






Communicating research to businesses and the general public

Many researchers face challenges in terms of innovative dissemination approaches. This table provides simple guidance and expert tips for researchers lacking experience with communicating their research to businesses and the general public. More resources can be found on <https://www.openuphub.eu/disseminate/>

Steps	Guiding questions	Expert Tips	
		Communicating to businesses	Communicating to general public
1. Define dissemination & communication objectives 	Think about your goals. What do you want to achieve by targeting the specific audience?	Involve business partners in a research project and/or collaboration. Get the business perspective to gain new insights for further research. Have a prototype developed in a real-life context. Commercialize your results.	Get feedback. Spark debate. Influence behaviours. Invite collaboration. Influence decision-makers.
	Think about what your audience should be able to do with your information. What is the purpose of the communication to the specific target group?	Achieve/ maintain the pole position in market based on scientific validated results. Drive innovation in both products and services and increase quality using new technologies. Make products that are safe, appealing and competitive (cost reduction). Validate research done in-house. Find new R&D collaborations.	How do you want the information to be used? Do you want to engage research participants (via Citizen Science)?
2. Define target audience(s) 	Think about who exactly you are trying to reach. Who is your main target audience? Break down and define your target group(s).	List possibly interested partners, e.g. Large/medium companies with and without R&D lab, startups, business sector-company association, Creative industry, NGOs, CSOs, etc.	The general public is a very large group, having a specific sub-group in mind makes arising interest easier. Build a picture of your audiences, their motivations and experiences.
	Get to know your target audience, their needs and expectations of the research outcomes, as well as their preferred communication channels	Keep businesses informed on your research project and update them on latest research developments. Clarify the IPR beforehand: make sure that relevant and sensitive results are only available for the company.	Can you organise a survey or focus groups with your target audience to better understand them? Understanding will help you engage.
3. Define key message(s) 	Align your key message with what the targeted audiences expect. Make sure that the key messages and information that you provide are relevant for the targeted audience.	Think about “What can a particular business get out of your research”. Select just one or two key aspects that are the easiest to showcase and grasp.	“How does science solve problems that our society faces?” Also: people are curious and want to learn something new.
	Explicitly include and address the targeted audience in the key message. Start with the knowledge base that they already have by involving their world in the story.	Identify the specific needs of the targeted business and design your key messages by addressing how your research can be beneficial to the specifics of their field.	Relate to the everyday lives of your target audience.
4. Plan your dissemination & communication strategy 	Choose media, format and dissemination strategy that fit your communication objectives. Structure and prepare your dissemination material.	Use different media channels to transmit your message: social media, information sheets and leaflets or advertisements.	Participate in public debates and go with the trend (social media, visual online resources, animations). Explain through the big picture; use “sensational details” to catch attention. Tell a story that is not too technical.
	Follow up with your stakeholders. You can activate your target audiences and enable them to become active or do something with the content that you provide.	Use face-to-face events, meetings at your venue and networking events to get in touch with the businesses.	Name contact persons. Participate in interactive, public events. Remember that laymen can give valuable insights.
5. Implement and verify the dissemination process 	Define who is in charge for communication and dissemination. Calibrate timing and assure sustainability.	Is there a single, easily reachable reference person for any question from business partners?	Is your communication media continuously feeding news and receiving comments? Are new suggestions coming in?
	Assess the effectiveness of your strategy. Check if the chosen medium fits the audience.	Are you acquiring more business partners? Do they propose new projects in future?	Does your project originate more buzz in the social media? Are people asking questions and suggesting interesting new directions to your research?

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