# Evaluating the Impact of Coordinated Communication Activities: Strategic Considerations

## Purpose

Identify and track basic elements of your communication activities that you expect to increase awareness of your public report. Evaluating the impact will show the value of communication and will allow you to refine and improve its effectiveness over time.

## Considerations

1. **It’s hard to know whether or how to improve if you don’t evaluate your impact.** While the ideal evaluation process may be comprehensive, multifaceted, and driven by statistics and longitudinal data, that may not be possible in the early stages of your public report. Don’t let the perfect become the enemy of the good: there are many ways to consider the impact of your communication activities even if initially on a small scale. For example, Google Analytics, a free tool, provides statistics about your Web site traffic, such as page views, visitors, and source of visitor (e.g., search engine, link from another site).
2. **Your approach to evaluation should reflect your communication strategies.** As you decide what to use as an indicator of progress, first review your overall communication plan for the next 12 months (see Resources 1a and 1b). Consider questions such as:

* **Are you expecting greater traffic to your report Web site after specific planned events each month**? If so, track the event date and note whether traffic to your report Web site increases within the week after the activity.
* **Will you encourage local employers, providers, community groups, health plans, and others to promote the public report to their key audiences?** If so, work with them to collect examples of their communications and note the dates so that you can review the impact, if any, on traffic to your public report Web site. Also track the number of newsletter articles or other materials your stakeholder partners produce to help promote your public report.
* **Are you working with employers, providers, community groups, health plans, and others to link the report Web site to their intranet or public Web site?** If so, review the data on Google Analytics or other Web site traffic analysis software to see where the visitors came from. You should be able to tell when visitors get to your report Web site by clicking a link from a stakeholder partner’s Web site.
* **Are you working with the media, both traditional and bloggers, to cover your public report on TV, radio, print, and online media?** If so, track the number and type of media coverage. When a major story runs in the media, assess whether the number of report visitors increases and how they get to the report Web site (e.g., a link on the local newspaper’s Web site).
* **Will you have a presence on Twitter and Facebook?** Facebook automatically sends use statistics to organizations with pages, which will help in your evaluation. You also can track the number of followers and “reTweets” on Twitter.

These ideas provide a starting point to consider how to evaluate your communications planning and implementation. See Toolkit Resource 9b for a matrix template to customize.