



Apple Education Communication Guide

Effectively engage your community to drive new initiatives forward.

As a leader, communicating effectively is one of the most important things you do. It supports the success of new initiatives that you're introducing to your learning community. But communication is more than sharing information through newsletters or a well-designed website. The best communication uses the power of storytelling to help people get excited about your vision. It builds trust, enthusiasm, and community.

This guide helps you build a story around your Apple initiative and communicate it with purpose every step of the way. You'll also find a list of resources that include strategies and messaging you can use to communicate with your learning community.

The power of a story

Great storytelling allows people to connect to and see themselves in your school's vision. It brings people together around shared experiences, it sets a tone, and it builds trust.

When students use iPad, for instance, they have a powerful learning tool that can be a notebook, a word processor, a camera, or a complete production studio. And iPad has a significant role in the professional world, too. When you tell stories about iPad, think about how to bring these learning experiences and opportunities to life for families and teachers, and how iPad prepares students for the world they'll graduate into.

If you don't tell your story, someone else will

People tell stories all the time to make sense of the world. And when you don't provide a clear and coherent story for your community to share, they'll create their own to explain things. That's why it's just as important to have a plan for *communicating* something new as it is to have a plan for *implementing* it.

The key to good storytelling is to be clear about your purpose. What's the vision behind your initiative with Apple? Why does it matter? And what do you want your audience to understand or do as a result of your story? With any new initiative, you'll want to:

- Build support.
- Educate your community.
- Celebrate as you see results.



Build support

Getting support from your community is essential to the launch of your initiative. The stories you tell at this stage need to win the hearts and minds of your community so they can believe in the work and support the changes ahead. Think about what you want and how you want your community to feel.

For any communication, it's important to determine who your audience is and what they care about. When you understand your audience, you can customize a story and connect your purpose with their priorities more effectively. List some of the stakeholder groups you want to communicate to, such as teachers, IT staff, and parents. What do they care about and what motivates them? Now explore what each stakeholder group might think, feel, and do regarding the initiative you're implementing.

As you create stories to build support, think about the format — how you'll tell your story to your stakeholders. And don't be afraid to try different formats to reach different audiences since everyone digests information in their own way.

At Saigon South International School in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, the head of school has relied upon the strong relationship she has with the PTA, thanks to ongoing video meetings. The PTA not only gives her candid insights into the needs of their community, but also ensures that important information reaches and is read by parents.

Educate your community

Use the power of storytelling to highlight important details and give your audience simple actions they can take. When you have buy-in and you need your audience to understand the details of your initiative — and how they can support it — your stories can help educate them.

At this stage, storytelling should be action-oriented. It should help your audience better understand your initiative and provide clear guidelines for how they can support it. Give them details about what they need to know — explain the who, what, where, and when. Offer ideas about how they can contribute to the changes that need to happen, give feedback, and support the school and their student.

At the Dunham School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the marketing, curriculum, and technology departments work together to share their vision for learning and what it looks like in practice. The director of technology and integration supports teachers in lesson design. The curriculum director provides context for the work. And the marketing department communicates the story to families using Clips and iMovie to create videos for newsletters.

Celebrate as you see results

When you start to build momentum, look for what's working, what isn't, and how to improve. Consistently share stories that deliver on the promise of your initiative to inspire your community.

There are many ways to capture success stories. Ask teachers, students, and parents to tell stories from their point of view, and amplify those stories through your own communication channels. Where possible, share how things have changed over time and the overall impact of your initiative.

EPiC Elementary in Liberty, Missouri, is continuing their vision of teachers and students as problem-solvers in the world. Every student uses iPad as an integral part of the way they learn, and today, they're seeing 97 percent daily engagement. To help inspire their community, EPiC has been telling their story through local media outlets.

Best practices

Now you have a structure for using storytelling to help you build a communication strategy and plan. Here are some additional ideas to help your planning.

Develop your school's voice.

Keep these principles in mind when you develop your story and your school's "voice":

- Be authentic. Your content and tone should reflect your school.
- Be concise and clear. Make it easy for people to get the main points quickly.
- Be consistent and accurate. If you deliver information in multiple ways, make sure the details are consistent.
- Be friendly and approachable. Friendly communication helps build trust.

Write a creative brief.

Many organizations develop a creative brief to outline a project. This helps capture your goals and directs the content and tone of your communication. The brief should include your primary objectives and why they're important to you. Also include who your audience is and key messages — how you want people to feel and what you want them to take away from the project.

Amplify with social media.

Social media is great for building and strengthening your school community. Because your audience likely includes social media users, you have the opportunity to meet them where they are. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Invite the school community to follow your channels.
- Create a school hashtag to help amplify conversations.
- Set times for regular social posts that your audience can expect, for example, Motivation Monday or Teacher Spotlight Tuesday.
- Share or retweet to amplify your community voices.
- Brand your social media cards with your logo, mascot, and colors to help them stand out.

Measure and iterate.

From the beginning, define your goals and identify what success looks like. As you collect data, you might realize that some parts of your program aren't essential while others are worth enhancing. Whatever you discover, communicate your goals and learnings to faculty, staff, and families so they know your priorities and what you're all working toward.

At a high level, you'll know your communication is effective when:

- You receive positive feedback.
- People share the stories with others on their own.
- People ask for more information.
- Feedback is based on facts included in your initial communications.

Messaging to tell your Apple story

As you're crafting communications for your Apple initiative, leverage the iPad and Mac messaging and images below as part of your email newsletters, social media posts, flyers, and even in-person welcome nights for parents and students.

iPad

No matter the task, iPad is a powerful, portable tool to get it done. Its versatility empowers students to learn in ways that work best for them — it can become a notepad, a sketchbook, a camera, a production studio, or even a window into another world with augmented reality. With fast wireless connectivity, iPad provides quick access to the internet. And students can do lots of things without the internet using native apps. It's compatible with apps and tools teachers and students use every day, including those from Google and Microsoft. And with up to 10 hours of battery life¹ and a thin and light design, teaching and learning with iPad can happen anywhere all day long.



Mac

Mac is the ideal computer for education. It's light, fast, and a powerful companion with incredible battery life for learning all day long, in the classroom or on the go. Mac was designed to be easy to use, with all the performance needed to tackle big projects and multitask in all kinds of apps. It's compatible with the apps and tools teachers and students use every day, including those from Google and Microsoft. Mac is built to last with a combination of durable, high-quality materials and ongoing OS updates. Mac enables the kind of learning that allows students to build the skills they need for the world they'll graduate into.



Conclusion

Remember that communicating through story opens up a dialog between the storyteller and the listener. Stories build relationships and trust — and ultimately make a community stronger. The time you spend on thoughtful communications is an investment in your school and the people in it.

¹ Battery life varies by use and configuration. See apple.com/batteries for more information.