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You gotta have a plan.

Strategic Communications Plan Template

The purpose of a strategic communications plan is to integrate all the organization's programs, public education, and advocacy efforts. By planning a long-term strategy for your efforts, you will be positioned to be more proactive and strategic, rather than consistently reacting to the existing environment. The strategic plan will help you deploy resources more effectively and strategically by highlighting synergies and shared opportunities in your various programs and work areas.

The creation and adoption of a strategic communications plan represents a significant step for any organization. For many organizations, the adoption of such a plan represents a cultural shift toward communications and a clear recognition that all the organization's efforts have a communications element. Public education, grassroots organizing, research, public advocacy, direct service, and even fundraising are all, at their core, communications tasks vital to the health and success of a nonprofit organization.

We firmly believe that a strategic communications plan has the power to transform an organization: both in terms of your credibility and status in your community and in terms of the way you work together as a team to achieve your mission and vision for your community.

Use this template as a guide to create a strategic communications plan for your organization or campaign. This document can help you facilitate a strategy session with key stakeholders.

An electronic version of this template and a tutorial that will help you to answer the questions below are available on the SPIN Project's website at: <http://www.spinproject.org/plangenerator>. **When submitting the template through their website, you can save your work for later editing and send a copy to the SPIN Project so that one of our strategists can review it and offer feedback.**

If you're ready to start planning strategically in your communications work, turn the page.



Communications Infrastructure

What communications capacity do you have – staff and time? Who will do the work? What budget do you have to do this work?

Goals

Why are you launching communications efforts? What do you want?

Target/ Target Audience

Who can give you what you want? Can you directly influence this individual's decision making? If not, who is your target audience? Who do you need on your side to get what you want?

Research

What do you need to know about your target audience? How will you get the information?

Frame the Issue

What is this issue really about? Who is affected?

Message

What are the elements of your message:

Problem

Solution

Action

Spokespeople

Who are the best messengers to reach your target audience?

Newshooks

What are newshooks for the issue?

Communications Channels and Outlets

How will you reach your target audience, e.g., news media, door-knocking, newsletters, email blasts, PSAs?

News Media

The remainder of the template assumes you've selected news media as one vehicle to reach your target audiences. The following are general ways in which to receive coverage. Check the ones that will reach your target audience:

- News article
Which Section:
- Op ed
- Letter to the editor
- Radio talk show
- Television talk show

Reporters/ Media Database

Based on what you've checked above, rank the top 20 outlets you want coverage in and identify the reporter from each outlet whom you want to target:

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| 1. | 11. |
| 2. | 12. |
| 3. | 13. |
| 4. | 14. |
| 5. | 15. |
| 6. | 16. |
| 7. | 17. |
| 8. | 18. |
| 9. | 19. |
| 10. | 20. |

Pitch Reporters

What will you pitch to the above reporters?

Deliverables/Collateral/Event

What deliverables/collaterals/events do you need to communicate with reporters?

- Media advisories
- News releases
- Fact sheets
- Brief bios of spokespeople
- Brochure
- Web newsroom
- Media briefings

To which reporter can you offer personal attention?

Additional Deliverables

What additional deliverables will pique reporters' interest and help make your case?

- Web newsroom reports
- Web newsroom polls
- Web newsroom scorecards

Track Coverage

What's your system to capture your media hits?

Evaluation

How will you evaluate your efforts?



Rasmuson Foundation is a private family foundation located in Anchorage, Alaska that works as a catalyst to promote a better life for Alaskans.

Founded in 1955, the Foundation invests approximately \$26 million annually in both individuals and well-managed nonprofit organizations dedicated to improving the quality of life for Alaskans primarily in the areas of arts and culture, community development, health, and human services.

Our grantees are passionate about their work. Given today's crowded media environment, their ability to effectively advocate on behalf of their constituents and tell their story is of critical importance to their success. The Foundation supported the development of this toolkit to provide a comprehensive and accessible resource for its

grantees both to build internal capacity and to work more effectively on a day-to-day basis with strategic communications.

In today's crowded media environment, organizations working to build a fair, just and equitable society can scarcely be heard. Organizations hoping to shape debates and shift public policy must embrace strategic communications to achieve their goals. The SPIN Project strengthens nonprofit social justice organizations, small and large, to communicate effectively for themselves.

The SPIN Project provides accessible and affordable strategic communications consulting, training, coaching, networking opportunities and concrete tools, such as this online communications toolkit. Our skills and expertise are blended with our commitment to strengthening social justice organizations and helping them engage in communications to achieve their goals.

We develop communications skills, infrastructure and leadership, strengthening organizations to achieve their social justice goals.

THE **SPIN** PROJECT