

# Building a Strategic Marketing and Communications Plan



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Improving marketing and communications efforts is possible and requires the typical resources: funding, staff time and expertise, board expertise and oversight and an implementation plan. The available amount of these resources varies and depends on your organization's capacity and needs. The last critical component is an understanding of the importance of marketing and communications. You're in good shape if your organization is providing resources towards these efforts.

### Assessment

A SWOT or SOAR analysis is helpful in this stage of preparation. Survey your organization's stakeholders and assess your marketing and communications efforts such as the following:

- The board and staff have adequate experience in marketing, communications or PR.
- Marketing and communications expenses are included in the annual budget and are adequate.
- Identify and assess the strategies used to reach the organization's current network.
- Identify and assess how the organization communicates to potential constituents and the community at-large.
- The agency has a strong web and social media presence.
- The agency is effective at storytelling.
- The agency adequately engages donors and volunteers by communicating with them and calling them to action.
- The agency can demonstrate its programmatic impact to funders.
- The board and staff effectively advocate for the mission, programming, clients and impact.
- The agency has developed a public relations program that is consistent with the agency's mission statement, goals and objectives.
- The agency has a designated spokesperson(s) for responding to the media during times of emergency or controversy.
- The agency's public relations efforts are coordinated with its programming and fundraising efforts.
- The agency has set and follows brand guidelines.
- The agency's materials are created with the intention of being inclusive of all current and potential clients.

### Environmental Scan

- Funding opportunities
- Analysis of similar organizations
- Agency's market position
- Social, cultural, technological, economic and political factors that affect the agency's work

## Planning

The plan must align with the organization's mission. The goals will be developed from the results of the assessments and prioritized according to the agency's highest needs. The plan may involve the following components:

- Executive Summary which includes an overview of the plan.
- Organizational Background: history, programs and services, clients served to-date, major funders and partners
- Goals and Objectives: include a review and update of policies and procedures
- Marketing channels such as TV, radio, partner communications, social media, website, events, direct mail, volunteer opportunities, etc.
- Budget
- For each action item on the plan, include columns to capture the following information: brief description, person accountable, due date, benchmark or target, progress.
- In addition, include a master calendar of all marketing and communications activities.

## Review Progress

As always, review and update the plan on a regular basis, track progress toward the goals, refer to the plan to guide decision-making and revise the plan as necessary. Share progress with the board and marketing committee, if applicable.

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