

Developing a Strategic Communication Plan – A Guide

Disclaimer: This document is not intended as legal advice. Your organizational goals, purpose, bylaws, and values should drive the creation of this document.

A strategic communication plan provides a roadmap to ensure that your organization's resources are used efficiently and effectively in reaching your goals. The process for developing the plan answers three basic questions:

- What does your group want to achieve with its communication program?
- What is the current environment in which you are operating?
- How will your organization get to where it wants to be?

The following information, which would be obtained through interviews with staff, board and other interested parties, provides essential elements needed to construct a useful plan:

- An audit of your current communication tools and the way they are being used
- Assumptions about internal and external forces influencing communication
- Identification of organization goals to be addressed by the communication program
- Identification of priorities, including key audiences that are important to your organization

Components of the plan

I. Goals

- What do you want to accomplish? You may have separate goals for each specific communication project.

II. A situation analysis – organizational infrastructure and operating environment

- What are your internal strengths and weaknesses related to your communication effort?
- What external opportunities and challenges exist that can influence your success?

III. Position statement

- What benefits do you offer? How are you unique?

IV. Key audiences

- What do you know about the people in your key audiences? What incentives would encourage them to engage with you? What barriers exist? How can you remove them?

V. Objectives and benchmarks

- What do you want to accomplish? How will you do it? By when? (See example below)
- Objective One – Develop relationships with key audiences to increase the likelihood of success with the endowment campaign
 - Reach XX% of the endowment by YY

VI. Implementation – turning your plan into action – communicating with your audiences

- What are your messages?
- What specific actions will you take to achieve your objectives?
- What's your timeframe? Your budget? Who is responsible for activities?

VII. Evaluation

- What measurable indicators can tell you if you're meeting your specific objectives?

VIII. Communication tools available to support your plan

- How will you use your website, email, social media, brochures, public relations, media relations, community outreach

IX. Additional information to support your plan