Campaign Communication

Strategy Development Worksheet

Nonprofit organizations regularly engage in campaign communication to advance their goals. Campaign communication can look different in strategy and approach compared to other communication efforts. For example, campaign communication usually focuses on one specific goal, requires a high volume and constant drumbeat of outreach and has a start and end date. Examples of campaign communication include advocacy, civic engagement, fundraising and other efforts focused on a singular purpose.

A successful campaign requires a strategic approach to communication. This worksheet provides step-by-step guidance for developing a campaign communication strategy that is tailored to your goal and the audiences you need to influence.

STEP 1: SET YOUR CAMPAIGN GOAL

Identify the specific and measurable outcome you want to achieve with your campaign and the time period by which you want to achieve it. **Write down your campaign goal and the timeframe.**

Questions to consider: What is the specific problem your policy or action will help solve? What challenge are you addressing? What is required to get your solution implemented?

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STEP 2: PINPOINT YOUR AUDIENCES

Identify the specific audiences you need to engage with and what actions you need them to take in order to achieve your campaign goal. You don't need everyone on your side. Be brutally honest about whose support is absolutely necessary. **List your primary and secondary target audiences below and your call-to-action for each audience.**

Questions to consider: Who are the ultimate decision-makers? Who has the most influence over them? Which individuals have the greatest stake in your issue and could be mobilized to participate?

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STEP 3: DO YOUR RESEARCH

Learn everything you can about your target audiences to better understand how to most effectively persuade them to take action. **Write down anything you need to learn in order to engage your audiences.**

Questions to consider researching for each audience: What are their values and priorities? What motivates them? Who do they listen to and respect? What are the best ways to reach them (e.g., school bulletins, social media, community events, email)?

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STEP 4: ALIGN YOUR COMMUNICATION WITH ADVOCACY

Map out the key decision-making moments for your issue (e.g., city council meetings where the policy will be considered). It's essential to strategically time outreach or activations (a rally, petition, etc.) around these moments to be influential. **Write down any key moments or timeline considerations for your campaign or target audiences.**

Questions to consider: If you are advocating for a policy, are there moments it will come up for legislative review, public comment or a vote? Do the decision-makers have a specific time period by which they must act? Are there upcoming community events you can leverage?

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STEP 5: DEVELOP TARGETED MESSAGING

Keep your messaging simple, yet direct. In campaigns, winning messages often appeal to emotions, show urgency and are tailored to each audience's values. **Using your research from Step 3, write down key messages for each target audience.**

Questions to consider: What does your audience need to know in order to make a decision? What values should you appeal to in order to persuade your audience to act? Why does the action need to happen now?

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STEP 6: MOBILIZE COALITIONS AND PARTNERS

A coalition is two or more organizations or groups working together to achieve a common goal. Consider leveraging the collective action of coalitions to demonstrate a wide range of support for your issue. Also consider whether any like-minded community or government leaders would be willing to partner. **Write down any organizations, groups or leaders that you could partner with to take collective action.**

Questions to consider: Do you work with other organizations or partners that share similar goals? Are there government leaders who would benefit from seeing this policy or action succeed? What community leaders can provide a beneficial platform for your campaign?

STEP 7: PROVIDE INCENTIVES

People are ultimately motivated by self-interest. Identify what is at stake for each audience and then frame your approach to appeal to their interests. For example, other organizations might be more inclined to take collective action if you formally invite them into the coalition. Policymakers might be more inclined to agree to your asks if they believe you will publicly praise them for doing so. **Write down any ideas you have for incentivizing your audiences to take action.**

Questions to consider: How will supporting your campaign personally help each target audience? What do they stand to gain? What can you offer each audience in return for their support?