



FLATE’s **Communications program** comprises of an extensive portfolio of tools geared to inform its stakeholders about FLATE-led projects and events. The *FLATE Focus*, FLATE’s two-time, award winning newsletter is currently among the primary vehicles for disseminating information, and is one of FLATE’s most effective content management systems. The **Focus** plays a critical role not only in dissemination and awareness of FLATE services, activities, and outcomes, but as a true vehicle of both “news” and connector to the advanced manufacturing education community.

The *FLATE Focus* is published in blog format, and is closely aligned with FLATE’s social media marketing efforts for information sharing with the advanced technological education and the manufacturing community. The *FLATE Focus* is designed with the “end user” in mind, and has a *Clear, Concise, and Coherent* messaging strategy that centers on: **Research, Action, Communication** and **Evaluation**.

1. Research	2. Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorm & finalize article ideas with management and staff • Research article topics • Identify and contact candidates for interviews and quotes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set-up a timeline from conception to completion • Conduct interviews by phone, or email • Draft articles • Finalize layout & prepare for dissemination
3. Communication	4. Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check distribution list • Email newsletter to stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect blogger to Google analytics • Run monthly Google analytics reports • Tally and analyze data regularly



Since the inception of the *FLATE Focus* in 2007, it continues to provide a means to share common interests on a local and national front. Readership for the *FLATE Focus* comprises of an eclectic mix of government, educational, and industry partners from across Florida and the nation. It continues to rank among the top most visited online resources offered by FLATE, and is an effective platform that “connects manufacturers, educators and students with Florida’s workforce.”

There are several nuances to creating an effective newsletter. Outlined below are additional tips on getting started, and pointers to help keep you focused on your readers.

TIPS

- Make “news” a habit with your team
- Keep a story idea file
- Have a point person
- Be regular with your standard communication
- Share partners’ & stakeholders’ news and successes
- Share with NSF program officers
- Pick a format that meets your needs
- Pick a format that works for your stakeholders

Once you get going

- **Dive into the data**—what are people reading?
- **Survey readers** – what do they want to read?
- **Be concise** – main ideas with following details
- **Jazz it up** – attention-grabbing titles; challenge your readers
- **Strategize graphics**– be sure they tell a story
- **Get interactive** – polls, quizzes, surveys
- **Give options** – for viewing, saving, printing, accessing

For more information visit: <http://flate-mif.blogspot.com>, or contact us at 813.259.6581, or news@flate.org. You can also refer to the FLATE Communications Best Practice Guide (<http://flate.org/best-practices>) for more ideas/information.