

TOP TEN DISSEMINATION MISTAKES

1. We assume that evidence will propel diffusion.
The solution: Emphasize other variables in the communication of innovations; often, evidence only affects the decisions of an early, small proportion of adopters.
2. We don't time our efforts to take advantage of windows of opportunity.
The solution: Monitor the information environment so that we have a basis for knowing when the context is supportive of innovations like ours, and when it is not.
3. We use creators as communicators.
The solution: Enable access to the experts, but rely on spokespeople whom we know will elicit attention and information-seeking by potential adopters.
4. We introduce innovations before they are ready.
The solution: Have effectiveness data and be prepared with portrayals of the intervention that you know will elicit positive perceptions from potential adopters.
5. We expect potential adopters to think like us.
The solution: Budget time to seek out and listen to representative members of target audiences as they express their wants and, later, their perceptions of prototype versions of the innovation.
6. We assume that dissemination is diffusion.
The solution: Couple an information dissemination strategy with a social influence strategy.
7. We confuse authority with influence.
The solution: Gather data about who among potential adopters is sought out for advice or acts as a model for others, and intervene with those persons/organizations first.
8. We allow adopters to find us, rather than strategically selecting them.
The solution: Know on the basis of formative evaluation which early adopters are experimenters and which early adopters are influential in the eyes of potential later adopters, and recruit the latter.
9. We discourage the modification of evidence-based programs.
The solution: Encourage responsible reinvention and adaptation by communicating the reasons why a specific policy or program worked, and by selecting and publicizing user modifications of our ideas.
10. We advocate single innovations.
The solution: Communicate a set of similar evidence-based programs to encourage target adopter choice, and increase the likelihood of progressive change to improve the state of the practice.