



A **Communication Plan** is a road map for getting your message(s) across to your audience and will help you improve the way you communicate with your stakeholders to achieve desired outcomes.

### Need

- Organisation has a newly-delegated person responsible for communication.
- Organisation needs and wants to scale up communications.
- Organisation is not reaching as many people, or the right groups of people, as they would like to.
- Organisation’s communications with stakeholders have been inconsistent to date.

### Challenges

- Identifying the primary audiences and understanding their needs and expectations.
- With abundance of communication options it can be challenging to choose the most effective ones and then stick to the decision.

### Objectives

- To have a comprehensive and detailed communication plan for the next year.
- To ensure regular and accurate communication with all main stakeholders throughout the year.
- To support communications staff.

### Contents of a Communication Plan

A good communication plan includes:

- Goals
- Target Audiences
- Messages to different audiences
- Communication channels and tools
- Detailed plan for 12 months with timeline including measurable milestones for the communication manager

### Keys to Success

- Work closely together with the everyone who will be doing the actual execution of the plan.
- Understand the resources available and the current status of communication when creating the plan.
- Know your audience. The better you understand their priorities, concerns and issues the better you can communicate with them.
- Keep it simple! Do not plan to undertake too many activities through too many channels.

# Communication Plan: Step-by-Step

Establish Need	Delegate	Identify Audience	Define Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If communications so far have been <b>mostly ad hoc</b> (not strategically planned and done only occasionally-- when there is free time or a special event), there are <b>clear benefits</b> of creating a communication plan.</li> <li>The <b>person or team</b> who creates with communications plan should be working closely with the person or team who will execute the plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If there is currently no staff responsible for communication, Organisation needs to hire or identify a person.</li> <li>The prerequisite for doing a communication plan is that there is a <b>dedicated person</b> in the organization who can carry and execute the plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and list the <b>different groups of target audiences</b> (donors, partners, beneficiaries etc.)</li> <li>Analyze what their <b>needs and expectations</b> are. A stakeholder survey can be conducted to receive accurate feedback and information (see Network Worksheet Stakeholder Analysis).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define what you want your audience(s) to know, think or do after receiving the message(s).</li> <li>Set <b>objectives</b> for each group of target audience.</li> <li>It is important that organisation is clear about <b>why</b> you need to communicate and keep in mind the <b>overall goals</b> for the next year(s).</li> </ul>
Create Messages	Identify Channels	Create Plan	Implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create <b>appropriate messages for each group</b> of target audience to meet the objectives.</li> <li>The content is equally important to the <b>tone and language</b> being used. What kind of feeling do you want to give to the audience? Do you want to be authoritative, respectful, friendly or emotional in your communication?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider through which channel(s) you can best deliver your message to the target audience.</li> <li>Aspects that need to be considered are: What media does the target group mainly use? <b>How are they reachable?</b> What resources are available? How will you <b>ensure that the message was understood?</b> (feedback or follow-up)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Set timings</b> for your communication: How often will you update your website, social media pages? How often will you send out a newsletter? How often will you meet them? etc.</li> <li>Consider how often target audience would like to be contacted as well as what is feasible.</li> <li>Time and cost will be the main decisive factors.</li> <li>Create a detailed <b>timeline</b> and communication plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create, or assist in creating, <b>materials</b> for the future communication activities (templates for newsletters, annual reports, emails, presentations etc.)</li> <li><b>Check in</b> with person responsible for communications during the first month of implementation and <b>modify</b> the plan if needed.</li> <li><b>Monitor</b> the implementation of the plan on a regular basis.</li> <li>Resources: Canva, MailChimp, and Hootsuite</li> </ul>