



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

what, why, how

The University of Alabama Center for Economic Development
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Strategic Communications Plan

What:

The purpose of a strategic communications plan is to create a platform for which all organizations and individuals can use in order to communicate. This plan strengthens the organization's mission and includes internal and external communications, clarifies the organization's priorities, target audiences, resources, outlines media activities, and evaluation of the process.

The creation and adoption of a strategic communications plan allows for ease of communication during specific times. It serves as a guide to prioritize needs, identify an audience, determine how a message should be delivered, and whether or not the delivery was successful.

The *internal* communications plan is for those involved in the planning of the initiative. A good way to communicate internally might be an e-newsletter. Internal communications might be sent to staff, board members, organization's taskforce, planning team and / or advisory council members.

The *external* communications plan is for anyone who needs to be informed of your initiative. Some ways to communicate externally are social media, press releases and media kits. This group consist of community members, community organizations, visitors, schools, and media just to name a few.

Why:

A strategic communication plan is necessary for sharing a mission-supporting message consistently and allows everyone on your team to have a stake in your success. As an organization come up with a mission statement that can be repeated easily by any member of the team; that exact message is then repeated across all your communication platforms (email/website / brochures/business cards.)

This plan is the tool to provide consistency in messaging that align the goals, objectives, and key communication messages.

Once implemented, a communications plan enables an organization to better understand the appropriate channels of communication in order to reach a target audience.

The work plan should also include a crisis control plan, regardless how non-controversial the organization. There should always be a plan in place to address undesired conditions. Remember that just because someone has the highest rank in your organization, it does not necessarily make him or her the most effective communicator. This plan should include the make-up of a crisis management team, the plan to ensure quick and appropriate responses to negative press and how often to meet during the crisis to remind the team of the procedures for implementing a damage control plan. Remember there is a distinct difference in responding and reacting. Make sure you have a plan in place that allows your organization time to respond appropriately.

How:

The creation of a strategic communications plan begins with asset inventory of the following:

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|--------------|--|
| Capacity | Who will do the work? What is the budget?
Evaluate the current communications process. How are staff members utilizing communication platforms? What is each communication activity designed to achieve? Is it effective? |
| Objectives | What message do you want to communicate?
This is done by clearly identifying the results that you want to achieve. Going more in depth concerning the stated objectives. You know what you want to achieve, how do you plan on achieving it? |
| Audiences | Who are you communication to?
Collaborate with your organization's taskforce to build this list. |
| Tools | What platforms will you use to communicate your message?
It can range from social media, television, radio, word of mouth, advertising, etc. |
| Resources | Who are the best messengers inside your organization?
Compile a list of local media outlets, organizations and businesses. |
| Deliverables | What do you need to best communicate with your target audience?
This allows the target audience to readily and easily access information. |
| Timescales | Should include immediate, short, and long-term goals and strategies.
Quantify the results in a calendar grid in order to outline what goals can be met, and when they will be met. Separate these objectives in to logical time periods (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.). |
| Evaluation | Was it successful? What went right? What can be improved upon?
Build in to your plan a method for evaluating the results. Creating a monthly report, staff meetings, periodic briefings on works in progress, and a year-end summary for the annual report can do this. |

Tools:

Media Kit

- Provides information concerning a company, organization or cause and makes it easy for media to learn about your organization, gain access to preapproved photos and marketing materials that they can use in their press coverage content.
- Media kits should include:
 - Introduction of the organization; your mission
 - Logo/ Photos approved for external use - high resolution /does it required photo credit
 - Contact information of the person the media should reach out to with questions
 - Frequently asked questions
 - Recent News Coverage
- Media Kits can also include:
 - Fact sheet listing specific features, statistics, or benefits
 - Biographies of key executives, individuals, artists, etc.
 - Testimonials
- Usually set up as PDF for ease of printing while maintaining original format

Public Service Announcement (PSA)

- PSAs are written for radio, newspapers and television and can also be used on social media.
- These are usually either:
 - 30 second (which is about 60 words)
 - 60 second (about 120 words)
- They key is to make it brief. Attempt to summarize the main idea of your PSA in one sentence and answer: where, when and who.

Press Release

- Used to disseminate information quickly.
- Press releases are written in inverted pyramid form; meaning that the important information goes at the beginning of the release, and all other information follows. The most important information always goes in the first sentence of the article, and the article needs to have a catchy summary in the title in order to grasp the attention of the reader.

Sections of a Press Release

Company: Include logo, address, phone, website

Timeline: When is this to be published? FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE is most popular, if you send a release out too far in advance it runs the risk of getting lost or bumped for larger news headlines in the future.

Headline: 18 words or less and use words to gain attention to story (type in BOLD)

Sub-headline: Makes headline more relevant to the demographic you are sharing with

Date: City, State, Month, Date, Year

Body: Write in journalism style of inverted pyramid – most important information first, so that if space is limited your most important info is out there. Cover who, what when, why and where as soon as possible.

Add a quote or two when possible to make it personal and to show buy in. As the author of the press release, you should always strive to show people in the best light. As a rule, correct grammar mistakes in quotes and get approval from the one who gave the quote before publishing.

Be sure to include the call to action (visit this website / call for more info / Etc.)

At the end of the body, you can share the organization/company/event history for background information, but if space is limited and this is left off, it will not affect the purpose of the release

Length: It is best to keep the release to one page, so that information is found all in one place. A multiple page release takes the risk of a page being lost, so be sure that you repeat your contact information on each page.

Ending: Be sure to end your release with “###” (end of context marker) so that the reader knows that is the end of the information and that no pages have been misplaced.

Contact: Make it clear whom the press contact is, include name, preferred contact information and be responsive



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
[DATE]

**[INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] STARTS CONVERSATION
TO STOP THE ABUSE OF OLDER ADULTS
ON WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY (WEAAD)**

Local effort to raise awareness about elder abuse and neglect in our community

[City, State, Month , Date, Year], - [Agency Name] marks WEAAD 2017 by hosting [event type and name/details]. This year's theme is '**Starting the Conversation to Stop the Abuse of Older Adults**'. Join us in building the movement for social change across the province, to raise awareness of this issue and mobilize communities in Ontario to take action.

On [date] at [time] the [Network/Agency Name] will be hosting a [event information] to create awareness of elder abuse and engage community members to *Start the Conversation* to promote dignity and respect of older adults.

Joe Smith, WEADD organizer stated: "Did you know the percentage of seniors in the population (16.9 per cent) now exceeds the share of children (16.6 per cent) in Canada? Our demographics are shifting, and we now have more seniors in Canada than ever before, a trend that is going to continue well into the future." At the same time as that the population is growing, we know that a startling number of seniors are experiencing abusive situations. Every year an estimated 200,000, or 10% of seniors living in Ontario are victims of elder abuse and neglect. And that's only part of the picture: experts believe that for every case of elder abuse or neglect that is reported, as many as 23.5 cases go unreported.

WEAAD serves as a Call-to-Action for individuals, organizations, and communities to raise awareness about elder abuse. The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) at the United Nations (UN) launched the first World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15, 2006 in a global effort to unite communities in raising awareness about elder abuse and the impact this has on the quality of life of our most vulnerable citizens.

"This local event will heighten awareness, that elder abuse is a serious *local issue* that must be addressed. We all have a vital role to play in creating a peaceful, supportive and just society" stated [name of representative]. We invite and encourage you to join us on [Date] in our efforts to *Start the Conversation to Stop the Abuse of Older Adults*.

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If you would like more information about this event, please contact:

Contact [Contact Name]
Telephone [Agency Phone] /Cell [Cell Phone]
Email [Agency E-mail]
Website [Website]

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