

Strategic Social Sector Communications

Feb. 22, 2019



Opening Circle

Reflections on previous module: “Managing Yourself in the Workplace”

Outcomes of this Session

- Learn effective but uncomplicated tools for goal-driven strategic communications planning
- Develop confidence in “selling” your work
- Embrace your role as communicators who bring discipline, creativity and thoughtful strategy to your organizations

What's in store for the day?

- SMARTie Goal setting
- Get Your GAME On!
- The Message House: VPSA
- Stand the Plan: Build confidence and secure buy-in for your work.

What is strategic communications?

Strategic Communications

- Purposeful use of communications by an organization to fulfill its mission. (USC/Annenberg)
- Consistently and persistently saying the right thing, to the right people, at the right time, to advance your values and your narrative and mobilize social power, so you can accomplish short-term objectives and set up long-term victories. (ReFrame Mentorships)



Common Mistakes & Lessons Learned

- Not a one-time activity.
- Don't equate tactics with a plan.
- Never about the “general public.”
- No silver bullet plans: watch for vague goals like “raising public awareness”
- “Do no harm” in your planning & messaging.
- Engage program staff as thought partners, but you are the expert.
- Be realistic about short & long term goals.

GAME On!

- **Goals**
- **Audience**
- **Message**
- **Execution (Tactics)**



Strategic Comms Plan 1: Goals

- Strategic
- Measurable
- Ambitious But Attainable
- Realistic
- Time-bound
- *Inclusive*
- *Equitable*

Case Study

- Vision: Communicate in a strategic, robust, refreshed and proactive way and positively shape the evolving narrative of our organization at this dynamic point in its history and in this current cultural and political moment.
- Goal 1: External Communications
- Goal 2: Internal Communications
- Goal 3: Readiness Communications

Case Study

- Goal 1: External Comms
- Increase funder partners, fiscally sponsored groups, and donor services projects in 2019 by enhancing and promoting the services, projects and leadership of the organization through targeted external relations and digital web/social media platforms, specifically emphasizing our value-added role as a funder intermediary.

Case Study: External Comms

- Objective – build out our website and social media with content & new partner services, capture positive testimonials of our groups and funders and leverage those stories to reach new audiences.
- Expand profile in Philanthropic Sector

Tactics:

- Increase monthly page views ; Twitter; Facebook;
- 3-4 Senior leadership thought pieces/staff op eds
- 2-3 Pres messages to partners
- Features on Fiscal Sponsored groups/other partners
- PR database software
- New Financial narratives
- Refresh core brand collateral
- Explore diverse content and emerging leaders (eg Gay Pride and Black History Month)

Breakout: Review Goals

Pair share: Discuss and review your goals:

State Goal, Objective, and Decision-Makers

Review using 7 criteria: S.M.A.R.T.I.E. Ask your partner: Do the goals hit all 7 criteria? What should be modified?



Strategic Communications Plan 2

- Audience
- Message

- Select and prioritize your audience targets.
- Decision makers and audiences that reach them have the power to help you attain your goal.

Audience

- Besides “decision makers” already identified, cite 2-3 key audiences you need to reach your goal and write these down on our plan sheet.

Message House: VPSA



Message House

VALUES	PROBLEM
SOLUTION	ACTION

Case Study: Values

- Dignity, Justice, Equality
- Embrace change, innovative, forward thinking.
- Professional, efficient, reliable, transparent.
- Supporting, facilitator.

Exercise:

- Complete VPSA Template
- Break out into pairs to review VPSA and audience selection.



Tactics and Putting it all Together

- Exercise: Identify at least 3-5 tactics to execute your plan.
- Group Break Out: Review and critique each others' plans, and pull out common or unique challenges, themes, creative ideas.



Stand the Plan

- Personal competence and advocating for our ideas.
- Identify triggers & blocks: being above and below the line.
- Strategies for engagement

E.I. Reminder: The Line

Open Curious Committed to Learning

Closed Defensive Committed to Being Right

Individual Contemplation

- Identify a moment(s) at work when you felt your personal confidence was at its strongest. Why?

Then,

- Respond to the following questions:
 - What blocks come up as you think about your aspiration?
 - What do these blocks mean?
 - How might you address them?
 - As you think about your blocks, can you identify any ways in which power and access or lack thereof reinforces them?

Pair Share: Moving the Blocks

- What was it like to think about blocks at work?
- What blocks came up for you? (internal and external)
- What advice or wisdom does your pair have for addressing your blocks?

Strategies for Bringing Your Best Self Forward

- Conduct internal trainings on strategic comms.
- Make time to talk about comms and show impact. Share comms plans with staff.
- Standing comms check in on program and other meeting agendas.
- Be clear about roles.
- Be prepared.

Strategies, cont.

- **Comms and Program** special focus:
 - Find ways to be useful to program staff
 - Be open to hearing their needs and priorities
 - Connect comms to program strategy
 - Be familiar enough with grantmaking process

Pair Share: Revisit the Line

Go back to your contemplation of confidence blockage moments and ask: What of these strategies could you consider using and why to go from below to above the line?

Self-Awareness Strategies

- Stop treating your feelings as good or bad
- Observe the ripple effect from your emotions
- Lean into your discomfort
- Feel your emotions physically
- Know who and what pushes your buttons
- Watch yourself like a hawk
- Keep a journal of your emotions
- Don't be fooled by a bad mood

Back Above the Line!

- Open Curious Committed to Learning.
- Bring full authentic self to the work, imbued with confidence, creativity and value-added skills.

Reflections & Synthesis

- What have you heard today that was new or surprising?
- What did you already know but now know in a new way?
- What do you still have questions about?