

Communications Plan // template

EQWIP HUBs goals

List three or four key goals you would like to accomplish through your communications efforts. Work with the other members of your team to match these communications goals with strategic organizational objectives. Consider how communications will help you accomplish these goals.

1. Goal 1
2. Goal 2
3. Goal 3
4. Goal 4

Organizational assets

Organizational assets are what make your organization special. These are the unique aspects of the programming that the team thinks will appeal to a variety of audience groups.

- Asset 1
- Asset 2
- Asset 3 ...

Organizational values

Organizational values are what drive the design and facilitation of your programs. All communications and organizational decisions should take these core values into consideration.

- Value 1
- Value 2
- Value 3 ...

SWOT analysis

Identify your organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. These SWOT elements can relate to staff capacity, political and social barriers/opportunities, other organizations working on similar projects, and more. Anything you think may affect your team and your ability to create effective communications should go in this chart.

Strengths	Weaknesses
A strength is a resource or capacity that can be used effectively to achieve a communications objective. To identify strengths, ask: what are our advantages in this situation?, what do we do well?, or what do other people see as our strength?	A weakness is a limitation or fault within the organization that could impact communications. To identify weaknesses, ask: what could we improve on?, what do we do badly?, what should we avoid? This will help you strategically plan your communications to minimize these weaknesses.

Opportunities	Threats
<p>An opportunity is a favorable situation in your organization – contacts, networks, or events that you can tap into in order to communicate positively about your team.</p>	<p>A threat is a danger in your organization. Threats can be identified by looking at the obstacles you face, initiatives by competitors, changing technology, and changing demand for your programs.</p>

Source: <http://www.cuttingedgepr.com/articles/swot-analysis-communication-projects.asp>

Overcoming threats and weaknesses

Based on the threats and weaknesses you identified in the SWOT analysis, come up with solutions to move past each of them. For example, if a weakness is identified as “we don’t have enough publicity in regions where we work,” a solution could be “work to expand our networks of media contacts to raise EQWIP HUBS’ profile in the community.”

- Solution #1
- Solution #2
- Solution #3
- Solution #4
- Solution #5 ...

Taking advantages of opportunities and strengths

Based on the opportunities and strengths you identified in the SWOT analysis, list some ways you can take advantage of these different items. For example, if one of your opportunities is that you have eager and talented photographer on your team of volunteers, an advantage use could be that you tap into their talent to create multimedia material to promote the program.

- Advantage use #1
- Advantage use #2
- Advantage use #3
- Advantage use #4
- Advantage use #5 ...

Identify your audience

Who are you communicating to? Identify each of these groups and determine the assumptions you can make about those people. Determine which of your objectives communicating to them can help you achieve. Fill out the box below for each of your audience groups (copy & paste or remove as you see fit)

I) Audience segment: (i.e. Informal sector youth)	
Assumptions about audience	Assets that will appeal to them

Assumptions can include demographics, language, access to technology, location, education level, etc.	Taken from your assets listed above
II) Audience segment:	
Assumptions about audience	Assets they can help achieve
III) Audience segment:	
Assumptions about audience	Assets they can help achieve
IV) Audience segment:	
Assumptions about audience	Assets that will appeal to them
V) Audience segment:	
Assumptions about audience	Assets that will appeal to them

Find your message

Now that you have determined your audience and matched them with the objective they can help achieve, determine the messages you want to share. Your messages should be created by combining the assets and audience assumptions identified earlier in the workshop. The below paragraphs are guidelines only, but they should take into account the key themes and language level that should be consistent in communicating with each group.

These can be used as “elevator pitches” to each of EQWIP’s audience groups – organizational overviews that get the gist of EQWIP HUBs across while also being mindful of which parts of the project will appeal to them. The style of message you use will differ based on the medium through which it is being communicated.

1. Audience group / goal:
 - *Message here*
2. Audience group / goal:
 - *Message here*
3. Audience group / goal:
 - *Message here*
4. Audience group / goal:
 - *Message here*
5. Audience group / goal:
 - *Message here*

Identify credible messengers

A credible messenger is someone who has a good reputation among the target audiences. This is a person that can be recruited to talk positively about EQWIP HUBs and its work.

Credible messengers can be both internal (Country Manager, local and Canadian volunteers) and external (a partner organization who will advocate for the effectiveness of EQWIP HUBs, a successful participant, a government minister, etc.). Ensure that your credible messengers have the accurate information they need to successfully promote EQWIP HUBs.

List your credible messengers in the chart below.

Who is your messenger?	Why are they a credible messenger?

Communications methods and materials

List the communications tools and materials you have available (social media, press releases, newsletters, etc.). Under each tool/material table, choose the message you wish to share with certain audience groups, and which strategic goals it works to fulfil.

Start by listening communications materials that your team thinks are important and relevant for the local team.

- Tool 1
- Tool 2
- Tool 3
- Tool 4
- Tool 5 ...

Communications tool/material:	
Audience	Using the audience groups you identified earlier
Description	More info about that platform (i.e. if your material is "Facebook" do you mean a Facebook page or a Facebook event? Be specific.
Intended use	What are the goals you're hoping to achieve through this platform?

Communications tool/material:	
Audience	
Description	

Intended use	
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Communications tool/material:	
Audience	
Description	
Intended use	

Communications tool/material:	
Audience	
Description	
Intended use	

Implementation plan

How are you actually going to share the messages using the materials/tools you identified above? List all upcoming communications efforts (events, projects, recruitment, etc.), the materials required for them, and your intended timeline for the project. This implementation plan should be updated regularly and also take into account the budget for communications and marketing materials.

Upcoming communications need:	
Materials	Timeline
Upcoming communications need:	
Materials	Timeline
Upcoming communications need:	
Materials	Timeline
Upcoming communications need:	
Materials	Timeline

Evaluation

This is the time to determine whether your communications efforts are actually working.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself:

- Was your communications activity adequately planned?
- Did the recipients of the messages understand them?
- Were all staff involved in the planning and delivery of communications?
- How could the communications strategy have been more effective?
- Were the desired organizational objectives reached?
- Were you on track with the timeline and budget for materials?

On the following page is an evaluation chart with some essential strategic communications practices. The following is adapted from the *Strategic Communications Audits* working paper that was prepared for the Communications Consortium Media Centre. This evaluation method is based specifically on non-profit approaches and needs in the area of communications.

	Strategic Communications Practices	Quality Criteria/Standards	Evaluation of Task
Strategy	a. Identify communications objectives	The communications objectives are aligned with the organization's overall mission.	
	b. Choose goals and outcomes	Goals and objectives are well defined, measurable, and help guide a defined plan of action.	
	c. Select target audiences	Audiences are specific (not the general public) and include key decision makers or individuals with influence on the issue.	
	d. Develop messages	Messages are specific, clear, persuasive, reflect audience values, and include a solution or course of action.	
	e. Identify credible messengers	Messengers are seen as credible by the target audiences and can be recruited to discuss the cause.	
	f. Choose communications materials and tools	Materials and tools are chosen for their access and availability to target audiences.	
	g. Scan the context and competition	Weaknesses and threats have been acknowledged in a SWOT analysis and creative solutions have been found.	
	h. Develop effective materials	Materials are attractive, accessible, and in-line with EQWIP brand standards.	
Implementation	i. Build valuable partnerships	Links with external stakeholders who can help achieve communications objectives.	
	j. Train messengers	EQWIP staff and volunteers know how to communicate about EQWIP's programs in aid of the communications objectives.	
	k. Conduct steady outreach	Outreach through blog posts, social media, and other forms is done on a regular basis.	
	l. Monitor and evaluate	Activities and outcomes are regularly monitored and evaluated for purposes of accountability and improvement.	
	m. Support communications at the leadership level	EQWIP management understands and advocates for the value of communications.	
	n. Communications resources	Fundraising regularly includes dedicated resources for communications practice.	

	o. Involve staff at all levels	Communications is not seen as an isolated function; most if not all of the staff members have some knowledge and participation in communications efforts.	
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