

Communications – Communications Planning

Participant Guide

NOTES

Table of Contents

Agenda	5
Learning Objectives	7
1.0 The Communications Planning Process.....	9
2.0 Why communicate as an organization?	13
2.1 Funding Requirement.....	13
2.2 Legislative requirement	13
2.3 Due diligence (by-laws).....	13
2.4 Change behaviour and/or attitudes.....	14
2.5 Build community support	14
2.6 Raise awareness	14
2.7 Exchange information.....	14
2.8 Crisis/risk management.....	14
2.9 Build capacity	15
2.10 Advocacy	15
2.11 Improve volunteer and staff morale.....	15
2.12 Recognize achievements/accomplishments	15
3.0 Communication strategies.....	19
3.1 Marketing.....	19
3.2 Advertising.....	19
3.3 Public relations.....	20
3.4 Promotion.....	20
4.0 Media (distribution channels)	25
4.1 Newspaper.....	25
4.2 Radio.....	25
4.3 Television.....	25
4.4 Magazines	25
4.5 Industry/community publications	25
5.0 What to communicate	29
5.1 Good news	29
5.2 Best practices	29
5.3 Mission / mandate	29
5.4 Progress reports and achievements	30
5.5 New initiatives	30
5.6 Changes.....	30
5.7 Policy and opinions.....	30
5.8 Basic information and facts	30

5.9	Events.....	30
5.10	Research.....	30
6.0	Target audiences	31
6.1	Internal organization	31
6.2	External Organizations.....	32
6.3	Tailor message to audience	32
7.0	Communication Methods/Delivery Methods.....	39
7.1	Branding.....	39
7.2	News release	39
7.3	Public Service Announcement.....	40
7.4	Brochure.....	40
7.5	Display	40
7.6	Speeches and presentations.....	40
7.7	Newsletters and circulars	41
7.8	General correspondence.....	41
7.9	Technology	41
7.10	Minutes	41
7.11	Reports	42
7.12	Sponsorships	42
7.13	Consultations.....	42
8.0	Communications Planning	57
8.1	Strategies and Methods.....	57
8.2	Appoint Official Spokesperson.....	57
8.3	Budget.....	58
9.0	Interview skills.....	63
10.0	Monitor and evaluate communications plan	71
10.1	Implement continuous evaluation.....	71
10.2	Determine some evaluation strategies or benchmarks.....	71
10.3	Evaluation Matrix	72
10.4	Annual Report.....	72
11.	Parking Lot.....	73
12.	Discussions/Questions/Summary.....	73
13.	Evaluation	73
14.	Appendices.....	73
	References.....	81

Communications Module 1 – Part 2

Communications Planning

The workshop is a full-day session to introduce participants to communications planning. It is the second day of the two-day Communications Skills workshop.

AGENDA

Activity

Icebreaker

Welcome & Overview

Agenda Review

Why Communicate

Communication strategies

Types of Media

What to Communicate

Target Audience

Communication/Delivery Methods

Establish a Communications Plan

Monitor and Evaluate Communications Plan

Parking Lot

Discussion/Evaluation

NOTES

Learning Objectives

The learning objectives for the Communications Planning module include:

- Understand various communication terms
- Identify various types of media and how to use them
- Discuss various target audiences and how to reach them
- Identify the various ways your organization can communicate with its target audience
- Determine the types of information your organization should communicate
- Discuss techniques for dealing with the media

NOTES

1.0 The Communications Planning Process

Communicating with your community, your volunteers, staff, and stakeholders is important to the success of your organization. In our last session, we focused on interpersonal communication skills becoming an effective communicator. In this session we will discuss the importance of communicating as an organization.

During the Communications Planning session we will discuss the following and participate in a variety of activities and discussions to help you and your organization communicate more effectively with stakeholders.

- Why communicate as an organization?
- Communication strategies
- Media
- Target audience
- Communication/Delivery Methods
- Communications Plan
- Monitor and Evaluate Communications Plan
- Tailor message to audience

NOTES



Exercise 1 – Why we communicate

Objective

Discuss various reasons for your organization to communicate

Advance preparation

None

Exercise

To open discussion on why we communicate, use a brainstorming session to get participants to list reasons for why organizations communicate.

Participant resources

Participant handbook

NOTES

2.0 Why communicate as an organization?

Your organization, association, or municipality needs to communicate for a variety of reasons – legislative requirements, inform the community and stakeholders, promote successes, and generate community support.

2.1 Funding Requirement

Funding agencies such as Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and other government departments often provide initial media release to promote their contribution to a project. The agency or department will often outline requirements for further promotion –such as use of logo – throughout the project.

The business community and private foundations also have requirements for recognition of their contribution.

2.2 Legislative requirement

Municipalities, regional economic development boards, have a requirement to inform the public through public meetings, public minutes, annual meetings, consultations and other strategies.

2.3 Due diligence (by-laws)

- Board bylaws usually require public meeting
- Advise public about regular, special and annual meetings, or to publish annual reports, etc.
- Requirement to publicize financial information

2.4 Change behaviour and/or attitudes

An organization, association or municipality may require a communications strategy to change the behaviour or attitudes of internal or stakeholders. For instance, a volunteer organization involved in promoting a healthy lifestyle may engage in a communications plan with high school students to reduce smoking or eating junk food.

2.5 Build community support

Community support is necessary for continued success of an organization. In a municipality community support for initiatives and projects is critical for smooth operation of the town, and an organization needs support of stakeholders in order to continue to meet its goals and objectives.

2.6 Raise awareness

- Raise awareness about the organization and its work
- Assist to build community support for any projects or initiatives

2.7 Exchange information

- Communicate to share information
- Liaise with partners involved in mandate and projects

2.8 Crisis/risk management

- Providing information in a timely manner during a crisis or emergency is critical for your organization and stakeholders
- Ensure your organization has a spokesperson to speak in a crisis or emergency

2.9 Build capacity

Maintaining communications with your stakeholders can contribute to building community capacity. Building capacity places emphasis on existing resources and that the community is interested in participating in its development and growth.

2.10 Advocacy

Advocacy may be an important activity for many organizations and can help an organization raise and maintain a public profile. For instance, a group may engage regular advocacy to preserve an open space for future development.

- Incorporate advocacy as part of an overall communications plan
- Ensure that your organization's mandate includes advocacy

2.11 Improve volunteer and staff morale

Acknowledge and publicly recognize efforts of volunteers and staff to contribute to maintaining a positive workshop relationship.

2.12 Recognize achievements/accomplishments

Publicly acknowledging achievement and accomplishments of staff, board members and the board will help you achieve many of the reasons we have already discussed.

NOTES



Exercise 2 - Review some communication strategies

Objective

Identify various terms used by organizations to identify their promotional activities.

Advance preparation

None

Exercise

Brainstorm examples of public relations, marketing and advertising.

Participant resources

Handout: Additional material on public relations, marketing and advertising.

NOTES

3.0 Communication strategies

It is easy to become confused about the various terms used by businesses, organizations and municipalities to describe their communications activities. Terms such as public relations, marketing, advertising and promotion can be found in different organizations and incorporate the entire range of activities and media. The terminology will often depend on the size of the organization and its mandate. Whatever term is used, an organization should have some sort of a plan to communicate and regularly evaluate it.

The following are communication terms used to describe the range of communication activities.

3.1 Marketing

- Overall plan to promote your organization using variety of media and tools
- Usually a comprehensive plan which focuses on all aspects of promoting your organization

3.2 Advertising

- Involves bringing a product/service to the attention of customers
- Focuses on one particular product or service.
- Uses signs, brochures, commercials, direct mailings or e-mail messages, personal contact, etc.
- Includes sponsorship of events, tradeshow, projects
- Media charges for advertising

3.3 Public relations

- Ongoing activities to ensure the organization has a strong public image.
- Includes activities include helping the public to understand the organization and its services
- can be conducted through media or through presence at events

3.4 Promotion

- Ongoing advertising and public relations
- Creating a familiarity with a product or service to create demand



Additional Material # 1

Advertising, Marketing, Promotion, Public Relations and Publicity, and Sales

It's easy to become confused about these terms: advertising, marketing, promotion, public relations and publicity, and sales. The terms are often used interchangeably. However, they refer to different -- but similar activities. Some basic definitions are provided below. A short example is also provided hopefully to help make the terms more clear to the reader.

Advertising

Advertising is bringing a product (or service) to the attention of potential and current customers. Advertising is focused on one particular product or service. Thus, an advertising plan for one product might be very different than that for another product. Advertising is typically done with signs, brochures, commercials, direct mailings or e-mail messages, personal contact, etc.

Promotion

Promotion keeps the product in the minds of the customer and helps stimulate demand for the product. Promotion involves ongoing advertising and publicity, such as mention in the media. The ongoing activities of advertising, sales and public relations are often considered aspects of promotions.

Marketing

Marketing is the wide range of activities involved in making sure that you're continuing to meet the needs of your customers and getting value in return. Marketing is usually focused on one product or service. Thus, a marketing plan for one product might be very different than that for another product. Marketing activities include "inbound marketing," such as market research to find out, for example, what groups of potential customers exist, what their needs are, which of those needs you can meet, how you should meet them, etc. Inbound marketing also includes analyzing the competition, positioning your new product or service (finding your market niche), and pricing your products and services. "Outbound marketing" includes promoting a product through continued advertising, promotions, public relations and sales.

Public relations

Public relations includes ongoing activities to ensure the organization or Company Company has a strong public image. Public relations activities include helping the public to understand the organization or company and its services or products. Often, public relations are conducted through the media, that is, newspapers, television, magazines, etc. As noted above, public relations is often considered as one of the primary activities included in promotions.

Publicity

Publicity is mention in the media. Organizations usually have little control over the message in the media, at least, not as they do in advertising. Regarding publicity, reporters and writers decide what will be said.

Sales

Sales involves most or many of the following activities, including cultivating prospective buyers (or leads) in a market segment; conveying the features, advantages and benefits of a product or service to the lead; and closing the sale (or coming to agreement on pricing and services). A sales plan for one product might be very different than that for another product.

An Example of the Definitions

The following example may help to make the above five concepts more clear. I recently read that the story comes from the *Reader's Digest*, a quote found in "Promoting Issues and Ideas" by M. Booth and Associates, Inc. (Thanks to Jennifer M. Seher, participant in the CONSULTANTS@CHARITYCHANNEL.COM online discussion group.) "... if the circus is coming to town and you paint a sign saying 'Circus Coming to the Fairground Saturday', that's **advertising**. If you put the sign on the back of an elephant and walk it into town, that's **promotion**. If the elephant walks through the mayor's flower bed, that's **publicity**. And if you get the mayor to laugh about it, that's **public relations**." If the town's citizens go the circus, you show them the many entertainment booths, explain how much fun they'll have spending money at the booths, answer their questions and ultimately, they spend a lot at the circus, that's **sales**.

Adopted from Basic Definitions of Advertising, Marketing, Promotion, Public Relations and Publicity, and Sales by Carter McNamara, MBA, PhD

Source: www.managementhelp.org



Exercise 3 – Media or distribution channels used to communicate

Objective

Develop an understanding of the various types of media channels and how to use them

Advance preparation

None

Exercise

Identify the various types of media that can be used to communicate to their stakeholders.

NOTES

4.0 Media (distribution channels)

Your medium or channel of communication is referred to as the media. The media includes a variety of print and electronic media and are outlined below:

4.1 Newspaper

- Ideal for reaching a specific audience
- Make space available for community events
- Determine editorial policies

4.2 Radio

- Immediate
- Reaches many audiences
- Regular news and features
- Excellent tool for public service announcements

4.3 Television

- Community cable channels provide wide access to community
- Primary focus is major events due to nature of medium
- Challenge for groups and organizations to make the news

4.4 Magazines

- Directed at target audiences
- Need to determine editorial policies

4.5 Industry/community publications

- Directed at target audience
- Some provide space for community groups
- Can be excellent channel to reach some target audiences

NOTES



Exercise 4 - What does your organization communicate?

Objective

To demonstrate an understanding of appropriate information that organizations need to communicate to their stakeholders.

Advance preparation

None

Exercise

Think about what should be communicated by an organization. Be prepared to share with the group.

NOTES

5.0 What to communicate

What should an organization communicate to the public? There are certain standard things that should be communicated such as good news about funding or staff. For some groups, what they communicate to the public may be related to a special project or to their mandate.

5.1 Good news

- Organization accomplishments
- Staff achievements
- Funding
- Awards

5.2 Best practices

- Promote successful projects that address a community
- Provides examples for other communities

5.3 Mission / mandate

- Promote what you are established to do
- Promote any changes or updates to the mission and mandate

5.4 Progress reports and achievements

- Progress or interim on community projects
- Achievement of milestones, new programs

5.5 New initiatives

- New community program or service
- New way of doing business to improve service

5.6 Changes

- Changes designed to improve business processes
- Changes as a result of funding

5.7 Policy and opinions

- Board or municipality's new policies
- Board or municipality's position on government or other policies
- Opinions on community or government initiatives that could impact programs or services

5.8 Basic information and facts

- Community or regional socio-economic profiles
- Board information

5.9 Events

- Special events
- Regular events

5.10 Research

- Results of research
- Impact of research results from another organization

6.0 Target audiences

A **target audience** is the primary group of people that can be of a certain age group, gender, marital status, income bracket, or some other characteristic. A certain combination, like community volunteers age 24 and up is a target audience, as are employees and elected officials of a government department or agency. Determining a target audience is one of the most important stages involved with market research. Without knowing your target audience promoting a product or service can become difficult and very expensive.

The target audiences that are relevant to community groups and organizations are varied and can include the following groups.

6.1 Internal organization

- Staff
 - May be a small or large target group depending on size or organization
 - Ensure internal/staff communication channel
- Volunteers/Board members
 - May be in the community or geographically dispersed
 - Maintain regular communication with volunteers to sustain commitment
- Committees
 - May be in community or geographically dispersed
 - Maintain regular communication as required

6.2 External Organizations

- Funding sources
 - Government departments and agencies
 - Municipalities
 - Private foundations
 - Business community
- Partners
 - Government departments
 - College
 - Schools
 - Service clubs
 - Volunteer community
- Elected Officials
 - Federal representatives
 - Provincial representatives
 - Municipal representatives
 - School board
- Other stakeholders
 - Public
 - Media

6.3 Tailor message to audience

Once you know and understand your target audience it is important to develop the message with the appropriate language so that you appeal to the audience.

For instance, if you are holding a public meeting to generate interest in several committees that you wish to establish in your community, identify the people you wish to target (age, experience, knowledge) and determine the best method of reaching them. This can be general publications like newspapers, but also try church bulletins, school newsletters, direct letters, or radio and cable television public service announcements.

It is very important to ensure that you include statements to motivate people to respond, and not just a general call for volunteers. Ensure that you state the commitment that will be required, the type of work that will be required, and other pertinent information.

NOTES



Exercise 5 – Who is your target audience?

Objective

Identify the various target audiences that are relevant to your organization.

Advance preparation

Briefly review Section 6.0 – Target Audiences

Exercise

Review case studies provided and identify the target audience for communicating the project or program.

Participant resources

Pen, paper, flipchart paper for recording target audience.

NOTES



Exercise 5 - Case studies

1. Regional Economic Development Board

Directions: Identify the target audience for any communications strategies or projects describing this project.

Regional economic development board just received funding from ACOA and Industry Canada to develop a comprehensive community profile. Two new staff members will be hired to complete the project in the region.

2. The Town of Tildacane

Directions: A committee has been formed to begin planning the project. Generate a list of stakeholders.

The Town of Tildacane just announced that it is embarking on a plan to construct a new multi-purpose facility for the Town to replace several buildings, including the town hall, swimming pool, stadium and public works depot.

3. The Coffee Makers Co-op

Directions: The co-op needs to update its list of potential customers and other stakeholders so generate a target audience list.

The Coffee Makers Co-op has developed a new low caffeine bold tasting coffee which will appeal to coffee lovers who are conscious about caffeine levels. Not all members are totally

supportive because it means buying imported coffee but are willing to support the development of the new product.

4. The Middle Ridge Farmers Market

Directions: Generate a target audience list for promotion of the committee opportunity.

The Middle Ridge Farmers Market which sells fresh fruit, vegetables, quality crafts and some processed foods like jams and pickles, is looking for volunteers to sit on two new committees – a product development committee and marketing committee. The market board has already had a general call for volunteers through requests in the community paper’s what’s happening section, but hasn’t had any takers.

7.0 Communication Methods/Delivery Methods

Once you understand your target audience you can pay attention to the ways in which you are going to reach your audience. The types of communication methods you use will depend on the target audience, but some, such as branding, is critical as a first step for any organization.

7.1 Branding

This is the first step in development of communications plan

- Determine how you wish to promote our organization – eg. name, tag line, logo, and other information
- Includes letterhead, website, brochure, signage, and other promotional material
- Ensure that it is used the same way in all materials to deliver main message in consistent manner

7.2 News release

The news release is written and circulated to all media when you have an important announcement. You may also send a news release to a specific media if you are trying to reach a certain target audience. For example, if you wish to recruit volunteers for a health related forum you may contact hospitals and nursing homes and have the information contained in their newsletters.

Components of a news release:

1. Write an interesting title
2. Answer the 5W's and how
3. Keep it short – one or two pages if necessary
4. Put most important information first
5. Send additional information and photos (with cutline/caption)
6. Include contact name and telephone number and ensure person is available to media when release sent out

7.3 Public Service Announcement

- A short description of an event or service delivered in a 10 to 60-second radio clip
- A one paragraph description of an event for a print publication
- Media usually make space available for community events

7.4 Brochure

A brochure is a folded information sheet containing basic information on your organization. It can be created inhouse using a variety of graphics and photos, or can be professionally created.. The production will depend on your budget and audience. Think about the distribution when developing your brochure – how will it reach your audience? Your organization should have developed its brand and identified audiences in its communications plan, so the brochure can be designed to reach a specific audience or a general one to promote awareness of your organization.

7.5 Display

A display can be a table top board to a large scale trade show backdrop. Depending on your organization’s mandate and budget, a display can be used for a variety of promotional activities – high school events, local trade fairs, college open houses, industry events, trade shows – and the message can be consistent or tailored to the specific audience.

7.6 Speeches and presentations

Staff and officials of community-based organizations are often called upon to make presentations to various government and community events. If your organization is not well known and does not get such requests, it is worthwhile to contact various groups and offer to be a guest speaker or make a presentation.

- Prepare a standard speech with the organization’s key messages
- Prepare a stand PowerPoint presentation which can be modified as needed
- Take the display for speeches and presentations

7.7 Newsletters and circulars

Producing a newsletter can be an effective tool to keep your stakeholders and the public updated on your activities and updates. A newsletter can be a one page sheet with highlights or can be an 8 or more page booklet.

If you are going to produce a newsletter, determine budget, human resources, circulation, and frequency.

7.8 General correspondence

Letters to community leaders, local businesses, and government officials can provide a forum for sharing information or promoting your organization. A letter can be sent to announce a major initiative, to introduce your organization's brochure, or to accompany a progress or annual report.

Letters have an excellent chance of being read and tabled by government and volunteer organizations.

7.9 Technology

Use websites, email and other technology for communicating with the public.

Maintaining an updated current website is a major challenge for many organizations so assess your site and if necessary, make it a location for basic information only which does not require frequent updating.

You can use email to notify stakeholders of important meetings and events.

7.10 Minutes

Posting minutes on your website is a good way to communicate your organizations discussions and decisions.

Circulating minutes through email can also provide a link to stakeholders.

7.11 Reports

Reports can be lengthy documents so prepare an executive summary or similar summary of any report that you wish to circulate to your audience. The report can be made available online to be read by those who wish further information.

7.12 Sponsorships

Many organizations have sponsors for certain events – eg the local utility company is sponsoring a youth forum – so these contributions need to be acknowledged and recognized in any marketing for that event.

7.13 Consultations

A community consultation process may be incorporated into a communications plan in order to get input and feedback from various groups on an annual basis. Stakeholders such as government departments, agencies, community groups, schools, and others may be included and methods may include presentations, public meetings, speeches, and networking events.



Additional Material #3

Writing a Media Release

What is a media release?

A media release (also sometimes called a press or news release) is information that you wish released to the media pertaining to a specific issue or event that affects your group or organization. The media consists of newspapers, radio stations and television stations, but may also include magazines and online publications. Depending on the range of interest for your story, you may wish to contact local, provincial, national and/or international media.

Why write a media release?

Here are a few examples of reasons why a group or organization might issue a media release:

- Publicizing an opinion
- Winning an award
- Receiving or losing funding
- Launching a new program
- Achieving a goal
- Celebrating a milestone or anniversary
- Holding a fundraising event
- Anything else of interest

The purpose of a release is to connect with the media so that they will provide coverage of your story. However, there is no guarantee the media will “pick up” your story and provide coverage. It is up to each newspaper or station what stories they want to publish or broadcast. In most cases, the media release you send will not be used by the media “as is.” Rather, if the media is interested in your story, they will have a reporter contact you for more information so they can write the story themselves. So it is important to have a contact person who is very knowledgeable of the issue and the organization.

How to format and write a media release?

1. **Letterhead.** Use your organization’s letterhead (if applicable)
2. **Font and layout.** Make sure your font choice and size is plain and easily readable by fax – Times New Roman or Arial in a 12 or 14 point size are good choices. Double space if necessary.
3. **Media Release.** The words MEDIA RELEASE should be at the top of your release, in uppercase letters.
4. **Timing.** Indicate the release timing. In most cases, use FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, if the information can be released right away. Otherwise, use HOLD FOR RELEASE UNTIL _____ (indicate date and time) although this request may not always be honoured.

5. **Target.** List the target of your story. For example ATTENTION EDITOR or ATTENTION SPORTS EDITOR or ATTENTION ARTS EDITOR, depending on the subject.
6. **Headline.** List your headline. Print in uppercase letters. Your headline is what makes your release stand out and is the most important point you want to get across. Keep it active, descriptive, and try always to include the name of your organization. Example “BLOOMFIELD RECREATION COMMITTEE RECEIVES GRANT TO BUILD SKATE-BOARDING PARK” instead of “Bloomfield Recreation Committee receives \$500 grant”
7. **Sub-headline.** List your sub-headline (if applicable). For example, “\$500 grant will go a long-way to helping local youth”
8. **Date and Location.** Enter the date and location in brackets at the beginning of your first paragraph. For example, (May 4, 2002 – Bloomfield). If you are sending your release to national media, be sure to include your province.
9. **First paragraph.** This is where you clearly introduce the issue or event that you are sending the release about and how it relates to your organization. It is the hook that entices the media to read the rest of your release. This is also the best place to cover the 5 W’s: WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and WHY IMPORTANT.
10. **Second paragraph.** Includes a further description of your story, perhaps in the form of a quote from someone of significance. This will increase the interest of the reader since someone else besides you has input about your story.
11. **Subsequent paragraphs.** Includes less important and supporting information.
12. **–more- line.** If the release is more than one page put “-more-“ at the bottom of the page.
13. **–30- line.** This indicates the end of the media release. Everything listed above the -30- line is considered suitable for release to the public.
14. **Contact information.** This lists the contact person and how the media can get in touch with them for more information. Include a name, title, telephone numbers, and email address as a minimum. Make sure that there is always someone who the media can easily and quickly reach for follow-up. News happens very quickly - if a reporter cannot reach someone when they need to, your story might be dropped and your credibility may be affected.
15. **About your organization.** This is where you can briefly describe your organization and what it does (optional).
16. **Picture.** An interesting photo can sometimes increase the chance that the media release will be picked up. If you do send a picture, include a caption with picture details and photo credits.
17. **Proof read.** Proofread your release for accuracy and typographical errors. Give it to someone else to double-check it for you. This is going out to the public and you want it to be perfect. It is very important to have no mistakes.

How to send it?

By fax – A reminder to make sure your font choice and size is plain and easily readable by fax – Times New Roman or Arial in a 12 or 14 point size are good choices. Don’t forget to include a cover page.

By e-mail – If using this method of distribution, send your release in the email message itself, not as an attachment, in a plain text format. Type MEDIA RELEASE in your subject line.

By mail – This method is not preferable unless you have no other option available to you, as it usually hinders distributing the release in a timely fashion.

When to send it?

Most media releases should be sent at the time the story, or event, is taking place. If you send it too early, there may not be enough for the media to write about. If you send it too late, the media may not want to cover something they feel is out-of-date. For example, if you are having a fundraising event on Saturday, send a media release with information about what happened at the event on Saturday evening or Sunday. If you wish to invite the media to attend an event in person, send a brief media advisory a day or two in advance listing just the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE.

What else you can do to get the attention of the media?

Following up on your media release with a phone call is sometimes worthwhile – ask them if they have received your release and remind them that you are available if they wish to follow-up with you. Always thank the media for their time and consideration.

While following these guidelines and applying creativity to your media release may help increase its chances, there is still no guarantee the media will cover your story. Some stories, no matter how wonderful or important to your organization, will appear dull to anyone not intimately involved with your organization. Don't send releases to the media in such cases. You don't want to damage the credibility of your organization with the media by sending boring stories – or they might start to ignore everything you send because you have developed a reputation for never sending them anything interesting.

Remember that every time you interact with the media you are building a relationship – even if they don't pick up your first story, hopefully you will have made a valuable contact and have improved your chances for the next time!

Source: Adopted from Writing a Media Release, Community Services Council of NL, www.envision.ca

NOTES



Additional Material #4

News Release Template

Title	Make it catchy – needs to grab attention
For Immediate Release Date	Today's date or when it should be released
Lead	Opening paragraph Who, what, when, where, why, how Preferably one sentence and less than 30 words
Main Body	Remainder of the body text Include any relevant information to support lead Include quote from spokesperson Less relevant information at the end Summarize in last line
Completion	-30- indicates release is finished
Contact	List spokesperson and contact information

NOTES



Additional Material #5

Quick Tips for Writing an Effective Media Release

1. **Use an imaginative headline that will grab the media’s attention.**

Your headline is what makes your release stand out. Keep it active, descriptive, and try always to include the name of your organization.

Example: “BLOOMFIELD RECREATION COMMITTEE RECEIVES GRANT TO BUILD SKATEBOARDING PARK” instead of “Local group receives \$500 grant”

2. **List the most important information at the beginning.**

The media should be able to learn what the release is about in the first paragraph – otherwise they may not read any further!

3. **Avoid hype and unsubstantiated claims.**

Stick to the true facts and provide specific information – don’t exaggerate the worthiness of the story. Also, don’t let it sound like an advertisement - find creative but legitimate ways to highlight how the information pertains to your organization.

4. **Stress the benefits.**

How will people’s lives be helped by this news? For example, stress how the money raised will be used when releasing information about a fundraising event.

5. **Be active and to the point.**

Use clear language that will get the reader as excited about the news as you are.

6. **Keep your release to one or two pages.**

The media does not have the time nor the inclination to read a long release. The goal of the media release is to capture the interest of the media so they will contact you for more in-depth information.

7. **Keep your language simple.**

Avoid using acronyms, abbreviations, or technical language that may not be understood by everyone.

8. **Be specific and detailed.**

Ensure your release covers the 5 W’s: WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and WHY IMPORTANT.

9. **Include a contact.**

Ensure that your release has a contact person listed for more information. This person should be familiar

with the story and ready to answer questions. List all the ways this person can be contacted (office, home and cell numbers, email etc.)

10. Proofread.

Proofread your release for accuracy and typographical errors. Give it to someone else to double-check it for you.

Source: www.envision.ca



Additional Material #6

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA)

What is a PSA?

Unlike a media release, a public service announcement, or PSA, is usually transmitted electronically, via radio or television in a short spot of ten to sixty seconds. Stations donate a certain amount of airtime to serve the public and the community. Most public radio and TV stations have a community calendar on which they will announce events to the public.

A PSA typically heralds a community event, usually, but not always, for a non-profit organization. Commercial groups can also announce non-profit events or services. Many local newspapers also have community calendars so PSA's are not limited to only electronic media.

Though the PSA covers less material than a media release, it requires the same **who, what, where, when and why**. Also include your organization's name, a contact person and telephone number.

Formatting a PSA for Radio?

Radio PSAs should be submitted in written script, for use by the radio announcer. Write "for the ear" by reading your effort aloud. Repeat telephone numbers or dates. Spell out any numbers, dates or other figures and provide phonetic pronunciation (in parentheses) for any unusual words or names.

Use the following word count for an estimate of on-air time: 10 seconds -- 25 words; 20 seconds -- 40 words; 30 seconds -- 80 words; 60 seconds -- 160 words.

Keep rewriting and reading it aloud until your PSA copy flows smoothly and you definitely are under the time limit. Always include the date, your group's name, a contact person and telephone number. Use a separate sheet of paper for PSAs of different time lengths.

Remember, you cannot control when your PSA will be broadcast. Stay up late to hear it -- don't expect it to appear during prime time.

Formatting a PSA for Community Television Message Boards and Newspapers?

Community television message boards are another common means of distributing public service announcements in Newfoundland and Labrador. They will air the text of your PSA in continuous rotation for an extended period of time. The format they accept is extremely short, usually no more than 25 words. (In St. John's the limit is 100 characters, including spaces.) Always adhere to your community station's guidelines or there is a chance it may not be aired.

Local newspapers will usually list your PSA under their community calendar section. Again, find out the word limit for each paper in your area and adhere to their guidelines.

Other PSA Tips?

The best means of ensuring your PSA gets accepted is to determine the format and word limit required by each media organization it is being sent to.

Send your PSA at least two weeks before you want it used.

Try not to include any sort of price reference with your PSA - this may cause it to be rejected by some media organizations.

Remember the most important thing about a PSA is the **KISS – Keeping It Short and Simple!**

Source: www.envision.ca



Exercise 6 – Writing a public service announcement

Objective

Write an effective public service announcement

Advance preparation

Review tips for writing a public service announcement

Exercise

In this exercise, write a public service announcement for a community event you are organizing. Identify which media you will use for the PSA. (5 minutes)

Be prepared to read your PSA and media selected.

Participant resources

Pen and paper to write their public service announcement.

NOTES



Exercise 7 – Developing a communications plan

Objective

Identify the communication methods that you would use to reach the target audience identified in exercise 5.

Advance preparation

Complete exercise 5 and understand target audiences

Exercise

Break into groups – same group as exercise 5). Discuss communication methods to reach your target audience and record some on the flipchart to report back to the large group.

Participant resources

Pen, paper, flipchart or sheets.

NOTES

8.0 Communications Planning

A communications plan can be a comprehensive strategy outlining tools, timelines, messages and evaluation strategies. Most organizations do not have the time or resources/staff for a detailed plan but have identified communications as a priority and utilize a variety of the following types of strategies to reach their audiences.

8.1 Strategies and Methods

- Regular news releases
 - Ensure that you have a newsworthy item
 - Ensure that you quote board or senior staff
 - Include background material if necessary
- Regular speaking engagements
 - Service clubs
 - School councils
- Submit articles to newsletters, industry publications
- Distribute annual report
- Use website wisely
- Arrange interviews with local media

8.2 Appoint Official Spokesperson

- Designate official spokesperson for your organization as it ensures a credibility
- Ensures consistent image and message
- Provide guidance/training on interview skills

8.3 Budget

- Develop budget for advertising (print, radio, other)
- Develop budget for other initiatives
 - Presentations
 - Printing
 - Special events



Additional Material #7

Communication Plan

Article by Nancy Rathbun Scott

Dumfries, Virginia

What is a communication plan? When should it be developed? Where does the information in the plan come from? How do you write one, and why should you bother?

Overworked and underfunded communicators (Are there any other kind?) have a right to ask whether the work involved in developing a plan is worth it. The answer is yes because a written communication plan will

- give your day-to-day work a focus,
- help you set priorities,
- provide you with a sense of order and control,
- help get the chief staff executive and staff to support your program,
- protect you against last-minute, seat-of-the-pants demands from staff and members, and
- prevent you from feeling overwhelmed, offering instead peace of mind.

What Is a Communication Plan?

A communication plan is a written document that describes

- what you want to accomplish with your association communications (your objectives),
- ways in which those objectives can be accomplished (your goals or program of work),
- to whom your association communications will be addressed (your audiences),
- how you will accomplish your objectives (the tools and timetable), and
- how you will measure the results of your program (evaluation).

Communications include all written, spoken, and electronic interaction with association audiences. A communication plan encompasses objectives, goals, and tools for all communications, including but not limited to:

- periodic print publications;
- online communications;
- meeting and conference materials;
- media relations and public relations materials;
- marketing and sales tools;
- legal and legislative documents;
- incoming communications, including reception procedures and voice mail content;

- committee and board communiques;
- corporate identity materials, including letterhead, logo, and envelopes;
- surveys;
- certificates and awards;
- annual reports;
- signage;
- speeches; and
- invoices.

When to Develop the Plan

The best time to develop your plan is in conjunction with your annual budgeting or organizational planning process.

Where to Get Information

Grist for the plan generally comes from five sources:

1. your association mission statement,
2. a communication audit,
3. membership surveys and focus groups,
4. committee and leadership input, and
5. discussions with other staff and departments.

How to Develop the Plan

Take the following steps to develop an effective communication plan:

Conduct a research-communication audit. Evaluate your current communications. Some associations hire firms to do this, but the price for the objectivity of an outside auditor can be high. To conduct your own audit, find out

- what every staff person is doing in the way of communication,
- what each communication activity is designed to achieve, and
- how effective each activity is.

To get the answers you need,

- brainstorm with communication staff,
- talk to other departments,
- interview the chief staff executive,
- interview the board,
- talk to communication committee members,
- survey the membership,
- host focus groups, and
- query nonmembers.

Define objectives. Armed with information from your audit, define your overall communication objectives—the results you want to achieve. These might include

60 _____

- excellent service to members,
- member loyalty,
- centralization of the communication effort,
- increased employee teamwork,
- improved product delivery,
- visibility for the association and the industry or profession it represents, and
- influence on government, media, consumers, and other audiences.

Define audiences. List all the audiences that your association might contact, attempt to influence, or serve. Included on your list may be

- members;
- nonmembers;
- consumers;
- related associations;
- adversarial associations;
- educators;
- federal, regional, and local governments;
- related industries; and
- the media.

Define goals. With stated objectives, and considering available human and financial resources, define goals—in other words, a program of work for each objective. Goals include general programs, products, or services that you will use to achieve stated objectives. For example, if the objective is to improve member service, goals might include improved training for the member-service function, special communications directed at first-time members, a reference manual for handling complaints, and ongoing information for members.

Identify tools. Decide what tools will be used to accomplish stated goals. These tools can be anything from a simple flyer to a glossy magazine. Don't overlook less obvious tools such as posters, report covers, Rolodex cards, and Web sites. Brainstorm ideas with your staff.

Establish a timetable. Once objectives, goals, audiences, and tools have been identified, quantify the results in a calendar grid that outlines roughly what projects will be accomplished and when. Separate objectives into logical time periods (monthly, weekly, etc.).

Evaluate the result. Build into your plan a method for measuring results. Your evaluation might take the form of

- a monthly report on work in progress,
- formalized department reports for presentation at staff meetings,
- periodic briefings of the chief staff executive and the department heads, and
- a year-end summary for the annual report.

Developing a written communication plan will take effort. Plan on three or four days the first time you do it. Once in place, the written plan will smooth your job all year long, earn you respect from the CEO and other staff, help set work priorities, protect you from last-minute demands, and bring a semblance of order to your chaotic job.

Nancy Rathbun Scott is president of Liberty Communications, Dumfries, Virginia.

Source: <http://www.hieran.com/comet/howto.html>

NOTES

9.0 Interview skills

- be prepared
- avoid off the record comments
- be eloquent
- be courteous
- tell the truth or don't deny bad news
- ask for clarification
- be clear, brief and don't chatter

NOTES



Exercise 8 - Media interviews

Objective

Discuss some strategies you have used or should use to handle media interviews in order to respond effectively.

Advance preparation

Review/discuss material on media interviews.

Exercise:

Use large group discussion and record on flipchart.

Facilitator resources

Flipchart

Participant resources

NOTES



Additional Material #7

Handling Media Interviews

To maximize your public relations activities, assign an official spokesperson for your organization.

In a municipality the official spokesperson is usually the mayor and his/her designate is the deputy mayor or the senior town official. In a community-based organization the spokesperson is usually the chairperson or senior staff person, and of course in volunteer organizations without staff it is the board chair or president.

The official spokesperson will often be contacted for an interview following a communication activity – news release, public event, etc.

So how do you prepare for the interview?

- Ask the interviewer for information on what they need to know and how much they already know
- Ask for the deadline and if possible ask for interview to be held before the deadline
- Review details of the interview and then agree to call the interviewer back with the required information
- Plan your message – write down what you want to say to the interviewer
- Provide additional material to the interviewer (this is good for print interview)
- For print interviews
 - Chose a comfortable place
 - Ask for questions in advance (may not be provided)
 - Ask to see article once it is completed (again, may not be provided)
- For radio or TV interviews
 - Ensure you know the setting – your office on the phone, studio, will there be others, is it news story or phone-in
 - Slow your speech
 - Speak in warm and pleasant voice
 - Answer questions as if you are talking to one person and not the entire audience

Adopted from: Parker, B. J. (2001). Tea you can trot a mouse on. Volume 1. Hubbards, NS: Wee Society.

NOTES



Additional Material #8

QUICK TIPS FOR BEING INTERVIEWED BY THE MEDIA

When a member of the media interviews you, you have a chance to do yourself and your organization a lot of good -- or a lot of damage! Here are some tips to help you handle yourself when being interviewed by the media.

1. **Don't chatter.** Try not to do all the talking. It's not supposed to be a monologue, but it is an easy trap to fall into because you are supposed to know a lot about the subject. A better approach is to give a brief answer, then stop and let the reporter ask another question.
2. **Ask for clarification.** Don't hesitate to ask questions of your own. If you are unsure of what the reporter wants or what slant they are looking for, ask!
3. **Only repeat what is repeatable.** Avoid off-the-record comments. What you are doing is asking the reporter to keep a secret that you can't keep.
4. **Don't make it up.** If you don't know, say so, but offer to find out. Remember to get the information back to the reporter in a timely fashion.
5. **Be eloquent.** If you want to be quoted, say something quotable. Reporters love short, pithy comments using lively words that really convey solid meaning. This is especially true for the broadcast (radio, television) media due to the scarcity of time.
6. **Talk to a general audience.** Use examples, talk to the reporter's audience and imagine your words being put into writing. The reporter is usually trying to convey your story to a wide audience -- so make it easy for the reporter to understand and to get it correct.
7. **Don't deny the bad news.** If you don't tell the bad news as well as the good news the reporter may not believe your good news -- not for long anyway. It's better to tell your side of the story before the reporter gets it from somebody else.
8. **Be courteous.** Thank them for interviewing you and providing coverage for your organization. Do not ask to read what the reporter will write prior to publication, this may only cause some resentment. Also do not ask for copies of the story to be sent to you -- go out and buy your own.
9. **Be human.** The key thing is to try to relate to the reporter as a fellow human, one prone to the same tendencies as you.
10. **Be prepared.** Reporters like having complicated facts, biographies and background information in writing, you should have a backgrounder prepared. Essentially, gather all the facts and viewpoints available -- and be ready for the tough questions as well as the easy ones.

Source:

- Public Relations for the Non-profit workshop, Community Services Council www.envision.ca

NOTES

10.0 Monitor and evaluate communications plan

A major component of any communications plan is to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness. Has it reached its intended audience (s), facilitated desired change in attitudes, increased awareness of your organization and its mission and mandate?

Implement continuous evaluation

An organization should have a continuous evaluation process in place to monitor communications during and after an event. For instance, if a news release didn't make the news, follow up with media to learn if it was release, timing, or some other reason

10.2 Determine some evaluation strategies or benchmarks

- brochure distribution
- calls or website hits following an event or news release
- telephone calls or inquiries in response to an advertisement for an event
- types of inquiries
- media coverage
- attendance at events (include an evaluation to determine how they learned of the event)

10.3 Evaluation Matrix

- develop a matrix to evaluate your plan
- determine what you want to monitor and why
- incorporate items such as:
 - brochure distribution
 - website traffic
 - media response to news releases
 - inquiries to PSA
 - inquiries following release or event
 - calls following an advertisement
 - media coverage

10.4 Annual Report

- conduct an annual review and evaluation of your strategies so that you are not doing the same thing every year because you think they work.
- prepare an annual report outlining the year's activities and successes and outline any redundancy or ineffective strategies.

11. Parking Lot

Discuss any issues that arise throughout the day that are not part of the workshop.

12. Discussions/Questions/Summary

13. Evaluation

Ask participants to complete an evaluation which covers the material, the facilitator and the space/resources.

14. Appendices

Communications glossary

NOTES

Communications Glossary

Advertising

Advertising is bringing a product (or service) to the attention of potential and current customers. Advertising is focused on one particular product or service. Thus, an advertising plan for one product might be very different than that for another product. Advertising is typically done with signs, brochures, commercials, direct mailings or e-mail messages, personal contact, etc.

Body Language

Body language is an outward reflection of a person's emotional state as each movement or gesture can indicate what a person may be feeling or thinking at the time. For instance, folded arms may indicate that the person is feeling defensive or fearful. Body language is an important part of the communication process.

Blog

A blog (short for web log) is a user-generated website where entries are made in journal style and displayed in a reverse chronological order.

Branding

Branding involves a strong, consistent message about an organization, product, service or community which differentiates it from others. It is an image and feeling that people have and consists of their perceptions and experiences, some of which you can influence.

Channel

Messages are conveyed through channels which can be face to face meetings, telephone calls, letters, emails, and reports.

Describing Behaviour

Describing behaviour is a communication tool in which you state only what was observed and not what was said.

Email

An electronic message sent via internet to another person. Can be basic message or can include attachments such as letters, reports, photos, etc.

Enunciation

Enunciation is how clear you speak.

Feedback

Feedback is what you get from your audience in reaction to your message.

“I” statements

A communication tool to use when you want to explain your feelings. The tool is good for reduce tension and conflict.

Making an “I” statement:

When (describe behaviour and not person)

I feel (describe the feeling that you get)

Because (tangible or real effect) or how about (a suggestion for change)

Making I statements pushes the speaker to define what disturbs him/her about a situation.

Inflection

Inflection is the change in the pitch of your voice to emphasize words.

Listening

Listening involves listening to what another person is saying. Active listening is a way of listening that focuses entirely on what the other person is saying and confirms understanding of both the content of the message and the emotions and feelings underlying the message to ensure that understanding is accurate. Hearing is a passive skill.

Marketing

Marketing is the wide range of activities involved in making sure that you're continuing to meet the needs of your customers and getting value in return. Marketing is usually focused on one product or service. Thus, a marketing plan for one product might be very different than that for another product. Marketing activities include "inbound marketing," such as market research to

find out, for example, what groups of potential customers exist, what their needs are, which of those needs you can meet, how you should meet them, etc. Inbound marketing also includes analyzing the competition, positioning your new product or service (finding your market niche), and pricing your products and services. "Outbound marketing" includes promoting a product through continued advertising, promotions, public relations and sales.

Medium

The medium is the way to get your message across to your audience. More than one medium is media.

Media

Media are the medium to carry message and include traditionally include radio, television, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, and now include websites, electronic newsletters, etc.

Media (press) release

A media or press release is a newsworthy announcement that is sent to your media list.

Message

The message refers to what you are communicating and can be written, oral and can be impacted by the sender's tone, method of organization, what is communicated, and the individual's style of communicating.

Non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication is what we say with our body – includes facial expressions, eye contact, tone of voice, etc.

Noise

Noise refers to noise in a message and can include interference from various sources and impacts the receiver's attention.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is a communication tool that allows you to restate or state in your own words, what was said in order to understand what you heard.

Perception checking

Perception checking is stating in your own words what you think another person is feeling.

Pitch

The pitch of your voice is the point within range where voice is placed for speaking. Some people have a deep voice and some have a high pitched or squeaky voice.

Promotion

Promotion keeps the product in the minds of the customer and helps stimulate demand for the product. Promotion involves ongoing advertising and publicity, such as mention in the media. The ongoing activities of advertising, sales and public relations are often considered aspects of promotions.

Pronunciation

Pronunciation refers to how you pronounce your words.

Public relations

Public relations includes ongoing activities to ensure the organization or company has a strong public image. Public relations activities include helping the public to understand the organization or company and its services or products. Often, public relations are conducted through the media, that is, newspapers, television, magazines, etc. As noted above, public relations is often considered as one of the primary activities included in promotions.

Publicity

Publicity is mention in the media. Organizations usually have little control over the message in the media, at least, not as they do in advertising. Regarding publicity, reporters and writers decide what will be said.

Public service announcement (PSA)

A PSA is a brief announcement about an upcoming event that is publicized by local media at no cost.

Range

The range of your voice refers to the musicality of your voice.

Sales

Sales involves most or many of the following activities, including cultivating prospective buyers (or leads) in a market segment; conveying the features, advantages and benefits of a product or service to the lead; and closing the sale (or coming to agreement on pricing and services). A sales plan for one product might be very different than that for another product.

Sender

The sender is the person who sends the message and who must be credible, must know the subject, the audience and context in which the message is delivered.

Target Audience

A target audience is the audience your message is intended to reach

Verbal communication

Verbal communication is what we say and how we say it. It includes the range, pitch and volume of our voice, our enunciation and pronunciation, inflection and tone of our voice.

Website

A website is an internet site containing information on a government department, business, organization or individual for public viewing.

NOTES

References

College of the North Atlantic (2006). *Interpersonal communication skills and conflict resolution*. St. John's, NL: College of the North Atlantic and Municipal Training and Development Corporation.

Communications (Interpersonal). Retrieved from: www.managementhelp.org

Community Services council. *Public relations for the non-profit workshop*. Retrieved From www.envision.ca

Frank, F. & Smith, A. (2000). *The partnership handbook*. Ottawa, ON: Human Resources Development Canada.

Frank, F., & Smith, A. (1999). *The community development handbook. A tool to build community capacity*. Ottawa, ON: Human Resources Development Canada.

Frank, F. & Smith, A. (1999). *The community development facilitator's guide*. Ottawa, ON: Human Resources Development Canada.

Hollis, David. *Facilitator Tools*: Retrieved from:
<http://www.users.waitrose.com/~dhollis/tq/facilt.htm>

Icebreakers. Retrieved from: <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/icebreak.html>

McNamara, C. Basic Definitions of Advertising, Marketing, Promotion, Public Relations and Publicity. Retrieved from www.managementhelp.org

O'Hair, D., Freidrich, G., Wiemann, J. & Wiemann, O. (1995). *Competent Communication*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Parker, Barbara. J. (2001). *Tea you can trot a mouse on*. Volumes 1 and 2. Hubbards, NS: The Wee Society.

Pease, A & B. (2004). *The definitive book of body language*. New York: Random House

Pincus, M. (2004). *Managing difficult people*. Avon, MA: Adams Media

Non-Verbal Communication. Retrieved from:
<http://www.zeromillion.com/business/management/non-verbal-communication.html>

Non Verbal Communication Skills. Retrieved from:
www.andrews.edu/~tidwell/lead689/NonVerbal.html

Resources for Facilitators. Retrieved from:
http://www.managementhelp.org/grp_skill/resource.htm

Wood, Rick. (2007). - Tourism Development From a Branding Strategy Perspective.
www.8020info.com

Why Communications Skills Are So Important. Retrieved from:
www.mindtools.com/CommSkill?Communicationintro.htm

Scott, N.R. *Communication Plan*. Retrieved from: <http://www.hieran.com/comet/howto.html>

Strategic Communications Planning. Retrieved from:
<https://secure.spinproject.org/downloads/StrategicCommunications.pdf>

Wikipedia. Retrieved from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page