



A GUIDE TO

# **Conducting a Stop, Start, Continue Analysis of Your Communication Strategy**



A GUIDE TO

# Conducting a Stop, Start, Continue Analysis of Your Communication Strategy

## Contents

### Introduction

### Stop, Start, Continue Explained

What It Is

Why Use It

### What to do After your Analysis

Test and Learn

Share Your Results and Strategy

Change Management

### Stop, Start, Continue Template

### Resources

### About theEMPLOYEEapp

# Introduction

Internal communications professionals are *strategists* at heart. But with small average team sizes and massive amounts to communicate, we sometimes get stuck feeling like *tacticians*. This makes it incredibly important to find tools and tactics that make it easier and faster to get strategic work done.

In this guide, we'll review one of our favorite tools: a **Start, Stop, Continue Analysis**. This kind of analysis can be used after individual campaigns or large multi-touch initiatives to learn what worked and what didn't and to look at your entire strategy.

But don't conduct your analysis in a vacuum. Channel assessments, audience analysis, and other strategy audits are also important. So, we've included links to some other helpful resources that will save you time and help you maximize your impact.



# Stop, Start, Continue Explained

## What a Stop, Start, Continue Analysis Is

This approach to analysis is a simple exercise that you can go through after a campaign or after enacting a strategy. The objective is to critically assess how things went to determine what worked, what didn't work, what you might want to continue testing, and so on. And you break this down into three categories:

### Stop

The stop category is where you'll put anything that you've determined you should stop doing. This might include channels that aren't working or don't reach the right people, it might be a content medium that isn't working, it could be a style of speaking or writing that isn't resonating. If something isn't having the desired effect, you should put it in this category.

### Start

The start category—you guessed it—is where you'll put your new ideas. Anything you want to start testing and trying out should go here. Often, this might be your ideas to replace what isn't working. If you're departing from an Intranet no one uses, you might decide to start a new channel or make use of other existing ones in a new way.

### Continue

And the continue category is for all the things that are working as expected that you want to continue doing or for anything that you think requires more testing to determine if it's working or not. We recommend giving strategies a little time to play out, so you can tweak them before abandoning them.

We recommend *not* relying solely on your gut to make these determinations. If you're going to demonstrate to your senior leaders that a strategy worked—or your go-forward plan if it didn't—then you're going to need some data.

You'll want to survey your employees to ask them what they thought and how their experience was. You'll want to look at your open rates, task completion rates, and questions that came in through your channels. And if data and measurement isn't your strong suit, we recommend starting with our [Definitive Guide to Measurement and Analytics for Internal Communications Professionals](#).

# Stop, Start, Continue Explained

## Why Use a Stop, Start, Continue Analysis

This is action-oriented and encourages active testing and measurement to make decisions. It is also a continuous process that you can use to avoid getting stuck in a rut. So often, teams can fall into a pattern of “it’s how it’s always been done.” But with advances in technology and a constantly evolving and changing workforce, you need to engage in reflective activities more often. Stop, Start, Continue analyses are a proven method for doing that—without being too time-consuming.

## How to Conduct a Stop, Start, Continue Analysis

**STEP ONE: Set SMART Goals.** Ask yourself, why am I conducting this analysis? What are my goals as an internal communication department? What are the business goals that I am working towards achieving? Write these down and keep them in mind throughout this process. These SMART objectives are what you will be comparing your data and employee feedback to, and they are how you determine if something is working or not.

**STEP TWO: Write Down All Your Strategies, Tactics, Channels, and Campaigns.** If you work on a larger internal communications team, we recommend doing this together. And we also suggest you conduct an annual [Internal Communications audit](#) first. IC audits take you through the process of listing channels, key messages, and audiences to determine if there are any holes in your strategy. Your Start, Stop, Continue analysis can then be used year-round to gauge campaign success and check your strategy in real-time. But it helps to see all your activities in one place. If you’re doing a holistic analysis, write down everything you do. But if you’re doing a post-campaign assessment, you can write down the activities, tactics, and channels for just that campaign.

**STEP THREE: Collect the Necessary Data to Make an Assessment.** For simplicity, let’s say you are doing a Start, Stop, Continue analysis of your open enrollment campaign. Using your goals as a guide, look at the data you have available to assess if what you did worked. Did you hit HR’s goals to increase the percentage of employees who enrolled on time? What channel performed best for your messaging? Did you miss a key audience by not using a certain channel? Ask tough questions and critically assess what worked, what didn’t, what could have been done better, and what you might need to test more.

**STEP FOUR: Go Through Each Activity and Channel and Make an Assessment.** Go through your list of channels, tactics, and activities and (using your data) decide what you should stop doing, start doing, and continue doing. Back these decisions up with qualitative or quantitative data and then continue to measure the impact of your changes.

# What to do After Your Analysis

## Test and Learn

Once you're done, you aren't really done. Strategy isn't a finite thing. It is something you should continually be fine-tuning. Marketers and internal communicators don't always see eye-to-eye, but one thing Marketing does really well that IC can learn from is testing.

Marketing strategies are rooted in a test-and-learn approach with heavy reliance on data to prove whether a strategy works. And, as a result, marketers are constantly using Start, Stop, Continue methodology to optimize campaigns and strategies. If they didn't do this, Marketing would waste precious marketing dollars on channels that don't hit the right audience, time-consuming content creation that doesn't fulfill audience needs, and so on.

Internal communications isn't different. The IC team works with essentially every department in an organization. IC teams are instrumental in getting messages to the right audience, on the right channels, in the most effective way. And with more attention focused on the importance of communication, your company's senior leadership has high expectations for your employee campaigns. So, you'll want to be able to show that you are constantly innovating and working on optimizing your approach to communication. And the best way to find the "next best strategy" is to test your ideas.

This is what "Start" is all about. If one strategy didn't work and is a "Stop," you now need to come up with a new idea. And it's okay to try something creative and different than anything you've ever done. If it's based on data and employee feedback, and then rigorously tested, your leadership team will thank you for being so innovative and solving a problem.

## Share Your Results and Strategy

Sharing your results with leadership is key to proving you are a strategist and an expert on communication and your employee audience. And regularly sharing what you're up to, why you're changing tactics and strategies, and what the results of your testing is helps build your credibility as an expert. Not everything you try will work, and that's okay. But that's why Start, Stop, Continue is so helpful. When you find something doesn't work, you can share that, why it happened, and already have a plan for what you should try next.



# What to Do After Your Analysis

We recommend setting up a cadence for how often you share results with key groups. We suggest:

- Internal Team: Weekly
- Stakeholders/Departments: Biweekly or Monthly
- Senior Leaders: Monthly or Quarterly

## Change Management

Once you have your results and your go-forward strategy, it's time to put on your change management hat. The change management framework that we recommend is ADKAR, which stands for Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement. If you're making a change based on the data you've collected and your Start, Stop, Continue analysis, you want to make sure you're setting yourself up for success.

**Awareness:** This step is when you are communicating a change for the first time. It's important to keep in mind that this is likely the first time your people are hearing about the change. And it is key to start sharing the "why" behind your change.

**Desire:** This can be one of the main barriers to successfully implementing a change because you may face resistance to accept and support the change. So, you want to work closely with managers to equip them with the information and resources that will help them answer their teams' questions.

**Knowledge:** In this stage, you need to assess how the rollout of your change is going. Do people know why you've made the change? Do they have the tools they need to do their job? Do they understand the larger implications? Keep communicating and keep assessing what gaps exist that need to be addressed.

**Ability:** Where communicators often make a misstep is forgetting to support the change on an ongoing basis. But you aren't done yet! In the ability phase, you want to continue training and building the behavior you were hoping for.

**Reinforcement:** And then in the final phase, the goal is long-term reinforcing and re-training. And as you innovate, it's essential to continue to support your teams. To be successful here, it is helpful to have a designated individual for this task so it doesn't fall through the cracks.

# Start, Stop, Continue Example

Say, you conduct your Start, Stop, Continue analysis on your annual employee engagement survey campaign. Based on data, feedback, and your survey results, you determine you want to:

- **Stop:** Using your old survey provider because the analytics don't provide the insights you want. You'll switch to a new one, which is also something you'll start.
- **Start:** Conducting pulse surveys throughout the year so you aren't as surprised by the results at the end of the year and so you are more agile.
- **Continue:** You'll continue partnering with HR to run the survey, ask the same questions in the annual survey, and continue sharing results with leadership after two weeks with a plan ready by the one month mark.

The main change that will impact your employees is the switch to pulse surveys in addition to an end of year survey. Let's focus on that here.

- **Awareness:** Build awareness by letting your field leadership and field managers know first that you are going to start Pulse surveys. Provide talking points for your managers so they accurately explain the reason why: that employees asked for more chances to give feedback. And then include this as part of your post-survey communications to the whole company.
- **Desire:** To overcome resistance, keep reinforcing that you're making the change because of their feedback. It might be helpful to explain that these pulse surveys will be quick (less than 5 minutes) every other month and that they will be communicated through multiple channels so these surveys are easily accessible.
- **Knowledge:** You'll need to focus on knowledge with your managers. Partner with them as change champions to find out if employees are struggling to access the surveys still and help your managers be better about communicating and reminding employees to take the pulse surveys.
- **Ability:** Since you also changed to a new survey provider, you'll want to make sure there are no technical issues and that the channels the survey is shared on is intuitive for employees.
- **Reinforcement:** Over time, the best way to reinforce the behavior of taking a survey every other month will be to show that you are acting on the feedback. Every time you finish a survey, have a plan to communicate the results and the changes you plan to make as a result.



# Start, Stop, Continue Template

[Download Template](#)



# About theEMPLOYEEapp

theEMPLOYEEapp was created by communications and HR professionals to address the challenges organizations face communicating with a dispersed and deskless workforce. theEMPLOYEEapp is an internal communication and engagement solution that allows workers to have fast and easy access to the information, documents, and resources they need to succeed in their work.

Our app allows you to target information to your employees when and where they need it on their smartphone, tablet, or computer, and empower leaders and frontline managers to engage and activate employees across the organization. Unlike most traditional communications channels, theEMPLOYEEapp creates a customized, branded experience for employees, encouraging your workforce to join together in a single, centralized channel.

**Our Mission is to enable the effortless flow of meaningful information for organizations driven by frontline workers.**

[Request a Demo](#)

