COMMUNICATION PLANNING 101

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Tacoma, WA / April 9, 2019

Why does it matter?

Engage the right audiences

Taking the time to develop a plan can help you think through which groups you need to be engaging.

More bang for the buck

Identifying your vision and goals can help you make the most out of limited resources.

Clarifying objectives

Ensuring everyone in your organization is on the same page is integral to effective communication and outreach.
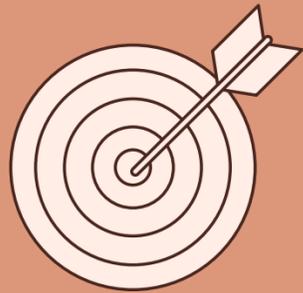
COMMUNICATION

Communication can be thought as the building blocks of outreach. This is the step before implementation where each message is carefully crafted.

OUTREACH

The fun part! Outreach is the act of engaging audiences and builds off the work done creating a communication plan, whether formal or informal.

Your 5 Elements of Success

Goals   Audiences   Messaging   Priorities   Metrics

Setting Goals

MISSION

How does communication and outreach tie into your organization's mission?

ROLE

What is your organization's role in your community? How do you want to expand and build on that?

RESOURCES

What resources do you have to implement a communication plan?

THINK BIG

This should be your broad vision for where you want your organization to go.

Audiences

Who can help you reach your goals?

Think about who will benefit from your goals, whose help you will need to implement them, and who can help fund them. .

Who are potential road-blocks?

Are there people or groups who could slow down achieving your goals?

Don't forget partners and internal communication!

Be sure to include folks already on your side as an audience as well as internal communication to help better communicate within your own organization and community.

How to reach your audience

Where do they get their info?

Think carefully about how each audience is likely to receive and share information.

Who already has their ear?

Incorporating messengers as part of your communication plan is an important way to reach specific audiences.

Think creatively!

Don't limit yourself to the same old direct mail campaign; even on a low-budget there are creative ways of reaching your audiences.

Crafting Your Messages

Who's the Audience

Individualize each message. Why should this audience care about your goals?

What's the Action

Be clear about what it is you need each audience to do to help reach your goals.

Keep it Simple

Keep it short and concise. Each message should be about a sentence.

Based in Facts

Your messages should be backed up in facts that are easy to access and understand.

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For last year's words belong to last year's language and next year's words await another voice.

T.S. Eliot

Priority Setting

Near-term priorities

These should be actions that are fairly easy and possible to complete within the next few months.

Mid-range priorities

These should be actions that are a bit more complex and can be completed within the next year or more.

Long-term priorities

These should be actions that may be difficult to accomplish and will take time.

Defining Success

M — Measurable: ensure it can be quantified or represented numerically.

E — Easy: the relationship between the metric and the activity should be easy to understand and data is easily collected.

T — Timely: the metric should be as real-time as possbile.

R — Repeatable: maintain the same process to ensure stability and correct interpretation of your data.

I — Insightful: metrics should help you learn more about what you're doing right or wrong.

C — Controllable: the metric is produced by your actions (whether direct or indirect.)

Common Problems

I can't get anyone interested

- Re-evaluate your audiences: are you targeting the right people?
- Re-evaluate your messages: are they crafted to appeal directly to each audience?
- Re-evaluate your tactics: are you reaching people where they are or asking them to come to you?

We don't have any money for this

- Look at the big picture!
- Utilize your partners.
- And MORE!

Questions?