engage those stakeholders based on specific demographic needs. Strategic communication is essential to engaging stakeholders and working within social systems to affect positive change.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify strategic communication competencies for county Extension educators nationally as perceived by a panel of experts. The objective for the study was to obtain consensus regarding strategic communication competency statements for county Extension educators in the United States.
Rationale for the Study

Schultz et al. (1993) noted that in a competitive environment, the only real differentiating factor that an organization can bring to its customers is what those consumers expect of the organization. The only place that real product or brand value exists is within the minds of the customers. They added that: “What exists in the mental network of the consumer or the prospect is truly where marketing value resides,” that is, what people believe, want, and dream about are the only issues that matter. The challenge for any organization is to understand the needs and concerns of its customers. Schultz et al. (1993) concluded, “communication is rapidly becoming the major marketing force of today and certainly tomorrow” (p. 45).

Strategic communication may be effective in helping Extension identify and build effective relationships with its stakeholders. Extension goals should focus on satisfying customer needs and thus, creating a win-win situation for both Extension and its clientele (Ludwig, 1995). Because the literature does not indicate specific knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for strategic communication, there is a need to examine what strategic communication competencies can help county Extension educators manage the communication process to build effective relationships with stakeholders. Lyles (2004) found that communication is one of seven competencies essential to all Extension employees. The author further suggested that additional research was needed to identify specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes of communication competencies for major job groups within the Extension system.
Definition of Terms

**Competency** - A cluster of related knowledge, skills and attitudes that affects a major part of one's job (a role or responsibility), that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured against well-accepted standards, and that can be improved via training and development (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999).

**County Extension Educator** – This term describes individuals who work for a university Extension program at the county level in the United States of America. These professionals are also known as county Extension agents in several states. Support staff and district specialists who work in counties will be excluded from this definition.

**Strategic Communication** – The art of expressing organizational values and solutions so that people who need to know will understand the message. Strategic communication is the science of transmitting information so that people who need to know will see what is meant and hear what is said (Radtko, 1998).

**Modified Delphi Technique** – A research method used to obtain a consensus of opinion about a matter not subject to precise quantification (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963). The technique can be used for forecasting, policy investigations and goal setting. A modified version starts with a questionnaire based on existing literature and expert opinions.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The researcher identified numerous historical and contemporary literary works related to strategic communication. Literature from the fields of Extension education, social marketing, organizational communication, and nonprofit management yielded relevant information. This review of literature covers eight main areas related to strategic communication. These areas are: communication and social change, strategic communication research, strategic communication process, strategic communication in academic and professional fields, strategic communication in Extension, competencies, and Delphi Technique.

**Communication and Social Change**

The roots of strategic communication can be found in early literature about the concept of communication and social change. The subject can be traced back to the 1960s. In its infancy, strategic communication was called social marketing. Early scholars defined social marketing as marketing efforts designed to serve the goal of society and impact social perspectives (Lazer, 1969). Social science and communication scholars sought to expand the field of marketing
from a business function to a social relationship function. Lazer suggested that “One of the next marketing frontiers in marketing may well be related to markets that extend beyond mere profit considerations to intrinsic values – to markets based on social concern, markets of the mind, and markets concerned with the development of people to the fullest extent of their capabilities” (p. 4).

In the 1970s scholars shifted the focus of social marketing away from business marketing as a way to influence social perspectives. Scholars continued to analyze social marketing within the context of nonprofit organizations (Kotler, 1979). Nonprofit organizations began to see the importance of marketing to their overall management strategies (Nickles, 1974). These organizations saw marketing strategies as a way to further their missions and affect social change. The first social change agents to adopt social marketing to affect social change were in the public health field. The goals for public health professionals were to encourage healthy behaviors in the areas of alcohol abuse prevention, drug abuse prevention, improved nutrition, and family planning (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971; Burgon, 1972; Fox & Kotler, 1980).

**Strategic Communication Process**

Scholars in the strategic communication field proposed many different variations on the strategic communication process (Radtke, 1998; Smith 2002; Bonk et al., 1999). All variations can be explained using four basic principles that will be discussed in this section. Those principles are: research, planning, implementation, and evaluation (see Figure 2.1).
Research

Peppers & Rogers (1993) referred to the modern age as a “technological discontinuity of epic proportions” saying that the old paradigm of mass production, mass media and mass marketing is being replaced by “a one-to-one economic system” (pp.4 - 5). They emphasized the importance of tailoring products to individual tastes. Grunig (1992) suggested that the reconciliation of an organization’s goals with the expectations of its strategic publics, contributes to the effectiveness and value of an organization. In order to accomplish such catering to individuals and publics, effective audience identification is crucial.

Culp (1997) pointed out customer “turn offs” relating to needs and expectations that should be noted by Extension. These turn offs included not meeting the audiences desires with the products or services that are offered; help being unavailable when needed; poorly trained, uninformed and distracted staff; bureaucratic processes and red tape; unreasonable wait times; information being hard to obtain; misleading advertising; costs that exceed value; failure to meet quality expectations; failure to stand behind products or services; poor housekeeping that creates an unwanted image; and inconvenience relating to location, layout, parking or access. All audiences have unique needs and desires, and to accomplish its objectives, a non-profit organization has to take those attributes of an audience into consideration. For instance, Taylor (1989) discussed providing training for transitional clients. He reported on a study that indicates the importance of identifying perceptions of these transitional clients in
relation to needed training programs. The surveying of potential employers for
the clients can also reveal the skills and competencies that the workers need to
the fill the positions available with the employers. Training programs can be
quite fruitless if these needs and expectations are not met.

Bonk, Griggs, & Tynes (1999) and Radtke (1998) all recognized audience
identification and needs assessments as important elements of an effective
strategic communication plan. Bonk, et al. (1999) listed identification of the
target audience as the first critical element to building a communication strategy
after the goals, vision and values are established. Radtke (1998) included
identifying and learning about the audience as a step that precedes and enables
targeting of messages to the intended audience. Proper identification of the
target audience is key to determining how, when and where to communicate an
organization’s message. These steps pave the way for the implementation of a
communication plan in accordance with Radtke’s recommended seven-step
process to developing an effective plan.

Audience identification is important to the overall communication strategy
of an organization. Achieving identification of the proper audience is, perhaps,
more complex, and Peppers & Rogers (1993) had a unique perspective. The
authors did not view the audience as a demographically similar segment of the
market as most marketing gurus do. Rather, they emphasized the need to be
able to distinguish individual customers in order for an organization to customize
products and services for each of them individually. They contended that this
focus on the individual will create lasting relationships one customer at a time.
O’Neill (1993) agreed with this concept citing “the lifetime value of a customer” and emphasizing “it is easier to sell to someone who has used your product or service before than it is to someone who doesn’t know you.”

In his discussion of relationship marketing, DeYoung (1988) emphasized the need for one-on-one relationship marketing, that is very much aligned with the concepts introduced by Peppers & Rogers (1993). DeYoung (1988) concluded that relationship marketing that targets key representatives of the general public, clientele, media and decision makers is critical to the viability of a non-profit organization. He further stated that elected officials are important and should be part of the audience for an organization’s relationship marketing efforts.

Woodson & Sgamma (1997) pointed out that it is challenging to meet the needs of a diverse audience because of language barriers and cultural differences that lead to varying needs for some cultural groups in a community. Similarly, Boone & Zenger (2001) acknowledged difficulties in identifying needs of Extension homemakers because the characteristics and related needs of that traditional market have changed in recent years. Grieshop, Bone & Frankie (1990) stated that what the community wants to know often differs from what organizations want them to know or think they want to know. Along the same line of thinking, Cobourn & Donaldson (1997) acknowledged the challenge of responding to changing community needs indicating that it is difficult for non-profit organizations to educate members of the public because they don’t want to participate in new, voluntary educational programs unless they see immediate
personal or financial benefits associated; therefore a communication program that creates “buy in” for diverse audiences is imperative. They suggested that a creative needs-assessment is the first step in developing broader ties to the community. Strategies for getting to know the audience included learning the obstacles that prevent public participation in the non-profit organization’s programs. These obstacles may involve things like inaccurate preconceptions, fear, time constraints, or need for child care. They suggested that interviews with people who are already acquainted with a particular audience are a good first step to discovering these obstacles and the interests of the audience. They also suggested holding public meetings with potential audiences and offering them an incentive to attend the meeting.

Israel (1993) also acknowledged difficulty in identifying needs. To identify needs, he suggests collecting and analyzing data, meeting with advisory committees, discussing trends with the committee, and soliciting opinions from the committee. He identified advisory committees, personal observation, casual conversation, news media, specialists and researchers, needs assessment surveys and secondary data as sources for problem identification. Sandmann & Vandenberg (1995) suggested networking and collaboration with others in partnerships and coalitions as a means of community building. Israel (1993) suggested that once needs are identified, those needs are implicit to a particular audience. This assessment, he contended, will identify the “real” target audience.
Planning

Strategic communication planning involves integrating the organization’s mission into the overall communication strategy (Radtke, 1998; Bonk et. al. 1999). Mission statements in nonprofit organizations focus on why organizations exist. These mission statements are concise, written, and adopted through consensus of all stakeholders of an organization (Bernstein, 1997). The reason that communication plans must focus on a nonprofit organization’s mission is to insure that all objectives and strategies are in concert with the purpose of the organization (Radtke, 1998; Bonk et. al., 1999; Quirke, 2003).

Analysis of mission statements often involves strategic planning, that incorporates stakeholder’s views of the future directions of the organization. Strategic planning is common practice in nonprofit organizations, yet, strategic planning that specifically focuses on organizational communication is uncommon (Dyer et al). Smith (2004) noted that strategic communication must be tied to an organization’s mission and evaluated at the affective, cognitive, and behavioral levels (see Figure 2.2).

The absence of focus on strategic planning in organizational communication lends itself to the need for individuals with expertise in communication strategies. Smith (2004) contended:

No longer is it enough merely to know how to do things. Now the effective communicator needs to know what to do, why and how to evaluate its effectiveness. Public relations professionals used to be called upon mainly for tasks such as writing news releases, making speeches, producing videos, publishing newsletters, organizing displays and so on. Now the profession demands competency in conducting research, making decisions and solving problems. The call now is for strategic communicators. (p.1)
Bonk, Griggs, and Tynes (1999) emphasized that strategic communication will support and drive the goals, outcomes, and vision of an organization as expressed in its mission statement and held in its values and beliefs. Communication goals vary by organization and may include desires to develop and implement plans to enhance visibility or to manage a crisis.

The vision and mission statement are the guiding elements that drive the direction of media activities, while the system of values and beliefs is the heart of the organization and should be reflected in all of the organization’s plans and actions. The goals, vision and values are the foundation to build a communication strategy. Temple (2002) reiterated the importance of setting clear goals saying that those goals are “the key ingredient to effective communication planning” (pg. 6). He presents the “CLEAR model” to improve strategic planning. The model involves five points to enhance goal setting efforts – goals should be Concrete, Linked to organizational objectives, Executable, Action-oriented and Results-driven.

Implementation

The literature revealed several similar terms used to describe communication plans such as marketing plans and public relations plans. Poderis (2004) makes a clear distinction between marketing plans and communication plans while some others view public relations plans, communication plans and marketing plans as one and the same. He contends that an effective communication plan is the key to successful fund-raising campaigns for nonprofit organizations because it “develops a persuasive ‘case
for support’. The communication plan, Poderis suggested, is extremely important to nonprofit organizations because major gift campaigns seek to “raise the most money from the fewest sources in the least amount of time.” He reiterated, “You don’t ‘market’ to them, you ‘communicate’ to them” (pg. 4).

Radtke (1998) recommended a seven-step process to developing an effective communication plan. The steps consist of establishing a mission statement, identifying and learning about the audience, targeting the message to the intended audience, determining how to communicate the message, deciding when and where to communicate the message, implementing the plan effectively, and evaluating the plan to see if it is working. Chappell (1994) believed that the application of marketing planning techniques by decision-makers creates a stronger competitive advantage. Furthermore, the marketing analysis, planning, implementation, and control improves an organization’s ability to foresee and adapt to forces that exist and emerge in its marketing environment, therefore, putting it in a better position to “sense, serve, and satisfy” the target audience.

Maddy and Kealy (1998) explained the concept of integrated marketing plans saying that these plans emphasize becoming involved in the entire strategic planning process and providing communication solutions and executions. RD Marketing (2004) emphasized the importance of integrating marketing communication plans so that the plan has all parts of communication strategies working together. The suggested elements to be considered in integrating include websites, advertising, marketing collateral, online marketing,
trade shows, direct mail, personal selling, networking and other methods employed to get the message to the target market. Budgeting and allocation of resources to each element of the plan is of utmost importance.

Smith (2002) emphasized that a public relations campaign should be a concerted effort aimed at achieving research-based goals through applying communication strategies and measuring outcomes. Kendall (1997) discussed public relations campaign strategies with a focus on communication as both functions and tools. The functions to be integrated include public relations geared toward building mutually beneficial associations with the public; marketing to match products and services with the audience’s needs; advertising – the process of creating and placing paid media messages; and sales promotion - the activity aimed to win publicity in support of sales. Tools for implementing communication strategies include advertising, marketing, public relations, promotion, publicity and special events.

Smith (2002) compiled a comprehensive review of organizational communication strategies sorted into four categories: interpersonal communication, where face-to-face opportunities for interaction are created; organizational media - publications or messages produced by the organization itself; advertising and promotional media, controlled by the organization but external to it and designed to reach large audiences; and news media, where the public dissemination of organizational messages to large audiences is achieved through news outlets.
Interpersonal communication is widely considered the most effective of all communication strategies (Kotler, 1985). Educational gatherings, on-site visits, audience-site visits, demonstrations, meetings, speeches, and special events such as social gatherings and fundraising events are all opportunities for interpersonal communication (Smith, 2002).

Kotler (1985) pointed out that the high cost of interpersonal communication makes it desirable to utilize it in high payoff activities such as fundraising. In a survey of over 1,500 nonprofit organizations in the United States, Hager, Rooney and Pollack (2002) found that nonprofit organizations raising over $1 million per year report that their executives were significantly involved in fundraising and employing interpersonal communication to leverage personal relationships in order to acquire funding. Radtke (1997) pointed to the “dual purpose” of face-to-face communication in public forums. Participants establish relationships of value to their organizations and observers engage in the discussion, resulting in a sense of ownership of the efforts of the nonprofit organization.

Organizational media strategies are selected when the audience is widespread or when control of the specific timing and content of the organization’s message is critical. Examples of organizational media include the publication of newsletters, reprints, or progress reports; the use of direct mail to distribute information or solicit funds; audiovisual media, including demo tapes or CDs and informational voicemails as well as direct-distribution video cassettes and “town-meeting” type videoconference; and the growing use of computer-based media such as electronic email, homepages, and web-based broadcasts. Herron (1997) cited the use of
direct mail as a favorite among nonprofit organizations in describing the case of the Milwaukee Repertory Theater Company. Unhappy with previous fundraising efforts, the MRTC flooded the mail with over 350,000 leaflets and sold 10 times more subscriptions than the year before. The Brooklyn Academy of Music also used direct mail flyers, describing its subscribers as “among the most adventuresome people in town” and dramatically increased subscriptions.

Advertising and promotional media targets particular audience segments as well as large audiences. These strategies include magazine, newspaper and directory advertising, electronic media including radio, television, and the web, and out-of-home advertising such as posters, billboards, large-screen video advertising, and transit advertising such as the ads placed on buses and at airport terminals (Smith, 2002). Herron (1997) distinguished further between advertising and promotion, describing promotion as a tactic that gives something to the audience through exhibits, free samples, entertainment, coupons, discounts, specials or incentives. Educational institutions have made ample use of promotions in college sports. For example, Wichita State University has become known for its entertainment and novelty-based promotions used to bring patrons into sports events, including the first performance of the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders ever at a college football game and a camel race at half-time (Roessing, 1981).

Finally, news media develop and present information to a wide variety of audiences through numerous outlets. This tactic is useful with large audiences (Smith, 2002). An additional benefit is that the uncontrolled nature of the information presented through news media can create or enhance the credibility of an
organization (Espy, 1993). Newspapers, including specialty-audience and trade papers, magazines (including internet-based e-zines), radio, and television are all valuable methods of getting the message out. Press releases, event listings, audio news releases, video news releases, and letters to the editor are all methods of implementing the news media tactic. An additional tactic cited by Espy (1993) is the use of websites to feed information to the press through the development and upkeep of a press kit. A variation of this method is to create opportunities for news coverage by maintaining a “newsroom” on websites where information, press releases, or items of note designed to be picked up by the press may be posted (Lewandowski, 2002).

In addition to “direct” methods, Campbell (2001) described the indirect tactic of creating strategic alliances with external organizations including: community groups, coalitions, consortiums, and the creation of joint ventures. Hager, Rooney and Pollack (2002) added to the list parent organizations and fund-raising federations such as the United Way, which allocates funds to nonprofit organizations, and Herron (1997) suggested collaborating with commercial companies. In addition to the obvious benefits of pooling resources, this communication tactic can be a halo effect arrangement where the nonprofit organization benefits from the positive public perception of its allies (Thorndike, 1920).

Bonk, Griggs and Tyne (1999) echoed Kotler (1985) in their observation that the most significant barrier to implementation of effective communication plans and strategies may lay within the nonprofit organization itself. With regard to news media strategies, they describe poor prior experience as a significant inhibitor to
effective use of the press. Nonprofit organization leaders and managers who have
dealt with the media only at times of crisis or who were victims of negative publicity
may avoid the use of the press. Other barriers include lack of experience and a
resulting sense of intimidation in approaching the media that leads to simple
avoidance – with the unfortunate consequence that the nonprofit organization may
remain invisible. A third difficulty with the news media is what they describe as
“Attitude Problems,” wherein the experts at the nonprofit organization may feel that
the press should come to them (p. 4).

Another significant challenge is the lack of resources, or the perceived lack of
resources, within the organization (Andreasen & Kotler, 2002). Smaller nonprofit
organizations, in particular, may feel that they do not have the resources to compete
with larger organizations. As Campbell (2001) illustrated, one approach to this
problem may be through a strategic alliance. Another approach is to scale public
relations and communication to a level that is manageable within the resources of
the organization, and then to execute fully (Bonk, Griggs and Tyne, 1999).

Communication strategies that are well thought-out and implemented may turn
the case of the Delaware Symphony Orchestra that outsourced administrative
functions such as ticketing to a group with significant advertising power. Although it
increased the media “air time” received by the Symphony, this tactic reduced the
direct contact between the organization and its patrons, adversely affecting sales.
Schneider documented another example that describes the unintended
consequence of furthering the divide between the “haves” and “have-nots” when
some nonprofit organizations adopted the internet as a method of communicating with their clients (2003). These examples make clear the importance of careful adherence to the “best practices” approach, with its careful research and market analysis designed to maximize the effectiveness of communication strategies employed by nonprofit organizations.

Evaluation

Smith (2002) referred to a public relations campaign as a concerted effort aimed at achieving research-based goals by applying communication strategies and measuring outcomes. The measuring of outcomes occurs through a process of evaluation. As Radtke (1998) suggested, the evaluation of the plan explains whether it is working. Bonk, Griggs, & Tynes (1999) indicated that a communication plan should have a built-in evaluation component to review accountability and to make ongoing improvements to the plan. Pieczka (2000) took the discussion of evaluation to another level suggesting that effectiveness, based on objectives and evaluation of public relations practices, displays the value that an organization provides to its clients. She further explained that this effectiveness is a reflection of an organization’s expertise and professionalism.

The importance of evaluating communication efforts is undisputed; however, many ponder the process for accomplishing evaluations. Scott (2004) agreed that a method for measuring results should be a part of a communication plan and suggests that the evaluation can take the form of monthly progress reports, formalized departmental presentations, periodic briefings, and year-end summaries in annual reports.
Radtke (1998) provided a simple format for evaluating the strategic impact of communication efforts. In her *Communication Evaluation Worksheet*, she suggests identifying the time period that is being evaluated and keeping track of the total number of messages sent and activities planned and breaking those down into how many were audio, video, electronic, or face-to-face messages. She also suggested tracking the total number of media messages occurring that are not directed by the organization including the type of coverage, the total gross impressions or potential exposures, and the percentage of total coverage. Regarding content, she recommended identifying the major messages conveyed; the issues framed and who had control of framing the issues; the words that appeared repeatedly; and whether or not the intended message was part of the mix. She also recommended evaluating the number of people who received a message, based on circulation or the reach of media; the number who attended to messages, based on readers, viewers and listeners; and the number who participated in activities, based on attendance and frequency.

Radtke’s process of evaluation measured outputs to determine the effectiveness of communication efforts and to see if a communication plan is working; however, Pratt & Lennon (2001) contended that outputs do not prove effectiveness, although their concept of nominal evaluation is similar to the process introduced by Radtke (1998). Pratt & Lennon (2001) said that increased sophistication of the public relations process calls for interpreting action plans as proxies for program objectives. They contend that records of strategies such as media tours and distribution is not a focus and that direct tests and measures
should evaluate the attainment of objectives. They advocate two ways to evaluate a plan’s effectiveness – through nominal evaluation and outcomes evaluation. They describe the nominal evaluation as the process of collecting evidence of media exposure and quantifying the media placements. They emphasize that the outcomes evaluation is a better measure for proving effectiveness. This process involves determining how a result is a consequence of a communication program or campaign. Evaluators can determine this by using questionnaires or conducting experiments to produce comparative data collected before, during, and after a campaign or program implementation. This type of evaluation measures the awareness, comprehension, retention, and reception of the message as well as measuring changes in behavior, attitudes, and opinions resulting from the message.

Like Pratt & Lennon (2001), Likely (2000) recognized the need for both quantitative and qualitative measurements when evaluating communication programs. He looked at evaluation from a “return on investment” perspective and recommends three specific performance measures to evaluate communication programs: effectiveness, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness (cost-effectiveness is the combination of the effectiveness and efficiency measures). With such a performance measurement management framework, Likely says management will gain five benefits: a visual realization and understanding of what can be measured; a description of what is currently being measured; recommendations for what should be measured in the future, why and how; approximate costs and time scales for each measure; and an opportunity to
decide how communication functions will be accountable during the life of the framework. In order to accomplish the evaluation within the framework, Likely recommends the use of observational methods, unobtrusive methods, combination methods, quantitative methods, and qualitative methods.

Sinickas (2004) agreed with the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods of evaluation. She suggested three tools to be used in different stages of an evaluation: interviewing and surveying executives, clients and communicators; taking an inventory of people, channels and time; and benchmarking with other companies. She contended that this approach will identify the ideal infrastructure, measure the current infrastructure, assess gaps between current and ideal, and enable the planning for needed corrections.

The first stage recommended by Sinickas (2004) consists of interviewing executive and middle-management clients in an effort to identify ideal communication structures that will provide them with support and surveying clients to determine the current level of competency, skill and behavior among the communication staff. Next, she endorsed inventorying channels and people that consist of quantifying the number of communicators and assessing their experience levels; identifying the percent of time that the communicators spend on communication responsibilities and comparing that to the clients’ expressed needs; analyzing the relative operating budget; identifying best practices and inconsistencies in the channels of communication used in various parts of the organization; identifying the communicators’ reporting relationships; and determining the competencies and expertise of communicators through self-
evaluation and managerial assessment. The next step, interviewing and surveying communicators, identifies ideal versus actual communication relationships, identifies content that should come from different levels of an organization, and assesses the staff’s view of how well the communication channels work, as well as pointing out what resources communicators need and the effectiveness of the resources they have at their disposal. Benchmarking against other companies reveals how well an organization measures up in terms of staffing levels; budgets; reporting relationships; and time spent being proactive, reactive, strategic or tactical; as well as the effectiveness of the infrastructure.
Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework for strategic communication based on literature review
Figure 2.2: Strategic communication goal-setting and evaluation levels

Affective
(accepting or rejecting strategy)

Behavioral
(changing behavior)

Mission

Cognitive
(awareness & understanding)
Strategic Communication in Academic and Professional Fields

An identification of academic and professional knowledge bases provides possible training and research opportunities in this area. Organizations desiring to find individuals with expertise in strategic communication have the options of soliciting information from existing experts in the field or training internal candidates in strategic communication practices.

There are growing numbers of existing experts in strategic communication. These individuals are academicians and practitioners who serve as consultants to organizations desiring to revamp their communication strategies. Many consultants offer technical assistance to organizations through strategic planning, communication plan development, and communication plan implementation.

Even though consultants specialize in providing strategic communication expertise to organizations, many nonprofits find these services cost prohibitive. The Cleveland Foundation conducted a study to determine how nonprofit organizations handle their communication and marketing responsibilities (2002). Key findings from the study were as follows:

- Primary responsibility for marketing and/or branding activity is allocated to an executive director, a communication department or a team of individuals including communication, gift planning and/or donor relations.
• Marketing and/or branding activities are more likely to be conducted in-house than contracted out to a consultant; when the services of an outside consultant/agency are utilized, the subcontracted work is split equally between advertising and public relations agencies on a project-by-project basis.

• Nonprofit organizations were significantly more likely to utilize an advertising and/or public relations agency on a project-by-project basis than implementing a retainer.

Findings from this study coincide with challenges that nonprofit organizations, such as Extension, face across the nation with shrinking funding bases (Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, 2002).

Another option that organizations have to obtain strategic communication expertise is to train internal candidates through academic programs. A number of universities now recognize the need for strategic communication training and have began offering curricula in this area. The University of Iowa was perhaps the first to do so in the early 1980s. The University of Iowa established what it called a “development support communication” (DSC) graduate program in 1983 to train professionals for communication roles in developing countries (Brody, 1984). A decade later, in the mid-1990s, Iowa recognized that the demand for these communication professionals was also present in the United States and transformed its public relations (PR) program in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication into a “strategic communication” program. In 2000, the Department of Communication and Journalism at The Ohio State
University followed suit, turning its undergraduate PR program into a “strategic communication” sequence (Glynn, 2003).

A growing number of universities offer degrees or certificate programs in strategic communication. Examples of these programs are as follows.

- Villanova University’s Communication Department offers a graduate certificate in strategic communication.

- Temple University’s Department of Speech Communication changed its name to the Department of Strategic and Organizational Communication in July 2004. The department offers a bachelor of arts degree in strategic and organizational communication.

- Seaton Worldwide is an online university that offers a master’s in Strategic Communication and Leadership.

- Southeastern Oklahoma State University - The Department of Communication and Theatre offers students the concentration of organizational & strategic communication in their bachelor of arts major.

- University of Missouri – Columbia – The Missouri School of Journalism offers a master’s degree in strategic communication.

These examples of communication departments shift to strategic communication emphases contribute to the academic knowledge base for organizations to train new experts in strategic communication.
Strategic Communication in Extension

Agricultural communication programs at Land Grant Universities, that have always provided communication support to Extension practitioners, are also realizing the need for strategic communication training. The National Agricultural Communications Summit (2004) revealed, “the need for professionalism, that is, the responsibilities of agricultural communicators to their clients, communities, society and future agricultural communicators” (p. 2.2). Of particular concern was whether agricultural communication should continue to produce communication technicians to perform entry-level jobs such as writing press releases, producing videos, publishing newsletters, and organizing displays or whether the emphasis should be on strategic communication that is producing graduates who can manage the overall communication needs of an organization. Communicating with such a diverse group of clients requires strategic communication that promotes trust among all involved.

Competencies

Competencies are extremely useful in helping to identify what knowledge, skills, and abilities are needed to be successful in a particular occupation. Hedges (1995) defined a competency as “an observable and measurable behavior that has a definite beginning and ending, can be performed within a limited amount of time, consists of two or more competency builders, and leads to a productive service, or decision” (p. 13). The American Home Economics Association (1974, p. 4) defined a competency as “an attitude, behavior, skill, or understanding demonstrated by a participant at a specified performance level.”
Green (1999) concurred with the aforementioned definitions by defining a competency as “a written description of measurable work habits and personal skills used to achieve a work objective” (p.5). Once competencies are identified, organizations can shape individual training and professional development activities.

The Cooperative Extension System recognizes the need for competency based professional development. Subject matter competencies identified for Extension educators have been identified through various studies (Cooper & Graham, 2001; ECOP, 1987; ECOP, 1992; King, 1997). Extension’s focus on competencies is a result of a need to remain competitive in a highly competitive and performance based budgeting environment (Stone & Bieber, 1997). Several authors have identified competencies for specific subject matter as it relates to management, 4-H, and family and consumer science for Extension educators (Stedman, 2004; Burke 2002; Linder, 2000; Albright, 2000). Although Extension competency research exists for other topics, the literature available in the area of strategic communication for Extension educators is minimal.

**The Delphi Technique**

The Delphi Technique is a method for the systematic solicitation and collation of judgments on a particular topic through a set of carefully designed sequential questionnaires interspersed with summarized information and feedback of opinions derived from earlier responses (Delbecq, Van de Ven, & Gustafson, 1975). Norman Dalkey and Olaf Helmer are generally credited with developing this research method for the Rand Corporation during the 1950s as a
tool for forecasting military priorities (Murry & Hammons, 1995).

The process of Delphi consists of a series of rounds of survey questionnaires. In a traditional Delphi study, the first round consists of participants responding to a broad question, while each additional round would build upon the responses gleaned from earlier rounds. The process is terminated when consensus is reached (Delbecq et al., 1975), and literature indicates that consensus can be reached in three rounds (Ruhland, 1993). According to Linstone and Turoff (1975), most commonly, three rounds proved sufficient to attain stability in the responses; further rounds tended to show very little change and excessive repetition were unacceptable to participants. The true Delphi technique starts with an open-ended question that is given to participants to solicit opinions about one or several aspects of the topic (Ruhland, 1993). A modified version of Delphi dispenses with the traditional open-ended questionnaire and begins with a structured questionnaire (Murry & Hammons, 1995).

According to the literature, the Delphi technique has several advantageous features which include (1) anonymity, (2) written responses, (3) controlled feedback, and (4) statistical group responses (Dalkey, 1969; Delbecq et al., 1975). Among its advantages is the fact that participants do not have to meet face to face, respondents may remain anonymous, domination by individuals is prevented, adequate time is provided for thinking and reflection, participants are granted flexibility in responding, and conformity issues are avoided (Linstone & Turoff, 1975; Weaver, 1988; Ruhland, 1993). According to
Sackman (1975), the Delphi method is generally fast, inexpensive, easy to understand, and versatile in the sense that it can be applied wherever expert opinion is believed to exist.

According to Sackman (1974), a disadvantage of the Delphi Technique is most Delphi experiments are probably unreliable and invalid. The literature suggests that Delphi study reliability depends greatly on the abilities of the respondent group or experts to "perform" by completing the necessary rounds and communicating accurately (Dalkey, 1969; Delbecq et al., 1975; Linstone & Turoff, 1975; Sackman, 1975 Murry & Hammons, 1995). Furthermore, the literature suggests that another disadvantage of Delphi studies arises when questions formulated by the researcher may influence the panel responses (Dalkey, 1969; Sackman, 1975 Murry & Hammons, 1995).

**Chapter Summary**

The literature review illustrated the following areas: communication and social change, strategic communication research, strategic communication process, strategic communication in academic and professional fields, strategic communication in Extension, competencies, and Delphi Technique. Understanding these themes creates a solid knowledge base that can be used to identify competencies for organizations such as Extension.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to identify strategic communication competencies for county Extension educators nationally as perceived by a panel of experts. The objective for the study was to obtain consensus regarding strategic communication competency statements for county Extension educators in the United States. This chapter has five major sections: research design, panel selection, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Design

The researcher used a modified Delphi Technique to identify the competency items essential for county Extension educators to perform strategic communication. The traditional Delphi Technique starts with an open-ended question that is given to participants to solicit opinions about one or several aspects of the topic (Ruhland, 1993). A modified version of the Delphi Technique eliminates the traditional open-ended questionnaire and begins with a structured questionnaire (Murry & Hammons, 1995). Ludwig (1994) used a modified method that allowed the researcher to design the first round statements based on
a thorough review of the literature and expertise in the subject area. The modified Delphi Technique is a group method used to collect information from a purposive sample of experts in various locations. This purposive sample is also called a panel of experts. The researcher used the modified Delphi Technique to reach consensus from a panel of experts regarding strategic communication competencies. A group can provide better information than an individual when researchers follow correct group process procedures (Applbaum, 1981; Bell, 1997; & Ziglio, 1996).

Ulshak (1983) recommended that researchers present a statistic such as the mean or median as the "score" to calculate feedback from quantitative questionnaires generated through Delphi studies. Dalkey (1967) indicated that the median of individual responses was most useful. Consensus on a topic may be determined by having a certain percentage of votes fall within a prescribed range (Schiebe et al., 1975). Consensus was determined when 80% of the responses to a competency statement fell within two points from the median of any category. Statements that achieved consensus were not included in future rounds.

Panel Selection

The Delphi Technique works best with 15-20 panelists because large numbers of respondents generate many items, making categorization difficult (Delbecq et al., 1975). Jones and Twiss (1978) indicated that qualifications of desirable respondents should be identified and a nomination process used to select specific individual respondents. Linstone and Turoff (1975) recommended solicitation of nominations of well-known and respected individuals from members within the target group of experts. The researcher solicited individuals
to form a nominating group of 45 individuals (see Appendix A). Nominating
group names came from The Ohio State University Extension Director who is also
immediate past chair of the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, The Ohio
State University Agricultural Communication Faculty, and The Ohio State University
Extension Communications & Technology Leader. The purpose of the nominating
group was to identify individuals, including themselves, to serve on the panel of
experts. The researcher solicited nominations via e-mail and followed up with a
hard copy of the letter (see Appendix B). The nomination criteria were to identify
experts using the following:

1. Familiarity with strategic communication and Extension,
2. Conducts research, lectures, or applies communication in social
   change, and
3. Has a deep interest in the role of communication in Extension.

Forty-five nominees came from the nominating group. The researcher selected a
purposive sample of twenty individuals to invite to serve on the panel of experts to
ensure geographic, racial, and gender diversity.

The researcher sent an invitation letter via e-mail to nominees co-signed by the
immediate past Chair of The Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, Dr.
Keith Smith (see Appendix C). Dr. Smith is a nationally known Extension leader and a
member of the researcher’s dissertation committee. The letter invited individuals to
serve on the panel of experts, explained the purpose of the study, described the
modified Delphi Technique process, indicated the time commitment, explained
how the invitee was nominated, and emphasized the importance of serving on the panel.

Personal or telephone contacts with potential respondents help to explain the study's purpose and the importance of participation (Altschuld, 1993; Altschuld, et al., 1992; Delbecq et al., 1975). The researcher called nominees to clarify the purpose of the study and the importance of participation. Twenty individuals that responded affirmatively constituted the panel of experts for the study (see Appendix E).

**Instrumentation**

Linstone and Turoff (1975) and Kerlinger (1973) indicated the appropriateness of using a modified Delphi Technique if essential information was available. The authors went on to explain that a structured instrument developed by the researcher and refined by a panel of experts for use in the first round of Delphi minimized the expense and time of using open-ended questions on the first round. The researcher received a human subjects exemption from the Institutional Review Board process from The Ohio State University Office of Research Risks Protection, since this study did not harm human subjects. The study project number was 2005E0235. The researcher designed a quantitative questionnaire for the first round of the study to collect data regarding the strategic communication competencies for county Extension educators (see Appendix F). The questions came from the review of literature regarding the strategic communication process (Wilson, 1997; Radtke, 1998; Bonk et al., 1999; Smith 2004). Each section focused on the four stages of the strategic communication
process: formative research, strategy, tactics, and evaluation (see Figure 2.1).
The panel of experts indicated their level of agreement for each competency regarding whether it is desirable for county Extension educators to demonstrate the competency over the next five to ten years. The panel of experts indicated their level of agreement for each competency based on a six point Likert-type scale where: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = moderately disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = somewhat agree; 5 = moderately agree; and 6 = strongly agree. A section was included to allow respondents to add competencies.

The researcher developed the Round II instrument based on responses received from the Round I instrument. The researcher provided panel members with summaries of competencies that achieved consensus during Round I along with individual responses. Eighteen competencies that achieved consensus were included on the Round II instrument in bold type. To eliminate confusion that may have been associated with including competencies that achieved consensus, the researcher erased the Likert-type scale for each item that achieved consensus. The researcher also filled in the Likert-type scale with solid black coloring so that panel members could not rank those competencies. Competencies that did not receive consensus appeared on the Round II instrument to give the panel of experts another opportunity to reach consensus on those items. Additional competencies added during Round I were also included on the Round II instrument. The panel of experts indicated their level of agreement for each competency based on a six point Likert-type scale where: 1
= strongly disagree; 2 = moderately disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = somewhat agree; 5 = moderately agree; and 6 = strongly agree.

In the final round, the researcher developed the Round III instrument based on responses received from the Round II instrument. The researcher provided panel members with summaries of competencies that achieved consensus during Round II along with individual responses. Twenty-nine competencies that achieved consensus were included on the Round III instrument in bold type. To eliminate confusion that may have been associated with including competencies that achieved consensus, the researcher erased the Likert-type scale for each item that achieved consensus. The researcher also filled in the Likert-type scale with solid black coloring so that panel members could not rank those competencies. Competencies that did not receive consensus appeared on the Round III instrument to give the panel of experts a final opportunity to reach consensus on those items. The panel of experts indicated their level of agreement for each competency based on a six point Likert-type scale where: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = moderately disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = somewhat agree; 5 = moderately agree; and 6 = strongly agree.

Validity

Content and face validity of the Round I questionnaire was field tested with a review panel of three Ohio State University faculty considered to be knowledgeable about communication and/or Extension (see Appendix D). The panel reviewed the instrument for clarity and content. The panel also provided
feedback for questionnaire improvement. Neither construct validity nor criterion related validity is necessary with the Delphi Technique. Neither construct nor criterion-related validity is concerned with the predictive relationship of items to external criterion (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 1996). The results from a Delphi study cannot be generalized to any other population.

Reliability

Fraenkel and Wallen (1996) defined reliability as the degree to which scores obtained with an instrument are consistent measures of whatever the instrument is measuring. This measure of internal consistency cannot be determined using conventional means in Delphi studies. The Delphi technique assumes that responses will change with each round as the panel moves towards consensus and the instrument will be modified in each round. When establishing reliability in studies where expert opinion is used, Dalkey (1969) stated:

For the analyst using expert opinion within a study, reliability can be considered to play somewhat the same role as reproducibility in experimental investigations. It is clearly desirable for a study that another analyst using the same approach (and different experts) arrive at similar results .... In general, one would expect in that area of opinion, group responses would be more reliable than individual opinions, in the simple sense that two groups (of equally competent experts) would be more likely to evidence similar answers to a set of related questions than would two individuals. This "similarity" can be measured by the correlation between the answers of the two groups over a set of questions (p. 6).

Data Collection

The researcher collected data from May 6, 2005 to July 24, 2005. Three rounds were used to gain consensus from the panel of experts. Each round
lasted two weeks. Delbecq et al. (1975) recommended allowing two weeks for participants to respond to each round.

**Round I**

During the first round, the panel of experts received a cover letter, a self-addressed stamped envelope, and the questionnaire via U.S. Mail. The questionnaire consisted of a list of 52 competency statements created from a review of the literature that asked the panel of experts to indicate their level of agreement regarding whether county Extension educators should demonstrate competence in strategic communication over the next five to ten years (see Appendix F). The questions focused on strategic communication in research, strategy, tactics, and evaluation. Round I occurred from May 6, 2005 to May 23, 2005.

The researcher assigned numbers to each panel member. The assigned numbers appeared on the back of each instrument to identify non-respondents. Round I yielded a 90% response rate with 18 out of 20 questionnaires returned. To increase response rates the researcher sent two e-mail reminders to non-respondents after the response deadline and called non-respondents once to encourage participation.

**Round II**

During the second round, the researcher compiled responses received during the first round. The researcher sent the revised questionnaire via U.S. Mail. Competencies that reached consensus during the first round were listed for the edification of panel members. Competencies not reaching consensus were
included on the Round II questionnaire. The panel of experts reviewed the statistical results of questionnaire responses from Round I and expressed their individual judgments as their level of agreement for each item. Round II occurred from June 8, 2005 to June 24, 2005.

The researcher assigned numbers to each panel member. The assigned numbers appeared on the back of each instrument to identify non-respondents. Round II yielded a 85% response rate with 17 out of 20 questionnaires returned. To increase response rates the researcher sent two e-mail reminders to non-respondents after the response deadline and called non-respondents once to encourage participation.

**Round III**

In the third and final round, the panel of experts received the last competency items that did not receive consensus during Round II and expressed their individual judgments as to their level of agreement. According to Linstone and Turoff (1975), most commonly, three rounds proved sufficient to attain stability in the responses; further rounds tended to show very little change and excessive repetition were unacceptable to participants. Round III occurred from July 6, 2005 to July 22, 2005.

**Data Analysis**

**Round I**

During Round I, the researcher coded competencies from the questionnaire to enable data entry into SPSS. The researcher tabulated data from Round I using SPSS software. Medians and standard deviations were computed
for each statement. The researcher created a summary table for each panel member that indicated individual responses to each competency item that did not reach consensus during Round I (see Appendix G). Panel members viewed their individual responses to each competency item compared to the median responses for each item. In addition to analyzing quantitative data, the researcher and faculty adviser examined qualitative responses received from Round I that contained additional competencies. These additional competencies were included in the Round II questionnaire.

**Round II**

During Round II, the researcher coded competencies from the questionnaire to enable data entry into SPSS. The researcher tabulated data from Round II using SPSS software. Medians and standard deviations were computed for each statement. The researcher created a summary table for each panel member that indicated individual responses to each competency item that did not reach consensus during Round I (see Appendix I). Panel members viewed their individual responses to each competency item compared to the median responses for each item.

**Round III**

During Round III, the researcher coded competencies from the questionnaire to enable data entry into SPSS. The researcher tabulated data from Round III using SPSS software. Medians and standard deviations were computed for each statement.
Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify strategic communication competencies for county Extension educators nationally as perceived by a panel of experts. The researcher used a modified Delphi Technique to gather feedback from a panel of experts familiar with Extension and communication. Data collection occurred via mailed questionnaires. Data analysis used descriptive statistics.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to identify strategic communication competencies for county Extension educators nationally as perceived by a panel of experts. The objective for the study was to obtain consensus regarding strategic communication competency statements for county Extension educators in the United States. After a nomination process, 20 experts in Extension communication agreed to serve on the panel of experts (see Appendix E). The researcher used a modified Delphi technique that involved three rounds of questionnaires to gain consensus among panel members.

This chapter presents the results of the three rounds of study in chronological order. Each round contains a summary of each question and whether the question reached consensus. Consensus was determined when 80% of the responses to a competency statement fell within two points from the median of any category. Explanations of descriptive statistics (frequency, median and standard deviation) used to determine consensus will be described using tables and through a narrative.

Round I

Eighteen out of 20 panelists responded to Round I. The researcher developed 52 strategic communication competency statements derived from the literature that were divided into four categories: (a) communication research, (b)
communication strategy, (c) communication tactics, and (d) communication evaluation. Panel members gave their level of agreement for each competency statement based on a six-point Likert-type scale. Tables 4.1 through 4.4 outline the frequency, median, and standard deviation for each competency statement. Eighteen competencies reached consensus during Round I.

A. Communication Research Competencies

Communication research refers to systematically gathering and analyzing information that will lead to the design of a strategic communication plan for the Extension organization. Communication research involves understanding the Extension organization, its partners or stakeholders, elected officials, and other organizations that can have an effect on the Extension organization (Smith, 2004).

Communication Research Competency 1: Ability to systematically segment community members or clients into need-based, demand-driven Extension groups

The majority of respondents (94.1%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the strongly agree category were 58%, or ten respondents, and in the moderately agree category were 35.3%, or six respondents. The median response was 6.0 and the standard deviation was .62. One panel member omitted a response resulting in 17 valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round I.
Communication Research Competency 2: Ability to assess external factors, such as political, social, and economic trends that might affect county Extension organizations

The majority of respondents (94.1%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the strongly agree category were 70.6% or 12 respondents, and in the moderately agree category were 23.5%, or 4 respondents. The median response was 6.0, and the standard deviation was .61. One panel member omitted a response resulting in 17 valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round I.

Communication Research Competency 3: Ability to use quantitative research methods, such as survey research to assess client communication needs

Members of the panel were divided over this statement. Levels of agreement fell into all categories with seven of the responses falling into the somewhat agree category. This category had the most responses at 38.9%. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.25. Eighteen valid responses came from respondents. This competency item did not reach consensus during Round I.

Communication Research Competency 4: Ability to use qualitative research methods, such as, the focus group technique, to assess client communication needs
Members of the panel were divided over this statement. Levels of agreement fell into all categories with six of the responses falling into the moderately agree category. This category had the most responses at 33.3%. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.27. Eighteen valid responses stemmed from this statement. This item did not reach consensus during Round I.

**Communication Research Competency 5: Ability to report research findings**

Levels of agreement fell into all categories with seven of the responses falling into the moderately agree category. This category had the most responses at 38.9%. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was 1.41. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This item did not reach consensus during Round I.

**Communication Research Competency 6: Ability to assess the organization’s internal communication resource potential, such as staff numbers and their communication skills, budget, and expected communication functions**

Panel members came close to reaching consensus for this item with 66.7% of responses in the moderately agree and strongly agree categories. Nine of the responses fell into the moderately agree category. This category had the most responses at 50.0%. The median response was 5.0 and the standard deviation was 1.50. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This item did not reach consensus during Round I.
Communication Research Competency 7: Ability to systematically compile a comprehensive set of information that will enable the educator to effectively incorporate communication in the organization’s plan

Panel members came close to reaching consensus for this item with 77.7% of responses in the moderately agree and strongly agree categories. Eight of the responses fell into the strongly agree category. This category had the most responses at 44.4%. The median response was 5.0 and the standard deviation was .92. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This item did not reach consensus during Round I.
Table 4.1: Distribution of Ratings of Levels of Agreement by Expert Panel for Communication Research Competencies on Round I Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Research Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to systematically segment community members or clients into need-based, demand-driven Extension groups (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ability to assess external factors, such as political, social, and economic trends that might affect county Extension organizations (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ability to use quantitative research methods, such as survey research to assess client communication needs (N = 18)</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ability to use qualitative research methods, such as, the focus group technique, to assess client communication needs (N = 18)</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ability to report research findings (N = 18)</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round I. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.
Table 4.1: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Research Competency</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Ability to assess the organization’s internal communication resource potential, such as staff numbers and their communication skills, budget, and expected communication functions (N = 18)</td>
<td>11.1% 2</td>
<td>0% 0</td>
<td>11.1% 2</td>
<td>11.1% 2</td>
<td>50.0% 9</td>
<td>16.7% 3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ability to systematically compile a comprehensive set of information that will enable the Educator to effectively incorporate communication in the organization’s plan (N = 18)</td>
<td>0% 0</td>
<td>0% 0</td>
<td>5.6% 1</td>
<td>16.7% 3</td>
<td>33.3% 6</td>
<td>44.4% 8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round I. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.
B. Communication Strategy Competencies

Communication strategy refers to the Extension educator’s overall communication plan. For example, should the county educator be competent in designing and managing a crisis communication plan? Communication strategy has a dual focus: a) the broad action(s) to be taken, and b) the messages to be designed. Strategy is referred to in the singular because each program should have a single, unifying communication strategy.

Communication Strategy Competency 1: Ability to set relationship management goals, that is, how county Extension educators can interact with their publics

The majority of respondents (94.4%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the moderately agree category were 50.0% or nine respondents, and in the strongly agree category were 44.4% or 8 respondents. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .70. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round I.

Communication Strategy Competency 2: Ability to set communication task management goals, that is, identify the communication functions that need to be performed at the county level and take action to achieve them

The majority of respondents (88.9%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the strongly agree category were nine respondents that
constituted 77.8%, and in the moderately agree category were 11.1% or two respondents. Equal numbers of respondents fell in the somewhat agree category and moderately agree category with 11.1%, or two respondents, for both. The median response was 6.0, and the standard deviation was .69. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round I.

**Communication Strategy Competency 3: Ability to relate the organization’s mission into its communication plan**

All respondents (100%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the strongly agree category were eleven respondents that constituted 61.1% and in the moderately agree category were 38.9% or seven respondents. The median response was 6.0, and the standard deviation was .50. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round I.

**Communication Strategy Competency 4: Ability to target special publics with specialized messages, such as designing special Extension programs for soybean growers or organic producers**

The majority of respondents (88.3%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the strongly agree category were 13 respondents that constituted 76.5% and in the moderately agree category were 11.8% or two respondents. Equal numbers of respondents fell in the somewhat agree
category and moderately agree category with 11.8% or two respondents for both. The median response was 6.0, and the standard deviation was .70. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round I.

**Communication Strategy Competency 5: Ability to distinguish communication problems from technical Extension subject matter problems**

The majority of respondents (83.3%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the moderately agree category were 44.4% or eight respondents, and in the strongly agree category were seven respondents that constituted 38.9%. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .85. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round I.

**Communication Strategy Competency 6: Ability to communicate with clients who do not speak English**

The majority of respondents (94.5%) either somewhat agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the moderately agree category were 55.6%, or ten respondents, and in the somewhat agree category were seven respondents that constituted 38.9%. The median response was 5.0 and the standard deviation was .59. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round I.
Communication Strategy Competency 7: Ability to set communication goals at the cognitive level, that is, knowing how to communicate for awareness and understanding

Panel members came close to reaching consensus for this statement with 77.7% of responses in the moderately agree and strongly agree categories. Eight of the responses fell into the moderately agree category. This category had the most responses at 44.4%. The median response was 5.0 and the standard deviation was .75. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This item did not reach consensus during Round I.

Communication Strategy Competency 8: Ability to conduct small group communication activities, such as a focus group discussion

Panel members varied on their responses for this statement. Responses fell in five out of six categories. Most responses fell in the strongly agree category with six responses that constituted 33.3%. The second largest amount of responses fell into the somewhat agree category that constituted 27.8% or five responses. The median response was 4.5, and the standard deviation was 1.29. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This item did not reach consensus during Round I.

Communication Strategy Competency 9: Ability to design a mass communication campaign plan, such as an educational program to inform the county about what Extension is

Panel members varied on their responses for this statement. Responses fell in five out of six categories. Most responses fell in the moderately agree
category with five responses that constituted 27.8%. The second largest amount of responses fell into the somewhat agree category that constituted 22.2% or four responses. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.37. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This item did not reach consensus during Round I.

**Communication Strategy Competency 10: Ability to integrate organizational values into a communication plan**

Panel members' responses fell in four out of six categories for this statement. Most responses fell in the moderately agree category with eight responses that constituted 44.4%. The second largest amount of responses fell into the strongly agree category that constituted 27.8% or five responses. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was 1.02. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This item did not reach consensus during Round I.

**Communication Strategy Competency 11: Ability to communicate orally with individuals**

All respondents (100%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the strongly agree category were 94.4% or 17 respondents. Only one respondent moderately agreed, that constituted 5.6%. The median response was 6.0, and the standard deviation was .23. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This statement reached consensus during Round I.
Communication Strategy Competency 12: Ability to make large group presentations

All respondents (100%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the strongly agree category were 77.8%, or 14 respondents, and four respondents moderately agreed, which constituted 22.2%. The median response was 6.0 and the standard deviation was .43. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This statement reached consensus during Round I.

Communication Strategy Competency 13: Ability to set communication goals at the affective level, that is, determine if a client is accepting or rejecting a strategy

Respondents almost came to consensus on this competency. Fourteen respondents that represented 77.8% indicated that they moderately agreed or strongly agreed that county Extension Educators should have this competency in the next five to ten years. Equal numbers of respondents were in the moderately agree and strongly agree categories that constituted 38.9%, or seven respondents in each category. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .78. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This statement did not reach consensus during Round I.

Communication Strategy Competency 14: Ability to set communication goals at the behavioral level, that is, know whether a recommended communication strategy is working effectively
Panel members expressed levels of agreement in three out of six categories for this statement. Most responses were in the strongly agree category representing eight or 44.4%. Panel members almost reached consensus with 77.7% of responses falling into the moderately agree and strongly agree categories. Equal numbers of respondents were in the moderately agree and strongly agree categories that constituted 38.9% or seven respondents, in each category. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .86. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This statement did not reach consensus during Round I.

**Communication Strategy Competency 15: Ability to determine whether having a communication plan should be a priority**

Panel members expressed levels of agreement in three out of six categories for this statement. Most responses were in the strongly agree category representing seven or 38.9%. Panel members almost reached consensus with 72.2% of responses falling into the moderately agree and strongly agree categories. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .83. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This statement did not reach consensus during Round I.
Note: Statements in bold achieved consensus during Round I. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Ratings of Levels of Agreement by Expert Panel for Communication Strategy Competencies on Round I Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Strategy Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to set relationship management goals, that is, how county Extension educators can interact with their publics (N = 18)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree 0% 0%</td>
<td>Moderately Disagree 5.6% 0%</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree 0% 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ability to set communication task management goals, that is, identify the communication functions that need to be performed at the county level and take action to achieve them (N = 18)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree 0% 0%</td>
<td>Moderately Disagree 0% 0%</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree 0% 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ability to relate the organization’s mission into its communication plan (N = 18)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree 0% 0%</td>
<td>Moderately Disagree 0% 0%</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree 0% 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ability to target special publics with specialized messages, such as designing special Extension programs for soybean growers or organic producers (N = 17)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree 0% 0%</td>
<td>Moderately Disagree 0% 0%</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree 0% 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ability to distinguish communication problems from technical Extension subject matter problems (N = 18)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree 0% 0%</td>
<td>Moderately Disagree 5.6% 1</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree 11.1% 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Strategy Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Ability to communicate with clients who do not speak English (N = 18)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree: 0%</td>
<td>Strongly Agree: 38.9%</td>
<td>Median: 5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ability to set communication goals at the cognitive level, that is, knowing how to communicate for awareness and understanding (N = 18)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree: 0%</td>
<td>Strongly Agree: 44.4%</td>
<td>Median: 5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ability to conduct small group communication activities, such as a focus group discussion (N = 18)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree: 0%</td>
<td>Strongly Agree: 33.3%</td>
<td>Median: 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ability to design a mass comm. campaign plan, such as an educational prog. to inform the county about what Extension is (N = 18)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree: 0%</td>
<td>Strongly Agree: 27.8%</td>
<td>Median: 4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ability to integrate organizational values into a comm. plan (N = 18)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree: 0%</td>
<td>Strongly Agree: 27.8%</td>
<td>Median: 5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round I. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Strategy Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Moderately Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to communicate orally with individuals (N = 18)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ability to make large group presentations</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ability to set communication goals at the affective level, that is, determine if a client is accepting or rejecting a strategy (N = 18)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ability to set communication goals at the behavioral level, that is, know whether a recommended communication strategy is working effectively (N = 18)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ability to determine whether having a communication plan should be a priority (N = 18)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round I. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.
C. Communication Tactics Competencies

Communication tactics call for attention to detail and creativity. Communication tactics include dealing with administrative details of budgeting, scheduling of events, and generally ensuring the smooth implementation of the communication plan.

Communication Tactics Competency 1: Knowledge of communication experts in the Extension organization who can assist with the communication aspect

The majority of respondents (94.4%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the strongly agree category were 83.3%, or 15 respondents and in the moderately agree category were 11.1%, or two respondents. The median response was 6.0, and the standard deviation was .55. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round I.

Communication Tactics Competency 2: Knowledge of how to work with local media agents

All respondents (100%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the strongly agree category were 66.7%, or 12 respondents, and in the moderately agree category were 33.3%, or 6 respondents. The median response was 6.0, and the standard deviation was .49. Panelists gave eighteen
valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round I.

**Communication Tactics Competency 3: Knowledge of communication events planning**

Panel members expressed levels of agreement in four out of six categories for this statement. Approximately 66% of responses fell in the moderately agree and strongly agree categories. Most responses were in the moderately agree category representing eight, or 44.4%. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was 1.02. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.

**Communication Tactics Competency 4: Ability to organize a news conference**

Members of the panel were divided over this statement. Levels of agreement fell into five of six categories. The highest number of responses were in the somewhat agree category. This category represented 33.3%, or five respondent opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.36. Three respondents did not answer this statement. Panelists gave fifteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.
Communication Tactics Competency 5: Ability to determine if the establishment of a communication unit at the county level is needed

Members of the panel were divided over this statement. Levels of agreement fell into six categories. The highest number of responses were in the moderately disagree category. This category represented 22.2%, or four respondent opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.59. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.

Communication Tactics Competency 6: Ability to cultivate relationships with media representatives

The majority of respondents (94.4%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the strongly agree category were 66.1%, or 11 respondents, and in the moderately agree category were 33.3%, or six respondents. The median response was 6.0, and the standard deviation was .62. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round I.

Communication Tactics Competency 7: Ability to leverage news events to expand media coverage opportunities

The majority of respondents (88.9%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the moderately agree category were 50.0%, or nine respondents, and in the strongly agree category were 38.9%, or seven
respondents. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .67. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round I.

**Communication Tactics Competency 8: Ability to advocate for the establishment of a communication unit at the county level**

Members of the panel were divided over this statement. Levels of agreement fell into six categories. The highest number of responses were in the somewhat agree category. This category represented 33.3%, or six respondent opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.50. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.

**Communication Tactics Competency 9: Ability to shoot newsworthy photographs for local media agents**

Responses to this competency statement yielded responses in six categories. The highest number of responses were in the somewhat agree category. This category represented 44.4%, or eight respondent opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.04. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.

**Communication Tactics Competency 10: Ability to make video tapes for television news feeds**

Members of the panel were divided over this statement. Responses fell into four out of six categories. The highest number of responses were in the
strongly disagree category. This category represented 33.3%, or six respondent opinions. The median response was 2.0, and the standard deviation was 1.19. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.

**Communication Tactics Competency 11: Ability to write a news release**

The majority of respondents (83.3%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the moderately agree category were 72.2%, or 13 respondents, and in the strongly agree category were 11.1% or two respondents. Equal amounts of respondents had opinions in the somewhat disagree category and the strongly agree category. Each of these categories had 11.1% or two respondents. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .79. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round I.

**Communication Tactics Competency 12: Ability to design culturally sensitive communication messages**

The majority of respondents (83.3%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the strongly agree category were 44.4%, or 8 respondents, and in the moderately agree category were 38.9%, or seven respondents. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .88. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round I.
Communication Tactics Competency 13: Ability to prepare an audio tape for radio broadcast

Respondents almost reached consensus for this competency. Levels of agreement fell into five out of six categories. The highest number of responses were in the strongly disagree category. This category represented 27.8%, or five respondent opinions. The median response was 3.0 and the standard deviation was 1.45. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.

Communication Tactics Competency 14: Ability to make a presentation on local television

Respondents almost reached consensus for this competency with the most responses (70.6%) falling into the somewhat agree and moderately agree categories. The highest number of responses were in the moderately agree category. This category constituted 41.2%, or seven respondent opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .79. One respondent did not answer this question. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.

Communication Tactics Competency 15: Ability to use multimedia in making Extension presentations

The majority of respondents (82.4%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the strongly agree category were 35.3% or six respondents and in the moderately agree category were 47.1%, or eight
respondents. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .86. One respondent did not answer this question. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round I.

**Communication Tactics Competency 16: Ability to design a web site**

Respondents’ opinions varied for this competency. Responses fell in five out of six categories. The highest number of responses were in the somewhat agree category. This category constituted 35.3%, or six respondent opinions. The median response was 3.0, and the standard deviation was 1.00. One respondent did not answer this question. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.

**Communication Tactics Competency 17: Ability to create PowerPoint presentations**

The majority of respondents (82.3%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the strongly agree category were 29.4%, or five respondents, and in the moderately agree category were 52.9%, or nine respondents. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was 1.19. One respondent did not answer this question. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round I.
Communication Tactics Competency 18: Ability to produce printed materials, such as brochures and newsletters

Respondents’ opinions were divided for this competency. Responses fell in six categories. The most responses (47.1%) were in the somewhat agree category. Equal respondents were in three categories of strongly disagree, moderately disagree, and somewhat disagree. Each of these categories had 5.9%, or one respondent. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was 1.32. One respondent did not answer the question. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.

Communication Tactics Competency 19: Ability to use distance education technology, such as teleconferencing

Respondents had mixed levels of agreement regarding this competency. Responses fell in four out of six categories. The most responses (37.5%) were in the somewhat agree category that constituted six respondent opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was 1.08. Two respondents did not answer the question. Panelists gave sixteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.

Communication Tactics Competency 20: Ability to train on communication skills, such as public speaking

Respondents’ opinions were divided for this competency. Responses fell in six categories. Equal responses appeared in five categories ranging from
strongly disagree to moderately agree. Each of these categories had 18.8%, or 3 respondent opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.44. Two respondents did not answer the question. Panelists gave sixteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.

**Communication Tactics Competency 21: Ability to develop a crisis communication plan**

Respondents had mixed levels of agreement regarding this competency. Responses fell in five out of six categories. The most responses (35.3%) were in the somewhat agree category that constituted six respondent opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.44. One respondent did not answer the question. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Tactics Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Knowledge of communication experts in the Extension organization who can assist with the communication aspect (N = 18)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Moderately Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Knowledge of how to work with local media agents (N = 18)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Knowledge of communication events planning (N = 18)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ability to organize a news conference (N = 15)</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ability to determine if the establishment of a communication unit at the county level is needed (N = 18)</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ability to cultivate relationships with media representatives (N = 18)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ability to leverage news events to expand media coverage opportunities (N = 18)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ability to advocate for the establishment of a communication unit at the county level (N = 18)</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round I. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Ratings of Levels of Agreement by Expert Panel for Communication Tactics Competencies on Round I Questionnaire (Continued)
Table 4.3: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Tactics Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Moderately Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ability to shoot newsworthy photographs for local media agents (N = 18)</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ability to make video tapes for television news feeds (N = 18)</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Ability to write a news release (N = 18)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Ability to design culturally sensitive communication messages (N = 18)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Ability to prepare an audio tape for radio broadcast (N = 18)</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Ability to make a presentation on local television (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Ability to use multimedia in making Extension presentations (N = 17)</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round I. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.
Table 4.3: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Tactics Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Moderately Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Ability to design a web site (N = 17)</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Ability to create PowerPoint presentations (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Ability to produce printed materials, such as brochures and newsletters (N = 17)</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Ability to use distance education technology, such as teleconferencing (N = 16)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Ability to train on communication skills, such as public speaking (N = 16)</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Ability to develop a crisis communication plan (N = 17)</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round I. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.
D. Communication Evaluation Competencies

Evaluation of a strategic communication campaign implies developing specific methods of measuring the effectiveness of specific communication tactics, the overall communication plan, and the overall impact of the communication component on organizational outcomes.

Communication Evaluation Competency 1: Ability to develop indicators for measuring the success of communication tactical objectives

Respondents had mixed levels of agreement regarding this competency. Responses fell into five out of six categories. The most responses (44.4%) were in the somewhat agree category that constituted eight respondent opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.49. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.

Communication Evaluation Competency 2: Ability to determine shifts in public opinion about the Extension organization

Respondents almost reached consensus for this competency with 72.3% of responses in the moderately agree and strongly agree categories. Responses fell into four out of six categories. The most responses (55.6%) were in the strongly agree category that constituted ten respondent opinions. The median response was 6.0, and the standard deviation was 1.51. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.
Communication Evaluation Competency 3: Ability to monitor the communication process, that is, identify shortcomings and make adjustments, once the communication campaign is in progress

Respondents almost reached consensus for this competency with 77.7% of responses in the moderately agree and strongly agree categories. Responses fell into four out of six categories. The most responses (44.4%) were in the strongly agree category that constituted eight respondent opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was 1.16. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.

Communication Evaluation Competency 4: Ability to measure communication impacts at the cognitive or awareness level

Opinions varied for this competency. Responses fell into all six categories. Three categories ranging from somewhat agree to strongly agree had identical responses of 22.2% that constituted four respondents’ opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.63. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.

Communication Evaluation Competency 5: Ability to evaluate communication outcomes at the affective or attitudinal level

Opinions varied for this competency. Responses fell into all six categories. Five categories ranging from strongly disagree to somewhat agree had identical responses of 18.8% that constituted three respondents’ opinions.
The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.24. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.

**Communication Evaluation Competency 6: Ability to evaluate behavioral communication outcomes, that is, show how communication contributed to the achievement of Extension’s mission**

Respondents were divided regarding this competency. Responses fell into five out of six categories. The most responses (33.3%) were in the strongly agree category that represented six respondent opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was 1.49. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.

**Communication Evaluation Competency 7: Ability to use pre-test/post-test measures to show communication impacts over time**

Respondents’ opinions varied regarding this competency. Responses fell into five out of six categories. Three categories: somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, and strongly agree had the same number of responses at 22.2%, representing four respondents each. The moderately disagree and moderately agree categories had identical responses of 16.7%, constituting three respondents each. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.43. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.
Communication Evaluation Competency 8: Ability to use social science theory to justify a communication project proposal presentation

Respondents were divided regarding this competency. Responses fell into all six categories. The most responses (27.8%) were in the somewhat agree category that represented five respondent opinions. The median response was 3.0, and the standard deviation was 1.30. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.

Communication Evaluation Competency 9: Ability to determine the contribution of staff to the success of the communication project

Opinions varied for this competency. Responses fell into four out of six categories. The most responses fell into the somewhat agree category with 27.8%, or five respondent opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was 1.04. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round I.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Evaluation Competency</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to develop indicators for measuring the success of comm. tactical objectives (N = 18)</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ability to determine shifts in public opinion about the Extension organization (N = 18)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ability to monitor the communication process, that is, identify shortcomings and make adjustments, once the communication campaign is in progress (N = 18)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ability to measure communication impact at the cognitive or awareness level (N = 18)</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ability to evaluate communication outcomes at the affective or attitudinal level (N = 18)</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round I. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.
Table 4.4: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Evaluation Competency</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Ability to evaluate behavioral communication outcomes, that is show how communication contributed to the achievement of Extension’s mission (N = 18)</td>
<td>0% 0</td>
<td>22.2% 4</td>
<td>5.6% 1</td>
<td>16.7% 3</td>
<td>33.3% 6</td>
<td>22.2% 4</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ability to use pre-test/post-test measures to show communication impacts over time (N = 18)</td>
<td>0% 0</td>
<td>16.7% 3</td>
<td>22.2% 4</td>
<td>22.2% 4</td>
<td>16.7% 3</td>
<td>22.2% 4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ability to use social science theory to justify a communication project proposal presentation (N = 18)</td>
<td>5.6% 1</td>
<td>38.9% 7</td>
<td>16.7% 3</td>
<td>27.8% 5</td>
<td>5.6% 6</td>
<td>5.6% 6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ability to determine the contribution of staff to the success of the communication project (N = 18)</td>
<td>0% 0</td>
<td>5.6% 1</td>
<td>0% 0</td>
<td>27.8% 5</td>
<td>38.9% 7</td>
<td>27.8% 5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round I. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.
E. Additional Competencies

The Round I questionnaire contained an open-ended section to allow panel members to add additional competencies. Panel members suggested nineteen additional competencies. The researcher edited the written responses and collapsed two similar competencies. Seventeen additional competency statements appeared on the Round II questionnaire in a separate section. Additional competency statements appear below.

- Ability to analyze political issues that affect Extension communication at the local level
- Ability to work with teams of communication professionals to reach communication goals
- Ability to differentiate appropriate media needed to reach audiences
- Ability to differentiate appropriate media needed to accomplish communication goals
- Ability to understand basic graphic design principles
- Ability to display professional interpersonal communication skills
- Ability to use organizational communication
- Ability to communicate the relevance of Extension to stakeholders
- Ability to report technical information
- Ability to use collaboration software (software used to allow individuals at remote locations to work on projects via the internet)
- Ability to use blogs (online journals that allow users to enter information regarding topics or events)
• Ability to use chat software, such as instant messaging programs
• Ability to understand various communication functions, such as media relations, public relations, or advertising
• Ability to teach online
• Ability to develop distance learning modules
• Ability to use online resources for courses
• Ability to write clearly

Round II

Seventeen out of 20 panelists responded to the Round II questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 34 competency statements that did not reach consensus during Round I. In addition to the competencies that did not reach consensus, the Round II questionnaire contained 17 competencies added by panel members during Round I. The Round II questionnaire contained five sections including: communication research, communication strategy, communication tactics, communication evaluation, and additional competencies. Panel members gave their level of agreement for each competency statement based on a six-point Likert-type scale. Tables 4.5 through 4.9 outline the frequency, median, and standard deviation for each competency. Twenty-seven competencies reached consensus during Round II. Results for competencies that did not reach consensus during Round I are listed below. All competencies maintained the item numbers from Round I in subsequent rounds for clarity.
A. Communication Research Competencies

Communication Research Competency 3: Ability to use quantitative research methods, such as survey research to assess client communication needs

The majority of respondents (87.6%) either somewhat agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. Equal responses appeared in both categories with 43.8%, or seven responses each. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was .70. One panelist did not respond to this question. Panelists gave sixteen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round II.

Communication Research Competency 4: Ability to use qualitative research methods, such as, the focus group technique, to assess client communication needs

The majority of respondents (93.8%) either somewhat agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. Most responses fell into the somewhat agree category with 68.8%, representing 11 respondents' opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was .62. One panelist did not respond to this question. Panelists gave sixteen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round II.

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Communication Research Competency 5: Ability to report research findings

The majority of responses (81.3%) fell into the somewhat agree or moderately agree categories. Most responses fell into the somewhat agree category with 68.8% representing 11 respondents’ opinions. The median response was 5.0 and the standard deviation was .79. One panelist did not respond to this question. Panelists gave sixteen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round II.

Communication Research Competency 6: Ability to assess the organization’s internal communication resource potential, such as staff numbers and their communication skills, budget, and expected communication functions

Most panelists (87.6%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should have this competency. The moderately agree category had the most responses with 62.5%, constituting ten panelists’ opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .68. One respondent did not answer the question. Panelists gave sixteen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round II.

Communication Research Competency 7: Ability to systematically compile a comprehensive set of information that will enable the educator to effectively incorporate communication in the organization’s plan

Panel members came to consensus for this competency with 81.3% of responses in the moderately agree and strongly agree categories. Eleven of the
responses fell into the moderately agree category. This category had the most responses at 68.8%. Both the strongly agree and somewhat agree categories had equal numbers of responses with 18.8%, constituting three respondent’s opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .63. One panelist did not respond to this question. Panelists gave sixteen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round II.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Research Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Moderately Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ability to use quantitative research methods, such as survey research to assess client communication needs (N = 16)</td>
<td>0% 0% 12.5% 43.8% 43.8% 0%</td>
<td>0 0 2 7 7 0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ability to use qualitative research methods, such as, the focus group technique, to assess client communication needs (N = 16)</td>
<td>0% 0% 0% 68.8% 25.0% 6.3%</td>
<td>0 0 0 11 4 1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ability to report research findings (N = 16)</td>
<td>0% 0% 6.3% 31.3% 50.0% 12.5%</td>
<td>0 0 1 5 8 2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ability to assess the organization’s internal communication resource potential, such as staff numbers and their communication skills, budget, and expected communication functions (N = 16)</td>
<td>0% 0% 6.3% 18.8% 68.8% 6.3%</td>
<td>0 0 1 3 11 1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ability to systematically compile a comprehensive set of information that will enable the Educator to effectively incorporate communication in the organization’s plan (N = 16)</td>
<td>0% 0% 0% 18.8% 62.5% 18.8%</td>
<td>0 0 0 3 10 3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round II. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.

Table 4.5: Distribution of Ratings of Levels of Agreement by Expert Panel for Communication Research Competencies on Round II Questionnaire
B. Communication Strategy Competencies

Communication Strategy Competency 7: Ability to set communication goals at the cognitive level, that is, knowing how to communicate for awareness and understanding

Most panelists (88.2%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should have this competency. The moderately agree category had the most responses with 58.8%, constituting ten panelists’ opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .64. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round II.

Communication Strategy Competency 8: Ability to conduct small group communication activities, such as a focus group discussion

Panel members came to consensus for this competency with 88.3% of responses in the moderately agree and somewhat agree categories. Eight of the responses fell into the somewhat agree category. This category had the most responses at 47.1%. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was .72. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round II.

Communication Strategy Competency 9: Ability to design a mass communication campaign plan, such as an educational program to inform the county about what Extension is

Panel members varied on their responses for this statement. Responses fell in four out of six categories. As in Round I, most responses fell in the
moderately agree category with eight responses that constituted 47.1%. The second largest amount of responses fell into the somewhat agree category that constituted 29.4%, or five responses. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .87. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This item did not reach consensus during Round II.

**Communication Strategy Competency 10: Ability to integrate organizational values into a communication plan**

Most panelists (93.8%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should have this competency. The moderately agree category had the most responses with 62.5%, constituting ten panelists’ opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .58. One panelist did not answer this question. Panelists gave sixteen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round II.

**Communication Strategy Competency 13: Ability to set communication goals at the affective level, that is, determine if a client is accepting or rejecting a strategy**

Panel members came to consensus for this competency with 82.3% of responses in the moderately agree and strongly agree categories. Ten of the responses fell into the moderately agree category. This category had the most responses at 58.8%. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .79. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round II.
**Communication Strategy Competency 14: Ability to set communication goals at the behavioral level, that is, know whether a recommended communication strategy is working effectively**

Panel members expressed equal levels of agreement in the strongly agree and moderately categories for this statement. Eight responses represented 47.1% for each category. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .62. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This statement reached consensus during Round II.

**Communication Strategy Competency 15: Ability to determine whether having a communication plan should be a priority**

Most panel members either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension agents should have this competency over the next five to ten years. Most responses were in the moderately agree category representing nine or 56.3%. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .66. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This statement reached consensus during Round II.
Table 4.6: Distribution of Ratings of Levels of Agreement by Expert Panel for Communication Strategy Competencies on Round II Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Strategy Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 7. Ability to set communication goals at the cognitive level, that is, knowing how to communicate for awareness and understanding (N = 17) | Strongly Disagree: 0%  
Moderately Disagree: 0%  
Somewhat Disagree: 0%  
Somewhat Agree: 11.8%  
Moderately Agree: 58.8%  
Strongly Agree: 29.4% | 5.0 | .64 |
| 8. Ability to conduct small group communication activities, such as a focus group discussion (N = 17) | Strongly Disagree: 0%  
Moderately Disagree: 0%  
Somewhat Disagree: 0%  
Somewhat Agree: 5.9%  
Moderately Agree: 47.1%  
Strongly Agree: 41.2% | 4.0 | .72 |
| 9. Ability to design a mass communication campaign plan, such as an educational program to inform the county about what Extension is (N = 17) | Strongly Disagree: 0%  
Moderately Disagree: 0%  
Somewhat Disagree: 0%  
Somewhat Agree: 11.8%  
Moderately Agree: 29.4%  
Strongly Agree: 47.1% | 2.0 | .87 |
| 10. Ability to integrate organizational values into a communication plan (N = 16) | Strongly Disagree: 0%  
Moderately Disagree: 0%  
Somewhat Disagree: 0%  
Somewhat Agree: 6.3%  
Moderately Agree: 62.5%  
Strongly Agree: 31.3% | 5.0 | .58 |
| 13. Ability to set communication goals at the affective level, that is, determine if a client is accepting or rejecting a strategy (N = 17) | Strongly Disagree: 0%  
Moderately Disagree: 0%  
Somewhat Disagree: 0%  
Somewhat Agree: 5.9%  
Moderately Agree: 17.6%  
Strongly Agree: 58.8%  
23.5% | 5.0 | .79 |
| 14. Ability to set communication goals at the behavioral level, that is, know whether a recommended communication strategy is working effectively (N = 17) | Strongly Disagree: 0%  
Moderately Disagree: 0%  
Somewhat Disagree: 0%  
Somewhat Agree: 5.9%  
Moderately Agree: 47.1%  
Strongly Agree: 47.1% | 5.0 | .62 |

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round II. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.
C. Communication Tactics Competencies

Communication Tactics Competency 3: Knowledge of communication events planning

Most panelists (88.2%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should have this competency. The moderately agree category had the most responses with 70.6%, constituting 12 panelists' opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .71. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round II.

Communication Tactics Competency 4: Ability to organize a news conference

Members of the panel were divided over this statement. Levels of agreement fell into six categories. The highest number of responses were in the somewhat agree category. This category represented 52.9%, or nine respondent opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.25. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

Communication Tactics Competency 5: Ability to determine if the establishment of a communication unit at the county level is needed

Members of the panel were divided over this statement. Levels of agreement fell into six categories. The highest number of responses were in the somewhat disagree category. This category represented 43.8%, or seven respondent opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation
was 1.29. Two respondents did not answer this statement. Panelists gave sixteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

**Communication Tactics Competency 8: Ability to advocate for the establishment of a communication unit at the county level**

Members of the panel were divided over this statement. Levels of agreement fell into six categories. The highest number of responses were in the somewhat agree category. This category represented 52.9%, or nine respondent opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.15. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

**Communication Tactics Competency 9: Ability to shoot newsworthy photographs for local media agents**

Responses to this competency statement yielded responses in four categories. The highest number of responses were in the somewhat agree category. This category represented 56.3%, or nine respondent opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was .91. Two panelists did not respond to this question. Panelists gave sixteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

**Communication Tactics Competency 10: Ability to make video tapes for television news feeds**

Members of the panel were divided over this statement. Responses fell into five out of six categories. The highest number of responses were in the
moderately disagree category. This category represented 47.1%, or eight respondent opinions. The median response was 3.0, and the standard deviation was 1.23. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

**Communication Tactics Competency 13: Ability to prepare an audio tape for radio broadcast**

Respondents’ opinions varied for this competency. Levels of agreement fell into four out of six categories. The highest number of responses were in the somewhat disagree category. This category represented 47.1%, or eight respondent opinions. The median response was 3.0, and the standard deviation was 1.06. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

**Communication Tactics Competency 14: Ability to make a presentation on local television**

Respondents reached consensus for this competency with the most responses (62.5%) falling into the moderately agree and strongly agree categories. The highest number of responses were in the moderately agree category. This category constituted 62.5%, or ten respondent opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .77. One respondent did not answer this question. Panelists gave sixteen valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round II.
Communication Tactics Competency 16: Ability to design a web site

Respondents’ opinions varied for this competency. Responses fell in five out of six categories. The highest number of responses were in the somewhat agree category. This category constituted 35.3%, or six respondent opinions. The median response was 3.0, and the standard deviation was 1.30. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

Communication Tactics Competency 18: Ability to produce printed materials, such as brochures and newsletters

Respondents’ opinions were divided for this competency. Responses fell into four out of six categories. The most responses (58.8%) were in the moderately agree category. Equal respondents fell into three categories of strongly disagree and somewhat disagree. Each of these categories had 17.6%, or three respondents. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .78. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

Communication Tactics Competency 19: Ability to use distance education technology, such as teleconferencing

Respondents had mixed levels of agreement regarding this competency. Responses fell in four out of six categories. The most responses (52.9%) were in the moderately agree category that constituted nine respondent opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .93. Panelists gave
seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

**Communication Tactics Competency 20: Ability to train on communication skills, such as public speaking**

Respondents’ opinions were divided for this competency. Responses fell into six categories. Most responses fell into the somewhat disagree category with 35.5%, or six respondents’ opinions. The median response was 3.0, and the standard deviation was 1.37. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

**Communication Tactics Competency 21: Ability to develop a crisis communication plan**

Respondents’ had mixed levels of agreement regarding this competency. Responses fell in five out of six categories. The most responses (41.2%) were in the somewhat agree category that constituted seven respondent opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was 1.06. One respondent did not answer the question. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.
### Table 4.7: Distribution of Ratings of Levels of Agreement by Expert Panel for Communication Tactics Competencies on Round II Questionnaire (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Tactics Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Knowledge of communication events planning (N = 17)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Moderately Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ability to organize a news conference (N = 17)</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ability to determine if the establishment of a communication unit at the county level is needed (N = 16)</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ability to advocate for the establishment of a communication unit at the county level (N = 17)</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ability to shoot newsworthy photographs for local media agents (N = 16)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ability to make video tapes for television news feeds (N = 17)</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Ability to prepare an audio tape for radio broadcast (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Ability to make a presentation on local television (N = 16)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round II. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.*
Table 4.7: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Tactics Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Moderately Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Ability to design a web site <em>(N = 17)</em></td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Ability to produce printed materials, such as brochures and newsletters <em>(N = 17)</em></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Ability to use distance education technology, such as teleconferencing <em>(N = 17)</em></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Ability to train on communication skills, such as public speaking <em>(N = 17)</em></td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Ability to develop a crisis communication plan <em>(N = 17)</em></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round II. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.
D. Communication Evaluation Competencies

Communication Evaluation Competency 1: Ability to develop indicators for measuring the success of communication tactical objectives

Respondents reached consensus for this competency with the most responses (88.2%) falling into the moderately agree and somewhat agree categories. The highest number of responses were in the somewhat agree category. This category constituted 64.7%, or eleven respondent opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was .72. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round II.

Communication Evaluation Competency 2: Ability to determine shifts in public opinion about the Extension organization

Most panelists (94.1%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should have this competency. The strongly agree category had the most responses with 70.6%, constituting 12 panelists’ opinions. The median response was 6.0, and the standard deviation was .61. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round II.

Communication Evaluation Competency 3: Ability to monitor the communication process, that is, identify shortcomings and make adjustments, once the communication campaign is in progress

Respondents’ opinions ranged over four categories. Most responses fell into the moderately agree category with 58.8%, or ten responses. The median
response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .78. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

**Communication Evaluation Competency 4: Ability to measure communication impacts at the cognitive or awareness level**

The majority of respondents (81.3%) either somewhat agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the moderately agree category were 43.8%, or seven respondents and in the moderately agree category were 37.5%, or six respondents. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .70. Two respondents did not respond. Panelists gave sixteen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round II.

**Communication Evaluation Competency 5: Ability to evaluate communication outcomes at the affective or attitudinal level**

Most respondents agreed on this competency. Eleven responses or 64.7% fell into the somewhat agree category. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was .69. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round II.

**Communication Evaluation Competency 6: Ability to evaluate behavioral communication outcomes, that is show how communication contributed to the achievement of Extension’s mission**

Respondents were divided regarding this competency. Responses fell into four out of six categories. Over half of the responses (52.9%) were in the
moderately agree category that represented nine respondent opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .81. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

Communication Evaluation Competency 7: Ability to use pre-test/post-test measures to show communication impacts over time

Respondents’ opinions varied regarding this competency. Responses fell into five out of six categories. Responses ranged from the moderately disagree to strongly agree categories. Most responses fell into the moderately agree category representing 35.5%, or six responses. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.27. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

Communication Evaluation Competency 8: Ability to use social science theory to justify a communication project proposal presentation

Respondents were divided regarding this competency. Responses fell into five out of six categories. Responses were identical for the moderately disagree, somewhat disagree, and somewhat agree categories. These categories each received four or 23.5% of responses. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.36. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.
Communication Evaluation Competency 9: Ability to determine the contribution of staff to the success of the communication project

Most respondents (82.3%) agreed on this competency. Ten responses or 58.8% fell into the moderately agree category. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .66. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round II.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Evaluation Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to develop indicators for measuring the success of communication tactical objectives (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ability to determine shifts in public opinion about the Extension organization (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ability to monitor the communication process, that is, identify shortcomings and make adjustments, once the communication campaign is in progress (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ability to measure communication impact at the cognitive or awareness level (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ability to evaluate communication outcomes at the affective or attitudinal level (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round II. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.

Table 4.8: Distribution of Ratings of Levels of Agreement by Expert Panel for Communication Evaluation Competencies on Round II Questionnaire
(Continued)
Table 4.8: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Evaluation Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ability to evaluate behavioral communication outcomes, that is show how communication contributed to the achievement of Extension’s mission (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ability to use pre-test/post-test measures to show communication impacts over time (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ability to use social science theory to justify a communication project proposal presentation (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ability to determine the contribution of staff to the success of the communication project (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round II. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.
E. Additional Competencies

Additional Competency 1: Ability to work with teams of communication professionals to reach communication goals

The majority of respondents (88.3%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the moderately agree category were 47.1%, or eight respondents and in the strongly agree category were 41.2% or seven respondents. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .69. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round II.

Additional Competency 2: Ability to differentiate appropriate media needed to reach audiences

Most respondents (94.2%) agreed on this competency. Equal responses (47.1%) into the moderately agree and strongly categories. Each category had eight respondents’ opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .62. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round II.

Additional Competency 3: Ability to differentiate appropriate media needed to accomplish communication goals

Most panelists (83.3%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should have this competency. The moderately agree category had the most responses with 47.1%, constituting eight panelists’ opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .69.
Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round II.

**Additional Competency 4: Ability to understand basic graphic design principles**

Respondents were divided regarding this competency. Responses fell into five out of six categories. Responses were identical for the moderately disagree, somewhat disagree, and strongly agree categories. These categories each received two or 11.8% of responses. The highest number of responses fell into the somewhat agree category with 41.2%, representing seven responses. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.17. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

**Additional Competency 5: Ability to display professional interpersonal communication skills**

Most respondents agreed on this competency. Fourteen responses or 82.4% fell into the strongly agree category. The median response was 6.0, and the standard deviation was .56. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round II.

**Additional Competency 6: Ability to use organizational communication**

The majority of respondents (81.3%) either somewhat agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the somewhat agree category were 43.8% or seven respondents and in the moderately agree category were 37.5%,
or six respondents. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .77. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round II.

**Additional Competency 7: Ability to analyze political issues that affect Extension communication at the local level**

All but one respondent either moderately or strongly agreed with this competency. Eleven or 64.7% of respondents strongly agreed. Five or 29.4% moderately agreed. The median response was 6.0, and the standard deviation was .62. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round II.

**Additional Competency 8: Ability to communicate the relevance of Extension to stakeholders**

Most respondents agreed on this competency. Fourteen responses or 82.4% fell into the strongly agree category. The median response was 6.0, and the standard deviation was .56. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round II.

**Additional Competency 9: Ability to use collaboration software (software used to allow individuals at remote locations to work on projects via the internet)**

Respondents were divided regarding this competency. Responses fell into five out of six categories. Responses were identical for the moderately disagree and strongly agree categories. These categories each received two or 11.8% of responses. The highest number of responses fell into the somewhat
agree category with 35.3%, representing six responses. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.20. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

Additional Competency 10: Ability to use blogs (online journals that allow users to enter information regarding topics or events)

Responses to this competency statement yielded responses in five categories. The highest number of responses were in the somewhat agree category. This category represented 29.4%, or five respondent opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.23. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

Additional Competency 11: Ability to use chat software, such as instant messaging programs

Respondents were divided regarding this competency. Responses fell into five out of six categories. Responses were identical for the moderately disagree, moderately agree, and strongly agree categories. These categories each received two or 11.8%, of responses. The highest number of responses fell into the somewhat agree category with 47.1%, representing eight responses. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.14. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.
Additional Competency 12: Ability to understand various communication functions, such as media relations, public relations, or advertising

Responses to this competency statement yielded responses in four categories. The highest number of responses were in the moderately agree category. This category represented 50.0%, or eight respondent opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .83. One panel member did not respond. Panelists gave sixteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

Additional Competency 13: Ability to teach online

Respondents were divided regarding this competency. Responses fell into five out of six categories. Responses were identical for the somewhat agree and strongly agree categories. These categories each received four or 23.5% of responses. The highest number of responses fell into the moderately agree category with 29.4%, representing five responses. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was 1.41. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

Additional Competency 14: Ability to develop distance learning modules

Respondents were divided regarding this competency. Responses fell into six categories. Responses were identical for the somewhat agree, moderately agree, and strongly agree categories. These categories each received four or 23.5%, of responses. These categories also had the highest number of responses. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation
was 1.71. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

**Additional Competency 15: Ability to use online resources for courses**

Responses to this competency statement yielded responses in four categories. The highest number of responses were in the moderately agree category. This category represented 41.2%, or seven respondent opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was 1.00. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round II.

**Additional Competency 16: Ability to write clearly**

All but one respondent either moderately or strongly agreed with this competency. Fourteen or 82.4% of respondents strongly agreed. Two or 11.8% moderately agreed. The median response was 6.0, and the standard deviation was .56. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round II.

**Additional Competency 17: Ability to report technical information**

Most panelists (94.1%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should have this competency. The moderately agree category had the most responses with 58.8%, constituting ten panelists’ opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .59. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round II.
### Table 4.9: Distribution of Ratings of Levels of Agreement by Expert Panel for Additional Competencies on Round II Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to work with teams of communication professionals to reach communication goals (N = 17)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (1) 0% 0% 0% 11.8% 47.1% 41.2%</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ability to differentiate appropriate media needed to reach audiences (N = 17)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (1) 0% 0% 0% 5.9% 47.1% 47.1%</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ability to differentiate appropriate media needed to accomplish communication goals (N = 17)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (1) 0% 0% 0% 11.8% 47.1% 41.2%</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ability to understand basic graphic design principles (N = 17)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (1) 0% 11.8% 11.8% 41.2% 23.5% 11.8%</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ability to display professional interpersonal communication skills (N = 17)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (1) 0% 0% 0% 5.9% 11.8% 82.4%</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ability to use organizational communication (N = 16)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (1) 0% 0% 0% 43.8% 37.5% 18.8%</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ability to analyze political issues that affect Extension comm. at the local level (N = 17)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (1) 0% 0% 0% 5.9% 29.4% 64.7%</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ability to communicate the relevance of Extension to stakeholders (N = 17)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (1) 0% 0% 0% 5.9% 11.8% 82.4%</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ability to use collaboration software (software used to allow individuals at remote locations to work on projects via the internet) (N = 17)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (1) 0% 11.8% 17.6% 35.3% 23.5% 11.8%</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round II. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.
Table 4.9: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Moderately Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ability to use blogs (online journals that allow users to enter information regarding topics or events) (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Ability to use chat software, such as instant messaging programs (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Ability to understand various communication functions, such as media relations, public relations, or advertising (N = 16)</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Ability to teach online (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Ability to develop distance learning modules (N = 17)</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Ability to use online resources for courses (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Ability to write clearly (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Ability to report technical information (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round II. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.
Round III

Nineteen out of 20 panelists responded to the Round II questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 24 competency statements that did not reach consensus during Round II. Panel members gave their level of agreement for each competency statement based on a six-point Likert-type scale. Tables 4.10 through 4.13 outline the frequency, median, and standard deviation for each competency. Ten competencies reached consensus during Round III. Results for Round III competencies appear below. All competencies maintained the item numbers from Round I in subsequent rounds for clarity.

A. Communication Strategy Competencies

Communication Strategy Competency 9: Ability to design a mass communication campaign plan, such as an educational program to inform the county about what Extension is

Most panelists (93.8%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should have this competency. The moderately agree category had the most responses with 63.2% constituting 12 panelists’ opinions. The median response was 5.0 and the standard deviation was .71. Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round III.
Table 4.10: Distribution of Ratings of Levels of Agreement by Expert Panel for Communication Strategy Competencies on Round III Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Strategy Competency</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree 1</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree 2</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree 3</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree 4</th>
<th>Moderately Agree 5</th>
<th>Strongly Agree 6</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. Ability to design a mass communication campaign plan, such as an educational program to inform the county about what Extension is (N = 19)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round III. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.
C. Communication Tactics Competencies

Communication Tactics Competency 4: Ability to organize a news conference

Respondents reached consensus for this competency with the most responses (82.4%) falling into the moderately agree and somewhat agree categories. The highest number of responses were in the somewhat agree category. This category constituted 68.4%, or 13 respondent opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was .81. Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round III.

Communication Tactics Competency 5: Ability to determine if the establishment of a communication unit at the county level is needed

The majority of respondents (84.2%) came to consensus for this competency. The highest number of responses were in the moderately agree category. This category represented 68.4%, or 13 respondent opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was .75. Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round III.

Communication Tactics Competency 8: Ability to advocate for the establishment of a communication unit at the county level

Members of the panel were divided over this statement. Levels of agreement fell into four categories. The highest number of responses were in the somewhat agree category. This category represented 52.6%, or nine
respondent opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was .87. Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round III.

**Communication Tactics Competency 9: Ability to shoot newsworthy photographs for local media agents**

Responses to this competency statement yielded responses in four categories. The highest number of responses were in the somewhat agree category. This category represented 36.8%, or seven respondent opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was .99. Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round III.

**Communication Tactics Competency 10: Ability to make video tapes for television news feeds**

Members of the panel were divided over this statement. Responses fell into four out of six categories. The highest number of responses were in the moderately disagree category. This category represented 68.4%, or 13 respondent opinions. The median response was 2.0, and the standard deviation was .79. Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round III.

**Communication Tactics Competency 13: Ability to prepare an audio tape for radio broadcast**

Respondents were very close to reaching consensus for this competency. The highest number of responses were in the somewhat disagree category. This
category represented 42.1%, or eight respondent opinions. The category that
received the second highest number of responses was the somewhat agree
category with 31.6%, or six responses. The median response was 3.0, and the
standard deviation was .78. Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this
statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round III.

**Communication Tactics Competency 16: Ability to design a web site**

Respondents’ opinions varied for this competency. Responses fell in four
out of six categories. The highest number of responses were in the somewhat
disagree category. This category constituted 47.4%, or nine respondent
opinions. The median response was 3.0, and the standard deviation was .92.
Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did
not reach consensus during Round III.

**Communication Tactics Competency 18: Ability to produce printed
materials, such as brochures and newsletters**

Most (94.8%) respondents agreed that county Extension educators should
have this competency in the next five to ten years. The most responses (73.7%)
were in the moderately agree category. Four respondents representing 21.1%
of responses fell into the somewhat agree category. The median response was
5.0, and the standard deviation was .58. Panelists gave nineteen valid
responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during
Round III.
Communication Tactics Competency 19: Ability to use distance education technology, such as teleconferencing

Respondents had mixed levels of agreement regarding this competency. The most responses (52.6%) were in the moderately agree category that ten respondent opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was 1.12. Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round III.

Communication Tactics Competency 20: Ability to train on communication skills, such as public speaking

Respondents’ opinions were divided for this competency. Responses fell in five out of six categories. Most responses fell into the somewhat disagree category with 68.4%, or 13 respondents’ opinions. The median response was 3.0, and the standard deviation was .79. Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round III.

Communication Tactics Competency 21: Ability to develop a crisis communication plan

Most (89.5%) respondents agreed on this competency. The most responses (68.4%) were in the moderately agree category that constituted 13 respondent opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .65. Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round III.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Tactics Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
<th>Median Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Moderately Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ability to organize a news conference (N = 19)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ability to determine if the establishment of a communication unit at the county level is needed (N = 19)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ability to advocate for the establishment of a communication unit at the county level (N = 19)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ability to shoot newsworthy photographs for local media agents (N = 19)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ability to make video tapes for television news feeds (N = 19)</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Ability to prepare an audio tape for radio broadcast (N = 19)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round III. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.*

Table 4.11: Distribution of Ratings of Levels of Agreement by Expert Panel for Communication Tactics Competencies on Round III Questionnaire

(Continued)
Table 4.11: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Tactics Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Ability to design a web site (N = 19)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Ability to produce printed materials, such as brochures and newsletters (N = 19)</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Ability to use distance education technology, such as teleconferencing (N = 19)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Ability to train on communication skills, such as public speaking (N = 19)</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Ability to develop a crisis communication plan (N = 19)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round III. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.
D. Communication Evaluation Competencies

Communication Evaluation Competency 3: Ability to monitor the communication process, that is, identify shortcomings and make adjustments, once the communication campaign is in progress

Most panelists (94.1%) either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should have this competency. The moderately agree category had the most responses with 64.7%, constituting 11 panelists’ opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .56. Two respondents did not answer this question. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round III.

Communication Evaluation Competency 6: Ability to evaluate behavioral communication outcomes, that is show how communication contributed to the achievement of Extension’s mission

The majority of respondents (94.7%) either somewhat agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should possess this competency in the next five to ten years. In the moderately agree category were 57.9%, or 11 respondents and in the somewhat agree category were 36.8%, or seven respondents. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .56. Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round III.

Communication Evaluation Competency 7: Ability to use pre-test/post-test measures to show communication impacts over time
Respondents’ opinions varied regarding this competency. Responses fell into five out of six categories. Responses ranged from the moderately disagree to strongly agree categories. Most responses fell into the somewhat agree category representing 52.6%, or ten responses. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was .90. Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round III.

Communication Evaluation Competency 8: Ability to use social science theory to justify a communication project proposal presentation

Respondents were divided regarding this competency. Responses fell into five out of six categories. Most responses were in the somewhat agree category with 36.8%, or seven responses. The median response was 3.0, and the standard deviation was 1.07. Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round III.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Evaluation Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Ability to monitor the communication process, that is, identify shortcomings and make adjustments, once the communication campaign is in progress (N = 17)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ability to evaluate behavioral communication outcomes, that is show how communication contributed to the achievement of Extension’s mission (N = 19)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ability to use pre-test/post-test measures to show communication impacts over time (N = 19)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ability to use social science theory to justify a communication project proposal presentation (N = 19)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round III. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.

Table 4.12: Distribution of Ratings of Levels of Agreement by Expert Panel for Communication Evaluation Competencies on Round III Questionnaire
E. Additional Competencies

Additional Competency 4: Ability to understand basic graphic design principles

All except one respondent either moderately or somewhat agreed with this competency. Twelve or 63.2% of respondents somewhat agreed. Six or 31.6% moderately agreed. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was .56. Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round III.

Additional Competency 9: Ability to use collaboration software (software used to allow individuals at remote locations to work on projects via the internet)

Most respondents agreed with this competency (89.5%). The highest number of responses fell into the somewhat agree category with 68.4%, representing 13 responses. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was .65. Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this statement. This competency reached consensus during Round III.

Additional Competency 10: Ability to use blogs (online journals that allow users to enter information regarding topics or events)

Responses to this competency statement yielded responses in four categories. The highest number of responses were in the somewhat disagree category. This category represented 31.6%, or six respondent opinions. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.07. Panelists gave
nineteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round III.

**Additional Competency 11: Ability to use chat software, such as instant messaging programs**

Respondents were divided regarding this competency. Responses were identical for the somewhat disagree and somewhat agree categories. These categories each received six or 35.3%, of responses. These categories also represented the highest number of responses. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was .90. Two panelists did not respond. Panelists gave seventeen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round III.

**Additional Competency 12: Ability to understand various communication functions, such as media relations, public relations, or advertising**

Most panelists (84.2%) either somewhat agreed or moderately agreed that county Extension educators should have this competency. Both categories had equal responses of 42.1%, that constituted eight respondent opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .73. Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this statement. This item reached consensus during Round III.

**Additional Competency 13: Ability to teach online**

Respondents were divided regarding this competency. Responses fell into four out of six categories. Responses were identical for the somewhat disagree and strongly agree categories. These categories each received three
or 16.7% of responses. The highest number of responses fell into the moderately agree category with 24.4%, representing eight responses. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .98. One panel member did not respond to this item. Panelists gave eighteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round III.

**Additional Competency 14: Ability to develop distance learning modules**

Responses to this competency fell into five categories. The most responses were in the moderately agree category with 42.1%, or eight responses. The median response was 4.0, and the standard deviation was 1.39. Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round III.

**Additional Competency 15: Ability to use online resources for courses**

Responses to this competency statement yielded responses in four categories. The highest number of responses were in the moderately agree category. This category represented 36.8%, or seven respondent opinions. The median response was 5.0, and the standard deviation was .91. Panelists gave nineteen valid responses to this statement. This competency did not reach consensus during Round III.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Competency</th>
<th>Percentage and Frequency for Level of Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ability to understand basic graphic design principles (N=19)</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ability to use collaboration software (software used to allow individuals at remote locations to work on projects via the internet) (N = 19)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ability to use blogs (online journals that allow users to enter information regarding topics or events) (N = 19)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Ability to use chat software, such as instant messaging programs (N = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Ability to understand various communication functions, such as media relations, public relations, or advertising (N = 19)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Ability to teach online (N = 18)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Ability to develop distance learning modules (N = 19)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Ability to use online resources for courses (N = 19)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies in bold achieved consensus during Round III. Likert-type scale responses represented by percent over frequency.

Table 4.13: Distribution of Ratings of Levels of Agreement by Expert Panel for Additional Competency Competencies on Round III Questionnaire
Discussion of Results

The literature revealed strategic communication competencies in four categories: communication research, communication strategies, communication tactics, and communication evaluation. Based on the results of this study, two areas that warrant discussion are: the strategic communication process and tactical vs. strategic communication.

The Strategic Communication Process

Panelists came to consensus regarding all of the seven communication research competencies. The consensus reached for this category indicated that panelists agreed that county Extension educators should demonstrate these competencies over the next five to ten years. The panel of experts’ opinions paralleled what the literature indicated regarding strategic communication in organizations. Strategic communication scholars indicated that segments of the population have different communication needs and public sector organizations should understand those needs (Radtke, 1998; Bonk et al., 2002; Smith, 2004). These results suggest that county Extension educators should recognize that Extension clients are very diverse and special attention should go to understanding various socioeconomic segments. This in depth understanding will lead to more strategic approaches to communicating with various segments of the population.

Panelists agreed that county Extension educators should demonstrate all 15 of the communication strategy competencies indicated in this study. Communication strategy pertains to the comprehensive design of a communications plan based on the information gathered about segments of clients when conducting communication research (Radtke, 1998; Bonk et al., 2002; Smith, 2004). These results reflect a need to
understand strategic planning as it relates to communication plans and how to integrate a strategic communication plan into current organizational structure.

Unlike the first two strategic communication competency areas, some of the communication tactical competencies did not reach consensus by the panel of experts. Tactical competency items has the highest number of items that did not reach consensus. The communication tactics competencies that did not reach consensus are as follows:

- Ability to advocate for the establishment of a communication unit at the county level;
- Ability to shoot newsworthy photographs for local media agents;
- Ability to make video tapes for television news feeds;
- Ability to prepare an audio tape for radio broadcast;
- Ability to design a web site;
- Ability to use distance education technology, such as teleconferencing; and
- Ability to train on communication skills, such as public speaking.

Based on the literature, one explanation for many of these competencies that did not reach consensus in this category could be due to lack of resources (Andreasen & Kotler, 2002). Many of these competencies call for technology that can be costly to an organization. The costs may be a prohibitive factor for many county Extension offices. Another rationalization may be that the panel of experts felt that the media specific knowledge required for some competencies should be left to communication specialists
at the state or district levels. Bonk et al. (1999) describe poor prior media experience as a significant inhibitor to effective use of the press.

The consensus of the panel of experts was that they agreed that county Extension educators should demonstrate competence in most of the communication evaluation competencies. Panelists did not reach consensus on two of the nine communication evaluation competencies:

- Ability to use pre-test/post-test measures to show communication impact over time; and
- Ability to use social science theory to justify a communication project proposal presentation.

Additional qualitative research could reveal reasons why consensus could not be reached for these two competencies. One panelist indicated that one of the reasons that some competencies did not achieve consensus may be due to the fact that responsibilities for communication functions vary by state. Some states have centralized state-level units that are responsible for strategic communication. Other states require county Extension educators do be responsible for communication tasks.

Panelists added 17 additional competencies that they felt related to strategic communication during Round I. The panel of experts agreed that county Extension educators should demonstrate 12 out of 17 of these additional competencies in the next five to ten years. The competencies that did not achieve consensus were as follows:

- Ability to use blogs (online journals that allow users to enter information regarding topics or events);
- Ability to use chat software, such as instant messaging programs;
• Ability to teach online;
• Ability to develop distance learning modules; and
• Ability to use online resources for courses.

All of the competencies that did not achieve consensus relate to using distance learning technology. Bonk, Griggs, and Tynes (1999) indicated that a lack of knowledge or experience about some communication tactics can create challenges to implementation in organizations. Another logical conclusion based on the results of this study is the variance of county Extension educator responsibilities in each state.

**Tactical vs. Strategic Communication**

The results of this study indicated that the panel of experts came to consensus regarding both tactical and strategic communication competencies needed by county Extension educators over the next five to ten years. Of the competency items that the panel of experts agreed, there are both tactical and strategic communication competencies. The panel did not come to consensus to determine that none of the competency items were needed over the next five to ten years.

Although there was not consensus to say that no items were needed, there were 14 items where no consensus was reached. Of these 14 items, eleven (79%) of the items are tactical communication competencies. These items are:

• Ability to shoot newsworthy photographs for local media agents
• Ability to make video tapes for television news feeds
• Ability to prepare an audio tape for radio broadcast
• Ability to design a web site
• Ability to use distance education technology, such as teleconferencing
• Ability to train on communication skills, such as public speaking
• Ability to use blogs (online journals that allow users to enter information regarding topics or events)
• Ability to use chat software, such as instant messaging programs
• Ability to teach online
• Ability to develop distance learning modules
• Ability to use online resources for courses

Three of the competencies that did not reach consensus were strategic including:

• Ability to advocate for the establishment of a communication unit at the county level
• Ability to use pre-test/post-test measures to show communication impacts over time
• Ability to use social science theory to justify a communication project proposal presentation

The rationale for the not reaching consensus can be attributed to what the literature said regarding tactical and strategic communication. Smith (2004) suggested that there is a greater need for strategic communicators than tactical communicators. The National Agricultural Communications Summit (2004) revealed, “the need for professionalism, that is, the responsibilities of agricultural communicators to their clients, communities, society and future agricultural communicators” (p. 2.2). Of particular concern was whether agricultural communication should continue to produce communication technicians to perform entry-level jobs such as writing
press releases, producing videos, publishing newsletters, and organizing displays or whether the emphasis should be on strategic communication that is producing graduates who can manage the overall communication needs of an organization. Smith (2004) stated:

No longer is it enough merely to know how to do things. Now the effective communicator needs to know what to do, why and how to evaluate its effectiveness . . . . Now the profession demands competency in conducting research, making decisions and solving problems. The call now is for strategic communicators (p. 1).

Smith went on to differentiate between tactical and strategic communication decisions. Tactical communication managers, such as those in Information and Applied Communication Units of LGUs, make daily decisions on practical communication concerns, such as whether to send a news release, hold a news conference, produce a brochure, or build a web page. Strategic communication managers are concerned with management trends, issues, policies, and corporate structure. These managers are concerned with what problems are likely to face the organization over the next several years and how to solve them.

**Chapter Summary**

The researcher collected data from a panel of 20 experts during three rounds of questionnaires through a modified Delphi technique. Round I yielded consensus on 18 competency statements. Members of the panel of experts added 17 additional competencies to the questionnaire. Round II yielded consensus on 28 additional competency statements.
Round III yielded consensus on ten additional competency statements. Sixty-four competencies achieved consensus. Fourteen competencies failed to achieve consensus.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (2002) indicated that the Extension system should develop integrated strategies to communicate with diverse groups of stakeholders and strategically engage those stakeholders based on specific demographic needs. Strategic communication is essential to engaging stakeholders and working within social systems to affect positive change. A core set of strategic communication competencies have not been identified for county Extension educators. The purpose of this study was to identify strategic communication competencies for county Extension educators nationally as perceived by a panel of experts. The objective for the study was to obtain consensus regarding strategic communication competency statements for county Extension educators in the United States.

Methods

The researcher used a modified Delphi Technique to identify the competency items essential for county Extension educators to perform strategic communication. A purposive sample of twenty professionals familiar with Extension and communication served on the panel of experts. The researcher collected data from May 6, 2005 to July 24, 2005. During three rounds of
quantitative questionnaires, a panel of experts indicated their level of agreement for 69 competencies regarding whether it is desirable for county Extension educators to demonstrate those competencies over the next five to ten years. The panel of experts indicated their level of agreement for each competency based on a six point Likert-type scale where: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = moderately disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = somewhat agree; 5 = moderately agree; and 6 = strongly agree. The researcher tabulated data from each round using SPSS software. Frequencies, medians and standard deviations were computed for each competency. Consensus was determined when 80% of the responses to a competency statement fell within two points from the median of any category.

Summary of Results

The panel of experts reached various levels of consensus during three rounds of questionnaires. Panel members indicated whether they felt that county Extension educators should have strategic communication competencies in the next five to ten years. Round I yielded consensus on 18 competency statements. Members of the panel of experts added 17 additional competencies to the questionnaire. Round II yielded consensus on 28 additional competency statements. Round III yielded consensus on ten additional competency statements. Sixty-three competencies achieved consensus. Fourteen competencies failed to achieve consensus. The researcher determined categories of consensus based on the medians of competencies during the rounds where consensus occurred. A listing of items reaching consensus follow.
Competencies Indicated as Strongly Agree

- Ability to systematically segment community members or clients into need-based, demand-driven Extension groups
- Ability to assess external factors such as political, social, and economic trends that might affect county Extension organizations
- Ability to set communication task management goals, that is, identify the communication functions that need to be performed at the county level and take action to achieve them
- Ability to relate the organization’s mission into its communication plan
- Ability to target special publics with specialized messages, such as designing special Extension programs for soybean growers or organic producers
- Ability to communicate orally with individuals
- Ability to make large group presentations
- Knowledge of communication experts in the Extension organization who can assist with the communication aspect
- Knowledge of how to work with local media agents
- Ability to cultivate relationships with media representatives
- Ability to determine shifts in public opinion about the Extension organization
- Ability to display professional interpersonal communication skills
• Ability to analyze political issues that affect Extension communication at the local level
• Ability to communicate the relevance of Extension to stakeholders
• Ability to write clearly

Competencies Indicated as Moderately Agree

• Ability to set relationship management goals, that is, how county Extension educators can interact with their publics
• Ability to distinguish communication problems from technical Extension subject matter problems
• Ability to communicate with clients who do not speak English
• Ability to leverage news events to expand media coverage opportunities
• Ability to write a news release
• Ability to design culturally sensitive communication messages
• Ability to use multimedia when making Extension presentations
• Ability to report research findings
• Ability to assess the organization’s internal communication resource potential, such as staff members and their communication skills, budget, and expected communication functions
• Ability to systematically compile a comprehensive set of information that will enable the educator to effectively incorporate communication in the organization’s plan
• Ability to set communication goals at the cognitive level, that is, knowing how to communicate for awareness and understanding
• Ability to integrate organizational values into a communication plan
• Ability to set communication goals at the affective level, that is, determine if a client is accepting or rejecting a strategy
• Ability to set communication goals at the behavioral level, that is, know whether a recommended communication strategy is working effectively
• Ability to determine whether having a communication plan should be a priority
• Knowledge of communication events planning
• Ability to make a presentation on local television
• Ability to create Power Point presentations
• Ability to measure communication impact at the cognitive or awareness level
• Ability to determine the contribution of staff to the success of the communication project
• Ability to work with teams of communication professionals to reach communication goals
• Ability to differentiate appropriate media needed to reach audiences
• Ability to differentiate appropriate media needed to accomplish communication goals
• Ability to use organizational communication
• Ability to report technical information
• Ability to design a mass communication campaign plan, such as an educational program to inform the county about what Extension is
• Ability to produce printed materials, such as brochures and newsletters
• Ability to develop a crisis communication plan
• Ability to monitor the communication process, that is identify shortcomings and make adjustments, once the communication campaign is in progress
• Ability to evaluate behavioral communication outcomes, that is show how communication contributed to the achievement of Extension’s mission
• Ability to understand various communication functions, such as media relations, public relations, or advertising

**Competencies Indicated as Somewhat Agree**

• Ability to use quantitative research methods, such as survey research to assess client communication needs
• Ability to use qualitative research methods, such as the focus group technique, to assess client communication needs
• Ability to conduct small group communication activities, such as a focus group discussion
• Ability to develop indicators for measuring the success of communication tactical objectives
• Ability to evaluate communication outcomes at the affective or attitudinal level
• Ability to understand basic graphic design principles
• Ability to organize a news conference
• Ability to determine if the establishment of a communication unit at the county level is needed
• Ability to use collaboration software (software used to allow individuals at remote locations to work on projects via the internet)

**Competencies That Did Not Reach Consensus**

• Ability to advocate for the establishment of a communication unit at the county level
• Ability to shoot newsworthy photographs for local media agents
• Ability to make video tapes for television news feeds
• Ability to prepare an audio tape for radio broadcast
• Ability to design a web site
• Ability to use distance education technology, such as teleconferencing
• Ability to train on communication skills, such as public speaking
• Ability to use pre-test/post-test measures to show communication impacts over time
• Ability to use social science theory to justify a communication project proposal presentation
• Ability to use blogs (online journals that allow users to enter information regarding topics or events)
• Ability to use chat software, such as instant messaging programs
• Ability to teach online
• Ability to develop distance learning modules
• Ability to use online resources for courses
Conclusions

Conclusions from the study indicated that there are four strategic communication competency areas including: research, strategy, tactics, and evaluation. The panel of experts agreed that county Extension educators should demonstrate nine strategic communication research competencies including: the ability to systematically segment community members of clients into need-based demand-driven Extension groups; the ability to analyze political issues that affect Extension communication at the local level; and the ability to assess external factors such as political, social, and economic trends that might affect county Extension organizations. The panel of experts agreed that county Extension educators should demonstrate 18 strategic communication strategy competencies including: the ability to set communication task management goals; the ability to relate the organization’s mission into its communication plan; and the ability to target special publics with specialized messages. The panel of experts agreed that county Extension educators should demonstrate 21 strategic communication tactical competencies including: knowledge of communication experts in the Extension organization who can assist with the communication aspect; knowledge of how to work with local media agents; and the ability to display professional interpersonal communication skills. The panel of experts agreed that county Extension educators should demonstrate seven strategic communication evaluation competencies including: the ability to determine shifts in public opinion about the Extension organization; the ability to measure
communication impact at the cognitive level; and the ability to evaluate behavioral communication outcomes.

**Implications**

Based on the results of this study, there is a need for professional development activities that will enhance county Extension educators’ expertise in strategic communication. Prior to identifying professional development activities, further research is needed to determine whether county Extension educators practice strategic communication and to determine specific training needs.

Results of the study indicate that strategic communication should be a function of county Extension educators resulting in decentralization of communication functions. This has implications for Extension organizational structures that may need to evaluate how Extension communication departments provide services. Evaluations may include analyses of: communication professionals’ roles and responsibilities, training offerings, human resource capabilities, and budget allocations.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

1. A study to determine to what extent county Extension educators use the strategic communication competencies identified in this study

2. Identification of strategic communication competencies for each Extension program area

3. Identification of training needs for strategic communication

4. Identification of existing strategic communication training curricula and professional development opportunities
5. A study to determine the costs and benefits of integrating strategic communication into Extension programming

6. A qualitative study of the panel of experts from this study to determine the rationale behind their decisions
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Coffman, J. (2002). *Research and advocacy collaboration: A New Jersey case study*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Graduate School of Education.


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APPENDIX A

NOMINATING GROUP
NOMINATING GROUP

Pam Alspaugh, Associate Director, Communications, Texas Technical University

Erik T. Anderson, Director, Agricultural Communication, University of Idaho

Melva L. Berkland, Ames, Iowa University

Kristina Boone, Interim Department Head, Department of Communications, Kansas State University

Sorrel Brown, Coordinator, IDEA, Iowa State University

Dan Cotton, Director, Cooperative Extension System e-Extension Initiative & Director Communications and Information Technology, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Carla Craycraft, Assistant Dean for Agricultural Communications and Information Technology, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

LaRae M. Donnellan, Professor, School of Journalism & Graphic Communication, Florida A & M University

Wendy Douglass, Marketing Director, Colorado State University

Standley Ernst, Communication Specialist, The Ohio State University

Scott V. Fedale, Chair, Information Department, Washington State University

Richard L. Fleming, Consultant, Agricultural Leadership Education and Communication, University of Nebraska

David Foote, Director, Information Technology and Distance Education, University of New Hampshire

Bob Furbee, Communications and Technology Leader, The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

Kirk Heinze, Director, Communications and Technology Services, Michigan State University

David King, Consultant to Agricultural Communication Service, Purdue University

Tom Knecht, Head, Agricultural Communications, Mississippi State University

Becky Koch, Information Specialist, North Dakota State University
George Laur, Jr., Publications Coordinator, University of Missouri

Valorie McAlpin, Associate Dean, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Maryland

Florita Montgomery, Extension Communication Specialist, Associate Professor, West Virginia University

Kim Parker, Extension Associate Professor, University of Vermont

Garvin Quinn, Director, Marketing & Communications, University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture

Bethany Raney, Computer Education Leader, Pennsylvania State University

Bonnie Riechert, Assistant Professor, School of Advertising and Public Relations, Univ. of Tennessee

Ellen Ritter, Professor & Extension Specialist, Texas A&M University

Robert Sams, Director, ANR Communications Services, University of California

Roy Scott, Director, Marketing & Public Relations, Clemson University

Dee Shore, Interim Department Head, Department of Communication Services, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, North Carolina State University

Chris Sigurdson, Department Head, Agricultural Communication, Purdue University

John Sperbeck, Extension Educator--Communications, University of Minnesota

Suzanne Steel, Director, College Communications, The Ohio State University

Joan Thomson, Professor of Agricultural Communications, Pennsylvania State University

Neal Vines, Director, Information & Communication Technologies, Pennsylvania State University

Carol Whatley, Co-Leader, Extension Communications, Auburn University
APPENDIX B

NOMINATION LETTER
Dear Colleague:

You have been identified as an expert on communication and Extension. We would like you to nominate colleagues nationally we can invite to serve on a panel of experts for a study entitled “Identification of Strategic Communication Competencies for County Extension Educators: A Delphi Study.” The purpose of this study is to identify strategic communication competencies for county Extension educators nationally as perceived by a panel of experts.

In addition to yourself, could you nominate 1-2 others you feel represent the following criteria?

1. Familiarity with strategic communication and Extension
2. Conducts research, lectures, or applies communication in social change
3. Has a deep interest in the role of communication in Extension

As a nationally recognized Extension/communication expert, your nominations will be vital to the outcome of this study. If you have questions relating to this study, please contact Cassandra Caldwell at caldwell.7@osu.edu or 919-363-6997. Please send your nominations via e-mail by April 29, 2005. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Kind regards,

Keith Smith
Associate Vice President, Agricultural Administration,
Director, Ohio State University Extension &
Past Chair, Extension Committee on Organization and Policy

Cassandra Caldwell
Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Human and Community Development
The Ohio State University
APPENDIX C

PANEL OF EXPERTS INVITATION LETTER
Dear Colleague:

You have been identified as an expert in communication and Extension by a colleague to serve on a panel of experts for a study entitled “Identification of Strategic Communication Competencies for County Extension Educators: A Delphi Study.”

A modified Delphi Technique will be used to gather feedback about this study. This process will involve three rounds of questionnaires - each round lasting two weeks. After each round, all participants will receive anonymous responses from the group, and have an opportunity to expand on each idea. The final and third questionnaire will be a rating of the ideas expressed by the group to identify general consensus. Each round will be sent and received via U.S. mail. Again, responses from each round will be shared anonymously. Upon receipt of the initial round, a number will be assigned to each participant and will appear on all of the data collected. There will be no matching of names of participants with the data they provide.

Each of the three rounds should not take more than 20 to 30 minutes to complete. This study is spread over six weeks. You will receive the first round questionnaire by May 9, 2005 via U.S. Mail. Please plan your schedule accordingly.

As a nationally recognized Extension communication expert, your participation is vital to this study. Please e-mail Cassandra Caldwell at caldwell.7@osu.edu to confirm your willingness to serve on the panel of experts. If you have questions related to the study please contact Cassandra Caldwell at 919-363-6997. Please respond to Cassandra by May 2, 2005. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Kind regards,

Keith Smith
Associate Vice President, Agricultural Administration,
Director, Ohio State University Extension &
Past Chair, Extension Committee on Organization and Policy

Cassandra Caldwell
Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Human and Community Development
The Ohio State University
APPENDIX D

FACE AND CONTENT VALIDITY PANEL
Face and Content Validity Panel

Robert Agunga, Associate Professor, The Ohio State University, Department of Human and Community Resource Development

Larry Miller, Professor, The Ohio State University, Department of Human and Community Resource Development

Larry Whiting, Professor, Agricultural Communication, The Ohio State University, Department of Human and Community Resource Development
APPENDIX E

PANEL OF EXPERTS
Panel of Experts

Erik T. Anderson, Director, Agricultural Communication, University of Idaho

Mary Ellen Bell, Senior University Relations Specialist, Public Information and Communications, University of Wisconsin - Madison

Kristina Boone, Interim Department Head, Department of Communications, Kansas State University

Sorrel Brown, Coordinator, IDEA, Iowa State University

Dan Cotton, Director, Cooperative Extension System e-Extension Initiative & Director Communications and Information Technology, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Scott V. Fedale, Chair, Information Department, Washington State University

Richard L. Fleming, Consultant, Agricultural Leadership Education and Communication, University of Nebraska

Bob Furbee, Communications and Technology Leader, The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

Elizabeth Gregory, Associate Professor and Extension Communications Specialist and Coordinator, Extension Marketing, Texas Cooperative Extension

Kirk Heinze, Director, Communications and Technology Services, Michigan State University

Dave King, Executive Director, Indiana Higher Education Telecommunication System

Tom Knecht, Head, Agricultural Communications, Mississippi State University

Valorie McAlpin, Associate Dean, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Maryland

Florita Montgomery, Extension Communication Specialist, Associate Professor, West Virginia University

Ellen Ritter, Professor & Extension Specialist, Texas A&M University

Garvin Quinn, Director, Marketing & Communications, University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture

Chris Sigurdson, Department Head, Agricultural Communication, Purdue University

Suzanne Steel, Director, College Communications, The Ohio State University

Joan Thomson, Professor of Agricultural Communications, Pennsylvania State University

Neal Vines, Director, Information & Communication Technologies, Pennsylvania State University
APPENDIX F

ROUND I QUESTIONNAIRE
Dear :

Thank you for agreeing to serve as an expert for a national study entitled, “Identification of Strategic Communication Competencies for County Extension Educators: A Delphi Study.” The purpose of this study is to identify communication skills county Extension educators should have, as perceived by a panel of experts. Please note that the purpose is not to measure whether they have these skills or competencies. That is the task of another study.

The Delphi is a survey technique that uses the opinions of experts on a panel to determine if a consensus can be reached on what these competencies are after a series of rounds. This study requires you to complete three questionnaires, one every two weeks, over a six week period. The second questionnaire will build on the first and the third, on the second. Each questionnaire should take about 30 minutes to complete.

Your participation in this Delphi study will contribute to our understanding of the strategic communication competencies county Extension educators should have. Your responses will remain confidential; however, your name will be listed in the study as one of the experts on the panel. A summary of this study will be sent to all participants.

Please return the questionnaire in the enclosed addressed envelope or fax it to 919-363-9117 before May 23, 2005. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Kind regards,

Cassandra D. Caldwell
Identification of Strategic Communication Competencies for County Extension Educators: A Delphi Study
Round I Questionnaire

Strategic communication refers to the systematic use of communication to help an organization meet its goals. It implies strategic thinking and managing the change process so that organizational goals are realized. The emphasis is on segmenting audiences and providing need-based, demand-driven communication programs. The strategic communication planning process covers four stages: (a) research, which is aimed at understanding the condition, needs and concerns of the client(s); (b) strategy, which implies making broad decisions dealing with the expected impact of communication on the project or program; (c) tactics, which involves creatively designing communication messages and using a variety of communication techniques and technologies to attain stated objectives and goals; and (d) evaluation, the systematic assessment of the impact or contribution of the communication component in the attainment of pre-determined organizational outcomes (Smith, 2005; Radtke, 1998).

Competency means being able to perform a particular skill, such as the ability to produce a brochure or to conduct a town hall meeting. Hedges (1995) stated that competencies are clusters of related knowledge, skills, and abilities that affect a major part of one’s job, that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured against well-accepted standards, and that can be improved via training and development. Below is a listing of communication competencies, gleaned from the literature, that might be useful to county Extension educators. As Extension and communication experts, your task is to discern whether these competencies are relevant to Extension educators. You are encouraged to indicate your level of agreement with the items in this list. There is an open section for you to add to the list.
Instructions

Please indicate your level of agreement regarding whether county Extension educators should possess the following strategic communication competencies in the next five to ten years. Use the following scale to indicate your opinions.

1 = Strongly disagree  2 = Moderately disagree  3 = Somewhat disagree  
4 = Somewhat agree  5 = Moderately agree  6 = Strongly agree

A. Communication research refers to systematically gathering and analyzing information that will lead to the design of a strategic communication plan for the extension organization. Communication research involves understanding the Extension organization, its partners or stakeholders, elected officials, and other organizations that can have an effect on the Extension organization.

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<tr>
<th>Communication Research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to systematically segment community members or clients into need-based,</td>
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<td>2. Ability to assess external factors, such as political, social, and economic trends</td>
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<td>that might affect county Extension organizations</td>
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<td>3. Ability to use quantitative research methods, such as survey research to</td>
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<td>4. Ability to use qualitative research methods, such as, the focus group technique,</td>
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<td>to assess client communication needs</td>
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<td>5. Ability to report research findings</td>
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<td>6. Ability to assess the organization’s internal communication resource potential,</td>
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<td>such as staff numbers and their communication skills, budget, and expected</td>
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<td>7. Ability to systematically compile a comprehensive set of information that will</td>
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<td>enable the Educator to effectively incorporate communication in the organization’s</td>
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**Instructions**

*Please indicate your level of agreement regarding whether county Extension educators should possess the following strategic communication competencies in the next five to ten years. Use the following scale to indicate your opinions.*

1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Moderately disagree 3 = Somewhat disagree 4 = Somewhat agree 5 = Moderately agree 6 = Strongly agree

**B. Communication strategy** refers to the Extension educator’s overall communication plan. For example, should the county Educator be competent in designing and managing a crisis communication plan? Communication strategy has a dual focus: a) the broad action(s) to be taken, and b) the messages to be designed. Strategy is referred to in the singular, because each program should have a single, unifying communication strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Strategy</th>
<th>1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to set relationship management goals, that is, how county Extension educators can interact with their publics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Ability to set communication task management goals, that is, identify the communication functions that need to be performed at the county level and take action to achieve them</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>3. Ability to relate the organization’s mission into its communication plan</td>
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<td>4. Ability to target special publics with specialized messages, such as designing special Extension programs for soybean growers or organic producers</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Ability to distinguish communication problems from technical Extension subject matter problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Ability to communicate with clients who do not speak English</td>
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<td>7. Ability to set communication goals at the cognitive level, that is, knowing how to communicate for awareness and understanding</td>
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<td>10. Ability to integrate organizational values into a communication plan</td>
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<td>11. Ability to communicate orally with individuals</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Ability to make large group presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Ability to determine whether having a communication plan should be a priority</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
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</table>
Instructions

Please indicate your level of agreement regarding whether county Extension educators should possess the following strategic communication competencies in the next five to ten years. Use the following scale to indicate your opinions.

1 = Strongly disagree  2 = Moderately disagree  3 = Somewhat disagree  
4 = Somewhat agree  5 = Moderately agree  6 = Strongly agree

C. Communication tactics call for attention to detail and creativity. Communication tactics includes dealing with administrative details of budgeting, scheduling of events, and generally ensuring the smooth implementation of the communication plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Tactics</th>
<th>1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Knowledge of communication experts in the Extension organization who can assist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>with the communication aspect</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Knowledge of how to work with local media agents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Knowledge of communication events planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Ability to organize a news conference</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>level is needed</td>
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<td>6. Ability to cultivate relationships with media representatives</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Ability to leverage news events to expand media coverage opportunities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Ability to advocate for the establishment of a communication unit at the county</td>
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<td>9. Ability to shoot newsworthy photographs for local media agents</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Ability to write a news release</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Ability to design culturally sensitive communication messages</td>
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<td>13. Ability to prepare an audio tape for radio broadcast</td>
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<td>14. Ability to make a presentation on local television</td>
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<td>15. Ability to use multimedia in making Extension presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Ability to design a web site</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Ability to create PowerPoint presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Ability to produce printed materials, such as brochures and newsletters</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Ability to use distance education technology, such as teleconferencing</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Ability to train on communication skills, such as public speaking</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Ability to develop a crisis communication plan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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D. Evaluation of a strategic communication campaign implies developing specific methods of measuring the effectiveness of specific communication tactics, the overall communication plan, and the overall impact of the communication component on organizational outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Evaluation</th>
<th>1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to develop indicators for measuring the success of communication tactical objectives</td>
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<td>2. Ability to determine shifts in public opinion about the Extension organization</td>
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<td>3. Ability to monitor the communication process, that is, identify shortcomings and make adjustments, once the communication campaign is in progress</td>
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<td>4. Ability to evaluate measure communication impact at the cognitive or awareness level</td>
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<td>6. Ability to evaluate behavioral communication outcomes, that is show how communication contributed to the achievement of Extension’s mission</td>
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<td>8. Ability to use social science theory to justify a communication project proposal presentation</td>
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</table>

Additional Competencies

In the space below, please list strategic communication competencies that county Extension educators should have in the next five to ten years, which are not included above.

Thank you for completing this Round I survey.

Please expect the Round II survey in two weeks.
APPENDIX G

EXAMPLE OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSE SUMMARIES FOR ROUND I COMPETENCIES THAT DID NOT REACH CONSENSUS
### Identification of Strategic Communication Competencies for County Extension Educators: A Delphi Study

**Competencies That Did Not Reach Consensus in Round I**

**Respondent Number 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Your Response (NR = No Response)</th>
<th>Median Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Research</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Ability to use quantitative research methods, such as survey research to assess client communication needs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ability to use qualitative research methods, such as, the focus group technique, to assess client communication needs</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Ability to report research findings</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Ability to assess the organization’s internal communication resource potential, such as staff numbers and their communication skills, budget, and expected communication functions</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Ability to systematically compile a comprehensive set of information that will enable the Educator to effectively incorporate communication in the organization’s plan</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Strategy</strong></td>
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<tr>
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## Competencies That Did Not Reach Consensus in Round I

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APPENDIX H

ROUND II QUESTIONNAIRE
June 8, 2005

Dear Dr.:

Thank you for your prompt return of the Round I Questionnaire for the national study entitled, “Identification of Strategic Communication Competencies for County Extension Educators: A Delphi Study.” The purpose of this study is to identify communication skills county Extension educators should have, as perceived by a panel of experts. Please note that the purpose is not to measure whether they have these skills or competencies. That is the task of another study.

During Round I, the goal for the Delphi process is to achieve consensus among the panel of experts. Eighteen statements achieved consensus during the first round and are in bold on this questionnaire. Consensus was determined when 80% of the responses to a competency statement fell within two points from the median of any category. Also enclosed are medians for responses to all competencies that did not achieve consensus and your individual responses for each competency.

Please consider the median responses compared to your responses when responding to the Round II Questionnaire. It should take about 30 minutes to complete. Please return the questionnaire in the enclosed addressed envelope or fax it to 919-363-9117 before June 24, 2005. If you have any questions, please contact me at caldwell.7@osu.edu or 919-363-6997. You will receive the third and final questionnaire in July.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Kind regards,

Cassandra Caldwell

Enclosures
Identification of Strategic Communication Competencies
for County Extension Educators: A Delphi Study
Round II Questionnaire

Strategic communication refers to the systematic use of communication to help an organization meet its goals. Strategic communication implies strategic thinking and managing the change process so that organizational goals are realized. The emphasis is on segmenting audiences and providing need-based, demand-driven communication programs. The strategic communication planning process covers four stages: (a) research, which is aimed at understanding the condition, needs and concerns of the client(s); (b) strategy, which implies making broad decisions dealing with the expected impact of communication on the project or program; (c) tactics, which involves creatively designing communication messages and using a variety of communication techniques and technologies to attain stated objectives and goals; and (d) evaluation, the systematic assessment of the impact or contribution of the communication component in the attainment of pre-determined organizational outcomes (Smith, 2005; Radtke, 1998).

Competency means being able to perform a particular skill, such as the ability to produce a brochure or to conduct a town hall meeting. Hedges (1995) stated that competencies are clusters of related knowledge, skills, and abilities that affect a major part of one’s job, that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured against well-accepted standards, and that can be improved via training and development. Below is a listing of communication competencies, gleaned from the literature, that might be useful to county Extension educators. As Extension and communication experts, your task is to discern whether these competencies are relevant to Extension educators. You are encouraged to indicate your level of agreement with the items in this list. There is an open section for you to add to the list.
Instructions

Please indicate your level of agreement regarding whether county Extension educators should possess the following strategic communication competencies in the next five to ten years. The panel of experts reached consensus on the bold items. Median responses and your response to items that did not achieve consensus during Round I are attached. Use the following scale to indicate your opinions.

1 = Strongly disagree  2 = Moderately disagree  3 = Somewhat disagree
4 = Somewhat agree  5 = Moderately agree  6 = Strongly agree

A. Communication research refers to systematically gathering and analyzing information that will lead to the design of a strategic communication plan for the extension organization. Communication research involves understanding the Extension organization, its partners or stakeholders, elected officials, and other organizations that can have an effect on the Extension organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Research</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to systematically segment community members or clients into need-based, demand-driven Extension groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ability to assess external factors, such as political, social, and economic trends that might affect county Extension organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ability to use quantitative research methods, such as survey research to assess client communication needs</td>
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<tr>
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<th>6 = Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

B. Communication strategy refers to the Extension educator’s overall communication plan. For example, should the county Educator be competent in designing and managing a crisis communication plan? Communication strategy has a dual focus: a) the broad action(s) to be taken, and b) the messages to be designed. Strategy is referred to in the singular, because each program should have a single, unifying communication strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to set relationship management goals, that is, how county Extension educators can interact with their publics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ability to set communication task management goals, that is, identify the communication functions that need to be performed at the county level and take action to achieve them</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Ability to relate the organization’s mission into its communication plan</td>
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<td>4. Ability to target special publics with specialized messages, such as designing special Extension programs for soybean growers or organic producers</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Ability to distinguish communication problems from technical Extension subject matter problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Ability to communicate with clients who do not speak English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ability to set communication goals at the cognitive level, that is, knowing how to communicate for awareness and understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ability to conduct small group communication activities, such as a focus group discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ability to design a mass communication campaign plan, such as an educational program to inform the county about what Extension is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ability to integrate organizational values into a communication plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Ability to communicate orally with individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Ability to make large group presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Ability to set communication goals at the affective level, that is, determine if a client is accepting or rejecting a strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Ability to set communication goals at the behavioral level, that is, know whether a recommended communication strategy is working effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Ability to determine whether having a communication plan should be a priority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instructions

Please indicate your level of agreement regarding whether county Extension educators should possess the following strategic communication competencies in the next five to ten years. The panel of experts reached consensus on the bold items. Median responses and your response to items that did not achieve consensus during Round I are attached. Use the following scale to indicate your opinions.

1 = Strongly disagree  2 = Moderately disagree  3 = Somewhat disagree
4 = Somewhat agree  5 = Moderately agree  6 = Strongly agree

C. Communication tactics call for attention to detail and creativity. Communication tactics include dealing with administrative details of budgeting, scheduling of events, and generally ensuring the smooth implementation of the communication plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Tactics</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Knowledge of communication experts in the Extension organization who can assist with the communication aspect</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Knowledge of how to work with local media agents</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Knowledge of communication events planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Ability to organize a news conference</td>
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<td>5. Ability to determine if the establishment of a communication unit at the county level is needed</td>
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<td>6. Ability to cultivate relationships with media representatives</td>
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<td>7. Ability to leverage news events to expand media coverage opportunities</td>
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<td>8. Ability to advocate for the establishment of a communication unit at the county level</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Ability to write a news release</td>
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<td>12. Ability to design culturally sensitive communication messages</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Ability to prepare an audio tape for radio broadcast</td>
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<td>14. Ability to make a presentation on local television</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Ability to use multimedia in making Extension presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Ability to design a web site</td>
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<td>17. Ability to create PowerPoint presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Ability to produce printed materials, such as brochures and newsletters</td>
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<td>19. Ability to use distance education technology, such as teleconferencing</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Ability to train on communication skills, such as public speaking</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Ability to develop a crisis communication plan</td>
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</table>
Instructions

Please indicate your level of agreement regarding whether county Extension educators should possess the following strategic communication competencies in the next five to ten years. The panel of experts reached consensus on the bold items. Median responses and your response to items that did not achieve consensus during Round I are attached. Use the following scale to indicate your opinions.

1 = Strongly disagree  2 = Moderately disagree  3 = Somewhat disagree
4 = Somewhat agree    5 = Moderately agree    6 = Strongly agree

D. **Evaluation** of a strategic communication campaign implies developing specific methods of measuring the effectiveness of specific communication tactics, the overall communication plan, and the overall impact of the communication component on organizational outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Evaluation</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to develop indicators for measuring the success of communication tactical objectives</td>
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<td>2. Ability to determine shifts in public opinion about the Extension organization</td>
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<td>3. Ability to monitor the communication process, that is, identify shortcomings and make adjustments, once the communication campaign is in progress</td>
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<td>4. Ability to measure communication impact at the cognitive or awareness level</td>
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<td>5. Ability to evaluate communication outcomes at the affective or attitudinal level</td>
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<td>6. Ability to evaluate behavioral communication outcomes, that is show how communication contributed to the achievement of Extension’s mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Ability to use pre-test/post-test measures to show communication impacts over time</td>
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<td>8. Ability to use social science theory to justify a communication project proposal presentation</td>
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<td>9. Ability to determine the contribution of staff to the success of the communication project</td>
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</table>
The following were competencies identified during Round I by the panel of experts. Please indicate your level of agreement regarding whether county Extension educators should possess the following strategic communication competencies in the next five to ten years. Use the following scale to indicate your opinions.

1 = Strongly disagree  2 = Moderately disagree  3 = Somewhat disagree
4 = Somewhat agree   5 = Moderately agree   6 = Strongly agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Competencies</th>
<th>1</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to work with teams of communication professionals to reach communication goals</td>
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<td>2. Ability to differentiate appropriate media needed to reach audiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Ability to understand basic graphic design principles</td>
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<td>5. Ability to display professional interpersonal communication skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Ability to use organizational communication</td>
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<td>7. Ability to analyze political issues that affect Extension communication at the local level</td>
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<td>8. Ability to communicate the relevance of Extension to stakeholders</td>
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<td>9. Ability to use collaboration software (software used to allow individuals at remote locations to work on projects via the internet)</td>
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<td>10. Ability to use blogs (online journals that allow users to enter information regarding topics or events)</td>
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<td>11. Ability to use chat software, such as instant messaging programs</td>
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<td>12. Ability to understand various communication functions, such as media relations, public relations, or advertising</td>
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<td>13. Ability to teach online</td>
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<td>14. Ability to develop distance learning modules</td>
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<td>15. Ability to use online resources for courses</td>
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<td>16. Ability to write clearly</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Ability to report technical information</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for completing this Round II questionnaire.

Please expect the Round III questionnaire in two weeks.
APPENDIX I

EXAMPLE OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSE SUMMARIES
FOR ROUND II COMPETENCIES THAT DID NOT REACH
CONSENSUS
Identification of Strategic Communication Competencies for County Extension Educators: A Delphi Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies That Did Not Reach Consensus in Round II</th>
<th>Your Response (NR = No Response)</th>
<th>Median Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent Number 1</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Communication Strategy

9. Ability to design a mass communication campaign plan, such as an educational program to inform the county about what Extension is

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Your Response (NR = No Response)</th>
<th>Median Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Ability to organize a news conference</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ability to determine if the establishment of a communication unit at the county level is needed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ability to advocate for the establishment of a communication unit at the county level</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td>9. Ability to shoot newsworthy photographs for local media agents</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Ability to make video tapes for television news feeds</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Ability to prepare an audio tape for radio broadcast</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Ability to design a web site</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Ability to produce printed materials, such as brochures and newsletters</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Ability to use distance education technology, such as teleconferencing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Ability to train on communication skills, such as public speaking</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Ability to develop a crisis communication plan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Communication Tactics

3. Ability to monitor the communication process, that is, identify shortcomings and make adjustments, once the communication campaign is in progress

### Communication Evaluation

7. Ability to use pre-test/post-test measures to show communication impacts over time

### Additional Competencies

4. Ability to understand basic graphic design principles

9. Ability to use collaboration software (software used to allow individuals at remote locations to work on projects via the internet)

10. Ability to use blogs (online journals that allow users to enter information regarding topics or events)

11. Ability to use chat software, such as instant messaging programs

12. Ability to understand various communication functions, such as media relations, public relations, or advertising

13. Ability to teach online

14. Ability to develop distance learning modules

15. Ability to use online resources for courses
APPENDIX J

ROUND III QUESTIONNAIRE
July 6, 2005

Chris Sigurdson  
Purdue University  
615 W. State Street  
West Lafayette, IN 47907

Dear Dr. Sigurdson:

Thank you for your prompt return of the Round II Questionnaire for the national study entitled, “Identification of Strategic Communication Competencies for County Extension Educators: A Delphi Study.” The purpose of this study is to identify communication skills county Extension educators should have, as perceived by a panel of experts. Please note that the purpose is not to measure whether they have these skills or competencies. That is the task of another study.

During Round II, the goal for the Delphi process is to achieve consensus among the panel of experts. Twenty-eight additional statements achieved consensus during the second round and are in bold on this questionnaire. Consensus was determined when 80% of the responses to a competency statement fell within two points from the median of any category. Also enclosed are medians for responses to all competencies that did not achieve consensus and your individual responses for each competency.

Please consider the median responses compared to your responses when responding to the final Round III Questionnaire. It should take about 30 minutes to complete.

Please return the questionnaire in the enclosed addressed envelope or fax it to 919-363-9117 before July 22, 2005. If you have any questions, please contact me at caldwell.7@osu.edu or 919-363-6997.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Kind regards,

Cassandra Caldwell  
Enclosures
Identification of Strategic Communication Competencies
for County Extension Educators: A Delphi Study
Round III Questionnaire

Strategic communication refers to the systematic use of communication to help an organization meet its goals. Strategic communication implies strategic thinking and managing the change process so that organizational goals are realized. The emphasis is on segmenting audiences and providing need-based, demand-driven communication programs. The strategic communication planning process covers four stages: (a) research, which is aimed at understanding the condition, needs and concerns of the client(s); (b) strategy, which implies making broad decisions dealing with the expected impact of communication on the project or program; (c) tactics, which involves creatively designing communication messages and using a variety of communication techniques and technologies to attain stated objectives and goals; and (d) evaluation, the systematic assessment of the impact or contribution of the communication component in the attainment of pre-determined organizational outcomes (Smith, 2005; Radtke, 1998).

Competency means being able to perform a particular skill, such as the ability to produce a brochure or to conduct a town hall meeting. Hedges (1995) stated that competencies are clusters of related knowledge, skills, and abilities that affect a major part of one’s job, that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured against well-accepted standards, and that can be improved via training and development. Below is a listing of communication competencies, gleaned from the literature, that might be useful to county Extension educators. As Extension and communication experts, your task is to discern whether these competencies are relevant to Extension educators. You are encouraged to indicate your level of agreement with the items in this list. There is an open section for you to add to the list.
Instructions

Please indicate your level of agreement regarding whether county Extension educators should possess the following strategic communication competencies in the next five to ten years. The panel of experts reached consensus on the bold items. Median responses and your response to items that did not achieve consensus during Round II are attached. Use the following scale to indicate your opinions.

1 = Strongly disagree  2 = Moderately disagree  3 = Somewhat disagree  
4 = Somewhat agree  5 = Moderately agree  6 = Strongly agree

A. Communication research refers to systematically gathering and analyzing information that will lead to the design of a strategic communication plan for the extension organization. Communication research involves understanding the Extension organization, its partners or stakeholders, elected officials, and other organizations that can have an effect on the Extension organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Research</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to systematically segment community members or clients into need-based, demand-driven Extension groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ability to assess external factors, such as political, social, and economic trends that might affect county Extension organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ability to use quantitative research methods, such as survey research to assess client communication needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Ability to use qualitative research methods, such as, the focus group technique, to assess client communication needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ability to report research findings</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Ability to assess the organization’s internal communication resource potential, such as staff numbers and their communication skills, budget, and expected communication functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ability to systematically compile a comprehensive set of information that will enable the Educator to effectively incorporate communication in the organization’s plan</td>
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</table>
Instructions

Please indicate your level of agreement regarding whether county Extension educators should possess the following strategic communication competencies in the next five to ten years. The panel of experts reached consensus on the bold items. Median responses and your response to items that did not achieve consensus during Round II are attached. Use the following scale to indicate your opinions.

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B. Communication strategy refers to the Extension educator’s overall communication plan. For example, should the county Educator be competent in designing and managing a crisis communication plan? Communication strategy has a dual focus: a) the broad action(s) to be taken, and b) the messages to be designed. Strategy is referred to in the singular, because each program should have a single, unifying communication strategy.

Instructions

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<td>3. Ability to relate the organization’s mission into its communication plan</td>
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<td>8. Ability to conduct small group communication activities, such as a focus group discussion</td>
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<td>9. Ability to design a mass communication campaign plan, such as an educational program to inform the county about what Extension is</td>
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<td>10. Ability to integrate organizational values into a communication plan</td>
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<td>11. Ability to communicate orally with individuals</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Ability to make large group presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Ability to set communication goals at the affective level, that is, determine if a client is accepting or rejecting a strategy</td>
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<td>14. Ability to set communication goals at the behavioral level, that is, know whether a recommended communication strategy is working effectively</td>
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<td>15. Ability to determine whether having a communication plan should be a priority</td>
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</table>
responses and your response to items that did not achieve consensus during Round II are attached. Use the following scale to indicate your opinions.

1 = Strongly disagree  2 = Moderately disagree  3 = Somewhat disagree
4 = Somewhat agree   5 = Moderately agree   6 = Strongly agree

C. **Communication tactics** call for attention to detail and creativity. Communication tactics includes dealing with administrative details of budgeting, scheduling of events, and generally ensuring the smooth implementation of the communication plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Tactics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Knowledge of communication experts in the Extension organization who can assist with the communication aspect</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Knowledge of how to work with local media agents</td>
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<td>3. Knowledge of communication events planning</td>
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<td>4. Ability to organize a news conference</td>
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<td>5. Ability to determine if the establishment of a communication unit at the county level is needed</td>
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<td>6. Ability to cultivate relationships with media representatives</td>
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<td>7. Ability to leverage news events to expand media coverage opportunities</td>
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<td>8. Ability to advocate for the establishment of a communication unit at the county level</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Ability to shoot newsworthy photographs for local media agents</td>
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<td>10. Ability to make video tapes for television news feeds</td>
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<td>11. Ability to write a news release</td>
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<td>12. Ability to design culturally sensitive communication messages</td>
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<td>13. Ability to prepare an audio tape for radio broadcast</td>
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<td>14. Ability to make a presentation on local television</td>
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<td>15. Ability to use multimedia in making Extension presentations</td>
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<td>16. Ability to design a web site</td>
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<td>17. Ability to create PowerPoint presentations</td>
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<td>18. Ability to produce printed materials, such as brochures and newsletters</td>
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<td>19. Ability to use distance education technology, such as teleconferencing</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Ability to train on communication skills, such as public speaking</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Ability to develop a crisis communication plan</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Instructions

Please indicate your level of agreement regarding whether county Extension educators should possess the following strategic communication competencies in the next five to ten years. The panel of experts reached consensus on the bold items. Median responses and your response to items that did not achieve consensus during Round II are attached. Use the following scale to indicate your opinions.

1 = Strongly disagree  2 = Moderately disagree  3 = Somewhat disagree
4 = Somewhat agree    5 = Moderately agree    6 = Strongly agree

D. Evaluation of a strategic communication campaign implies developing specific methods of measuring the effectiveness of specific communication tactics, the overall communication plan, and the overall impact of the communication component on organizational outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Evaluation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to develop indicators for measuring the success of communication tactical objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ability to determine shifts in public opinion about the Extension organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Ability to monitor the communication process, that is, identify shortcomings and make adjustments, once the communication campaign is in progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Ability to measure communication impact at the cognitive or awareness level</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Ability to evaluate communication outcomes at the affective or attitudinal level</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Ability to evaluate behavioral communication outcomes, that is, show how communication contributed to the achievement of Extension's mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Ability to use pre-test/post-test measures to show communication impacts over time</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Ability to use social science theory to justify a communication project proposal presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Ability to determine the contribution of staff to the success of the communication project</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The following were competencies identified during Round I by the panel of experts. The panel of experts reached consensus on the bold items. Median responses and your response to items that did not achieve consensus during Round II are attached. Please indicate your level of agreement regarding whether county Extension educators should possess the following strategic communication competencies in the next five to ten years. Use the following scale to indicate your opinions.

1 = Strongly disagree  2 = Moderately disagree  3 = Somewhat disagree 
4 = Somewhat agree  5 = Moderately agree  6 = Strongly agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Competencies</th>
<th>1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to work with teams of communication professionals to reach communication goals</td>
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<td>2. Ability to differentiate appropriate media needed to reach audiences</td>
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<td>3. Ability to differentiate appropriate media needed to accomplish communication goals</td>
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<td>4. Ability to understand basic graphic design principles</td>
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<td>5. Ability to display professional interpersonal communication skills</td>
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<td>6. Ability to use organizational communication</td>
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<td>7. Ability to analyze political issues that affect Extension communication at the local level</td>
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<td>8. Ability to communicate the relevance of Extension to stakeholders</td>
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<td>9. Ability to use collaboration software (software used to allow individuals at remote locations to work on projects via the internet)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Ability to use blogs (online journals that allow users to enter information regarding topics or events)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Ability to use chat software, such as instant messaging programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Ability to understand various communication functions, such as media relations, public relations, or advertising</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Ability to teach online</td>
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<td>14. Ability to develop distance learning modules</td>
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<td>15. Ability to use online resources for courses</td>
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<td>16. Ability to write clearly</td>
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<td>17. Ability to report technical information</td>
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Thank you for completing the final Round III questionnaire.