

Tool: Understanding your target audiences



What can I do with this tool?

This tool helps you understand your target audiences. Your target audiences are the people whose behavior you want to change. Before you start to communicate, you first need to understand them. Why? Because a message for everybody, is heard by no one. The message will not connect to current behavior, beliefs and attitudes.

For whom is this tool meant?

For professionals who help implement international agreements on biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development

What knowledge is presumed for using this tool?

To effectively use this tool, it is required to understand Key subjects 1-5 of the [course Strategic communication](#) on [Frogleaps.org](#).

When can I use it?

It is never too late to understand your target audiences, but we advise you to do it as a first step, even before starting a Communication project. The sooner, the better! You never start communicating from scratch. Your audiences mostly have been approached before by others or by yourself, sometimes with the same or similar messages as you have. It is important to analyze why such messages have not had the desired effect, and how you can improve.

How can I understand my target audiences?

- Step 1 Understand the benefits and costs of the behavior you want to influence.
- Step 2 Understand the knowledge, beliefs and attitudes linked to your issue.
- Step 3 Analyze all insights.
- Frogleap! Now you understand your target audiences so you can connect with them!

Step 1: Understand the benefits and costs of the behavior

Whose behavior needs to change? Understand your target audiences! It's not about your point of view. It's about the point of view of your target audience! By filling in the following 2 tables, you will paint a clear picture of the current behavior and the desired behavior. This will give you grip for effective strategies aimed at behavior change.

Behavior drivers	Questions to be answered by interviewing and observing	Your answers for the 'old/wrong' behavior you want to change	Your answers for the 'new' behavior you want to stimulate
Costs and benefits of behavior	Ask and observe: What do you like about the behavior? What advantages does it have? What do you dislike about the behavior? How much money, effort and time does it cost?		
Status	What impression does it make on society?		
Social pressure	How do colleagues, friends and family think and feel about the desired behavior change?		
Habits	Do they behave this way automatically, without a conscious decision?		
Culture and tradition	How long have people behaved this way? If this is a long time, the behavior you try to influence is shaped by tradition.		
Infrastructure	Is the desired behavior supported by infrastructure (garbage cans, signboards, parking places etc.)		

Step 2: Understand the beliefs, attitudes and knowledge

- Beliefs are what your target audiences assume to be true, for instance: 'nature is strong enough to recover from a bit of camping, driving, motor crossing and partying'.
- Attitude is how they feel about it: 'I love to celebrate the 1st May!'
- Knowledge is what they know about: 'The Pulsatilla Grandis is a rare protected species of great natural value.'

Behavior determinants	Questions to be answered by interviewing and observing	Your answers for the 'old/wrong' behavior you want to change	Your answers for the 'new' behavior you want to stimulate
Beliefs	What do your target audiences assume to be true concerning your issue and the behavior you want to change?		
Attitude	How do your target audiences view your issue and the behavior you want to change?		
Knowledge	What does your target audience know about your issue and the behavior you want to change?		

Step 3: Analyze all the insights from step 1 & 2

Try to summarize your conclusions about the benefits and costs of change in behavior and then summarize your conclusions your conclusions about beliefs, knowledge and attitudes of your target group. These conclusions will form the basis for your next steps to decide about the role of Communication, your change strategy and your Communication objectives. Try to be as concise as possible. Write down only the most important conclusions with a maximum of three.

Target group analysis	
<i>Conclusions about costs and benefits of behavior change</i>	1. 2. 3.
<i>Conclusions about beliefs, knowledge and attitudes vis-a-vis behavior change</i>	1. 2. 3.

Our Case of Simona: Understanding the benefits and costs of the behavior

Behavior drivers	Questions to be answered by interviewing and observing	Your answers for the 'old/wrong' behavior you want to change	Your answers for the 'new' behavior you want to stimulate
Costs and benefits of behavior	What do you like about the behavior? What advantages does it have? What do you dislike about the behavior? How much money, effort and time does it cost?	Driving up the mountain, over the fields is easy, it is fun. The mountain is so big why bother where to park and camp.	The shuttle bus, the facilities for parking, camping, sports and barbecuing are so easy and comfortable; they also make it a lot safer for small children who play on the mountain meadows.
Status	What impression does it make on society?	`It gives you status, we proudly tell colleagues about the their celebrations and our camping trip. To be a 'greeny' does not make you particularly popular.	Responsible behavior in nature is the norm, it gives us status with family, friends and colleagues.
Social pressure	How do colleagues, friends and family think and feel about the desired behavior change?	'Our friends and family celebrate the 1st May festival too, we would look like a fool if we did not join because of few flowers.' Everyone does it, what will it help if I alone change my behavior?	If you do not behave responsible in nature, people will look down on you as being not a civilized person.
Habits	Do they behave this way automatically, without a conscious decision?	We always drove up to the mountain, we are used to drive over the mountain meadow and parked where we wanted	We normally park our cars at the designated parking areas; we do not drive outside the roads.
Culture and tradition	How long have people behaved this way? If this is a long time, the behavior you try to influence is shaped by tradition.	'Our parents and grandparents also celebrated the 1st May festivities on the same meadows'. We always used to come by car or motorbike. The only difference is that now we have better cars and motor bikes.	It should be a new tradition that the 1 st of May celebrations are a feast for people and nature.
Infrastructure	Is the desired behavior supported by infrastructure (garbage cans, signboards, parking places etc.)	To regulate responsible behavior on the mountain, there is no proper infrastructure in place.	Now there are special place for parking, sport, camping, making fires and other facilities to prevent any pressure on sensitive natural areas.

Our Case of Simona: Understanding the beliefs, attitudes and knowledge

Behavior determinants	Questions to be answered by interviewing and observing	Your answers for the 'old/wrong' behavior you want to change	Your answers for the 'new' behavior you want to stimulate
Beliefs	What do your target audiences assume to be true concerning your issue and the behavior you want to change?	To have a traditional 1 st of May celebration on the mountain is our right. We always did it, so why to make any changes in the way we used to celebrate=	To have on the 1 st of May joint celebrations on the mountain that are a feast for people and nature is the right way to do it.
Attitude	How do your target audiences view your issue and the behavior you want to change?	We like the nature on the mountain. We love it, that is why we go there. We never see any difference when we come back the next year. So what is the real problem?	We like nature on the mountain and we are proud of the Natura 2000 site of the Pulsatilla Grandis. Of course we try to make our 1 st of May celebrations a feast for people and nature.
Knowledge	What does your target audience know about your issue and the behavior you want to change?	We know the complaints from the Protected area management. But it cannot be serious, as the police never stopped or fined us. We know some people complain about the increase of chaos, the noise and the abuse of alcohol.	We understand that the Protected Area Management has responsibilities for the Natura 2000 site. We also understand that conservation is important. We know that the new event management is a win-win solution.

Our case of Simona: Analyze all the insights from step 1 & 2

Target group analysis	
<i>Conclusions about costs and benefits of behavior change</i>	If the visitors had to choose between festivities or nature, they would choose festivities.
<i>Conclusions about beliefs, knowledge and attitudes vis-a-vis behavior change</i>	They like nature, they like the mountain, they like their tradition. They know there are problems, they don't think they are to blame.