



6 Steps to Create Your Benefits Communication Strategy

Learn the strategies and methods to improve your internal communication of your employee benefits package.

Postford Mill, Mill Ln, Chilworth, Guildford GU4 8RT
info@lemonadereward.com
01483 617010

www.lemonadereward.com



Discover why you should layer your benefits comms

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OBJECTIVE SETTING

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

The first step in creating a strategy to communicate your employee benefits is to set specific objectives.

Your businesses success can be greatly influenced by the quality of your employees. Showcasing your broad selection of employee benefits will go a long way to attract and retain quality employees.

A survey by the IFEBP* found that half of employees don't fully understand their employee benefits and **80% do not understand benefits collateral.**

With this in mind you need to set strategic and tactical objectives, considering what kind of organisation you are. Think about your corporate objectives, characteristics / types of employees, tone of voice etc.

TOP TIP!

Analyse your audience before you start, that can be via surveys or interactions with websites and find out what they are doing, what their knowledge is like etc. That way, you'll have a number to begin with and hopefully will be able to report an increase in that number at the end of the project.



*IFEBP - International Foundation
of Employee Benefit Plans -
Benefits Communication Survey

EXAMPLES

Improve employee understanding by XYZ%

Increase intranet traffic by XYZ%

Increase engagement through targeted comms XYZ%

Increase take up of XYZ benefits by XYZ%



Set your goals, write them down - now you're one step closer to achieving them."

— Richard Branson.

KEY MESSAGES

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO GET ACROSS?

Key messages will underpin all of the information that you broadcast in your communication and will ensure consistency across your strategy. Develop key messages and themes for each group of employees.

Your key messages are not only simply explaining about employee benefits, you need to ask yourselves the following -

What issues are most important for your target audience?

What are the FAQ's of the audience?

What actions should the audience take?

Examples of key messages

We're here to support you with the Annual Allowance so you avoid an unexpected tax charge

Book onto your financial education session today

It's never too early to start saving for your pension

Your flexible benefits window closes soon - make your selections



TRADITIONALISTS & BOOMERS

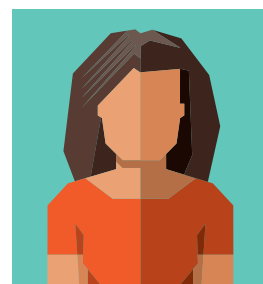
Grammar is key

Tone must be respectful

Will often give time to reading a communication thoroughly

No slang, be professional

V



MILLENNIALS & X'ERS

Use of informal language is preferred

Be direct and straightforward

Don't waste their time - don't use

100 words if 30 will do

Avoid "corporate speak"

EXERCISE

BARRIERS

Consider any barriers which may affect the success of your communications strategy. Here are some examples to get you started:

Multi-generational workforce

With a multi-generational workforce, we can often slip into the trap of using the same tone of voice across all groups, but to achieve high engagement levels, it's important to remember our target audience.

Location

If your workforce is spread out across the UK, or even the world, you need to consider if they have good internet access, work from home or are in a different time zone.

Language/cultural

This is more relevant for worldwide companies, but you may also find many nationalities and cultures within a UK workforce. It is a good idea to sense check your planned communications to ensure you are not going to run into problems if any employees don't speak English or have certain cultural beliefs.

Over communication

You can run the risk of over communicating if you rely on just one communications channel, such as email. Make sure you use a multi-channel approach to reach your audience. Don't be afraid to use email, as this is a powerful tool if used correctly. Just make sure your emails are targeted and the information is relevant to the recipient.

Technology

Where you are relying on technology to get your message across to your audience it is important to make sure you have everything set up correctly before broadcasting. For example; check and double check links are working, buttons are working, contact forms go through to the correct mailbox etc. You also want to consider how your audience will be able to view your communications. If they're likely to be looking at it on a mobile device, you need to ensure it is mobile responsive and displays correctly.

Lack of interest

For this group, you need to really pull out all the stops to engage them. They may have preconceived ideas which are causing them to have no interest. Use bold headings and catchy subject lines to try and grab attention and break down any preconceptions.

TIME LINE

HOW TO STRUCTURE THE CAMPAIGN TIME LINE

Now that we have set our objectives and key messages, it's time to develop a roll-out time line of your planned activity.

Every organisation is different and their roll-outs will vary but the key takeaway here is to plan in advance and be consistent. It is good to start with your deadline and then work back. Remember to include some contingency as time frames will often slip.


You can break down the cycle of the roll-out into 3 different stages - see example opposite.

TOP TIP!

Make sure your communications are timely. Don't bombard your audience over a benefits window for example.

Having consistency with your messaging is also key. Look into automated messaging services which can send out broadcasts on key trigger events such as:

 End of Tax Year -
Utilise your Pension Allowance

 Birthdays -
One step closer to retirement

 Events -
Book now for financial wellbeing

RETIREMENT EXAMPLE:



EDUCATE

KEY AIM: RAISE AWARENESS

Comms Focus:
Start thinking about things;
Understand options; Watch Videos;
Visit the FAQ's

WORKING LIFE



ENGAGE

KEY AIM: UNDERSTANDING MONETARY VALUE OF EACH OPTION

Comms Focus:
Use online tools; Ask questions; Retirement is just around the corner; Attend seminar/focus Group; Take survey

RETIREMENT



EXECUTE

KEY AIM: DECIDE ON FREEDOM CHOICE

Comms Focus:
Speak to adviser



COMMS CHANNELS

HOW TO GET YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS

It is well documented that the different generations have preferences in terms of how they digest or receive their information.

It is equally important that you avoid jargon and layer the complexity of complicated topics so the messages you are sending are simple and clear.

HOW TO LAYER YOUR BENEFITS COMMS

Level 1 - for everyone, from the most knowledgeable on the subject to the complete newbie, they must all understand, keep this level light on technicalities.

Level 2 - for info gatherers, this level is for those who want further information or are intrigued by level 1, you are free to go into more depth here.

Level 3 - for the action takers, if someone has got this far, it's for a reason, they want to action something. Here you can go into the finer details and signpost to useful websites/links/documents.



Traditionalist - Let's have a conversation

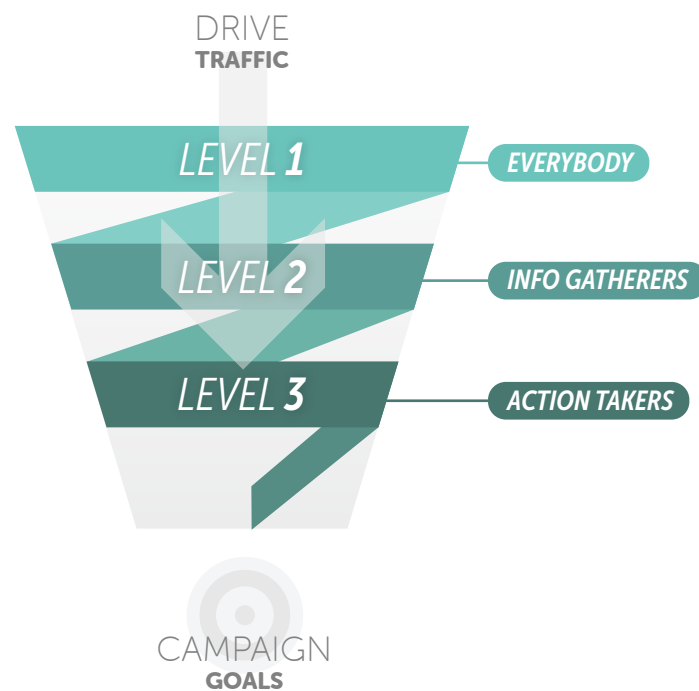
Boomer - Call me

X'er - Send me an email

Y'er - Text me

Millennial - Tweet me

It's important to bear this in mind and even though all of the generations are more than familiar with the other's preferred medium, if you can communicate to someone in their preferred style, you are far more likely to get positive engagement.



ANALYSIS & FEEDBACK

HOW SUCCESSFUL WAS THE CAMPAIGN?

When completing the campaign it's crucial to analyse the results against your campaign goals to see if it was successful or not. Gaining audience feedback along the way will also give you great qualitative results which could potentially be more impactful than data driven stats.

However, if you have websites / portals / videos / tools then these will all be able to kick out useful data such as views / clicks / subscribes / contact requests etc.

These may all be obvious results and when it comes to employee benefits, we want to measure the outcomes of campaigns on our audience. In other words, have our efforts changed the audience's mind set?

FINANCIAL WELLBEING EXAMPLE

We've completed many successful financial wellbeing projects and measured their success by gathering feedback from all attendees before and after attending a financial wellbeing presentation.

We use surveys to ask specific questions aimed at uncovering the mindset of the attendee before and after their financial education presentation. We also ask their preferred method of communication in the survey which gives us more insight for our communications strategy.

Many leave armed with the knowledge to take action to improve their financial future. This is the desired outcome and solidifies the positive impact your employee benefits and communications strategy has had.


CONCLUSION

Creating a simple message around some potentially complicated topics such as pensions, financial education and other benefits isn't always easy. The literature you receive from your pension or life insurance provider may be very complex. If you want real people to understand and engage you must pull out the key messages and communicate to your audience in a simple and clear way. If you have access to a great comms team you are in the lucky minority. If not, the first step towards great employee engagement should be to find one.



 www.lemonadereward.com

 info@lemonadereward.com

 01483 617010

This is a blank time line that you can print out and use to start planning your communications strategy.

**MILESTONES/
EVENTS**

Here is where you input your key events in the year such as a benefit launch

JAN

FEB

MAR

APR

MAY

JUN

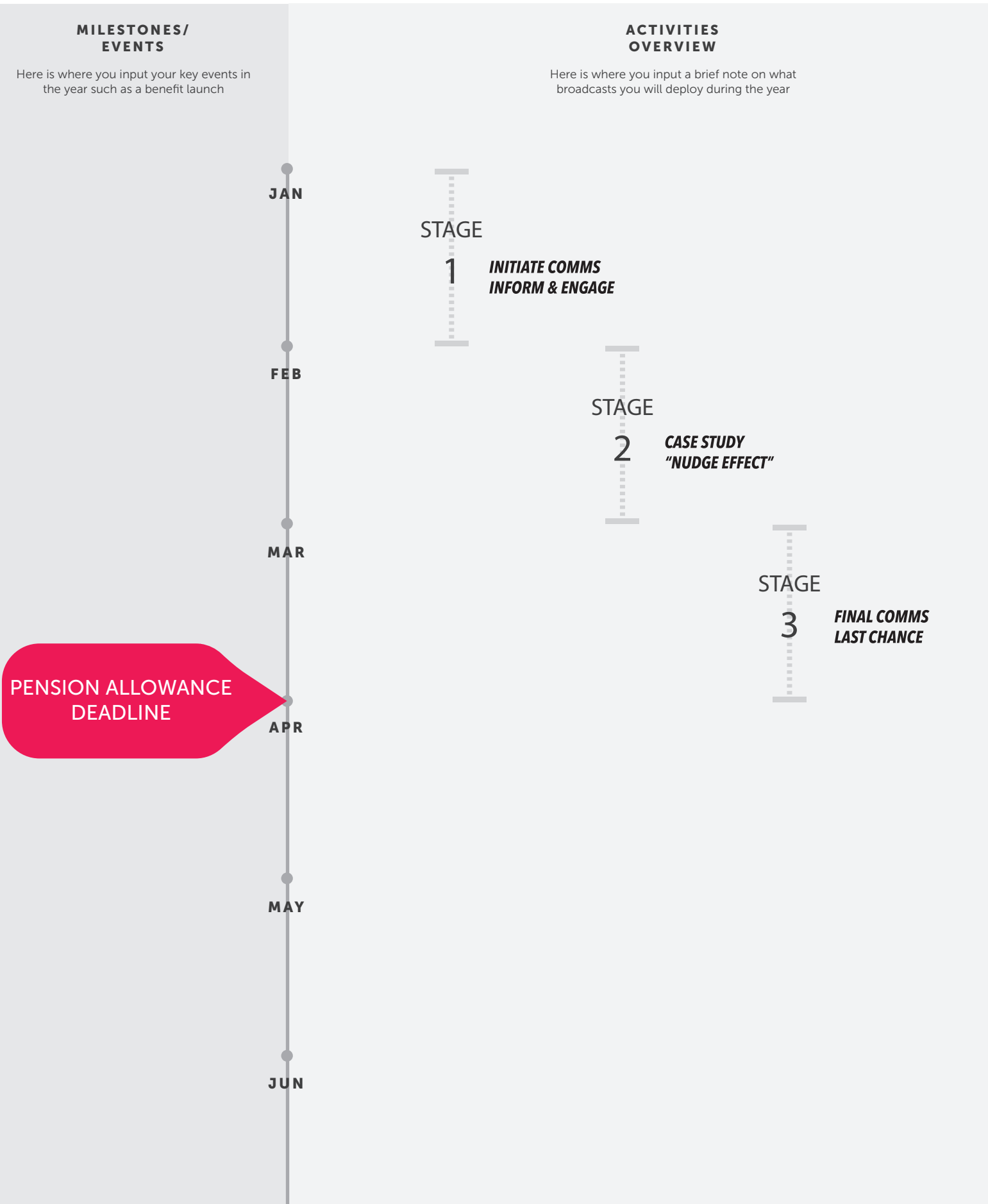
**ACTIVITIES
OVERVIEW**

Here is where you input a brief note on what broadcasts you will deploy during the year

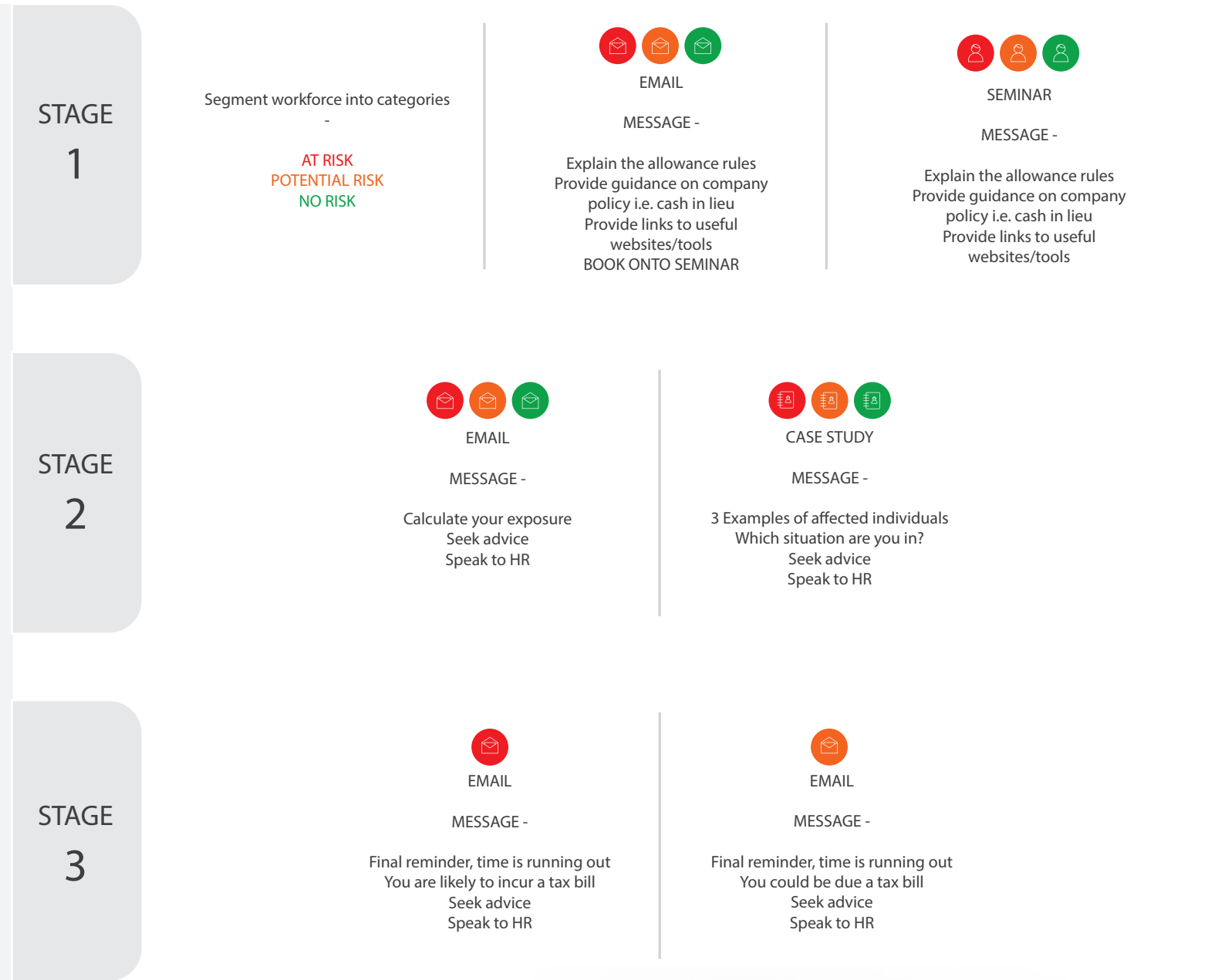
ACTIVITY NOTES Here is where you input detail on your broadcasts...

This is an example time line.

In the appendix you will find a blank version that you can print out and use to start planning your strategy.



ACTIVITY NOTES Here is where you input detail on your broadcasts...



IDEA

Direct mail campaign showing a case study example -

Catch audience away from their busy inboxes

People are more likely to open their post than a blanket email

Other halves may well open their post and engage in the process.



ACTIVITY NOTES Here is where you input detail on your broadcasts...

**MILESTONES/
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**ACTIVITIES
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