Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations
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Media Relations Manual
for Civil Society Organisations

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January 2013

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

TACSO	*Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations*
CSO	*Civil Society Organisations*
IPA	*Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance*
PR	*Public Relations*
MPs	*Members of Parliament*
IT	*Information Technologies*

Preface

The Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations (TACSO) project is aware of the importance of encouraging members of the Civil Society Organisations (CSO) community to develop their own links to the media; the project is continuously trying to widen its approach in assisting CSOs to get their message across to their publics. On the other hand, TACSO is also aware of the constraints the media has towards the CSOs and in turn TACSO has supported the media's contact with CSOs.

Throughout the establishment of the TACSO project, it has been noted that there are missing links in regards to the relations between CSOs on the one side and media on the other. In order to provide more structured assistance, the project has decided to investigate this missing link.

The result of this investigation is the report "The missing link: CSO-media relations". This report was produced during the summer of 2012 as part of the research on relations and opinions that the media has towards CSOs, CSOs' visibility in the media and CSOs' opinion on the role of the media in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The full report is available on the TACSO Web site, www.tacso.org.

The findings clearly indicate a missing link, which is shown to be a lack of understanding and miscommunication between the CSOs and media and vice versa.

In order to assist the CSOs in the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) region, TACSO undertook the effort to create a Communication Skills and Media Manual, in order to supply CSOs with the tools that will assist them to overcome one of the most significant challenges in their day-to-day work and fast paced information society.

The manual was developed by PR and Communication Officer, Sanela Tunović from the TACSO Regional Office with support from Aida Fazlic, TACSO Regional Office, Mehru Aygul, Project Officer and Ayca Bulut Bican, Deputy Resident Adviser from the TACSO Turkey offices.

We hope you will find it useful.

Palle Westergaard, Team Leader
January 2013

Introduction

Many organisations do great work but sell themselves short when it comes to getting their message across, so the purpose of this media manual is to provide organisations with an overview of the main communication tools. When we started working on this Manual, we wanted to write it in a simple everyday language that everyone understands. Our target group is primarily the staff, members of civil society organisations in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

Among other topics, the Manual will take you through the process of making a communication strategy, identifying stakeholders, defining messages, developing media relations and writing for the media and web.

With the development of social media and open sources available on the Internet, we tried to make an overview of the communication tools available in that area. We have included numerous tips, recommendations and examples.

We hope that the material before you will be helpful to anyone making their first steps in communication and public relations (PR).

Sanela Tunović-Bećirović,
TACSO Communications and PR Officer

Developing a communication strategy

A communication strategy is designed to help you and your organisation communicate effectively and meet core organisational objectives. Here we look at the key elements of a communication strategy as well as how press/PR plans, web strategies and marketing plans fit into your organisation's overall communication strategy.

Writing your communication strategy

1. Purpose statement

It is useful to say up front why you have developed a communication strategy and what you hope to achieve with it. This does not need to be very detailed; it acts as a reference and reminder for those using it in their work. For example:

"This communication strategy shows how effective communication can:

- help us achieve our overall organisational objectives;
- engage effectively with stakeholders;
- demonstrate the success of our work;
- ensure people understand what we do; and
- change behaviours and perceptions where necessary."

2. Your current situation

The introductory part of the communication strategy should briefly outline what your organisation does, what its main functions are and where it operates. It should also look at your organisation's communication strengths – what has been successful and what has not worked well over the last five years or so. The following tools can be used to help analyse your organisation's current situation.

a) *PEST Analysis*

This involves listing the **Political, Economic, Social and Technological** factors that could affect your organisation's work. These could be positive or negative factors and should include issues that are likely to have an impact on how your organisation operates. You should indicate why each factor will have an effect.

For example, under 'political' you might include: Change of government: need to build contacts with new civil servants/members of Parliament (MPs.) Need to understand new policy agenda. Both of which would then have implications for the target media.

b) *SWOT Analysis*

A SWOT Analysis involves listing your organisation's **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats**. Think about what this means in terms of your communication priorities. How can threats be turned into opportunities, how can you play on your strengths through effective communication?

c) *Competitor Analysis*

Another useful tool when assessing your current situation is to look at what your competitors are doing. This can be a relatively simple exercise where you identify your main competitors and rank them against certain criteria. Try to be objective when assessing current strengths and weaknesses. Please refer to Annex I for more information.

3. Organisational objectives and communication objectives

Any communication strategy should closely reflect your overall organisational plan. In this section you should look at your organisation's overall vision and core aims and objectives. You should then suggest how communication can help deliver these goals.

As well as referring to specific objectives, this section should give an overall sense of the principles of communication that underpin the strategy and the key messages that the organisation wants to convey.

It is important that your communication objectives should be seen to contribute to the achievement of the overall objectives of the organisation. In this way the objectives will be recognised not as an "add-on", but rather as operational or policy objectives that help achieve the organisation's overall mission.

The example below shows how for am (fictional) organisation that combats homelessness this might work in practice. Each of the organisation's strategic objectives (from its business plan) can be broken down to show how operations and communication can contribute to delivering the objectives.

Objective 1: **To provide the best standards of care and support for people using our services**

Operational or policy objectives	Communication objectives
To effectively train our staff to work with our service users	To ensure all staff know and understand the standards of care expected
To keep the premises clean and well maintained	To ensure service users know the quality of services they should expect, and know what is expected of them
To provide opportunities for service users to enter education, training or employment	To ensure service users have opportunities to communicate their needs within the organisation
	To regularly gather feedback to ensure we are maintaining standards of care and support

Objective 2: **To play a key role in the community as a valued provider of services for vulnerable people**

Operational or policy objectives	Communication objectives
To build strong relationships with the local authorities and other funders	To provide a regular flow of information to key stakeholders
To fulfil contracts with the local authorities to provide support for service users	To regularly showcase organisational successes in the local media
	To be approached by local media for opinions on the availability of services for vulnerable people

Top tip: *Most organisational plans cover a period of around five years; your communication vision should work to the same timescale.*

Top tip: *When setting objectives, it is important to be realistic in terms of timeframes, budgets and resources. It is also important to ensure they are measurable.*

4. Identifying stakeholders

In this section, you should give a detailed description of your main audiences – both external and internal. These might include the public, politicians, service users and staff. You might also refer to potential audiences that your organisation is keen to connect with.

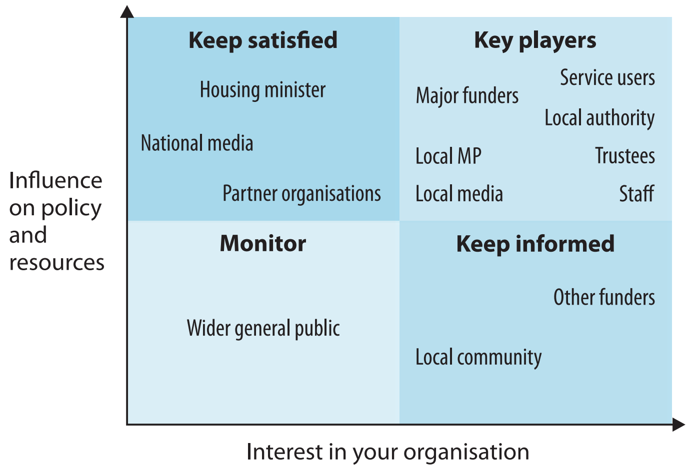
Many organisations will find that they have lots of audiences who they need to interact with. One part of the strategy might look at which audiences will be interested in which parts of your organisation or activities; understanding this may make it easier to prioritise your communication work.

In this fictional example, a charity providing advice and other services has looked at what its key stakeholders might be interested in:

Audience	Advice or information	Accommodation services	Policies and practice	Policy and research	Financial accounts	Success stories
Staff	No	No	X	X	X	X
Board of trustees	No	No	X	X	X	X
Donors	No	No	No	No	X	X
Community groups	X	No	No	X	No	No
Service users	X	X	X	No	No	No
Social services	No	X	X	X	No	X

Another way of prioritising your audiences or stakeholders might be to 'map' them. This involves choosing criteria which are important to your organisation and then ranking your different audiences against those criteria. This can help show you which are the most important and therefore the ones on which you should be spending most of your effort communicating. It is often easier to do this analysis with two criteria, so you can highlight the differences between audiences.

Some simple examples of mapping stakeholders include: looking at their influence on policy and resources and their interest in your organisation. For the fictional organisation above, the map might look something like this:



Description of the diagram: The diagram shows a square divided into quadrants with each quadrant shaded a different colour. The x-axis (horizontal) shows 'interest in your organisation' while the y-axis (diagonal) shows 'influence on policy and resources'. The quadrants are titled (clockwise starting from top left) keep satisfied, key players, keep informed and monitor.

In each of the boxes, there is a suggested prioritisation of communication with these audiences. The key players (top right section) are clearly those you want to spend the most time communicating with. Note that it is likely that some of these audiences will become more or less influential and have a greater or lesser interest in your organisation over time, which will depend on their interaction with you. So, it is worth revisiting this type of exercise periodically to see if the priorities are still the same.

Top tip: *Do not forget your internal audiences – staff, board members, etc. Internal communication is a crucial part of any communication strategy.*

5. Messages

Once you have identified your audiences, the next task is to break down your objectives into relevant messages for each of those audiences. Start with the audience that is your highest priority.

Remember that your messages should be relevant and appropriate to the audience. You might want to speak to your supporters and donors in much more forthright language than you would use for local authorities or other funders. But, it is very important that there is continuity across the messages. It is important that all of your stakeholders understand what kind of organisation you are, so your messaging needs to always link back to your key organisational objectives and values.

The table below sets out some examples of how messages can be tailored to different audiences.

Audience	What they need to know	Key communication messages
Service users	• What we offer them • How to access our services • Where to go for advice	• We provide useful, practical information and support • We are trustworthy and reliable • We put service users first and value their opinions
Local MP or councillors	• What we want to see changed in policy terms • Our strong evidence base and supporter base	• We have a strong evidence base and our calls are grounded in robust evidence • We have a good knowledge of the policy environment • We are a well-respected, authoritative organisation
Supporters	• We have the ability to make change if they help us	• We need you to support our campaign by writing to your MP, signing our e-petition, making donations, etc.

6. Key communication methods

For each audience identified in your previous section, you should now indicate the most appropriate channels for communicating with them. These might include an e-bulletin, conference, workshop, leaflet, press release, event – or broader methods such as through the media and your Web site.

There are pros and cons to all of these channels, which once again will vary depending on your organisations needs and resources.

Once you have looked at the channels you have, you can begin to construct your communication plan, linking audiences, messages and channels.

For example:

Audience	Key communication messages	Key communication channels
Service users	• We provide useful, practical information and support • We are trustworthy and reliable • We put service users first and value their opinions	• Eervice user e-newsletter • Quarterly service user meetings • Service user representation on the Board • Media training for service users who are keen to act as spokespeople
Politicians	• We have a strong evidence base and our calls are grounded in robust evidence • We have a good knowledge of the policy environment • We are a well-respected, authoritative organisation	• Quarterly policy briefings on specific policy areas • Look into creating an All Party Parliamentary Group • Ensure all press releases are sent to relevant government department in advance • Positive media coverage

Top Tip: *for each audience, there will probably be several appropriate communication channels*

You may want to include supplementary strategies for your web/online media presence, Press/PR Plans and direct marketing. These strategies will help you go into greater detail about how your organisation plans to use these channels to effectively communicate with relevant stakeholders.

7. Work plan

With your audiences and key communication methods identified, the next step is to draw up a table that indicates the key communication activities, budget and resources allocated to delivering the strategy.

The work plan should also include proposed timescales and identify particular milestones within the strategy. This will allow you to measure clear steps towards your ultimate goals.

There may also be specific projects, events or publications that you know will take place and these should be highlighted.

8. Evaluating success

Your communication strategy should conclude with an evaluation section. What does success look like and how will you know when objectives have been met?

Here you should indicate the tools you will use to evaluate various sections of your communication. These could be simple measures such as the number of responses to e-newsletters, hits to your Web site or increases in donations following a period of posting letters on donation information. They could be focused on policy changes, for example, have the key calls of your campaign been achieved? You could also include measures of media coverage; not only in terms of volume, but also breadth and depth. How often were your key messages mentioned and has there been a shift in public attitude on the issues you are campaigning for?

Supplementary strategies

Press/PR plan

A Press/PR plan looks specifically at how your organisation aims to raise its profile through the media. This includes print, broadcast and online media. The Press plan should link closely to the broader communication strategy.

Writing a PR plan

"Public Relations is about reputation; the result of what you do, what you say and what others say about you." -Chartered Institute of Public Relations

Planned PR is the most effective PR. A PR strategy can help you promote a service or facility, launch a new initiative, run a campaign, or put together a programme of on-going PR activities.

Putting together a PR strategy

This should include an overview of your organisation and/or campaign, your aims and objectives, target audiences and messages and identify a strategic approach.

Think about how you are communicating; if someone has a low literacy level then using verbal communication or reaching them through their own community group is likely to be more effective than producing reams of promotional literature which they cannot read.

Aims and objectives – Put in place measurable objectives for your strategy or campaign.

Your PR objectives should be linked into your operational objectives and organisation's priorities. Measurable objectives will also help you evaluate your success.

So for example:

- Setting up direct contact with four potential funders to raise the profile of an educational programme in the community and securing eight pieces of professional and national media coverage to raise awareness with opinion formers;

- Increasing the number of young people in the area to use services by 20 percent;
- Run an awareness campaign to help generate 500 callers on the helpline, 200 people to register for the e-newsletter, 100 people to become members, 300 people to sign an online petition;
- Generate one piece of coverage every month in the local media and six a year in professional media to help generate awareness of services with potential clients, their families and those who care.

Audience – Who should you be talking to?

At the very least it should be the people who use your services and the people who influence them. This could include potential and existing funders, family and advisers of service users, the media, political and professional stakeholders, pressure and local groups.

Looking through your stakeholders' eyes

One of the best sources of information to go to find out about your organisation is your service users and stakeholders. If you are developing a PR strategy for your organisation, try and carry out some research with your stakeholders to help you define and refine your messages; help you understand what is appealing and what could be improved; and how best to communicate with them.

What communication tools are you currently using?

Are you targeting the right media with the right messages? Do you let them know about what you are doing, about new services, your success stories? Are you making the most of your Web site and social networking sites? Do you enter awards and speak at key stakeholder conferences?

Resources and budget

What resources do you have in-house to help you? Do you have a Web site, regular electronic or printed newsletters? Do you exhibit at conferences? Do you have promotional literature, or an annual report?

If you are running a campaign, can temporary staff be brought in to help; or can you commission external expertise from designers, PR people, etc.

What budget do you have for campaign or promotional literature, a launch event, photography, advertising, exhibitions, an e-marketing campaign?

Evaluation

If you cannot measure the effectiveness of what you are doing, you should not be doing it! Agree on outputs and evaluation mechanisms and then make sure you review how well you are doing on a regular basis. If you find a particular activity is doing well then put more resources into it, if you are not getting the return you want, then you might not want to carry out the activity again.

Web strategy

A web strategy sits alongside an organisation's communication strategy and looks specifically at how the organisation can build its online presence. This includes having an effective Web site, utilising social media, running online campaigns and identifying what resources you should have online and for web marketing.

Social media

Getting started with social media can feel like a daunting process. Whether you are trying to build supporters, boost donations, share success stories or network with like-minded organisations, there is a social media outlet for everything. While most organisations acknowledge that having a web presence and engaging in social media is crucial, finding the sites which will work for you can at the start seem scary.

This section gives an overview of social media. It is structured around some of the key activities that social media could be used for: encouraging people to participate in campaigns, recruiting volunteers or demonstrating impact. This section looks at how sites like Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Blogspot and others can help your organisation raise its profile and have maximum impact in the world of social media.

What is social media?

Social media (sometimes called Web 2.0) describes Web sites that provide user-generated content. Whereas traditional media is controlled by editors, social media allows users to dictate the agenda.

It is therefore no surprise that with service user involvement and public support at the heart of what many charities do, engaging with social media is a must.

But with so many outlets and often limited resources, what are the best social media sites to invest time in? What can you not afford to miss out on? And once you have taken the plunge, how can you maximise your web presence and ensure you make the most of what social media has to offer?

How to decide which sites to use

Top considerations when choosing social media outlets:

- **Target audience** - when prioritising outlets, make sure you choose a social media platform that is used by the people you are targeting. For example, it is a waste of time building a profile on LinkedIn (used as a professional networking tool) if the majority of your audience is teenagers who are heavy Facebook users. Do some research and have a look at who uses the various social media sites.
- **Popularity** - social media platforms that have millions of users such as Facebook or Twitter will mean more people are likely to see your organisation and therefore should drive more traffic to your Web site. However, there may be smaller, more niche outlets that are populated by people with a specific interest in your cause. Above all, make sure you choose outlets that are popular with your intended audience.
- **User-friendliness** - you do not want to spend hours and hours familiarising yourself with a social media outlet only to find that it is too complicated for your colleagues or supporters to engage with. Think about how easy it is for your intended audience to use the outlet you choose; and how easy it is for you to manage it.
- **Two-way communication** - social media outlets that have comment and discussion boards, forums or the ability to leave messages are good for building dialogue between you and your followers. Be careful about how many of these sites you choose to be involved in though. If you invite people to join debates or ask you questions, you will be expected to respond!

Which sites to use for which activities

The table below shows some common activities and suggestions for which social media sites could be used.

Your aim	Outlets to consider
To get people to sign up to a campaign/pledge	Facebook, Twitter
To attract donations	Facebook, Twitter
To show progress/demonstrate impact	Flickr, Facebook, YouTube, Podcasts
To share knowledge	Wikipedia, blogs – e.g. eBlogger, WordPress,
To alert people of events or activities	Upcoming, Meetup, Twitter

Your aim	Outlets to consider
To build communities	Facebook, My Space, Twitter
To get feedback	Web feedback forms - e.g Survey Monkey
To recruit volunteers	Facebook, Twitter
To recruit staff	LinkedIn

How to use social media to meet your goals

Here are some practical tips on how to get the most out of social media for your activities.

Running a campaign

As well as using traditional methods to drive your campaigns – marketing materials, Web site, print and broadcast media among others – social media is a good way to boost your potential audience.

Before running a campaign using social media, consider the following points:

- **think about your audience** - which Web sites and social media outlets do your intended audiences use? Which platforms will you therefore prioritise for your campaign?
- **interaction** - a key part of social media campaigns is interaction with your prospective supporters. This group will become your biggest advocates and should feel passionate about spreading the word about your campaign to more people to build more support. Allow them to talk to each other by creating 'campaign' pages on sites such as Facebook. Encourage supporters to recommend the campaign to their friends and to pass on links and spread the word. They might also write blogs, upload photographs or share videos on campaign activities they have undertaken.
- **be fluid** - like any campaign, those driven through social media should not be unchangeable. It is important to keep updating information and introducing new aspects to the campaign so people maintain interest. Multimedia might play a role here – allowing you to refresh content by presenting short videos, podcasts or hosting interactive web chats.
- **be prepared** - if your campaign goes well, it may be that you receive lots of Web site hits, requests – and hopefully donations. Make sure you are prepared for that.

Boosting donations

If you are trying to raise funds for a specific campaign or even for your organisation as a whole, then social media can help push your cause. In particular, remember to:

- **publicise your targets** - overall targets with manageable and realistic milestones are crucial to any call for donations. Social media can be useful for keeping your supporters up to date and encouraging others to help you reach targets. You could update Twitter and Facebook followers on progress e.g. "We are only 1000 Euros off our target for the XYZ campaign".
- **show what donations will do** - the more you can tell people what their money will be specifically used for, the better. These types of message are strong when used on social media especially if you use audio, video or a game to accompany them. For example, you might say: "Giving 10 Euros a month to charity XYZ will ensure a hot meal every day for a homeless person". Post this on your Facebook page, perhaps with a short video clip showing the type of person you could help. Tweet about it, add it to YouTube, and get people to talk about it. It should also be clearly visible on your Web site.

Sharing knowledge

Many social media outlets thrive on people offering advice, sharing resources and promoting expertise. Charities can use these sites well to help demonstrate their impact and reach more people. Here are a few suggestions for maximising those opportunities:

- **knowledge-sharing Web sites –** KnowHow NonProfit is a great example of an online community where organisations and individuals with a common interest can get advice and share ideas. There are hundreds of other sites for specific topic areas – mums.net and Begrand.net are examples in the family sector. Consider joining these forums and offering advice where appropriate.
- **tweet advice –** MediaTrust does tweets throughout the day with tips on a different communication topic each day. You might think about doing something similar, providing your followers with an insight into your knowledge and expertise, but also some practical advice.
- **showcase service users** - encourage service users and those involved in your organisations to get involved in your social media
- **ensure stats are visible** - think about revealing a compelling statistic on your Twitter feed every week related to your field of work
- **Wikipedia –** here you can contribute to definitions and explanations of a whole range of topics and on a variety of subjects.

Alerting people

Whether it is a new campaign or a breaking piece of news – use social media to quickly alert your followers.

- **Micro-blogging sites** such as Twitter are great for sending out instant, short messages to your followers. To widen the number of people seeing your message, use the hash tag function (#). This ensures your message will get posted on relevant discussion threads. For example if you have a conference on an issue related to Big Society, post your comment followed by #bigsociety and it will be seen by all those accessing that discussion thread.
- Social networking sites including Facebook will alert people when a new message arrives from a group they are part of. If you have information to convey, using this method can be quick and effective.

Recruiting volunteers

Many charities look for new ways to increase their volunteer pool; social media can play a part in helping attract volunteers to your organisation. Here are a few points to consider:

- **ensure you have a presence of social networks** - Facebook has millions of users from all walks of life. There are thousands of groups where people with similar interests will post comments, debate and support. Find these groups, join them and post information about your organisation – and the fact you are looking for volunteers
- **tweet it** - if you are looking for more volunteers, say so! Twitter is a great way to put a message out quickly. Encourage people to 'retweet' to followers they think might be interested.
- **volunteer voices** - if potential volunteers can hear from existing volunteers what it is like, they might be more encouraged to put their name forward. Consider adding 'vox pops' of volunteers to your Web site, YouTube and Facebook pages.

Recruiting staff

As well as the traditional methods of newspaper and trade magazine advertisements, a cheaper alternative is to advertise vacancies through your social media networks. Many organisations tweet their vacancy and encourage others to retweet – providing a link to your Web site where the job description and application details appear in full.

You could also use LinkedIn, the professional network, to draw attention to your vacancy. Again, those interested should be referred to your Web site for more details.

Building communities

Social networking is a major part of the social media scene. Whether you are using Facebook, MySpace or Twitter, there are numerous outlets for bringing people together, hosting discussions and generating ideas.

Building communities is a major part of what CSOs try to do – and a key function of social media.

Influencing agendas, positioning your organisations

Social media can be a key means to position your organisation thus reaching a wider audience and giving that audience a voice.

- **Contribute to relevant debates** - keep an eye out for the top blogs in your sector/area of interest and post comments if you have something to add to the debate. Similarly on Twitter, 'follow' people who comment on topics relevant to your organisation and if they tweet something interesting, message them back – and/or retweet to your followers.
- **Be relevant and interesting** - tweeting or blogging can be great for giving your organisation a voice and help with positioning. However, to ensure you make the most of social media, it is important not to 'tweet' or 'blog' or 'post' on various outlets simply for the sake of doing so. Make sure whatever you do is relevant, timely and interesting to your followers.
- **Your organisation's reputation is at stake** - if you are using social media on behalf of your organisation, remember that whatever you post on a Web site, blog or Twitter reflects on your organisation. You should consider with colleagues what tone you want to present in your social media activity and what topics you want to comment on and which should be avoided. Do you want to be seen as informative, knowledgeable, reliable – or opinionated, challenging and confrontational? As with all traditional marketing and PR material, it's important to have some key lines that you can draw on across various topics so that you can react quickly to social media trends.

Generate feedback

Knowing your audience and addressing the issues that matter to them is important for any organisation. Social media can help you communicate effectively with your current and potential supporters - and respond to their feedback:

- **create a dialogue** between your organisation and its audiences – whether it is the public, service users, politicians or the media. Use your Facebook page and Twitter feed to pose questions and encourage followers to share views.

- **be responsive** - remember, if you want people to ask questions, then make sure you respond to them promptly and in sufficient detail.
- **keep blogging** - blogs are a great way of putting your organisation's views into the wider world – and inviting responses to them. Aim to build up followers and encourage them to post comments and give you feedback.

Communicate internally

More and more organisations are using sites like Facebook as a cheap way of communicating with staff. You can set up 'closed' groups to create a message board on certain topics – inviting staff to contribute ideas as well as keeping up-to-date with the latest news and updates from the organisation.

"Social media is not for me"

If you do not use social media in your personal life you may see using it professionally as a daunting prospect - you know you should but do not know where to start. Here are some of the common barriers which stop people from just having a go.

- **"You need to be very IT literate"** Most social media outlets are simple to use. You do not have to be technical; just know what you want to say and to whom. Why not start with Twitter, it is easy to set up and use. It may give you the confidence to experiment with other sites.
- **"It is going to cost a lot for not much in return"** Most sites are free to use and set up. At the start as you build your followers, it may seem that you are not getting much back. Stick with it and you will find yourself reaching more people.
- **"I do not have the time"** Yes, it will take time but if it is going to help you connect with people and /or raise money, is it not worth it?
- **"I need to get it right the first time"** Using social media is all about trial and error. See what works for you. As with any marketing or communication, different messages and media will work with different audiences.

Top Tip: *Begin with a plan and not with the tools and have patience.*

Top Tip: *Make your content easy to use while showing potential stakeholders what they will get out of being part of your community.*

Top Tip: *Listen to your audience, measure your feedback and gather support from your community.*

Marketing plan

A marketing plan follows a similar structure to the communication strategy. You should analyse your operating environment, look at your strengths and weaknesses, identity key audiences and indicate which methods you will use to take your product to the market.

Crisis communication plan

A crisis communication plan should be included in your communication strategy.

Crisis management

What is crisis management?

A crisis is something which poses a genuine threat to the reputation or even survival of the organisation. This could be anything from a member of staff or a trustee who has behaved inappropriately, to the closure of some of your organisation's services. It might be that one of your service users is unhappy with how your organisation has behaved – and told their story to the local press. Very often, it is when a bad news story about an organisation becomes public that it constitutes a real crisis.

The power of the media, particularly online media, means that news spreads quickly. Whatever the crisis, managing it effectively is crucial to minimising damage to your organisation. Crisis management means having a plan in place for when things go wrong and making sure you are able to act quickly if the organisation comes under threat.

Why is communication important?

The way your organisation communicates during a crisis can make the difference between the crisis escalating out of control and it being a minor setback.

It is important to gain control of communication in a crisis by being proactive. If there is public interest in your crisis, you need to make sure you feed the appetite for news. If you do not, the media will write their own stories. The aim of successful crisis communication is to show that the organisation is:

- going about its normal work
- controlling the crisis
- retaining the support of the people who matter most.

Mishandling crisis communication can make the whole situation very much worse. If the messaging is wrong, or the organisation appears to be in chaos, this looks bad on the organisation. And it makes for another negative story for the media.

What should we be communicating in a crisis?

Every crisis is different, but there are four broad principles to consider when putting together your key messages.

- **Empathy** - show that you understand why people might be angry/ upset/confused with the situation. e.g. "We recognise that service users and their families will be affected by the proposed closure of some of our services".
- **Context** - put your situation in the context of what is happening to the sector as a whole, or to similar organisations. e.g. "All organisations are facing cuts and being forced to reduce services and we are no different."
- **Action** - outline what your organisation is doing to deal with the crisis and where possible give examples of where you have already dealt with issues successfully. e.g. "At 'charity X' we are doing what we can to minimise the effect on our service users and their families. We have been open and honest with our service users and are making sure they are well supported during this difficult time. In the last couple of days we have put XYZ people in touch with other support services."
- **Transparency** - be open and honest. Journalists and their audiences can tell if you are hiding something and being dishonest can do more damage to your organisation's reputation. Mistakes happen and even in a real crisis, respect can be gained by admitting fault and being clear about the reasons for it. e.g. "We are aware mistakes have been made and we are working hard to rectify the situation. We have held several useful discussion sessions with service users and their families and are continuing to actively engage all those who are affected."

How can we be prepared for a crisis?

Handing a crisis well can be made easier by good preparation. First, it is important to put together a crisis communication plan.

Second, you should try to prevent crises where possible.

Putting together a crisis communication plan

A basic crisis communication plan consists of a number of key areas.

1. Decide whether to go public

The first stage of your plan should be to decide within your organisations whether to speak out or not. If the crisis has not gone public and is unlikely to, you may decide it is better not to react. Nevertheless, you should still develop some 'lines to take' just in case.

In situations where the story is already in the media – or it is likely to be in the media - you will want to put out a statement and react accordingly.

Nine times out of ten it is better to be pro-active and tackle the crisis head on rather than not saying anything and hoping it will go away.

2. Identify your key messages

What is your organisation's 'line' on the crisis? Using the key principles of 'empathy', 'context', 'action' and 'transparency' how are you dealing with the crisis?

If possible, try to tackle potentially difficult questions head on.

Use a short question and answer sheet as well as a short statement.

3. Developing a statement

Using the key messages put together a short statement that explains your organisation's position. The statement should be:

- short – three or four sentences maximum
- direct – tackling the issues head on
- unambiguous – avoid statements that are open to interpretation.

Make sure everything you say in the statement is something you are happy to be quoted on.

4. Identifying and briefing spokespeople

Decide who is best to speak on the issue. Ideally you should have one or two spokespeople who are available and comfortable to speak on behalf of the organisation. Depending on the nature of the crisis, these may include:

- Chief Executive
- Chair
- Head of communication
- Senior policy manager.

It can also be useful to have a service user as a spokesperson. They can help calm any fears about how the organisation is treating its service users.

Having a spokesperson from outside your organisation to give support is also useful. This is especially useful if the crisis involves a crisis of confidence in your organisation.

All spokespeople should be given a short question and answer sheet, outlining the organisations' key lines.

5. Checking all communication mechanisms are in place and establishing a protocol

As well as print and broadcast media outlets, ensure any statements that you issue are sent to online outlets and are visible on your Web site. This can help minimise the number of calls you get directly from journalists.

Make sure there is a protocol in place within your organisation so that all staff know how to handle media inquiries.

Implementing the crisis plan

As all crises are different, you will need to adapt your plan accordingly. You should go through you crisis communication plan and quickly establish the key points:

- key lines/messages
- statement
- spokespeople
- communication channels and protocol

The most important thing is to get your messaging right; act quickly and make sure all your spokespeople are well briefed.

Dealing with the media

When a negative story surfaces it automatically puts the organisation in a reactive position. Having spotted the threat you have now got to gain control. This is the secret to all good media relations. Do not forget:

Timing – act fast

The phrase 'speed kills' has as much relevance to negative news as it does to road safety. If you have spotted a negative story of any kind you must act fast with a swift and effective response which at the very least contains the situation.

On a very simple level this means getting back to the journalist with an appropriate quote in time (i.e. within his/her deadline). Timing plays a major part in gaining control – if you act fast enough an unbalanced story which has appeared in one part of the media will not be replicated in another.

'Speed' also means acting fast before the unbalanced story gets picked up by other media, potentially leading to an even greater PR disaster over which you have even less control.

Answering a journalist's call

Saying no comment when a journalist calls or forgetting to return his/her call is a massive mistake. The former is likely to result in a completely unbalanced story with the damning tailpiece: 'Charity X made no comment' or worse, 'Charity X refused to comment'. There is also a danger in going to the opposite extreme by making ill-advised comments that have not been prepared.

The simple tactic here is to check the journalist's deadline. Ask them what information they have, where they got it from and who else they have spoken to. Then tell them you will call back as soon as you can.

You have now hopefully bought yourself time to consult with colleagues and ensure that the relevant person drafts an appropriate statement.

Preventing a crisis

Ideally you want to prevent and avert a crisis before it occurs. Having a good idea of the potential threats to your organisation and having resources in place to deal with them is crucial. In fact, it can make the difference between a difficult situation being a minor internal blip – and turning into a full-blown crisis.

Identifying threats to your organisation

Knowing who and what your threats are is important in preventing crises. Depending on your organisation, the threats will be different. Some examples of the main sources include:

- funding crises
- staff or organisational performance
- external criticism
- physical (fire/burglary/illness).

Any strategy created to oversee corporate crises must include a plan for handling the media and must work on the assumption that your bad news will, one way or another, become public.

How can a threat turn into a crisis?

The potential threats to an organisation can quickly turn into a crisis – particularly if the media get hold of a 'bad news' story.

The ingredients of a bad news story include:

- conflict/confrontation
- the unexpected
- crime/violence
- tragedy
- items of public interest
- superlatives (worst, last, etc.).

The nature of the work of many CSOs means that from time to time a news story is bound to 'tick' one or another of these boxes. A really bad story will 'tick' several boxes at the same time.

The secret to tackling these potential media threats is to spot them at the earliest possible stage and take necessary action in-line with your organisation's existing protocols. From a communication point of view, when a crisis is identified, the crisis management plan should kick into action.

Effective internal communication

Ensuring all staff are engaged in the crisis communication plan and protocols is important. It means you can act quickly should a crisis occur. It also minimises the likelihood of a member of staff giving an inaccurate or potentially damaging quote to a journalist.

Staff can also be strong advocates for your organisation. They can act as spokespeople, utilise social media outlets and ultimately act as the voice of the organisation.

The communication team should develop a set of standard key messages which tap straight into the organisation's main communication strategy. These should be shared with staff and regularly refreshed.

Briefing staff

Depending on the scale of the crisis, it is possible a staff briefing will be held to inform employees of the situation. It is important that communication forms a part of the briefing. Being prepared with a crisis communication plan, key messages and a protocol will help staff feel that the crisis is under control. It is also important for making sure staff know they should not communicate with trade media or even social media about the problem unless authorised.

Building a group of external advocates

Having spokespeople from outside the organisation who can speak positively on your behalf is a huge advantage. If there is a negative news story about your organisation, you will need to counter it with supportive voices and external endorsements.

Who should be an advocate?

Building a group of external advocates and spokespeople should be a core part of any communication plan. These could be

- service users: people who engage with your organisations regularly and are positive about what you do
- supporters: members of the public who might have engaged with your organisation in some way such as campaigners, trustees or members
- partner organisations: organisations you have worked with who are supportive
- journalists: it may be that you have a particularly strong relationship with a journalist. While they may not cover your crisis favourably, they might be more likely to give a balanced take on the story
- local MPs: if you are a local organisation, do you have well-respected local politicians who would speak out favourably?

What should advocates be asked to do?

Advocates can be encouraged to do a number of positive things in a crisis to help your organisation. This might include:

- writing supportive letters to the press (local or national)
- being quoted in press releases/media outlets
- being active on social media networks see: Crises and social media: mobilising your supporters
- making use of their own networks to advocate for your organisation.

Crises and social media

The explosion of the internet means it can take one negative comment about an organisation posted on a Web site to prompt a media crisis. Within minutes, the reputation of your organisation can be under threat and a bad news story can have made its way across the globe.

The web also means stories stay around for longer. A story that took minutes to spread is in cyberspace for ever. It may take on different forms – a blog post, a Tweet, a comment on a Web site – but a bad news story has the potential to rumble on long after the print media has finished with it.

Having a clear grasp of how social media works and taking control of your own output is now a key part of effective crisis management.

It also worth noting that a few 'negative comments' on message boards and Twitter feeds does not necessarily constitute a crisis. However, it is important to keep an eye on comments and take action when you think it might be getting out of hand. Think about what the tipping point is for your organisation – and act when you feel it is more than just a few.

The media

There are two starting points from which you should start if you want to attract the attention of the public:

1. People are using media as one of the basic sources of information and
2. Media is influencing the positions and opinions of people.

Media carries news and other content, and in accordance with this they can be divided into:

a. News media – TV, radio, weeklies, programmes with political content in the forms of talk shows and trade press

b. Media that broadcasts other content (entertainment) in the forms of movies, talk shows programmes, soap operas and magazines

The first group serves to inform various audiences but also influence perceptions which can form or activate stereotypes.

However, given the new technology age there is one more way to group the media:

a. Traditional media (TV, radio and newspapers)

b. New media or social media (blogs, social networks, online news portal, Web sites)

How to use the media

First and foremost you should conduct a quick research to find out if people in your community are following the news broadcast and in what measure. It is common that older people and people living in urban areas are more often following news broadcasts, while younger generations are more interested in other content. Besides knowing which content and information your community seeks, it is also important to know where your audience seeks their information and which channels are the most appropriate for the message you want to send.

The TV is dominant channel for news media. Most people obtain information through the TV. However, regular newspaper buyers are people who are typically 45 and older, such as pensioners, people from urban areas, experts, and entrepreneurs to name a few. Domestic and world news are frequently read sections of the newspapers followed by entertainment section. While radio has lost its popularity it still has an audience of followers, not necessarily for the music, but for the radio programmes, which allow direct communication with the listeners.

Timing

How far in advance should I let journalists know about my story?

It really depends on the nature of the story. As a rough guide, it is normally a good idea to alert journalists two weeks before a launch. This could be in the form of a short 'operational ('op') note' or a short personal note to key journalists that you think will be interested in the story. The idea is to ensure your story is in journalists' and news outlets' planning diaries.

An 'op note' contains the bare information about your story. In this instance, let us say you are launching a report. The op note would contain information on where and when it is being launched, what it will say and details of how journalists can find out more and (if applicable) conduct interviews in advance. Op notes should be written in the future tense and aim to whet the appetite for the full press release that is to come.

For other long lead-in publications (such as monthly or quarterly magazines, TV programmes) you should think about calling the planning teams well in advance to gauge interest.

What is the best day to do a media launch?

Sometimes you have no choice over when to launch your publication or story, especially if it is tied to a specific event. However, if you do have a choice over days, here are a few things to consider:

- **Monday** - normally a good day for a launch as Mondays are often quiet news days. It also allows time for your story to run through the week if it is strong enough - through responses, online media, and blogs. If the story does well, be prepared for calls over the weekend from journalists wanting last minute information or pre-recorded interviews.
- **Tuesday-Thursday** - if you are aiming for national media with your story, think about which particular outlets you are targeting and what days they are printed. For example, if you are launching a report on children's issues and are aiming for a feature in Children & Young

People Now magazine, then perhaps timing the release for a Thursday when it is published is a good idea. Similarly, if Guardian Society is a main target, consider a Wednesday launch.

- **Friday** - usually a day where the media rounds up stories from the rest of the week. This can make it more difficult to get new stories in. However, it can also be a relatively quiet news day meaning there could be space for smaller stories.
- **Weekend** - Saturday newspapers are full of supplements and you can often find columns or feature opportunities that could be appropriate for your story. To get these secured, you need to contact Saturday journalists quite a few weeks in advance. Weekend television is very different from television during the week. There are generally fewer newsletters. On Sundays there are quite often programmes rounding up topical issues from the week – e.g. The Andrew Marr Show, Heaven and Earth etc. If there has been a strong story running during the week, it is likely this topic will be picked up on a Sunday discussion show. You could think about putting forward spokespeople who could contribute to the relevant debates. You may choose to run your story on a Sunday. If this is the case, you might want to think about seeing if one Sunday paper would run it exclusively. If they do, you could then release the story more generally on the following Monday.

Top tip: *Remember that parliament ends its business for the week on Thursday afternoon. So if you are running a political story and are trying to provoke a response from an MP avoid Friday launches.*

Should I put an embargo on a press release?

What is an embargo in this context?

Putting an embargo on a press release has a number of clear advantages. First, it gives a sense of importance – you have chosen a specific date and only on that date will the information be publicly available. Also, you are preventing journalists from reporting on the story at different times, which can lead to one outlet publishing and others choosing not to run with it because it's deemed 'old news'.

There is an unwritten rule about embargoes and not breaking them. For example, if a journalist decides to run with a story that clearly has an embargo; they lose credibility not only with you but with others in their profession. Similarly, if you put a story out and allow a journalist to break the story the day before, you have broken your side of the agreement.

However, make sure that you know what the practices are with press releases embargos in your community.

Dealing with journalists

Which journalists are most relevant for which stories?

Knowing who to contact at a particular publication can be intimidating. One of the best methods is to keep a close eye on the media and see who is reporting on what. Quite often it is best to approach a journalist personally who you know has written on similar topics – rather than sending a generic e-mail to the news desk. Build your own list (in Excel or a similar database) to keep a log of contacts and how they cover your stories.

For national broadcast outlets, as well as sending information to specific journalists, you should also make sure planning desks are informed of your event/launch well in advance. This ensures it is in planning diaries and the relevant journalists will pick it up.

How should you approach a journalist?

A personal e-mail is always a good way to begin. If you do not know the journalist's e-mail address, simply give the media channel (newspaper, radio, TV station) a call and they will give you it.

If possible refer to a recent article they have written on a similar topic – and make it clear who you can offer to talk to them in advance and who they should contact for more information. You could attach the op note or press release as well.

If you do not hear back, wait a day or two (depending on how soon your story is launching) and then follow up with a phone call. You do not want to hassle a journalist, but they do receive hundreds of e-mails a day and sometimes welcome a gentle reminder. Do not be put off if you receive a brusque response. Journalists are busy people.

Should I give an exclusive?

In general, the answer is no. Giving an exclusive limits the potential of your coverage – and does not even completely guarantee coverage in one outlet. It can be difficult to decide whether or not to give your story to one outlet exclusively. Each case should be taken on its own merits, but here are some pros and cons to consider.

Pros

- If it is an exclusive, it is likely to be covered more extensively by the chosen outlet.
- It should guarantee you at least one piece of coverage.

- If your story is not of wide appeal, you can target a relevant publication to cover it exclusively and in-depth.

Cons

- Even if someone is planning an exclusive, the piece may end up being pulled. You then lose the chance of any coverage.
- You jeopardise the chance of wider coverage – in general, newspapers do not like 'old' stories and so if it is covered the day before in one outlet, it will be old news the following day.

Should I organise a press conference/briefing?

Unless you have a story that you know is going to attract widespread media interest then the short answer is no; more often than not a press conference/briefing is not necessary. You run the risk of inviting journalists and having your spokespeople prepared – and nobody turning up. However, if you are having a launch event, then do consider inviting journalists.

Telling stories

Stories can help move an organisation away from dry statements of policy, mission and values to painting vivid pictures in words which have real impact.

What makes a good story

A good story is:

- **simple**: it does not try to cover too many bases
- **short**: no more than a minute long, easy to remember, no script needed
- **active**: the story is about doing things
- **true**: telling a true story is a chance to talk honestly about the organisation
- told for a **purpose**.

Good stories feature:

- a strong **character**: a person at the centre who we care about
- a **turning point**: a change or resolution.

Stories are not always serious. Touches of **humour** and lightness can show that you realise your organisation has limitations too.

Think about your audience

When telling a story, always start by thinking about the audience. Ask yourself why they should be interested and what you want them to say or do as a result of hearing your story.

Fundraising

Ask yourself how your story attracts your audience to contribute. How does it build a relationship and match their needs?

Service users and potential volunteers

Stories can help these groups relate to the service and engage with it. The right story can generate responses such as:

- "that sounds like me, so it is OK to go there/get involved."
- "I can connect and will be heard."
- "if they can do it, I can do it."

Staff and volunteers

Short, personal stories are great in newsletters, on noticeboards and for leaders speaking to people. They can illustrate:

- impact and motivation: reasons to be a volunteer
- success: what someone achieved in or from the service
- inclusion and bonding: 'we are greater than the sum of our parts'.

They can also highlight the need for quality: many non-profits may receive statutory funding which is subject to quality monitoring. Stories help awareness and move people beyond the mind-set of 'I am only a volunteer'.

Using stories to manage change

Leaders should think about stories in an even wider sense. For example, a 'future story' would be your personal vision of a typical day in the future that is so clear it makes everyone else want to get there. Or you might tell a story about taking a principled decision to encourage a change of values - but only if you can match up to that value yourself. The teller must be as authentic as the tale or their reputation will be short-lived.

Find your stories

Once you appreciate the power of stories, if you listen you will start to find them everywhere. Note them down and practice using them to inspire, persuade and celebrate the heroes around you. You may be amazed by the results.

TIPS

General tips for local media

1) **Keep it local** - it might be stating the obvious, but local news channels like to report on local stories. So if you are running a national campaign, you must use local case studies or have some local statistics if you are to have a chance of it being covered by the local press.
2) **Spokespeople** - as well as local case studies, are there any well-known local personalities, a local MP or councillor who might be appropriate to quote in your press release?
3) **The local man who made it national –** there is nothing that local media loves better than the story of a local resident who has made it onto the national stage. It might be someone who has won a national competition or been recognised with a national award.
4) **The city on the national stage** - does your story/report compare this area with others? How does Birmingham stand against Liverpool in terms of the number of stay-at-home dads for example? It is useful to have comparative statistics on hand if you have them.

Local broadcast – TV

1) **Location** - if you are planning a launch event, use somewhere iconic in the region/city you are targeting – the town hall might be an obvious choice, but what about the local airport, or a well-known building in the city centre?
2) **Sight and sound –** television is all about sight and sound. You need to give the TV something visual to film (hence the importance of location and the people taking part) as well as something to listen to. That is why activities that involve music, children, groups of people, unusual events, etc. make national news.
3) **Make it a story –** news reports tend to follow a similar pattern – they present the issue or problem, show what is being done to address it – and then they like to return to it (perhaps weeks or months later) to see the outcome. Bear this in mind as it can help with future media coverage of the same topic.

Local broadcast - radio

1) **Sound –** radio is all about sound, so try to find something that lends itself to be recorded; music is an obvious one but also thing more laterally - e.g. a variety of voices.

2) **Syndicated piece –** there are radio networks in the Region syndicates news pieces to some regional radio stations. If you have a story that you think would interest local radio stations, contact radio networks and see if they would be interested in recording a piece.

3) **Think about the audience –** the audience for local radio stations tends to be people who are retired or those who have chosen to stay at home to look after the family. When you are pitching a story to a local radio, try to keep these audiences in mind.

National broadcast – TV and radio

Tips for national TV

1) **Make it visual** - if your story has a strong visual aspect to it, then it generally stands a better chance of making it onto TV. Visuals might include a place where service users can be filmed, an iconic venue, an unusual piece of art, a workshop, etc.

2. **Know the audience** - many television programmes have specific audiences that they cater for. When approaching particular programmes, keep this in mind. For example, "Good morning" type of shows has an audience of largely stay at home moms with young children. News round is aimed at young people aged from around 7-16.

3) **Contact the right journalists** - for television programmes, you should try to contact the forward planning desk and programme editors well in advance of your proposed launch date. You could do this by sending an operational note.

   For some stories, you might want to contact particular journalists directly – for example, a specific education correspondent that you have heard covers stories that are similar to yours. If the journalist gets interested, they can recommend stories to their editors.

4) **Think about your spokespeople** - not only who you can put up, but their availability. You do not want to offer up your leading case study if he/she is on holiday during the launch week or is not comfortable about appearing on television.

5) **Statistics** - it is useful to have statistics to accompany your story – particularly if you are making a claim or issuing a call to action. If you are hoping for a news report or even an in-depth feature, the more robust statistics, comparisons and hard facts you can provide the better.

Tips for national radio

1. **Sounds and voices** - clearly radio is all about sound: so if your story involves music or a range of voices then that can help with securing radio coverage.
2. **Phone-ins** - many radio stations have phone-in programmes which can present a good opportunity to contribute to debates. Make your supporters/members aware of the debates (via Twitter, Facebook) and encourage them to contribute.
3. **Presenters** - although there are relatively few radio programmes compared to TV, there are many minutes of airtime filled by presenters, DJs and celebrity guests. Many have blogs accompanying their programmes, so if you think someone might be interested in a particular topic or story you are promoting, it is worth dropping them a personal e-mail with the details. They may well mention your story on air!

National newspapers

Tips for national newspapers

When liaising with national print journalists, it is important to make things as easy as possible for them. That means:

- sending them press releases which clearly state when the story is embargoed for and provides all the relevant contact information
- ensuring the press release provides enough factual information for the story to be written directly from it. If journalists are busy but have been asked to cover a story, they need to have enough material to write a story as quickly as possible
- providing case studies, spokespeople and relevant information in a timely fashion – and not promising things you cannot deliver
- giving them relevant material. Journalists are more likely to cover a story if it is on a topic that interests them directly. Think about what angle the journalist might be interested in and emphasise that when you approach them.

Other points to consider are:

- **lead-in times** - make sure that you give journalists plenty of notice for stories you hope they cover in-depth so they can adapt to their busy schedules.
- **case studies** - where possible, provide case studies to back up your story. Journalists are much more likely to run with a piece if they can talk to a real-life example. It can also help add personality to a story.
- **subject line of e-mails** - it may sound obvious, but try to make the subject line of your e-mail compelling.

- **personalise when you can** – it is more time consuming than simply sending out a mass blind carbon copy (BCC) e-mail, but personalising e-mails is much more effective when approaching specific journalists. A short covering note outlining the key points of the story and why you think it would be of interest to them, can make all the difference.
- **Pictures** – if you can provide a strong photo opportunity, or have a photograph already available, these can be useful when pitching to local newspapers.
- **Lead-in times** – local newspapers tend to have shorter lead-in times than nationals – but if there is an outlet you really want to target, then do.
- **Which journalists?** – many of the big regional newspapers have reporters who cover specific issues (education correspondent, environmental editor, etc.). Send stories to the relevant journalist if possible. For those without journalists covering specialised topics, send to an individual reporter as well as the main news desk.

Comment pieces

All national newspapers have a comment section – where authors write 600-800 words on topical issues. In order to pitch a comment piece, you need to approach the comment editors well in advance where possible. All comment pieces need a 'hook' – this might be a news hook (your comment is on a topic that is being widely covered by the media) or it might be anchored to a particularly event or launch that is taking place.

Increasingly online comment outlets are becoming popular and heavily read. Online comment outlets allow for readers' comments and you get an instant sense of people's opinions. When pitching a piece, make sure it is topical and think about offering an author other than your Chief Executive or Policy Director. More and more, online outlets are looking for the 'voice of real people.'

Responses and letters

When responding to an article or sending a letter to a national newspaper, you need to move quickly. If possible, send the letter the day you see the article printed. Make sure you refer to the article to which you are responding to in the letter – and keep your own writing concise and to the point. It is often a good idea to send a joint letter; particularly if your organisation can galvanise others to make a joint case.

Supplements

Many daily and weekend newspapers have supplements on specialist issues; education, environment, society, families, music, etc. It is worth making a note of when these are published so you can pitch any relevant stories. Supplements not only contain news stories but are often heavily case study led – so think about strong examples when you pitch a story.

Trade press

There are many trade magazines covering a range of topics, some of which are fairly broad (e.g. children and young people, science, healthcare) and others more specific (e.g. classical music).

In addition to the general points on contacting the media, here are some specific points to consider when approaching trade magazines:

- **photographs** - trade magazine often have plenty of space for photographs. If you have an event or strong picture story, then consider sending a photograph to relevant trade outlets with a caption. Do not forget to give credit to the photographer.
- **columns, features and interviews** - many trade magazines have regular columns, features and interview slots to fill each issue. Become familiar with the most relevant trade magazines and look at the opportunities for profiling your organisations/story/campaign. When you pitch an idea, make sure it fits with the style and structure of the column you are aiming for.

It is also worth bearing in mind that trade press will often have quite long lead-in times – particularly if they are not published every week.

Consumer magazines

In addition to the general points on contacting the media, here are some specific points to consider when approaching consumer magazines. Consumer magazines tend to have long lead-in times and are heavily focused on personal stories. Here are a few tips for successfully pitching your story.

- **Personal stories** – stories that have a strong personal dimension are ideal for consumer magazines. This might be someone who has achieved something outstanding against all odds, or who has a particularly compelling story to tell. As with other media outlets, the closer your case study fits the profile of the readership, the better.
- **Know the readership** – it is important to think about the target readership for the magazine. You can then make a more informed pitch. For example, it is no good pitching a story about a young, single mother who is struggling to cope because of changes to the benefits system – to a men's health magazine.

- **Long lead-in times** – with many magazines, approaching the features editor two months in advance gives the right amount of time to give your story a chance of being featured.

The key ingredients of news

There are various elements that ensure a story makes it into the media. The best stories combine many of them:

- human interest – celebrities/underdogs
- scandal – sex/money/abuse of power
- conflict
- relevance – tying into topical social, cultural and political debates
- the unusual
- the new
- death/disaster
- extremes – the first, the last, the biggest, the smallest.

What can make my story newsworthy?

There are a number of elements that can make your story appeal to the media. Here are some of them:

- **timely and topical** - if you can make a story timely and related to the news agenda then it has a much better chance of gaining coverage. For example, if your charity is launching a report calling for more support for children in separated families, it would be good timing to launch it to coincide with a government announcement on family policy – or during a time when journalists may be writing about family stories. **Top tip:** do not always be tied down by external events. There will nearly always be something else happening on the day you decide to launch, but if you let journalists know well in advance then it will be in planning diaries and stand a better chance of being covered.
- **evidence-based** - having a robust evidence base can help strengthen a story. This might be new evidence from a poll you have conducted or some research you have carried out. If the evidence is not new, perhaps it is a new way of interpreting old evidence, or pulling together a range of evidence to produce a different argument.
- **case studies** - strong case studies can make or break a story. If you are launching a report make sure that you have some people from the case studies who are willing to talk to the media (and if possible be photographed).

- **a strong call to action** - in addition to evidence and case studies, think about what your organisation is calling for. Is it a reform of the benefits system, greater recognition for single parents or the fact that every child should be able to learn an instrument during their time at school? Do you want people to sign up to your campaign, or to petition their MP? Whatever your call, the bolder – and more rooted in evidence – the better.

What makes a good press release?

Here are a few key pointers for writing good press release copy:

1) Make sure you grab the **reader's attention** from the very first paragraph – think about the 'human' angle i.e. what the story means to ordinary people. Think about how you would want to see your story covered in a newspaper and what the headline would be.
2) As a general rule, your first paragraph should be no more than **30 words**. Subsequent paragraphs should be no more than 35 words.
3) Make sure your first paragraph answers the questions: **Who? What? Where? When? and Why?**
4) Imagine **your press release as a pyramid** – your first paragraph has laid the foundations. (It is worth remembering that sub-editors will often cut a story from the bottom up so make sure your most important information/points are close to the top). All subsequent paragraphs should gradually give more and more detail of people involved, the time, the place, etc.
5) Make sure you **include a quote** from your organisation in the third or fourth paragraph. The quote should be no more than two paragraphs; you can always add more later down in the release. Try and make the language reasonably informal – like real speech.
6) Try to include an **external endorsement** as one of your quotes – perhaps from a service user, public figure or local MP.
7) Always put a **contact name and number** at the end of the release.
8) Always try and **think in terms of visuals** – is there an interesting picture opportunity that might illustrate the story? Even if a picture does not say a thousand words, it can certainly take up more space and give your story greater prominence.
9) Do not spend ages thinking of a witty headline – **leave the headline writing to the sub-editors**. If in doubt, write it straight - it is more important to use the headline to encapsulate the story in four or five words than providing side-splitting puns.

Top tip - *it is useful to **paste your press release into the body of an e-mail** rather than sending as an attachment. This way, the journalist can read it straight away. And remember to take out any tracked changes that might still appear in the release!*

What about picture stories?

If you have some great photographs from an event or have a strong photo opportunity that links to your story, then you should consider sending details to picture desks. All national newspapers and many magazines have picture desks. All photographs should be accompanied by a caption and a credit to the photographer.

If you are notifying a picture desk of a photo opportunity, make sure you alert them in advance and ensure all details are accurate and clear – including where, when, who and what forms the picture opportunity.

Producing effective e-newsletters

E-newsletters are a fantastic and cost-effective way for CSOs to communicate what they do, but it is an application that is underused and often misused. They are a great opportunity to shout about your achievements and keep stakeholders informed and engaged in what you do.

They are also an ideal way to speak to a large number of people in a short amount of time. But in an age of e-mail information overload how do you avoid people pressing the delete button before reading it in the first place?

Here are some tips on what makes an e-newsletter readable:

Read e-newsletters from other organisations

Signing up to the e-newsletters of other organisations helps to get a sense of what they are writing about, what information they are trying to get across and how they are doing that. Think about the style and tone. Is it personal or corporate? What is the approach and most importantly how relevant is the content? Think about whether this e-newsletter is helping the organisation get their message across. As a reader does it inspire you to keep reading? Have you learnt anything new from reading it?

Sign up to your own organisation's e-newsletter

What do you think of the content and what is being said? Is it communicating with the reader effectively?

Content, content, content

Content is critical. If you do not think you have enough news for a monthly newsletter it is better to wait than to send out information for the sake of it. Do plan what you want to say. Ask your colleagues to provide content ideas and potential articles to give a broader voice for your organisation. Think about when you have enough content and save stories for future newsletters.

Know your target audience

Who are your audiences? Is it only supporters, donors, stakeholders, trustees, staff – or all of the above? Is it appropriate to send them all the same information or do you need to target each group? Receiving irrelevant information can be worse than receiving no information.

The expectation for how we are communicated with is changing. In the not too distant future we will be communicating with different audiences in a more direct, targeted and personalised way. They will decide how they want to receive your information and in what format. E-newsletters will be an important part of this mix. Getting it right will be crucial.

Keep it fresh and regular

It is important to think about when you send out your e-newsletter and how often. A monthly or bi-monthly update is an achievable target. Anything more than that could be information overload and not sustainable. If you need to share breaking news, it may be appropriate to send out a special e-news update to your list.

When to send

Avoid sending e-newsletters on Friday after 5:00 p.m. and over the weekend. Tuesdays and Wednesdays are the best days for sending the Newsletter.

The subject line

What you write in the subject area can make a huge difference to your e-newsletter. This is one of the hardest things to do (and the thing I personally leave until the end). A phrase that teases the reader could at least get them opening up the e-newsletter but do not try and be too clever as you might not get through spam checking.

Annual reports

From naming your document to structure, content, design and launching, this section offers advice on how can you make your annual report stand out from the crowd and make a real impact.

For some organisations, putting this together feels like a lot of hard work with little reward. But it is much more than this. Rather than a chore that serves nothing but a legal purpose, an annual report is an opportunity to showcase your successes and achievements over the past year in one document. It can work to demonstrate your impact and value to a wide range of audiences.

Before you start

Think about these key areas before starting your report. You will find tips and ideas on how to present your annual report in the sections that follow – and examples of some reports that go beyond the basics.

Identify your audiences

Your annual report is an opportunity to position your organisation and influence a range of other audiences such as funders, MPs, supporters and service users.

Think carefully about the content and style of your report and how it communicates to different audiences. Would an online version with interactive elements such as links to videos or images appeal to your audience? Would a different name work - calling it something other than 'annual report' may appeal to a wider set of stakeholders.

Know what you want to say

Think of your annual report as your 'shop window' – one chance every year to really show people what you do. It is therefore important that you make it your own, do not be distracted by the fact it has to contain certain statutory information. This is best kept at the back of your report, or in a separate, accompanying document.

Consider how the report fits into and promotes the strategic objectives of your organisations for example how it can demonstrate your impact, value for money or pioneering partnerships.

Give your report a theme and narrative

Think about giving your report a name that reflects your organisation and its ambitions. You should include 'annual report' in the subheading but it does not need to be the main heading. Some organisations use the title 'Impact report' which gives a clear sense of the content of the document and its purpose. They then include their accounts in a separate, supplementary document.

Having a strong theme and narrative running throughout the report can help to make it engaging and lift it beyond a standard document. It can also ensure it appeals to a broader audience. The theme should be reflected in the headings in each section and especially in the design and feel of the report.

Effective design and alternative formats

It is worth investing in good design for your annual report – it will make all the difference and give it impact. If you do not have the skills in-house, approach design agencies who specialise in putting together annual reports for charities.

You should also consider different formats for your report. Producing lots of copies in print is expensive so think about how many you need. Could you simply do a PDF version, perhaps accompanied by a podcast or short film of your report? You could reach more people this way depending on who your audience is.

If you do go for a printed option, think about different sizes and shapes that you could use to really make your report stand out.

Using case studies

Ensuring there are active 'voices' in your document (service users, volunteers, staff, partners, etc.) can really help give character to your annual report. It helps demonstrate the impact and value of your organisation and the difference you make in people's lives.

Consider drawing on a range of voices and think about how you can communicate their experiences. As well as quotes and pull-out boxes, use images where you can. Also consider adding some multimedia content to your online version, perhaps a podcast or short video that you can embed into the document, keep on your Web site or host on your YouTube channel.

Launching your report

If there is a central message or issue in the report – and in particular one that fits within a broader strategy or campaign that you are running, then you might consider 'launching' your document. This could be at an event that your organisation is hosting, or simply be a 'virtual' launch through the media.

What to include in each section

A step-by-step guide of the key elements included in any annual report.

Introduction and executive summary

You should start with an introduction to the report by the Chair of Trustees and Chief Executive. This should be their own personal reflections on the year's activities, pulling out particular successes and highlighting some of the plans for the following year.

Think about different ways of presenting the introductions. For example, you could link from the online version of your annual report to a short interview/podcast with the Chair or Chief Executive.

The executive summary should be half about what you have achieved and half about plans and ambitions going forward. It should be upbeat in tone but should not exaggerate.

It is also worth thinking about extracting the executive summary so it forms a separate short document which will be easier to read for certain audiences.

Your objectives

What does your charity do and why? This should be a relatively short section and should align closely with your organisation's business plan. Think about both the overall objective of the organisation but also specific objectives for the past year. Were there particular objectives in different areas – communication, fundraising, expanding geographical reach for example?

Your achievements

Here you should include the key achievements over the year, measured against the objectives you set. This might include new contracts, campaigning and fundraising successes, positive media coverage, speaking opportunities, conferences, reaching new audiences, increase in volunteers, etc.

Use statistics and case studies were possible to make the text interesting and to give it a 'human' angle. Again, look beyond the printed document and think about having some of the case studies available as short videos on your Web site or YouTube channel. You might also link to some of the service user led features on your Web site if you have them – blogs, vox pops, or newsletter.

Impact and value

Demonstrating the impact and value of your services is crucial. It is this part of your report that can really set your organisation apart and help demonstrate to funders, supporters and all potential supporters the value of the work you do.

Every claim you make about impact must be backed up by evidence. For example, the statement:

'We make a real difference in homeless people across the country, helping them transform their lives.'

Should be backed up with statistics that show:

- how many homeless people have used your services in the last year
- what the impact of your interventions have been (number of people that received jobs/education/training, etc.).

Do you have good quality photos of the service users you can use? Statistics are important but it is also crucial to use case studies to demonstrate the impact on real people. Think about how these can be brought to life. Could you record short videos of service users talking about their experiences that could go on your Web site? Could the extracts in the annual report be linked to an online blog?

Volunteers

The majority of charities rely on volunteers to keep their services running and help raise money.

As with service users, think about how you can include the voices of volunteers in your report. Could you include 'day in the life of a volunteer' section within your report? Perhaps you could link to a volunteers section on your Web site that includes some short videos of volunteers talking about their experience of working with your organisation.

Ambition and long term strategies

How do this year's activities and successes provide a platform for future plans? What are the challenges that lie ahead and how will you overcome them? What opportunities and milestones are there in the year ahead that you want to make the most of? This final section should be ambitious and forward-thinking, but realistic.

Statutory information

As a general rule, it is best to leave the statutory information to the back pages, unless you can find a way of making a virtue of it. When presenting the information, use graphs and diagrams where possible so they are easy to interpret.

Multimedia

As technology advances, so there are more and more ways to communicate using a variety of methods. Multimedia is becoming an essential part of how an organisation presents information.

With a wealth of multimedia to choose from, getting to grips with what it can offer may appear discouraging. The following short guide offers tips and advice on how you can use multimedia as an effective part of your communication activities and campaigns – and help you deliver real impact.

We will look at a number of activities that your organisation might be involved in and suggest how multimedia can be used. In each case we start with the simpler uses and build up to the more complex.

What is multimedia?

Multimedia can include text, graphics, audio, animation and video. It refers to techniques such as podcasts, webinars, streaming and live web chats.

Multimedia is really about presenting information in a different way and making your traditional communication work harder. As with any new way of communicating, it can take time to learn the skills and technology involved. But it can also be fun! Start small and have a go.

Showcasing public events/performances/rallies

If your organisation is hosting an event, running a workshop, holding a rally or doing anything else that is visual or audio, think about how you can use multimedia to promote it to a wider audience.

- **Vox pops** - think about taking a small video or audio camera to your event and conducting short interviews with participants /audience / attendees. These can be put together to form a short video or podcast for your website or YouTube channel, allowing people to hear voices from outside the organisation.

- **Podcasts** - whether it is expert speakers or audience members, staff or services users, short podcasts which share knowledge are a good way of disseminating information. Podcasts should be made easily available on your Web site for people to download.
- **Record your event** - edit the best parts and put it on your Web site and /or YouTube. As well as showcasing your work, this offers another way for Web site visitors to learn about what you do.
- **Live video link** - stream the event live from your Web site so people who are able to attend the event can still participate.

Communicating research and reports

Whether it is your annual report or a new research paper, multimedia can help transform your document from words on a page to a dynamic, interactive resource.

Think about including interactive content in your online documents. If you have case studies in a report, consider inserting a link to a video of the person giving a verbal account of their story. If your report contains lots of graphs, tables and statistics, think about how these can be animated online – particularly if they are showing shifting trends.

Some organisations include expert 'talking heads' on their Web sites; short podcasts covering specific topics.

Sharing knowledge

It might be that you want to engage directly with your stakeholders and give 'real-time' advice on issues. To do this, you could host online discussion forums on specific topics, invite people to go online and ask questions which you can then respond to.

Another way of sharing knowledge is to develop a series of podcasts on specific topics. You might have a staff member who is a specialist in a certain area or an industry expert or celebrity speaking at an event. With a bit of imagination, these can be turned into dynamic, engaging podcasts. You could also create a series of podcasts relating to a campaign you are running, with each clip representing a different element of the campaign.

Or, you could use podcasts to bring newsletters and e-newsletters to life.

Campaigning – using 'voices'

More and more organisations have dedicated multimedia sections on their Web sites where they upload videos and photographs from campaigns and projects and encourage supporters to do the same. It is quick and free to create a Flickr and YouTube account for your organisation or campaign and publicise it on your Web site and other social media outlets. Use it to show pictures and videos on how your campaign is progressing and who is involved. This can generate a sense of excitement and momentum.

Think about who is speaking in the videos; the 'voices of the campaign' are important – try to include the voices of those the campaign will help and if you have them, celebrity or high profile supporters.

Viral marketing

If you are trying to raise your organisation's profile or want to draw attention to something new you are doing – a campaign or a piece of research for example – then why not explore using multimedia to create something a bit different that will prompt interest across the web?

Delivering training and workshops

If your organisation provides trainings, consider how this might be adapted for an online audience. Webinars and online training packages are becoming increasingly popular, so it is likely that you will reach more people 'virtually' than you would if you hosted your event in person.

Top tips on running a webinar

- **Choose a reliable and appropriate service** - there are many webinar services available, some are free, others are paid for. Think about how many people you expect to take part in your webinar and the type of graphics you will be showing; this will impact the type of service you choose as your host.
- **Plan well** - as with a normal conference session, you need to send out invitations, have a schedule of events, promote your webinar and collect registrations.
- **Promote it well** - use your social media networks, Web site and e-newsletters to promote your webinar. Consider seeing if partner organisations can alert their supporters/members – perhaps think about offering a discount for charities or smaller organisations who want to attend.

- **Gather participant information** - when someone signs up for your webinar, it is the best chance you have to get to know something about that person. Use the sign up as a way to gather demographic information on each participant, so you can better gauge the audience and tailor your presentation to the audience.

Top tips for webinar delivery

- **Be engaging** - make sure you do not dwell on one topic for too long. As a general rule, short and snappy presentations work best. Consider making your webinar interactive and inviting questions or feedback after each section. This way you have a higher chance of holding your audience's attention.
- **Audio and video** - not everyone will have a microphone on their computer, so make sure there is an option to use the telephone for audio during the webinar. Videos in webinars can often be choppy, so it is best to use slides or still images.

Making the most of media coverage

If your organisation achieves some media coverage, you will want your Web site visitors to know about it. If it is a television or radio clip, find it online and link to it from your homepage. Even better, you can purchase the clip and embed it in your Web site (be warned though – there is almost always a cost for that).

Multimedia and internal communication

Multimedia is not just a tool for communicating with the outside world. You can also use multimedia effectively in internal communication. Think about the following tools for boosting your internal communication.

- **Facebook** - you can use 'closed' groups on Facebook to communicate to staff and have an internal message board. Simply create a group, invite staff members – and make sure the security settings are such that only invited members can view content.
- **Video conferences** - if you have staff in different offices, consider hosting a video conference if you want to brainstorm ideas or deliver presentations – Skype is one of the most popular tools for video conferencing.
- **Knowledge Management** - online resources such as Google Docs and BaseCamp allow you to manage your projects and share documents and information with other members of your team.

Multimedia - dos and don'ts

- Remember to **check that what you are producing is accessible** to everyone. Not everyone will be able to access your information for example if they have a disability or are using an old computer or modem. If you are using sound provide a transcript of what is being said. If you are using images or graphics, add a description or alternative way of getting the information.
- If you do not have the technical skills in-house, look for a volunteer or supporter who could help. If you space in your budget there are also communication agencies who can produce multimedia for you.
- Think about whether what you are producing is really a good idea. Does your multimedia idea fit with your brand and what you are trying to achieve? Does it add something useful to your communication? If not, do not do it!

Media interviews

Whether you are promoting your own event or report, or responding to a crisis situation, media interviews present a real opportunity. However, there are some potential pitfalls. This section introduces you to the dos and don'ts of media interviews.

Interview techniques

Why give a media interview?

Appearing in the media is one of the cheapest ways of getting your message across to the greatest number of people. Many people are understandably nervous about dealing with journalists. Do not be put off though – the benefits mostly outweigh the threats.

Pros:

- opportunity for free advertising
- appearing adds credibility
- you can put the record straight
- you can end rumours
- you may be asked to become a regular interviewee or expert.

Cons:

- it may backfire
- the message may be distorted
- you may prolong a negative story.

Concentrate on the pros but do not ignore the cons. Although you can never accurately predict the outcome of a media interview, you can greatly improve your chance of success with careful preparation.

General principles

These general principles apply to all communication but are particularly worth bearing in mind when conducting a media interview.

- **Prepare well but do not over prepare** - preparation is vital in communication. Think about your arguments, your language and your presentation. Have key statistics and evidence on hand. Try not to over prepare otherwise there is a danger your response will sound automated. Try to make your answers sound as natural as possible.
- **Be clear** - aim for clarity. Language must always be relevant to its audience, concise and accurate. Do not over-elaborate, deal with facts of which you are unsure, or get lost in the details.
- **Banish jargon** - jargon is the enemy of good communication. It is an exclusive language that turns people off and makes you look detached. Think about the jargon you use – and make an effort to explain things in language that everyone understands.
- **Be proactive** - being on the front foot gives you more control. Try to tackle potentially difficult issues early on to avoid a difficult situation later.
- **Tackle negatives firmly** - inaccuracies must be challenged as they can become accepted truths. Where things are not working it is important to show determination to tackle them.
- **Remember your key messages** - think about where and how you can use your key messages. Find examples to articulate your messages and press them home.
- **Answer the question** - you should try to get your key messages across when you can but not at the expense of answering the question directly. If you ignore the question, you will irritate the interviewer and more importantly the audience.
- **Be people focused** - put people's concerns at the centre of what you say, and how you say it.

Remember the following five points before the tape recorders roll:

- relax
- prepare
- be open
- answer questions directly
- engage the interviewer (eye contact).

There are broadly speaking two types of media encounter: the proactive and the reactive.

Reactive interviews

When a journalist rings you up, **the golden rule is not to give an immediate interview.** Give yourself time to prepare what you are going to say – and how you are going to say it.

Your aim is to find out as much from the journalist while giving away as little as possible yourself. Make an excuse and get off the telephone as quickly as you can. Promise to phone back – but make sure you keep that promise.

Questions to ask the journalist

- Where are you from?
- What is the story?
- Where did you get the story?
- Who else have you spoken to?
- Who else will you be speaking to?
- What is your deadline?

Questions to ask yourself

- What will my organisation get from this?
- Am I the right person to be doing this?
- Do I know enough?
- Do I have the seniority to promote policy?
- What is my message?
- What does the journalist want out of it?

Should I say 'no comment'?

In general, the phrase 'No Comment' is best avoided.

At best it sounds unhelpful, at worst shady and at times even arrogant. If you decide not to do the interview, be as helpful as possible. Suggest another organisation or another interviewee and offer to help should the journalist need you in the future. Or if you cannot do the interview because it clashes with another commitment, offer the journalist an alternative time. Almost always there is some flexibility and running orders can be changed to accommodate people.

Getting the message right

It cannot be stated too often that preparation is the key to a successful interview. Work out what you want to say in the time before you call the journalist back. The first rule of talking to a journalist is **never say anything you did not intend to say**.

No news outlet can cope with a complicated message. There just is not the space or time. A long story in a broadcast might run to 500 words. A 30 second piece on radio or television will be about 100. You might have to make the message fit the space available.

Having worked out a clear message, come up with a maximum of three arguments to back up the message. You may not get all three in, but you certainly do not want to be dragged into any line of argument not included in your preparation.

Work out how you are going to answer the obvious questions and work out the answers to the questions you hope you will not be asked.

Proactive interviews

There are four types of main interview styles:

- informal
- interpretative
- personal/emotional
- confrontational.

Of these, the first two are usually the most straightforward to deal with. You are being interviewed because you have first-hand or expert knowledge about a subject and the aim of the interview is to elicit that information. With either interview there may be some tough questions.

The personal interview is designed to get an impression of the personality of the interviewee or to give emotional rather than factual details of the story.

The toughest to handle is, of course, the confrontational. A few well-known journalists have made their names doing this kind of interview, such as Oprah Winfrey, Christine Amanpour. Many budding journalists seek to make their name emulating them. Often they sound merely rude, but you should never rise to the bait. You need to sound impassioned – but never angry or defensive.

Top tip 1: *There is sometimes a perception that organisations have an easy time when it comes to interviews. While this may once have been the case, as organisations have become more professional and better organised they are more likely to be treated like any other interviewee guest.*

Top tip 2: *If you are inexperienced at giving broadcast interviews and do not feel confident, it is worth letting the researchers on the programme know. They will often go out of their way to make you feel comfortable and relaxed before you go into the interview.*

Interview techniques

This section includes tips on how to get your point across in media interviews, how to avoid common pitfalls – and how to deal with awkward questions.

Bridging

When faced with a question you were not expecting or one you are not sure how to answer, deal with that question very briefly and then move on to your main point again. There are several phrases, which are useful for this:

- but what is really important ...
- but just let me say ...
- to return to my original point ...
- you must remember ...

The crucial thing is to move back to your original point; otherwise you lose control and allow the journalist to dictate the agenda.

Common pitfalls

Watch out for common pitfalls when doing a media interview.

- **Having words put in your mouth** - if a journalist says "Do you not think that this is the worst thing that could happen?" and you agree, it will be written as though you actually said it yourself. Be clear about what you want to say.
- **Rebuttal** - if a question has a built-in premise with which you do not agree then you must disagree with it. For example, if the interviewer says "So you threw caution to the wind and went ahead with this exciting new project?" you should make it plain you only did it after careful consideration.
- **Negatives** - in broadcast interviews you should try not to repeat a negative statement with which you disagree. "So, these half-yearly figures are pretty disastrous?" Do not say "I do not think they are pretty disastrous". A simple "No", and the rest of the answer has more impact.

- **Keep it short and simple** – do not talk for too long. There is always a tendency, especially in print interviews, to keep talking as your words will be edited. Give your message and examples clearly and then end the interview. Never move into unprepared territory.

Remember that the journalist is not attacking you personally, no matter how it seems. They are only doing their job. Do not get angry as it gives the impression of being out of control. You need to be the voice of reason at all times. Also, remember not to laugh inappropriately – it may lead to embarrassment when you hear it played back.

Handling negative and difficult media interviews

The key to all good interview techniques is control. This is gained both in the interview itself and beforehand. Control comes with preparation, knowing the medium, language and interview technique.

Before the interview

- Think clearly about what you want to get out of the situation and how you want to be perceived (solution focused, empathetic, acknowledging errors, collaborative).
- Anticipate difficult issues and challenging questions.
- Have three points you wish to get across and be determined to make them even if the questions do not make it easy.
- Get as much information about the interview and subject matter as you can in advance.
- Make a list of questions that you think the journalist is likely to ask and practice the answers.
- Think how your interview will be used (how long is it, what time is it going out, what type of programme is it?)
- Think about what the media wants out of the interview.
- Pay no attention to the microphone – concentrate on the interviewer, make eye contact and treat it like a normal conversation.
- Practice - the more you can practice answering questions and getting your points across the better. Often being interviewed by your colleagues is actually tougher than the interview itself.

During the interview

General

- Be clear and concise, and do not give answers that are too long.
- Use real language that everyone understands and avoid jargon.
- Paint a picture when you talk (e.g. "three out of ten people" rather than "34 percent").
- Use action words like committed, determined, focused, ground breaking, unique, special.
- Avoid negatives, using a passive voice and elaborate phrases.
- Start well by giving an overview that emphasises your key message – and end on this too.
- Give it the personal touch by taking responsibility and showing that you are accessible.

Fielding negative questions

- As a rule, broaden the context for negative issues ('this is an issue that affects every community') – it puts the negative in perspective.
- If there is a negative you cannot avoid, mention it first – it is honest and takes the heat out of a situation.
- If the interview moves into difficult or unknown territory use the bridging technique ('what is really important here is...' 'to return to my original point..') - it provides a bridge back to your own issue.
- If there is a negative assertion, do not repeat it – but nail it ('That is not the case') and move onto your own point.
- Stress positive facts about your work, the area or the city – it creates a positive context.
- Be robust under pressure – even if it is a difficult issue take a line and stick to it.
- In most cases empathy with the public will help strengthen your case.
- Explain and illustrate the action you are taking at every opportunity – it shows you as pro-active and problem solving and puts you in the driving seat.
- Do not get drawn into criticising other organisations – it may look like you are passing on the responsibility "All of us have to work together on this" is a good way to move the interview forward.
- Remember you are the expert – relax and treat the interview as an opportunity, not a threat.

- If you do not know the answer to a question, admit it. If it is not your remit, say so and suggest who else might know. Importantly, do not waffle and tie yourselves in knots by trying to come up with a vague answer to something you do not know.

TV and radio interviews

Radio and TV interviews can sometimes feel overwhelming. Here we offer some key tips for making the most of broadcast opportunities as well as advice on how to handle tricky questions and remain calm under pressure. We will start by looking at the five types of broadcast interviews.

The live interview

The live interview is the one sure way you have of knowing you will not be misquoted. Although everyone worries about drying up when live on air, in practice it rarely happens. Think about interviews you have heard and you will struggle to recall anyone who has completely lost the thread. The adrenaline keeps you going. If you are inexperienced or particularly nervous, let the interviewer know. They will help you as they want the interview to run smoothly as much as you do.

The recorded interview

The recorded interview has the obvious advantage that if you are not happy with any or all of it, you can do it again – but sparingly. The disadvantage is that you can become too reliant on re-recording mistakes and so do a sloppy, ill thought out interview.

Top tip: *Although in theory you can record interviews again if you make mistakes, there is no guarantee that the editor will use the 'second take.' So it is always better to get it right the first time round.*

Group discussion

Many programmes use a panel discussion to bring out all the arguments surrounding a story. You should always find out who else is going to be involved and decide if you want to be on a panel with them. If you agree, then work out what their points of view are likely to be and how you will deal with them. The principle of deciding on your message and sticking to it still holds good. When the other participants are speaking you must listen so that you can make an intelligent reply. Make sure the recording does not show you slouching, foot tapping or yawning.

The phone-in where you are responding to listeners' questions

This is an excellent opportunity for getting your message across because you will have at least 30 minutes to an hour. It also allows you to demonstrate that you are 'in-tune' with listeners. You must prepare in the same way as for an ordinary interview by thinking of good examples, checking your language and especially working out which questions are most likely to be asked and how you can deal with the trickiest questions.

Do not get drawn into long conversations about people's personal problems. They are very boring for other listeners and there is often little you can do without a great deal more information. Always suggest that the caller gives their name to the programme's telephone operator so that you can call back after the programme. In this instance, make sure you do call back.

Down the line

This is a tricky situation for the inexperienced. On TV it means that you are in a separate studio from the interviewer, facing nothing but a studio camera. The trick is to talk into the camera – as if it were a real person – and try not to be put off by the studio paraphernalia. If you 'engage' the camera, look only at it, you will come over well. If you look around the studio, or down at your feet, you will have lose the audience. On radio it is more natural – just like holding a telephone conversation.

Top tips for TV interviews

When you are going on television, you are giving a message not only by what you say, but also in how you look. Researchers have shown that in a TV interview:

- 70 percent of the message is carried by how you look
- 20 percent is carried by how you say it
- 10 percent is carried by what you say.

But that does not mean it does not matter what you say. The minute what you say is off-key, the focus shifts away from how you look and your delivery - and moves firmly on to what you are saying.

What should I wear?

In dressing for television, it is very important that you consolidate your message with the way you look. You need to be dressed in your professional uniform. This adds credibility to your role as a spokesperson and also means your audience is not distracted. They should be listening to you, not noticing your clothes.

In general:

- wear dark clothes that fit and are comfortable (it boosts confidence)
- dark colours (navy blue, charcoal and grey) carry more authority than light colours
- avoid black – it drains colour from the face and television loses details like lapels and buttons
- avoid white – it glares, but cream is fine
- avoid very bright colours like shocking pink or red as they can "bleed" onto the screen
- avoid busy patterns on ties and blouses
- avoid checks or herring-bone patterns as they "strobe" on screen
- brush your hair
- check your appearance – it is not vanity, just common sense.

TV interviews checklist:

- Do keep eye contact with your interviewer and do not move your eyes around as this makes you look shifty.
- Do not worry about using your hands. Much of it will almost always be out of shot and anyway it looks natural. However, do not cross your arms. It makes you look on the defensive. Always maintain an open posture.
- Do not refer to notes. You have to look up and down which makes you look uncertain about your facts.
- Smile if appropriate. It takes an effort, but turns a boring looking person into a warm human being. If, however, you are talking about redundancies, illnesses or other personal tragedies, then a smile is quite wrong.

Top tips for radio interviews

- Do maintain eye contact with the interviewer. It will give you many more clues as to how the interview is going – such as whether you are being boring or whether the interview is about to end. It also helps you sound as though you are talking to a real person.
- Do not worry about 'umming and erring'. It just sounds like a real person talking and in fact, few listeners ever notice it.
- Do not take notes into the interview with you. They rustle and often make you sound stilted.

Giving radio interviews

In common with other traditional media, radio is embracing the digital revolution and listening habits are changing. This provides you with opportunities to reach your target audiences in different ways and attract new supporters or people to use your services.

The most common way for not-for-profit organisations to raise their profile on the radio is by giving interviews. A lot of people get nervous at the thought of speaking on the radio. They worry they will be grilled or that they will not get the chance to say what they want. By and large these fears are unnecessary. Preparation and thinking about what you want to say in advance is more than half the battle.

This section will give you some practical tips on how to make the most of your radio interview, how to get your point of view across and what to avoid.

Why is this radio station interested in you?

Generally speaking the media will call to speak to you for three reasons:

1. Your organisation is promoting something and the media want to talk to you to get more information.
2. Something is in the news and you or your organisation is expected to have a view on it.
3. Your organisation has been criticised for something and the media want you to explain or defend your position.

Before you undertake a media interview you should ask yourself how giving an interview will benefit your organisation. If there is little benefit you may decide not to be interviewed at all. Once you have decided to do the interview you need to start preparing.

Preparing for the interview

If a radio station calls, it is helpful to have a checklist of questions to ask them.

Where and when will you be interviewed?

Will you be in the studio or down-the-line (on the telephone)? What is the address of the studio? How long will it take you to get there? Will the radio station send a car to pick you up? Does the timing make a difference to what your audience will expect you to say?

Is the interview live or recorded?

If the interview is pre-recorded it means that you can fluff your lines and ask to repeat what you have said. This reassures a lot of people but remember that pre-records can be edited later so that your carefully considered comments may be shortened or even cut.

How long is the interview?

Most interviews are two or three minutes long at maximum. This is why it is vital to think about what you want to say in advance. In the pressure of the interview and with limited time it is easy to overlook a key message.

Who will be conducting the interview?

What do you know about the interviewer? Do they know your organisation? What is their attitude to you likely to be? If the journalists at the radio station has never heard of your organisation or knows very little about the issue you are being asked to talk about you may want to think about how you will give some context in a succinct and non-jargon way.

Who is listening?

What age are the people listening to the radio show? What are their interests? What are they likely to know or think about the issue you are talking about? What information will they expect from you?

Who else is participating in the show?

Is it someone who will criticise you or disagree with your views? What is their line likely to be? Have you thought about what your response will be?

What will the line of questioning be?

What questions are you likely to be asked? Do you have all the information you need at your fingertips e.g. facts and figures. Is there a press release you should be familiar with?

Style: How you come across in the interview?

You may find it strange to think about style before content. But the reality is people remember how you say something more than they remember what you say.

Some dos and don’ts for coming across well:

- be open and friendly: do not ever lose your temper!
- use informal, everyday language

- do not use jargon especially acronyms. Think about an intelligent 14-year old - would they know what you were talking about?
- radio is an intimate medium: talk as though you are talking to one person. Do not speak as though you are in a meeting talking to an assembled group.
- use anecdotes/stories to make your point: it helps the listener empathise with your point of view

Content: What points do you want to make in the interview?

As most interviews are three minutes long at the most you need to think carefully about what you want to say. Most people focus on the three most important things. The reality is that you will not have time to say more than this.

To avoid being caught with questions you are not prepared for, have a stock answer such as, "I am sorry, I am not in a position to answer that at the moment but what I can say is..."

Be clear about what you **do not** want to say! For example, you may not want to comment on what another organisation is doing. Be prepared. A stock answer might be: "I am not prepared to comment on that. You will have to ask them."

Do not be afraid of repeating your point. A lot of people are doing something else when they are listening to the radio, for example, driving or ironing. They will probably not be giving you their full attention. This makes it all the more important to be clear about what you want to say.

A final tip before your interview

Many people who will do an interview get really nervous beforehand. In all likelihoods you know much more about the issue on hand than a journalist who is hopping from one topic to the next with little time to research the background thoroughly. So, remember that you are the expert and enjoy yourself.

Monitoring the web

Social media networks

Keeping a close eye on what is being said about your organisation on social media sites is a good way to start. There are an ever-growing number of social networking sites, checking them all can be time consuming. However, a daily scan of the following should help:

- Twitter – have a look at your news feed and any lists that are relevant to your organisation. Follow your mentions to see what is being said about you
- Facebook– search for mentions of your organisation and keep an eye out of any groups that might have formed in opposition to any campaign you are running
- LinkedIn – if your organisation has a LinkedIn profile, check related groups and message boards regularly
- Flickr/YouTube – it is worth keeping track of any photographs or videos that might be posted mentioning your organisation.

Online media: blog and message boards

Make sure you keep up-to-date lists of the most popular blogs in your particular sector. Make a point of checking them regularly to follow trends. And when you have positive news stories, ensure blogs are on your press lists.

When a bad news story breaks, quite often it will appear on blog posts or message boards. Have a look at the comments under articles on newspaper Web sites. If there are inaccuracies in what people are writing, or views you think are damaging to your organisation, you (or an advocate) should post a response.

If your organisation has a blog, or members of staff blog on behalf of your organisation, check comments on these too. Responding to questions on your message boards is important as it shows you are engaging with the public's concerns.

Remember that comments added to articles and blogs will not necessarily appear in searches quickly. It is better to go and check them directly if you can.

Mobilising your supporters

Your supporters can play a major role in helping to advocate for your organisation in the event of a media crisis – particularly via social media outlets.

Depending on the nature of the crisis and the size of your organisation, you might want to encourage your supporters to do the following:

- use Twitter to post positive news stories/their own experience of the organisation
- respond to negative comments on message boards
- write their own blog posts putting across their point of view
- submit comment pieces to online outlets
- create a Facebook page supporting your organisation
- alert you of any negative posts they are aware of on the internet.

Brand awareness tracking/media monitoring

Some organisations wish to monitor the strength of their brand among key stakeholders and/or monitor how their organisation is being talked about in the media. There are a number of companies who provide these services – with varying degrees of detail and analysis.

Media monitoring

- http://www.kantarmediauk.com
- http://www.durrants.co.uk
- http://www.precise.co.uk
- http://uk.cision.com/Products-and-Services/media-monitoring

Brand awareness

- http://www.nfpsynergy.net/tracking_research/charity_awareness_monitor/default.aspx
- http://www.visionone.co.uk/BrandResearch.htm

Free Online Data Storage Tools

DropBox: www.dropbox.com

Google Drive: drive.google.com

What is it?

Dropbox is a free service that lets registered users store any files online. It also enables sharing the stored data when preferred. It starts with two GB of free space and there are free of charge ways to extend it as well as paid options in order to increase the size of the available space.

Google Drive is associated with Google Accounts and can be obtained free of charge. It provides five GB of free space for each user for their online data storage and provides other applications for data processing.

How will I join?

You can register on **DropBox** from the Web site and choose between the free or paid options. You will need to download DropBox to your computer but you will be able to access your account from any other place.

To use **Google Drive,** you need to have a Google account. You can also use a variety of Google Apps to process data in Google Drive. You will need to download Google Drive to your computer but you will be able to access your account from any other place.

What will it do for me?

Dropbox:

- You can access your Dropbox account from any computer or mobile as it is available online.
- You can share specific folders or files with other people by simply sending an e-mail with the link included.
- You can use it to back up your documents online.
- More information is provided in the Dropbox Help section, which provides tips on basic uses and sharing as well as how to organise your photos and videos.

Google Drive:

- You can create and store your files to Google Drive and share any file with anyone with an e-mail invitation.
- You can download and use various Google Applications to process your data in Google Drive.
- You can use Help Desk to learn how to use Google Drive and apps from the Google Drive Support page.

Free Open Source Alternatives

Connected with Organised Circles: Google Plus: plus.google.com

What is it?

Google Plus is a social networking interface based on Google Profile. Google+ (G+) as of December 2012 has a total of **500 million** registered users of whom 235 million are active on a monthly basis. It is also available on mobile devices.

Google Profile is associated with many commonly used Google services: Gmail, YouTube, Google Talk and Google Voice, Google Reader, Blogger, Picasa, Calendar, etc. Google Plus is integrated in the registration of these apps, and is stated to be an overarching "layer" which covers many of Google's online properties.

You can use Google+ to;

- network and reach out individually or for your non-profit organisation by simply setting up a Google Profile;
- on G+ Stream share and view information via organised Circles of Audiences-friends, colleagues, affiliates, celebrities, etc.;
- video chat with Google Hangout with a maximum of 10 People at one time in a single hangout
- Chat via Messenger with people in your circles
- Search content specifically in Google+
- Use hash tags as in Twitter to address certain topics
- Use Google Pages for your organisation/business (http://www.google.com/+/business/)
- Promote your G+ posts on Web sites with G+ share buttons and G+ gadget

How will I join?

You can join Google Plus via your Google Profile if you are using any of Google's online services, for most Gmail is the starting point. Once you have a Google profile and you are logged into Google; visit plus.google.com. A series of simple videos will assist you to register for G+ and determine your privacy setting.

- Entering basic profile information: Add your picture and cover photo, enter in information about your age, job, and address and determine the circles you will share certain information with.
- Build your network: Add your friends and family to your Circles or invite them to Google Plus by e-mail.

What will it do for me?

Once you have joined Google Plus, it can help you to:

- Organise Hangouts with up to nine people and you – you can have a 10 person video chat. You can share videos, documents or screens during the hangout. You will be able to edit, download or publicize your hangout video using YouTube Editor. Hangouts also provide a cost effective way of joint conversation for work purposes. Hangouts can be used as a tool for internal communication allowing you to work on documents or share slides and videos with your colleagues during online meetings.

- Join Public Hangouts with People of your Interest: You can join public hangouts organised by other people; or start your own public hangout by starting the broadcast button that can be reached via YouTube. You can invite people of your interest to be added to your circles. You can reach out to audiences, or organise Question and Answer sessions with interested people and make the hangout video available on YouTube for further use.

- Share specific content with specific circles: You can share anything with a specific circle, an article on work with colleagues, or holiday photos with family. Through the privacy settings, your circles will not be able to see the circle name or if there are preferred members in the circles.
- You can join the conversation in all streams: When you share something in a G+ Post, you will decide whom you will share it with: specific circles; a Gmail user who is not in G+ by entering an e-mail address, all of your circles; or will it be totally public.
    - You will be able to see public posts and will be able to "Like" them by clicking "G+1" button and you will be able to comment on them. You can simply search in Google or Google Plus for your inquiries.

Google Alerts

Google Alerts is a content change detection and notification service, offered by the search engine company Google, that automatically notifies users when new content from the news, web, blogs, video and/or discussion groups matches a set of search terms selected by the user and stored by the Google Alerts service. Notifications can be sent by e-mail, as a web feed, or displayed on the users' iGoogle page.

Google Alerts only provides content from Google's own search engine.

Currently there are six types of alerts sent when news content matches the search terms of the alert:

- Everything – (default setting) aggregates News, Web and Blogs
- News – sent when matching content makes it into the top ten results of a Google News search
- Web – sent when a new web pages appear in the top twenty results for a Google Web search
- Blogs – sent when matching content appears in the top ten results of a Google Blog Search
- Video – sent when matching content appears in the top ten results of a Google video search
- Groups – sent when matching content appears in the top fifty results of a Google Groups search

Users determine the frequency of checks for new results. Three options are available: "once a day", "once a week", or "as it happens". These options set the maximum frequency of alerts and do not necessarily control how often they will receive alerts. Alerts are sent only if new content matches the user-selected search terms.

Free Web based Resources for Information and Knowledge Sharing

A way to spread ideas for web surfers: Stumbleupon: www.stumbleupon.com

What is it?

StumbleUpon (SU) is a **web interface** that enables web surfing via its **INDEX.** Assigned tags create the live Index to potentially include any online page. StumbleUpon hosts a community of more than 25 million Stumblers (Users). It is also called the widest **social bookmarking** web interface.

You can use StumbleUpon to create a **SU blog** for your **Organisation/Cause**:

- You can promote your Organisation/Cause by adding them to the SU Index and increase your Web site traffic
- You can keep a live collection of web references for your organisation/cause

SU was originally developed as a **Firefox** add-on but is now also available with the Google Chrome tool bar, which can be downloaded free of charge. **SU** blogs can be connected with FaceBook; the Apple IOS appstore also has a **SU** application available for free download. **SU** calls itself the "Web's Top Discovery Engine".

How will I join?

You can join the SU community via www.stumbleupon.com; you can use your Facebook ID or create a StumbleUpon ID with your e-mail address. You will pick a nickname for your SU blog, and SU will take you to the page where you can pick your interests[1].

You can adjust and change your interest areas anytime you want. These interest topics will be available for you to choose with the toolbar, and you may choose one to 'Stumble' in a specific area, e.g. when you choose the Nutrition option and select the Stumble button, it will show you randomly selected pages which are tagged to be about nutrition.

In your home page, shown below, you may hit the Stumble Button to randomly surf the web. You may use the Recommended button (it is a drop down menu showing your previously selected interest areas) to select a topic such as Women's Issues.

When you select Women's Issues as an **interest area** and select the Stumble button, you will be shown a Web page such as the one to the right. You may select the Thumbs Up (Like) Button to add it to your SU Blog.

You can also leave comments by clicking on the comment tab and leave a comment on the SU Index for this page. You can share your comment on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.

If you give a Thumbs Down (Dislike) for a page you stumbled upon, it will be listed in the Index for that page, and you will not see this page again.

You can also create and share lists for your cause/organisations.

1 http://www.problogger.net/archives/2007/09/26/building-your-blog-with-stumbleupon/

Stumble Upon also provides you guidance during your first stumbles. You can also get help from the SU new users guide and also from some blog posts and other guides.

What will it do for me?

- You will have a Stumble Upon Blog that you can collect web pages of your organisation/cause that can be followed, shared and rated by people in the SU Community and more with sharing options.
- Your blog can serve as a reference point for your organisation/cause for those who are interested
- You can promote your Web pages and campaigns, as well as other references on your organisation/cause by adding them to the SU Index and promoting their popularity with comments[2]
- You can join the Stumble for Good Campaign of SU and promote your cause/organisation with its support[3]

2 http://www.johnhaydon.com/2008/10/7-powerful-discoveries-ive-made-about-how-stumbleupon-can-increase-traffic-for-your-non-profit/

3 http://adage.com/article/goodworks/stumbleupon-launches-program-nonprofits/229191/

Free Online Research Tools

SurveyMonkey: http://www.surveymonkey.com/

Google Drive Forms: drive.google.com

What is it?

SurveyMonkey is a web survey facility. It is available for free use as well as with paid options which offer more facilities. It is available online at www.surveymonkey.com.

Google Drive as described in the first section of this annex also provides other applications for data processing, including **Forms** that enable the creation of surveys and feedback forms.

How will I join?

You can register on **SurveyMonkey** through their Web site and choose between the free or paid options.

To use **Google Drive Forms** for surveys and feedback forms, you need to have a google account.

What will it do for me?

Surveymonkey:

- A free surveymonkey membership enables 10 questions in a survey providing up to 1000 responses.

- You can choose from a variety of question types including multiple choice or open ended questions that allow for greater details to be provided in the comment field.
- You will be able to share your survey link in Facebook, Twitter, e-mail or embed the survey on your Web site.
- The Survey Monkey Help Page provides tutorials and frequently asked questions for designing a survey, collecting responses and analysing data. A user's manual is also available for free use. Video tutorials are also available providing the how to's of the tool, which can be found with a simple web search such as this.

Google Drive Forms:

- You can create and share a form from your Google Drive Documents List or from any existing spreadsheet.
- You can send out your survey for responses via e-mail or embed it in Google Plus.
- You can use Help Desk to learn how to create a form, add sections and other items and how to disseminate it from the Google Drive Support page.
- There are also video and written tutorials on the how to's of the Google Drive Forms that can be found with a simple web search such as this and this.

Social Media

Facebook: www.facebook.com

Facebook (FB) is the one of the most popular social media tools in the world. The main goal of Facebook is to connect people to others and share and broadcast information.

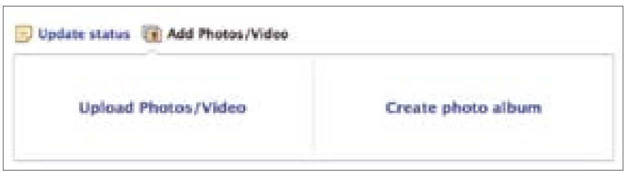
Facebook has **32 million accounts** (2012 data) and is constantly growing.

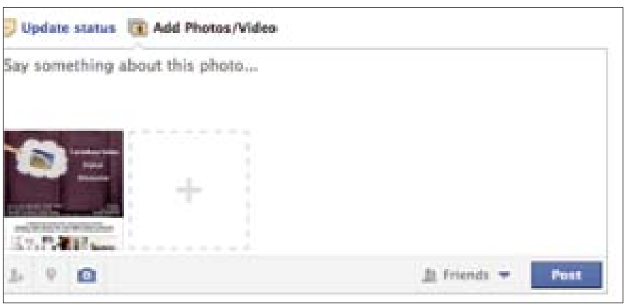
How can you open a Facebook account?

1) Go to www.facebook.com
2) Add you information to the main page (name, age, e-mail, etc.)
3) Confirm your membership via a system administered e-mail in your e-mail inbox
4) Now you are on Facebook! You can start finding your friends.

How can you add Photos and Videos?

1) Go to your homepage
2) Click to "add photos/videos"
3) Choose "upload photo"
4) Add your photo from your computer and click to "choose"
5) Write some information about the photo (who is in the photo, place, etc.)
6) Click the "post" button and your photos will be posted to your timeline and photos page
7) You can tag your friends on the photo and they can see and share photo in their timelines





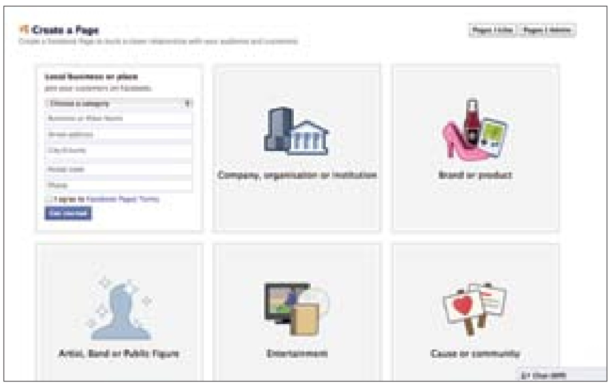
Page: With the move to the Timeline format in February 2012, Facebook Pages are increasingly becoming the primary hub for users to discover and interact with all types of businesses and organisations online. For advertisers, Pages are the primary means of reaching an audience by publishing the content that appears in the News Feed of users who have liked your page.

In order to speak with one voice, and to spread one message, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) should have one Facebook page with all their activities shown on this one page.

Facebook pages should be updated daily. According to some research, the best times for posting information are between 12:00 and 13:00 hrs. and around 16:00 hrs.

How can you create a Page on Facebook?

1) Login to your FB account and click to “create page”
2) Choose your page type (company, brand or product, entertainment, etc.). CSOs should choose the **“Cause or Community” category**
3) Add relevant information (page name, information, pictures, etc.)
4) Click to save
5) You now have a page! Now you can invite your community to like your page and to participate in information sharing.



Timeline: Since February 2012, Facebook has been using a new format. Timeline is a more effective and easier form of communication on Facebook. Timeline gives you the opportunities to create your organisation’s timeline with posts, pictures and videos. Timeline can help communicate and promote your organisation’s message.

Groups: Dating back to over five years ago, during the early days of Facebook, Groups were the oldest and simplest way to build an online community around a particular topic. While the vast majority of marketers and advertisers should focus on Facebook Pages, Groups still have the potential for marketers and community managers who are looking to collaborate and internally share online, or to organise people around projects, ideas and causes.

How can you open Groups?

1) Login to Facebook
2) Click “Groups”. Then choose “create group”
3) Add your information about the group (name, definition, category, etc.) and click “Create”
4) Then in a new page choose your group picture and click to save
5) You now have a Facebook Group! Now you can add your community to your group.

Like: The Like Button is the simplest social plugin and it creates a viral distribution method for content. This Like Button can be seen on other Web sites, on articles and comments on blogs, among others. You can click this button for the things you like without having to be logged into your FB profile. Your 'likes' will in turn show up automatically on your Facebook page and you will be able to see which of your friends have also liked the same things as you and which sites they have engaged in. You can include the Like Button on your organisation's Web site and follow you has liked your page and the number of likes you have received.

Localizations: You can share your post for special localizations. This tool is important when you have a community that differs in gender, age and/or speaks different languages.

As mentioned in the image above, page post targeting will only apply to the News Feed distribution. All posts will remain visible from the page's Timeline. This will allow the friends of fans who do not meet the targeting criteria to see stories about their friends who like or comment on a post. Localization enables page owners more control over the messages they share to different subsets of their audience. If pages take advantage of this feature, users will see more relevant content, which could reduce the number of fans who unsubscribe to posts or unlike pages. It could also help pages increase the Talking About feature.

Tips and Tricks for Facebook

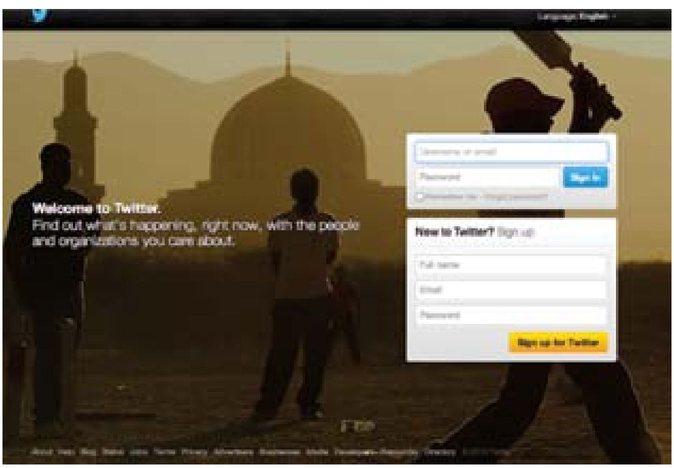
- Use quality pictures on Facebook for a greater effective.
- Facebook is a tool for a more qualified user.
- Facebook is a platform where visuals and videos attract attention whereas Twitter is a text platform
- Using key words is important.
- Follow similar pages and accounts as yours.
- Add pictures with a logo to the timeline headline. Picture should help describe the work you do.

Twitter: www.twitter.com

Twitter is one of the simplest and fastest ways of telling your story or sharing your opinion in 140 characters with the social media generation. Twitter has 100+ million active users who send over 250 million tweets in a day. Twitter content is created by people and shared quickly. Since Twitter followers are part of your community, it is important that there is mutual trust between CSOs and their followers so that a bonding factor can be formed.

How can you open a Twitter account?

1) Go to www.twitter.com
2) Add your information. (Name, e-mail and password)
3) Choose your username in the new page
4) Twitter will send you a confirmation. Click the link and confirm your membership.
5) You now have a Twitter account. Now start following and sharing your thoughts.
6) Twitter will recommend some persons for you to follow based on your profile.

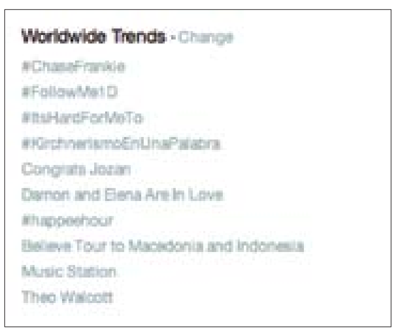


Cover Photo in Twitter

Twitter announced cover photos in 2012. Cover photos are for your own page view. The idea is similar to Facebook's Timeline cover photo. Followers' eyes will immediately go toward the larger image that also promotes the username, location, and bio -- which was far less visible with the old layout.

The new look adds some flavour and visual personality to a Twitter account.

Trending Topics (TT)



Trending topics are user created hashtags that become popular and if the volume is right get featured on Twitter's list of most discussed topics. People tweet something interesting for others who – instantly pick it up, retweet and move it forward which demonstrates **a new form of a modern word of mouth**. Eventually, and if a story is picked up by many people, **it goes viral and becomes a trending topic** that appears at the right side column of every Twitter homepage along with many other Web sites which follow Twitter trends.

Why are Trending Topics important for CSOs?

1) CSOs can create TT for their aims
2) Raise awareness
3) CSOs can join other TTs

Hashtags (#)

Often the biggest results come from the smallest actions, take Twitter hashtags, for example. The concept itself is deceptively simple; just add the "#" symbol in front of a word or a group of words with the spaces between them taken out.

By including a relevant hashtag in your tweet, it becomes visible to people searching for that specific topic, adding your voice to the general discussion. Conversely, hashtags automatically narrow down your audience, allowing your tweets to reach and engage only those interested in the same subject matter.

The system's utter simplicity makes it easy to get your hashtag campaign started. Here are some tips on how to get started.

1. Determine the kind of value you aim to derive for yourself and your followers from using the hashtag. Do you intend to crowd source information? Do you aim to create buzz? Are you looking to provoke conversation? Make sure your intentions and purpose for employing the hashtag are clear and focused. Formulate a hashtag that is relevant to your purpose and the subject you intend to tweet about.
2. Check to see if the hashtag you have in mind already exists and is in use. It is also very important to check if your desired hashtag has not taken on some other meaning. Twitter Search, Hashtags.org and Tagalus are some tools you can use to do a quick hashtag check.
3. Start tweeting your hashtag. It helps to set the context of your hashtag by briefly explaining what it means. Tweet with moderation. The last thing you want is to be seen as a spammer. Always ask what value you and your followers can get from the tweet you are putting out.
4. If it does not exist yet, add your hashtag definition to online tools such as Tagalus.
5. Set up an automatic alert tool that sends you an e-mail alert when someone tweets your hashtag. Twilert is one such tool.

Tailored Trends

Twitter trends have become more and more popular as Twitter's popularity has grown. Everyone wants their hash tag to be "trending on Twitter." But now trends will be even more targeted to users who see them. Tailored trends take into account a user's interests, followers, and location. This update allows Twitter to notify users about relevant topics. When breaking trends affecting the industry occur, Tailored Trends is a way advertisers can immediately find out about it, and possibly even do some newsjacking.

Tips and Tricks for Twitter

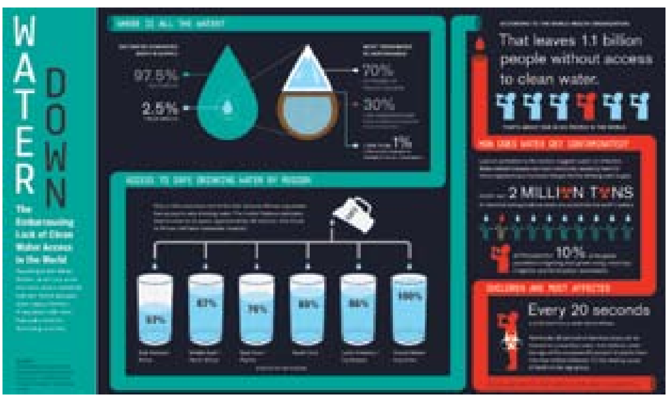
- Twitter is a better platform for perception management
- A striking highlight is important on Twitter, like a quote from someone famous.
- Using key words is important.
- Follow similar pages and accounts with yours.
- Add pictures with a logo to the timeline headline. Picture should help describe the work you do.
- Find celebrities who support your cause and reach out to them via Twitter, explaining what your organisation does and see if they will support you.

Infographics

Information graphics or **infographics** are graphic visual representations of information, data or knowledge intended to present complex information quickly and clearly. They can improve cognition by utilizing graphics to enhance the human visual system's ability to see patterns and trends. The process of creating infographics can be referred to as data visualization, information design, or information architecture. Infographics represent a natural extension of storytelling which is telling the story of data.

Five ways that non-profit organisations can utilize infographics

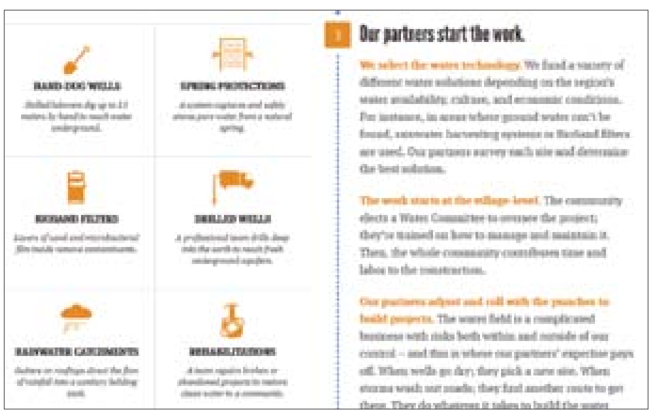
There are a lot of great ways that non-profit organisations (NGOs) can utilize infographics. Below are five ideas for NGOs who want to tell stories using infographics.



1. **Show the need for a programme.** This infographic illustrates the need for clean drinking water.
2. **Visualize data from a report**, such as this infographic summarizing the eNonprofit Benchmarks study.

3. **Move people to action.** Voices for America's Children created an infographic showing where children live in poverty in the U.S.A., overlaid with where the important elected officials live. The infographic is located adjacent to its "take action" online letter to elected officials.

4. **Donation impact.** NGO charity: water created an infographic called How Your Birthday Can Change the World to show the impact of donations.



5. **Impact of services.** The American Red Cross's infographic illustrates the many ways that they are helping victims of US natural disasters.

Designing An Infographic

Some great tips for designing infographics:

- Keep it simple! Do not try to do too much in one picture.
- Decide on a colour scheme.
- Research some great facts and statistics.
- Think of it as a visual essay: ensure your arguments hold and are relevant.
- Remember that it is all about quickly conveying the meaning behind complex data.
- Draw conclusions.
- Reference your facts in the infographic.
- Include your URL so people can be sure who made it.

Ideas for infographic formats include:

- Timelines;
- Flow charts;
- Annotated maps;
- Graphs;
- Venn diagrams;
- Size comparisons;
- Showing familiar objects or similar size or value.

Instagram

Instagram is an online photo sharing and social networking service that enables its users to take a picture, apply a digital filter to it, and share it on a variety of social networking services, including its own and other leading sites such as Facebook or Twitter. A distinctive feature is that it confines photos to a square shape, similar to Kodak Instamatic and Polaroid images, in contrast to the 4:3 aspect ratio typically used by mobile device cameras.

What can I do with Instagram?

Instagram allows brands and businesses to connect directly with their fans. Here is a brief rundown of how you can use Instagram for your business.

- Social media sharing: Share photos via Twitter, Facebook, Flikr, Tumblr and Foursquare. Instagram allows you to add hashtags, which will help you track any picture via your social networks.
- Event: Asking people to take photos of an event you are having creates more interaction and builds a following for an event.
- Connection: With over 50 million Instagram users, it is wise to make it another avenue to form connections on a personal level.

Location: Geo-tagging allows followers to map where the photos are being taken. This is useful for a professional event. It can also be made fun as some have already tried to use it as a way to create a virtual scavenger hunt for customers.

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network with over 175 million members and growing rapidly. LinkedIn connects you to your trusted contacts and helps you exchange knowledge, ideas, and opportunities with a broader network of professionals. The site lets you find other business associates, clients, and colleagues whom you already know. You "connect" with them through the site, and then they become part of your network.

Once you have connected with a person, you will then have access to their list of connections – this is called your "extended network." You can request an introduction to people in your extended network through your mutual contact.

LinkedIn also provides other features including the ability to set up and join groups, and a jobs section where members can advertise open positions or apply for jobs.

What are the LinkedIn Terms?

- Connections – Connections are other registered users who you know personally on LinkedIn. Although you can invite anyone to be a connection, they will need to set up an account to use the site.
- Second-degree connections – These are the connections that your connections have. For example, you are friends with Bill, who is directly connected with his boss. Bill's boss is a second-degree connection for you.
- Third-degree connection – Any connections from your second-degree connections are third-degree connections. So, Bill's boss's connections would be your third-degree connections.
- Profile page – This is your personal page on LinkedIn. All registered users with LinkedIn can view it (unless you set it to be a private page). Your profile page can list your education, past work history, current and past projects, groups and associations, and more. Users can also forward your profile page to contacts on their lists. You can also make your profile page "public" so that anyone (even people not on LinkedIn) can view it.
- Recommendations – Your connections can write recommendations, or testimonials, for your profile. These can be a powerful testament to your business and professional skills.

- Introductions – Introductions are when a third party introduces two people who were not currently connected. For instance, your colleague Sue and your client Dan do not know each other. You think Sue could help solve a problem that Dan is having with one of his projects, so you introduce Sue and Dan through LinkedIn. Introductions are simply a way to bring people together on the site.

Organisational Use

You can also use LinkedIn in the following ways to help your organisation grow:

- Increase visibility – LinkedIn gives your organisation increased visibility for its brand, products, and corporate goals. Potential volunteers and supporters can research your organisation on LinkedIn to see if they are interested in cooperating. This is especially useful if your organisation provide services or products to other businesses.
- Conduct research on other organisations – LinkedIn also works the other way. You can use the site to research your competition, potential partners, or new supporters and volunteers.
- Tell your organisation's story – The company story, if told in the right way, can inspire community and potential volunteers, and create an emotional connection with people. Special applications, like video, allow you to create a multimedia experience with other users. (Setting up a profile for your organisation will be useful here.)

Tip: *Make sure that the organisational use of LinkedIn is aligned with your organisation's overall strategy, and its other channels of communication.*

Pinterest: www.pinterest.com

Pinterest is a pinboard-style photo sharing Web site that allows users to create and manage theme-based image collections such as events, interests, hobbies, and more. Users can browse other pinboards for inspiration,'re-pin' images to their own collections or 'like' photos. People use boards to plan their weddings, decorate their homes, and share their favourite recipes.

How can you use Pinterest:

1. Go to www.pineterest.com
2. Login with your e-mail or Facebook account or Twitter
3. Search categories and choose your interest
4. Create your boards
5. Start following other boards
6. Add and share your design/campaign visuals, etc.

Tips and Tricks:

- Connect your Pinterest account to your other social media accounts.
- Share one or two visuals a day.
- You can run social media campaign with Pinterest and Twitter/ Facebook together
- You can like others pin without re-pining.
- If you want to share others' pins click to re-pin.

YouTube: www.youtube.com

YouTube is a video-sharing Web site. Most of the content on YouTube has been uploaded by individuals, although media corporations including CBS, the BBC, VEVO, Hulu, and other organisations offer some of their material via the site, as part of the YouTube partnership programme. Unregistered users can watch videos, while registered users can upload an unlimited number of videos. Videos considered to contain potentially offensive content are available only to registered users at least 18 years old.

Tips and tricks:

- Keywords which define the video need to be added.
- The keywords should be included in the headline of the video.
- Make links to your video from other Web pages or social media tools.
- Ask people to join your YouTube channel. In this way people can easily follow your new videos.
- Do not use automatics programmes for uploading video because they cannot organise your video.
- Do not forget to add your Web site in the definition.

Free Open Source Alternatives for Office Software

Apache Open Office: http://www.openoffice.org/

The Document Foundation - Libre Office: http://www.libreoffice.org/

What is it?

Free and open source software, is software that is both free software and open source. It is liberally licensed to grant users the right to use, copy, study, change, and improve its design through the availability of its source code. In the context of free and open-source software, *free* refers to the freedom to copy and re-use the software, rather than be charged for using the software.

OpenOffice.org

Apache Open Office is an open-source office software suite for word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, graphics, databases and more. It is available in many languages and works on all common computers. It stores all your data in an international open standard format and can also read and write files from other common office software packages. It can be downloaded and used completely free of charge for any purpose.

LibreOffice
The Document Foundation

LibreOffice is a community-driven free and open source office suite software, which isa project of the NGO The Document Foundation. **LibreOffice** descended from OpenOffice.org, from which it was forked in 2010. It is available in more than 30 languages and for all major operating systems, including Microsoft Windows, Mac OS X and GNU/Linux and others.

How will I join?

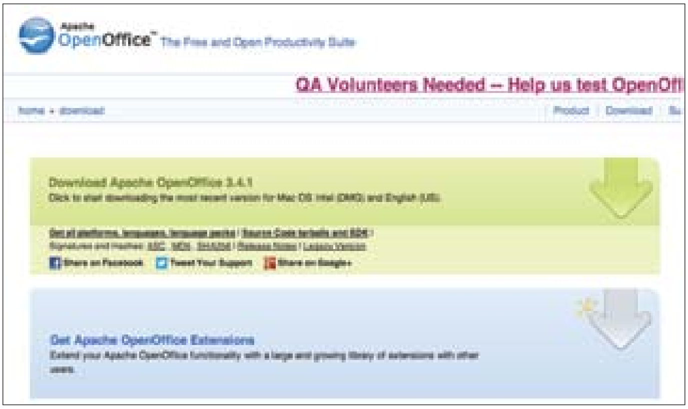
You can download **Libre Office** in your own local language if available from its Web site. There are online trainings and manuals available for enhancing user's capability free of charge.

You can download **Open Office** in your own local language if available from its Web site. There are online trainings and forums and manuals available along with free Open Office School for enhancing user's capability free of charge.

What will it do for me?

With **Libre Office** you can use the below after downloading the Office Suite package:

- Writer is the word processor
- Calc tames your numbers and helps with difficult decisions when you are weighing alternatives.
- Impress is the fastest and easiest way to create effective multimedia presentations.
- Draw lets you build diagrams and sketches from scratch.
- Base is the database front-end
- Math is a simple equation editor that lets you lay-out and display your mathematical, chemical, electrical or scientific equations quickly in standard written notation.



With **Open Office** you can use the below after downloading the Office Suite package:

- Writer a word processor you can use for anything from writing a quick letter to producing an entire book.
- Calc a powerful spreadsheet with all the tools you need to calculate, analyse, and present your data in numerical reports or sizzling graphics.
- Impress the fastest, most powerful way to create effective multimedia presentations.
- Draw lets you produce everything from simple diagrams to dynamic 3D illustrations.
- Base lets you manipulate databases seamlessly. Create and modify tables, forms, queries, and reports, all from within Apache Open Office.
- Math lets you create mathematical equations with a graphic user interface or by directly typing your formulas into the equation editor.

Open Source Data Management Tool

CIVICRM: http://civicrm.org/

What is it?

CiviCRM is a web-based, open source, Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) software geared towards meeting the needs of non-profit and other civic-sector organisations.

CiviCRM focuses on the needs of non-profits. CiviCRM emphasizes communicating with individuals, community engagement and activism, outreach, managing contributions, and managing memberships. It needs web hosting to deploy, and provides several tips for hosting options.

CiviCRM's feature set includes:

- Contact management
- Contributions
- Communication
- Peer-To-Peer Fundraisers
- Advocacy Campaigns
- Events
- Members
- Reports
- Case Management

It provides an evaluation facility to enable you to determine your organisation's needs according to CiviCRM features.

How will I join?

After reading CiviCRM book, visiting Forums and using the evaluation facility, if you decide to use CiviCRM for your organisation, you will determine your hosting preferences and install it with assistance from your IT person. Before proceeding, you will need to organise your data to transfer it in the system.

What will it do for me?

- You can manage all data relevant to your organisation's work, including additional facilities such as Civi Grants, Civi Petition and Survey ,Civi Email and Civi SMS, Civi Membership, Civi Events, Civi Reporting and so on.
- You can review the CiviCRM Book for Civi Wiki and the Forum facilities and how you can benefit from them.

ANNEX 1

Communication strategy - competitor analysis

Assess your current communication strengths and weaknesses by looking at what your competitors are doing.

Identify your main competitors (or those organisations operating in a similar field) and rank them against certain criteria.

Give them a score out of 5 or simply comment on the different criteria.

Example

	Web site	Media presence	Strength of brand	Spokespeople
Org A	4/5 – strong colours, easy to navigate, good use of case studies	1/5 – one trade press appearance in last three months	3/5 – strong logo and name but not always associated with the range of issues they cover	5/5 – high profile chief exec and use service users well
Org B	5/5 – well designed, easy to use and well linked to other resources. Good integration with social media outlets	4/5 – regularly called upon to respond to issues relating to the sector. Seem to lack proactive media comments though	5/5 – strong brand and chosen commentator in their speciality area	4/5 – good, high profile spokespeople but limited service user voices

Now try to rank your organisation alongside this.

It can be difficult to be objective, so think about asking a range of people in your organisation to give their views. If your organisation has done any stakeholder analysis, include some headline findings here.

	Web site	Media presence	Strength of brand	Spokespeople
Your org				

Competitor Web site analysis

If you are looking at one specific communication area, such as a Web site, conduct a competitor analysis of that specific area in more detail. For example:

	Design	Usability	Content	Online brand
Org A				
Org B				
Org C				

External stakeholder surveys

A further step is to conduct an external stakeholder survey to gauge what organisations you work with really think of you. Clearly this takes time and resources, but it can be well worth doing – or recommending – as part of the development of the communication strategy.

Depending on the size of your organisation and your budget, there are a number of considerations to have in mind when planning a stakeholder survey.

- **Your stakeholders**: who do you want to ask? Is it specifically donors or supporters, the media, policy makers, politicians, or maybe umbrella bodies and other organisations in your sector? You may feel that your message reaches one group well but struggles to connect with others. This is a good opportunity to test that view.
- **Number of people**: in general, the more people you can speak to and the more opinions you can get the better. However, consider your timescales and medium (see below) when deciding on the number of people you approach.
- **The medium**: you could do interviews face-to-face or over the phone. This way you will get more in-depth responses but it is time consuming and depends on the availability of your stakeholders. For a speedier way to gather and analyse responses, consider online surveys such as Survey Monkey. You could also use traditional paper questionnaires.

- **Types of questions**: open ended questions (e.g. 'what do you think of...?') will allow respondents more freedom to give their opinion, but closed questions (e.g. 'how would you rate X from 1-5?') will allow you to compare between responses more easily. It is often good to have a balance between open and closed questions. If your survey is online or paper based then be careful not to have too many questions as it may be off-putting to potential respondents. When drafting the questions, make sure they are not too 'leading' and that they are clear and relevant to your audience. Test your survey on friends or colleagues before passing it to real stakeholders.
- **Anonymity**: consider whether or not you want your survey respondents to remain anonymous. If they are, they may be more willing to provide honest feedback. If they are not, you have the obvious advantage of being able to match responses to respondents.

Annex 2

E-mail Etiquette

E-mail can be a very efficient communication tool when used properly. Below you will find e-mail etiquette that everyone needs to be aware of and follow.

Sending E-mails

- Make sure your e-mail includes a courteous greeting and closing. This will help to make your e-mail not seem demanding or blunt.
- Address your contact with the appropriate level of formality and make sure you spelled their name correctly.
- Spell check your e-mails, because e-mails with typos are simply not taken as seriously.
- Read your e-mail out loud to ensure the tone is that which you desire. Try to avoid relying on formatting for emphasis; rather choose the words that reflect your meaning instead. A few additions of the words "please" and "thank you" go a long way.
- Be sure you are including all relevant details or information necessary to understand your request or point of view. Generalities can many times cause confusion and unnecessary back and forth.
- Are you using proper sentence structure? First word capitalized with appropriate punctuation? Multiple instances of !!! or ??? are perceived as rude or condescending.
- If your e-mail is emotionally charged, walk away from the computer and wait to reply. Review the sender's e-mail again so that you are sure you are not reading anything into the e-mail that simply is not there.
- If sending attachments, did you ask first when would be the best time to send? Did you check the file size to make sure you do not fill the other side's inbox causing all subsequent e-mails to bounce?

- Refrain from using the **Reply to All** feature to give your opinion to those who may not be interested. In most cases replying to the sender alone is your best course of action.
- Make one last check that the address or addresses in the To: field are those you wish to send your reply to.
- Be sure your name is reflected properly in the From: field. Jane A. Doe (not jane, jane doe or JANE DOE).
- Type in complete sentences. To type random phrases or cryptic thoughts does not lend to clear communication.
- Never assume the intent of an e-mail. If you are not sure -- ask so as to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings.
- Just because someone does not ask for a response does not mean that you should ignore them. Always acknowledge e-mails from those you know in a timely manner.
- Be sure the Subject: field accurately reflects the content of your e-mail.
- Do not hesitate to say thank you, how are you, or appreciate your help.
- Keep e-mails brief and to the point. Save long conversations for the old fashioned telephone.
- Always end your e-mails with "Thank you," "Sincerely," "Take it easy," "Best regards" – or something similar.

Formatting E-mails

- Do not type in all upper case letters. That is yelling or reflects that you are trying to emphasis shouting.
- If you bold your type, know you are bolding your statement and it will be taken that way by the other side – times 10.
- Do not use patterned backgrounds; it makes your e-mail harder to read.
- Stay away from fancy fonts – use only the standard fonts that are on all computers.
- Use emoticons sparingly to ensure your tone and intent are clear.
- Typing your e-mails in all lower case gives the perception of a lack of education or laziness.
- Refrain from using multiple font colours in one e-mail. It makes your e-mail harder to view and can add to your intent of being misinterpreted.
- Use formatting sparingly. Instead try to rely on choosing the most accurate words possible to reflect your tone and avoid misunderstandings in the process.

E-mail Attachments

- When sending large attachments, always "zip" or compress them before sending.
- Never send large attachments without notice. Always ask what would be the best time to send them first.
- Learn how to resample or resize graphics to about 600 pixels in width before attaching them to an e-mail. This will greatly reduce download time.
- Never open an attachment from someone you do not know as it could contain a virus.
- Be sure your virus, adware and spyware programmes are up-to-date and include scanning your e-mails and attachments both incoming and outgoing.
- It is better to spread multiple attachments over several e-mails rather than attaching them all to one e-mail to avoid clogging the pipeline.
- Make sure the other side has the same software as you before sending attachments or they may not be able to open your attachment. Use PDF when possible.

To, From, Cc, Bcc, RR, Subject:

- Include addresses in the To: field for those who you would like a response from.
- Make sure your name is displayed properly in the From: field.
- Include addresses in the Carbon Copy (Cc): field when you believe that it is important for these people to receive the information. Do not overuse Cc as it may cause your e-mails to be ignored.
- Make sure when using Blind Carbon Copy (Bcc): that your intentions are proper. To send Bcc: copies to others as a way talk behind someone's back is inconsiderate.
- Never expose your friend's or contact's e-mail address to strangers by listing them all in the To: field. Use Bcc:!
- Think about your motives when adding addresses to To:, Cc:, Bcc. Use your discretion.
- Always include a brief Subject. No subject can get your e-mail flagged as spam.

- Do not use Return Receipt (RR) on every single e-mail. Doing so is viewed as intrusive, annoying and can be declined by the other side anyway.
- When replying to e-mails, remove addresses from the To:, Cc; and Bcc: field that do not need to see your reply.

E-mail Forwarding

- Do not forward e-mails that say to do so--no matter how noble the cause may be. Most are hoaxes and may not be appreciated by those you send them to.
- If someone asks you to refrain from forwarding e-mails they have that right and you should not get mad or take it personally.
- When forwarding e-mail, if you cannot take the time to type a personal comment to the person you are forwarding to--then do not bother.
- Do not forward anything without editing out all the forwarding >>>>, other e-mail addresses, headers and commentary from all the other forwarders.
- If you must forward to more than one person, put your e-mail address in the TO: field and all the others you are sending to in the Bcc: field to protect their e-mail address from being made available to people they do not know. This is a serious privacy issue!
- Be careful when forwarding e-mail on political or controversial issues. The recipient may not appreciate your point of view.

E-mail and Perception, Privacy, Copyright

- Choose your e-mail address wisely. It will determine, in part, how you are perceived.
- Try not to make assumptions when it comes to e-mail. Always ask for clarification before you react.
- Posting or forwarding of private e-mail is copyright infringement -- not to mention downright rude. You need permission from the author first.
- Even though it is not right; e-mails are forwarded to others. Keep this in mind when typing about emotional or controversial topics.
- When there is a misunderstanding by e-mail, do not hesitate to pick up the telephone to work things out.

- Know that how you type, and the efforts you make or do not make will indicate what is important to you and if you are an educated, courteous person.
- If you forward an e-mail that turns out to be a hoax, have the maturity to send an apology follow up e-mail to those you sent the misinformation to.
- When filling out a contact form on a Web site, do so carefully and with clarity so your request is taken seriously.
- If a friend puts your e-mail address in the To: field with others you do not know, ask them to no longer expose your address to strangers without your permission.

Business E-mail

- Think of your business e-mail as though it was on your business letterhead and you will never go wrong.
- If you cannot respond to an e-mail promptly, at the very least e-mail back confirming your receipt and when the sender can expect your response.
- E-mailing site owners about your product or service through the site form is still spam. Ask them if they want more information first.
- When replying to e-mails, always respond promptly and edit out unnecessary information from the post you are responding to.
- Formality is in place as a courtesy and reflects respect. Assume the highest level of formality with new e-mail contacts until the relationship dictates otherwise. Refrain from getting too informal too soon in your e-mail communication.
- Never send anyone an e-mail they need to unsubscribe from when they did not subscribe in the first place.
- Be very careful on how you use Reply to All and Cc: in a business environment. Doing so for protecting your back or to subtlety tattle can backfire and have you viewed as petty or insecure.
- When replying to an e-mail with multiple recipients noted in the To: or Cc: fields, remove the addresses of those who your reply does not apply to.
- Never send business attachments outside of business hours and confirm that the format in which you can send can be opened by the other side.

Chat, IM, Texting

- When texting or participating in Instant Messaging (IM) and Chat, try not to be overly cryptic or your meaning can be misread.
- Use IM for casual topics or informational briefs. IM is not the place for serious topics or confrontational issues.
- Start by always asking if the person you are IMing is available and if it is a good time to chat. Refrain from IMing during meetings or when your attention is required.
- Practice communicating briefly and succinctly.
- Always consider if calling the other party on the phone is better when texting about sensitive topics.
- IMing is not an excuse to forget your grade school education.
- If you are not a smooth multitasker, do not continue multiple IM sessions and leave folks hanging while you communicate with others.
- Learn how to use the features of your IM programme. Specifically the features, you are "busy" and "away".
- Never IM under an alias to take a peek at friends' or associates' activities.
- Take into consideration who you are communicating with to determine the acronyms and emoticons that should be used - if at all.

Social Media, Blogs and Forums

- Keep in mind when Tweeting, on Facebook or message boards that you are in a global arena.
- When discussions get out of control; do not stoop to name-calling or profanities. You are better than that.
- In forums, keep your signature file to no more than two-three lines.
- Keep commercialism to no more than a link at the end of your comment or contribution.
- Stay on topic and discuss issues only relative to the thread/topic in question.
- If new to a group or forum, "lurk" for a while to get a feel for the community and personalities of the regulars before you post.
- Never give out personal information or specifics to your location on online -- nor should you give out the personal information of others.
- Keep in mind there will always be differences of opinion. Try to remain objective and not personalize issues.

- Do not fall for trolls. Trolls are people who will post rude comments just to get a rise out of everyone.
- Be sure to down edit, or remove any part of the post you are replying to that is no longer necessary to the on-going conversation.

E-mail Considerations...

- Before getting upset because you perceive someone did not respond, check to see if their reply was inadvertently deleted or sent to your Trash or Junk folder.
- With emotionally charged e-mails, wait until the next morning to see if you feel the same before clicking Send.
- Feel free to modify the Subject: field to more accurately reflect a conversation's direction.
- When it comes to your e-mail communication, know who you can trust; trust only those you know.
- Take the time to review each e-mail before clicking Send to ensure your message is clear and you are relaying the tone that you desire.
- Never use an old e-mail to hit reply and start typing about an entirely new topic.
- Regardless of how noble a forwarded e-mail may be, do not just forward without investigating its authenticity.
- Always add the e-mail addresses of Web sites and new contacts immediately to your approved senders or address book so they get through Spam filters.
- Before completing a Web site's Contact form; make an effort to review the site to be sure the information you seek is not already available.
- Take a quick look at the e-mails in your Trash before you delete them just in case a good e-mail landed there by mistake.
- If any e-mail states to forward to all your friends, or just five people -- do everyone a favour and just hit delete.
- Do not mass e-mail people who did not ask to be on your personal "mailing list".
- Double check that your adware, spyware and virus programmes are set to automatically update at least once each week so the software knows what to protect you from.
- And finally... ***Type unto others as you would have them type unto you!***

1. **Understand the difference between "To" and "Cc."** As a rule of thumb, the more people you send an e-mail to, the less likely any single person will respond to it, much less perform any action that you requested. The people you include in the "To" field should be the people you expect to read and respond to the message. The "Cc" field should be used sparingly. You should only Cc people who have a need to stay in the know. The "Bcc" field should be used even more sparingly. People you include in the "Bcc" field will not be visible to others.
2. **Keep messages brief and to the point.** Make your most important point first, then provide detail if necessary. Make it clear at the beginning of the message why you are writing. There is nothing worse for the recipient than having to wade through a long message to get to the point. Worse, if you send long messages, it is much less likely that the person will act on what you have sent or respond to it. It is just too much work. It often gets set aside and, unfortunately, forgotten.
3. **Do not discuss multiple subjects in a single message.** If you need to discuss more than one subject, send multiple e-mails. This makes it easy to scan subject lines later to find the message you need. It also contributes to briefer e-mail messages and a greater likelihood of a response. Also, the more specific you can be about your subject heading, the better.
4. **Reply in a timely manner.** E-mail does not necessarily demand an instantaneous response. Responding once or twice a day is sufficient, unless you are in sales, customer service, tech support, or some other field where a faster response is expected. Regardless, you must reply in a timely manner, otherwise you will incrementally damage your reputation and decrease your effectiveness.
5. **Be mindful of your tone.** Unlike face-to-face meetings or even phone calls, those who read your e-mail messages do not have the benefit of your pitch, tone, inflection, or other non-verbal cues. As a result, you need to be careful about your tone. Sarcasm is especially dangerous. If something gets "lost in translation," you risk offending the other party. The more matter-of-fact you can be the better.
6. **Do not use e-mail to criticize others.** E-mail is a terrific way to commend someone or praise them. It is not an appropriate medium for criticism. Chances are, you will simply offend the other person, and they will miss your point. These kinds of conversations are usually better handled face-to-face or, if necessary, over the phone. Especially, do not use e-mail to criticize a third party. E-mail messages live forever. They are easily forwarded. You can create a firestorm of conflict if you are not careful.
7. **Do not reply in anger.** E-mails written in the heat of the moment almost never serve their purpose or your long-term interests. They burn up relationships faster than just about anything you can do. If it makes

you feel better, go ahead and write the message, then delete it. Usually a day or two after you did not send an angry e-mail, you will understand the wisdom of restraint.

8. **Don't overuse "reply to all."** Replying to all, adds more clutter to everyone's already unwieldy inbox. Your default response should be to reply only to the sender. Before you reply to everyone, make sure that everyone needs to know.
9. **Don't forward chain letters.** These can be forgiven when they are from your mother, but they only add clutter in the workplace. Nine times out of ten, the information is bogus. It is often urban legend. If you feel you absolutely must pass it on, please make sure that it is valid information. If in doubt, check it out at Snopes.com, a Web site devoted to tracking urban legends and rumors.
10. **Do not "copy up" as a means of coercion.** It is one thing to copy someone's boss as a courtesy. But it is not a good idea to do this as a subtle—or not-so subtle—form of coercion. You may be tempted to do this when you do not get a response to an earlier request. But I would suggest that you will be better served to pick up the phone and call the person. If they are not responding to your e-mails, try a different communications strategy.
11. **Do not overuse the "high priority" flag.** Most e-mail programmes allow you to set the priority of the message. "High priority" should be reserved for messages that are truly urgent. If you use it for every message, you will simply be ignored. It is like the boy who cried "wolf" one too many times.
12. **Do not write in ALL CAPS.** This is the digital equivalent of shouting. Besides ALL CAPS are harder to read (as anyone in advertising will tell you.)
13. **Do not send or forward e-mails containing libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks.** If you do so, you can put yourself or your company at risk. You could be sued for simply passing something along, even if you are not the original author.
14. **Remember that company e-mail is not private.** You have no legal protection. Anyone with sufficient authority or access can monitor your conversations on company-owned servers. If you need to communicate privately, then get a free account at Gmail. Use it for anything personal or private.
15. **Use a signature that includes your contact information.** This is a courtesy for those receiving your messages. It also cuts down on e-mail messages, since people do not have to send a second or third e-mail asking for your phone number or mailing address.

16. **Provide "if-then" options.** Provide options to avoid the back and forth of single option messages. For example, "If you have completed the assignment, then please confirm that via e-mail. If not, then please estimate when you expect to finish." Or, "I can meet at 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. or 2:00 p.m. Will one of those times work? If not, would you please reply with three times that would work for you?"
17. **Use your spellchecker.** Lapses in grammar or punctuation can be forgiven. But misspelled words are just too easy to correct. That is why we have spellcheck. Make sure to use yours.
18. **Re-read your e-mail before you send it.** It is a good idea to re-read your messages and make sure that you are communicating clearly and observing good e-mail etiquette.

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* *This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*