Building Knowledge Mobilization Plans

The Framework: Key questions to ask

From: Organizing framework for a knowledge transfer strategy (Lavis et al., 2003)

- The message (What should be transferred to decision makers?)
- The target audience (To whom should research knowledge be transferred?)
- The messenger (By whom should research knowledge be transferred?)
- The knowledge-transfer processes & communication infrastructure (How should research knowledge be transferred?)
- Evaluation (With what effect should research knowledge be transferred?)

Some Helpful Guidelines:

The Message: Concentrate on the broad actionable messages from your research not individual findings.

The Target Audience: In what setting, and in what context will the target audience apply your research? What will they likely be using it for? What types of decisions are they called upon to make? Etc.

The Messenger: Will your research likely be communicated to the target audience by an individual, a group, an organization? This will inform your choice of strategy.

The KT Process & Infrastructure: Passive processes such as websites are generally ineffective, aim for active engagement

Evaluation: Choose outcome measures that match the context of your target audience.

It is important to note that “not all research can or should have an impact. Some bodies of research knowledge will not generate a take home message, because either the research has no apparent application for decision makers or the findings are not conclusive. That said, this excuse can be overused” (Lavis et al., 2003, p. 223).

“This framework provides an overall approach to knowledge transfer that can be evaluated as a whole over long periods of time, as well as specific elements that can be evaluated and fine-tuned over shorter periods of time” (p. 221).


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Cooper & Levin (2010): Strategy Approach

“Knowledge Mobilization efforts can be described as involving the creation of products, events, and networks…” (p. 361)

Products (research summaries, reports, executive summaries, literature reviews, systematic reviews, conceptual papers, reference lists, annotated bibliographies, fact sheets, success stories/cases, multimedia such as videos, podcasts, powerpoint presentations, FAQs, tool kits, tutorials, promotional materials)

Events (panels, talks, conferences, symposiums, workshops, training sessions, awards ceremonies, annual meetings)

Networks (e-bulletins, network push mechanisms such as Listserv, communities of practice, directories of contacts/researchers/organizations, social media, online forums)

Media (press releases, newspaper articles, radio, TV, blogs)

Some Helpful Guidelines:

The strategy approach is well suited to research that innately involves communicative strategies either as the subject of research, or as a component of the methodology.

That is, if your study involves interaction a network, community or practice, this is likely a good place to start.

Build your KM plan around these strategies right from the outset.

A note on networks – “The literature on KM suggests that networks are potentially a powerful avenue to change practice because they create ongoing social contact, which is most likely to affect behavior…” (Cooper & Levin, 2010, p. 362)

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Cooper (2011): Function Approach

Cooper created a typology of brokering strategies being used by Canadian knowledge mobilization intermediaries (KMI).

This provides a valuable resource of numerous possible strategies sorted into broad categories, which you can use in the construction of your KM plan.

This is helpful when conducting research that does not innately involve knowledge mobilization strategies.

“[This typology] informs our understanding of the different purposes of KMI’s efforts. More work is needed to determine what strategies and functions are most effective with different audiences in various contexts…” (Cooper, 2011, p. 154)


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