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"Leadership, Partnership, and Championship"

NCI Issues New Pink Book for Health Communicators

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) has revised *Making Health Communication Programs Work: A Planner's Guide*, a resource for health communicators first published in 1989 and widely known as the "Pink Book." The updated version reflects recent advances in knowledge and technology, such as the Internet, that can affect the communications process. In clear language, the book emphasizes a practical approach, with the understanding that one communications plan does not fit all and that each plan should be tailored to the individual needs and size of an organization.



The publication guides readers through four stages in the health communications process:

* Stage 1: Planning and Strategy Development

Planning provides a foundation. This stage allows the organization to refine its understanding of the issue and its approach to promoting the issue. It involves establishing objectives, priorities, and responsibilities.

* Stage 2: Developing and Pretesting Concepts, Messages, and Materials

Pretesting allows the communicator to know which messages will be most effective before time and money are invested in them.

* Stage 3: Implementing the Program

A launch plan that outlines how the program will be distributed, promoted, and evaluated may involve working with the media and creating partnerships.

* Stage 4: Assessing Effectiveness and Making Refinements

Evaluation allows communicators to determine whether they are meeting objectives or need to adjust their program.

By following these stages, communicators will learn to assess community needs, create a message, identify appropriate audiences and media for their message, conduct market research, create partnerships, and evaluate and improve programs. In addition to advice about each stage, readers receive information about conducting communications research and the pros and cons of using focus groups, in-depth interviews, and surveys. The book concludes with ready-to-use forms, scripts, and samples to create and evaluate successful communication plans.

The Pink Book can be viewed online at <http://www.cancer.gov/pinkbook>. Print or CD-ROM copies can be ordered by calling 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237) or online at <http://cancer.gov/publications>.

The purpose of life is to live it, to reach out eagerly and without fear
for newer and richer experience. - Eleanor Roosevelt