

## **Q: Where do you start in developing a communication measurement strategy?**

**Lisa Kibler**  
**Communications Supervisor**  
**State Farm Insurance Companies**

Start with a SWOT analysis, which stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Consider such elements as how well your current communication program:

- Supports the organization's business strategy;
- Reaches and meets the needs of various stakeholder groups;
- Has an appropriate mix of channels (type of channel, direction of flow, timeliness, etc.);
- Is communicating the right messages;
- Has the right organizational staffing, reporting relationship and financial resources to do all the above effectively.

As you brainstorm with others on your SWOT analysis, you will discover that on many aspects of your program, you don't know enough to categorize something as a strength or a weakness. You may not be sure of the distribution of many channels, you may not know what your stakeholders are interested in knowing about or how well they understand subjects that senior leadership might want them to know about. All of these will suggest *content* areas that should be included in your measurement process.

A typical communication measurement *process* starts with some objective assessments of what you are communicating. Objective analysis tools include inventories, content analysis and reading grade level tests. Once you are clear on what communications you are sending out, it's time to ask your audiences for their input, using some qualitative research first (executive interviews and employee focus groups) to identify areas for quantitative analysis (typically surveys).

*Angela Sinickas, ABC, is CEO of Sinickas Communications, Inc., a communication consultancy specializing in helping corporations achieve business results through targeted diagnostics and practical solutions.*

