Creating a detailed Communication Plan- Template Guide

# The Organization’s background

**This section is expected to provide a brief introduction to the organization background**

What is the history of the organization?

What are the organization’s membership and broad activities

# Communication GOAL

**This section identifies the communication goal, as sharply as possible, BEFORE implementation.**

- What is the main communication goal of the assigned project? Keep it simple & focused to 1 or 2.

- At this stage, clearly define key project targets & KPIs on project completion

The following are examples of communications Goals:

* Create a campaign to generate awareness around a misconception.
* Grow membership to x numbers
* Raise funds up to x amount.

# Communication Objectives/ Mini Goals

**This section helps you break up your goal into specific communications activities that can help you achieve the project goals you've listed above (section 2)**

* Clear, specific, and measurable objectives are key to the success of any communications strategy.
* Your communications can be external or internal, or both:
* Be realistic about timeframe, budget & resources
* Ensure they are measurable
* You can use the SMART approach to develop your objectives.
* S – Specific: M- Measurable; A – Achievable; R – Realistic; T – Timely

The following are examples of communications objectives:

* Introduce the support hotline to young people living with HIV.
* Sign up 50 MSMs per month to email subscription list.
* Publish 2 press articles about trans activists and their lived experiences in two major newspapers in the next three months.

# Target Audiences / Stakeholders (Internal & External)

**This section focuses on who you will be impacted with your communications campaign:**

Your target audience can be internal (within the organization) or external :

Who do you want to get your message across to? Be as specific as possible:

* Who will best help you achieve your goal
* What demographic groups are you trying to reach?
* What are the best ways and communication platforms to reach them?

You can Identify key stakeholders under the following pillars.

* **Target audience** – who needs to be influenced
* **Partners/ collaborators** – who will help you to influence
* **Beneficiaries –** those who will be benefited from the influencing
* **Barriers –** those who will challenge the influencing
* **Others -** any other party that is important, worth considering

You can also Identify key stakeholders under the following pillars.

### [Main Audience]

These are the key persons/groups you communicate to directly. You can have more than one primary target audience.

Eg: Parents, particularly single mothers, of children aged 0 – 6 years.

### [Second Audience]

People of less importance who you wish to receive the communications campaign messages, people who will also benefit from hearing the messages or people who influence your target audience now or in the future.

Eg- the extended family and friends of Parents, particularly single mothers, of children aged 0 – 6 years.

### [Internal Audience]

Identify internal stake holders of your project. Who will be your partners in the project?

What are the communication tools needed for the stakeholders of the project.

Short descriptions via internal communication helps ensure that everyone involved are on the same page.

Eg: your bosses, different departmental heads, Regional & global offices

# Key Messages (to specific target audience)

**This section identifies the focused messaging for the appropriate target audience.**

* What do you want the target audience to know?
* What do you want them to feel - what perception do you want to create?
* What do you want them to do - what action do you want as a result?
* What is it that you want to change in them?

#### Examples of a "result" could be the following:

* Do you want to change their attitude towards your project via awareness?
* Do you want them to support your project by donations or volunteers?
* Do you want them to be motivated to take action or make a decision?
* Do you want them to be involved, sign petitions?

# Consistent Communication Content

**This section focuses on the consistency of your content messaging to reach your target audience and to achieve your goals.**

Presenting your organization’s brand correctly is crucial.

**This means being consistent with your logo, typefaces, slogan, colours, and outlining brand guidelines with key messages and the way words and images are used on all applications.**

All this will combine to communicate the sort of organization you are – active, passionate, solutions oriented.   
  
When communicating with your audience follow this simple checklist and   
ask yourself:

* Is my message **passionate**? Does it really show my enthusiasm?
* Is it **optimistic**? Is it positive and forward looking?
* Is it **inspirational**? Will it move someone to take action?
* Does it **challenge**? Does it confront the issues?
* Is it **credible**? Will people believe me?
* Is it **accountable**? Does it demonstrate our honesty and trustworthiness?
* Is it **persevering**? Does it prove our commitment?
* Is it **delivering results**? Does it show what we have achieved?

Keep in mind that your message does not need to include all of the above. In other words, you don't need to reflect every single brand value in your message.

Create specific instructions for Writers, Designers, Producers for each project and provide templates and Design Guide books if necessary to stay on par with organization brand values.

# Communication Methods/ Media platforms

**This section focuses on the best and cost-effective media platform to reach your target audience and to achieve your goals.**

Whether you’re preparing a 12, 24 or 36 month communications plan, what media will you need to use during this timeframe?

Your choices will depend on who you want to reach, what you want to achieve, what you want to communicate, and your budget.

##### External Communications Mix

##### Internal Communications Mix

* Conference calls ((zoom, google meet, teams)
* Face-to-face meetings
* Emails, Telephone calls

# Communication Matrix Strategies

**This section gives you some egs. and strategies of how we can mix our communication media channels based on our core message and core audience.**

Create a Communication Matrix to map out your Messages with Target audiences and the dissemination methods.

Target Audience

Message 1

Communication

Channel

Target Audience 2

Target Audience 3

Message 2

Communication

Channel

Communication

Channel

Mix and match ideal Target Audiences, Messages and the Communication Channels.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Audience | Message | Communication Channel | Notes |
| Target Audience 1 | Message 1 | Comm Channel 1, 2 3 |  |
| Target Audience 2 | Message 1, 2 | Comm Channel 2, 3 |  |
| Target Audience 3 | Message 3 | Comm Channel 1, 2 3 |  |
| Target Audience 4 | Message 1, 4 | Comm Channel 1, 2 3 |  |
| Target Audience 5 | Message 1, 3, 4 | Comm Channel 1, 2 3 |  |
|  |  |  |  |

# Budget

**This section focuses on the importance of funds available to plan your communication strategy effectively and how to use them wisely.**

Budget Where possible, list the following:

* The amount of money available for the implementation [money = people resources]
* The amount of money available in the future [money = people resources]
* Based on your Communication Media Matrix identify the Communications budget.

# Timeline

**This section focuses on the Schedule:**

When will you need to communicate over the next 12, 24 or 36 months?

List the key dates - what do you need and when.

Describe each key event or activity that will need communications (incl. launch of a report, forum, conference, etc.).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Event 1 | Event 2 | Event 3 | Event 4 | Event 5 | Event 6 |
| What: |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Why: |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Where: |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| When: |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Who: |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| How: |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# Monitoring & Evaluation: Measure the success of your communication plan

**This section monitors the success of your campaign goal- did the correct message reach your TG, within budget and on time?**

## How will you know if you have succeeded and met your objectives? How are you going to evaluate your success, what performance indicators and evaluating measures will you use?

It's important to assess your strategy/project so that any changes, if necessary, can be made when engaging in a similar strategy/project in the future.

## External

* Have you achieved your Goal & objectives (i.e. raise funds, create awareness...etc)?
* Did you reach the right audience?
* Did you use the right tools?
* Did you work within budget? If you didn't, why not?

## Internal

* Did you reach the right people within the organization?
* Did they understand what the message was - did they do what had to be done?
* Did you use the right tools?
* Did you get their support?

# Risks mitigation

**This section is to facilitate identifying risks and challenges to achieve the advocacy goals and objectives.**

Were there any risks in the overall communication plan that we had control over, had no control over or had some control?

For eg- Think about sensitivities of publically discussing communitites that have legal and social stigma’s on. i.e. FSW: Can they promote sex work? What will happen when a conservative person comes across these messages, what are the potential liabilities of discussing same-sex with MSM organizations.