



External Communications

If your company comes under external pressure for using business aviation, you can be put on the defensive very quickly. Having an external-communications plan to support your company's use of business aircraft is crucial.

A good plan can correct inaccurate information that could damage your company's reputation. And, equally important, an effective plan can help prevent negative perceptions by promoting the many good reasons your company's airplane is essential to the business.

In this video, we'll take a look at the *right* approach for developing an external communications plan. Let's get to it.

As we know, every company is different, so no two external-communications plans will look exactly alike. But, there are some proven best practices for developing a plan that apply to almost all types of companies.

- First, the development of the plan should begin with guidance from your company's leadership. This might include your communications specialists, or public affairs staff.
- Second, the planning for external communications should be based on the use of quantifiable facts. Also, messages will need to be delivered from a position of respect and open dialogue.
- Third, all external communications will need to be results-based, persuasive and consistent.

Once you and others in your company have considered these basic guidelines, you're ready to move ahead. To do that, you'll want to identify the external audiences that are most important to your company. Some audiences you may want to consider include:

- National and local media organizations;
- Regulators and other government officials;
- Financial analysts;
- Customers; and
- Even the general public.

Once you've targeted your primary audiences, the next step is to develop messaging that builds the strongest possible case for your company's use of business aircraft. Your messages should be simple and to the point. In other words, consider how what you say might appear in a news story.

There are several ways to ensure your messages are clear and concise. For example:

- Use strong, specific arguments rather than weak generalizations. The messages you use should include facts and measurements.
- Explain how business aviation provides a unique competitive advantage to your company.
- Emphasize the ways your business aircraft has helped your company manage rapidly changing situations and capitalize on new opportunities it otherwise could not.
- Illustrate how the aircraft helps employees be more efficient and productive.

In developing these and other messages, you'll want to use "proof points." These are specific examples that support your overall messages. They provide a visual illustration to help people understand how your company's aircraft helps advance its business objectives.

They might include examples about the missions you've conducted, or the customers flown, or the deals closed, or the other business opportunities explored with the airplane. The information for these kinds of proof points will likely be found in resources we talked about in previous videos in this series.

In those sessions, we discussed guidelines for developing a business aircraft use policy for your company. We also talked about how to develop tracking metrics to demonstrate the effectiveness of the policy.

These tools will have the information about your company's specific use of business aircraft. Those examples – or proof points - will help you clearly and concisely explain why a business airplane is such a valuable asset to your company.

Of course, additional resources are available for identifying your audiences, developing your messaging or managing other aspects of an external-communications plan. You can find those by clicking on the links below this video, or visiting the No Plane No Gain web site.

Finally, as you're preparing your company's external communications, here's a thought to keep in mind:

The perceptions outside audiences have about your company can influence decisions about the use of your business aircraft. An effective communications plan will help you avoid reputational damage. But it will also help you promote the fact that using an airplane is the sign of a well-managed company.

We hope you've found this tutorial useful. Don't forget, additional videos and other resources are available on this web site, as part of the No Plane No Gain toolkit.

Thanks for watching.

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