

# Public Relations & Communications

## Principles of Public Relations and Communication

Public relations is an essential component of every well-run organisation. In recent years, PR / marketing has become a major part of strategies for non-profit and social enterprises to attract clients, funding and support for an organisation's social mission. Like other aspects of an organisation, PR / marketing requires organisation, strategic planning and evaluation to succeed and be sustainable.

This section will explain:

- Developing a communication
- A simple approach to creating a communication / PR / marketing plan
- Different ways to create messages with powerful content
- Choosing methods and channels to effectively deliver your message

## Creating a PR / Communication Plan

A communication plan is a framework to clarify your public relationships and/or marketing objectives and explore methods that will suit your organisation. Each stage of a communication plan is designed to strengthen your communication with a particular audience or group, and select tactics and methods that will improve how your message is received. (3)

The final objective is to use choose and improve the methods that will motivate your target audience to create a positive change in their behaviour or actions.

There are five steps involved in designing a simple communication plan:

1. **Create goals.** The first step involves defining what you want to achieve through marketing. What is the change you would like to create? A marketing plan can be used in a range of situations, like marketing a service or product, launching a campaign, preparing an event or launch, and improving engagement with your audience.
2. **Undertaking a situational analysis.** This also called an environmental scan by some organisations. This involves reviewing the internal (e.g. technology, staff) and external conditions (e.g. barriers, resources, funding) needed to achieve your goals. What will positive or negatively affect the outcome of your marketing plans?
3. **Understanding your audience.** This is also called audience segmentation. This stage involves describing in detail who you are communicating with. For instance, building profiles about groups of people important to your organisation, and understanding their interests and needs.
4. **Create messages.** This involves working out specific messages that are more likely to be understood by your target audience. What kinds of messages are confusing or will be ignored? What information does your audience need to make the right decision about your product or service? Different types of messages will be explored later in this chapter.
5. **Choosing appropriate methods and tactics.** Methods describe the tools used to communicate your message, like social media, blogs or newsletters. Tactics describes using various methods to improve how messages are delivered, like using word of mouth and advertising together. Other important questions are: who should deliver the message? How often should you deliver your message? What are the short-term and long-term steps involved?

Table 1 Marketing Objectives Exercise

<b>Communication Objective - Try using terms like Reach, Engage, Action and Change</b>
<b>Objective 1:</b>
<b>Objective 2:</b>
<b>Objective 3:</b>

## Understanding Your Target Audiences

The most important planning stage involved in marketing is to clearly understand who you are trying to *communicate* to and what do they *care about*?

Organisations starting using social media will sometimes neglect important strategic questions around the target audiences they seek to communicate with. Each target audience requires its own series of methods and tactics in order to effectively have your message heard. For example, each group might receive the same message, but would have heard the message in different ways or channels. (1)

Recognising that there are multiple target audiences, this is the first step to creating unique messages for each group of individuals and selecting correct channels. For instance, communicating with community members through YouTube and business professionals through LinkedIn or Twitter. The next step involves segmenting these multiple audiences into fully defined groups (or profiles), describing the common characteristics, behaviour and attitudes of these people. In this process, you can further describe the specific individuals that important within this group, and good examples of marketing or advertising by other organisations. (4)

At the most basic level, there are two types of audiences that non-profit organisations communicate with: the people that use their services / products, and the people that support their organisation's work, like volunteers, partners or stakeholders.

## Creating Messages with Powerful Content

There are many strategies to messages that create a reaction or evoke an emotional response in your audience. Once you have segmented your larger audience into smaller groups, the next step is focusing on what type of message will make the most impact.

This section will discuss five message types that are powerful ways of communicating with your target audience. It is important to keep in mind that one approach, on its own, will not convince your audience to make their behaviour, attitudes or actions. (1) Good marketing is about creating and building a relationship with target audiences, which will in turn support your work. (6, 7)

1. Emphasising personal experience or impact

This approach is popular for charities and non-profit organisations. The message motivates the audience to help one person as opposed to a group of people. This message has been found more likely to produce an action than asking a person to help many people. For instance, people are compelled to act when they feel a direct connection with one person where their action will have a greater impact.

## 2. Using emotional content

In this approach, the message appeals to the audience's emotions as opposed to their rational information. Some emotions can be powerful motivators that spark people into action. For instance, when people feel good their actions they are more likely to change their behaviour. Another example is that fear can be a good motivation for people to change their behaviour and is popular method for health organisations.

## 3. Reinforce personal identity

By listening closely to a target audience, marketers learn how their supporters think about themselves in relation to your cause or service. These perceptions can be used to reinforce messages that motivate people to make decisions, take action or change behaviour that affirm personal identity and values. For instance, an individual describes a donation to a charity by saying "I wanted to donate to this charity because it is important to me, and I feel quite strong about these issues."

This type of message will often market to target audience by focusing a specific characteristic or personal quality of the group, like profession, education, background, attitudes or lifestyle.

## 4. Emphasise logic, reason and statistics

One of the most popular types of messages is using fact-based and logical reasoning. In this approach, marketers use convincing statistics and rationale to motivate people to change their actions or behaviour. This is most successful when information is memorable and easily understood, and the call to action is clear and simple. On the other hand if the call to action is complicated, people will not be convinced to make difficult or complex decision with a single fact. For example, fact-based infographics is a popular way to visually communicate statistics and research.(8)

## 5. A clear call for action

Most messages will include text with a call to action. This text will explain what your audience can do next or how they can support your efforts. A good call to action can be very forceful and direct (e.g. we need your help, volunteer now) or more suggestive and friendly (e.g. join now, to learn more about our work). Better understanding what type(s) of action your target audience is motivated by or will accept will improve your marketing strategies. Different target audiences will be more receptive to certain messages than others, and the more time you invest in trying different messages your organisation will learn understand what messages should be used and at what time or place. (9)

## 1.1 Resources

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I want to clarify my priorities  
by focusing on key critical issues

**PROBLEM DEFINITION**

<p>What is the key issue you are trying to address and why is it important?</p>	<p>Who is it a problem for?</p>	<p>What social/cultural factors shape this problem?</p>	<p>What evidence do you have that this is worth the investment?</p>	<p>Can you think of this problem in a different way? Can you reframe it?</p>
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I want to know the people I'm working with  
by clarifying relationships between stakeholders

PEOPLE & CONNECTIONS MAP

