COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS OF CANADA | FONDATIONS COMMUNAUTAIRES DU CANADA

Communications Toolkit Overview:

BIG IDEAS FOR SMALL BUT MIGHTY TEAMS

January 2023

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Grounding Principles

Slow down to speed up

When many people dive into communications work, they start at the execution point. "We should revamp our website." "We should be posting more on social media." "We should be doing storytelling about that awesome grant." Pause, take a step back and slow down for a moment. The work of what you could be doing is infinite. It's important to slow down so you can be strategic about what will have the most significant impact for your community foundation. Otherwise, you will always feel behind. Being patient and building your strategy and assets is key to successful implementation on a tight time budget.

Time block

Community foundations are busy. There are so many things going on many people find themselves in the trap of being reactive. Being reactive is understandable and can create feelings of being behind and mean you often start from scratch for communications work. Blocking time is key to building your strategy and assets and maintaining communications. It also helps keep things time bound so that you don't get stuck in trying to create perfect work.

Be bold

Community foundations are already communications powerhouses. They are sitting on countless great stories, their teams are relationship masters, and they can communicate passionately. Have confidence in your ability and the value of your work. Feel empowered to reach out to local media. Lean into your passion and allow it to fuel creative ideas for storytelling.

Outsource and use tools strategically

Do you need a person or a tool? As digital communications grow, so do the resources and tools. Outsourcing can be valuable to bring in expertise you don't have, but many tools may be more cost-effective. For example, do you want to hire someone to build and manage your website and domain, or do you want to use a website builder that allows you to create your website? Whatever route you choose, it is important to ensure you have the access and capability to perform maintenance yourself if you wish.

3 Phase Approach

Phase 1: Strategy

Create the luxury of space and think strategically about what you want to do. Use the Communications Strategy 101 Factsheet and the template communications strategy (Jan 2023) to think through an approach. Creating a strategy will allow you to:
- Clarify your thinking and priorities;
- Manage expectations and create buy-in with your team and board;
- Have a touchstone to come back to and ground your work.

Remember strategies are both to create clarity for yourself and also to manage stakeholders.

Phase 2: Asset Building

Invest to build assets for the future. This phase is often overlooked but is essential to creating a sustainable communications system. In this phase, you create a visual identity, including a brand guide, visual templates and an image bank. You also create messaging templates, including key messages, template letters and press releases. Having templates makes the execution phase less daunting and scattered.

Phase 3: Execution

Now you start to see the fruits of your labour! Do that storytelling project, revamp your social media, and reach out to local media – the ins and outs of your execution phase will be specific to your community foundation. The key is setting up the systems and tools to make it easily sustainable for those side-desk communications aficionados.

CFC Resources

Area	Guides and webinars	Templates
Strategy	● Communications 101 Factsheet	● Template Implementation Timeline
Key Messages	● Communications 101 Factsheet	● Template Key Message Prompts
Storytelling	● Step-by-step guide to storytelling ● Equity principles for storytelling	
Branding and visuals	● Branding 101 ● Tips and tricks for creating videos	
Media Relations	● Step-by-step guide to media relations	● Template pitch email for media
Website	● Step-by-step guide to building a website	● Template site map
Stakeholder relations	● Relationship management with fund holders (upcoming) ● Community stakeholder engagement (upcoming)	

Roadmaps

	90 min a week	10 hrs a week
Week 1	**Strategy:** Carry out an audit of your current communications assets, channels. What do you like or not like?	**Strategy:** - Carry out an audit of your current communications assets and channels. What do you like or not like? - Complete a stakeholder map of your audiences and be specific. - Complete a map of your messengers
Week 2	**Strategy:** Start creating a basic communications strategy using the template provided (Jan 2023).	**Strategy:** Draft a full communications plan which includes your mappings. Spend your time thinking through what strategies your are going to employ and also what success looks like.
Week 3	**Strategy:** Review strategy with the stakeholders for feedback and buy-in.	**Strategy:** Review strategy with the stakeholders for feedback and buy-in.
Week 4	**Asset Building:** Start with the visual identity – ensure you have established logo, colours (with hex codes) and the fonts you want to use.	**Asset Building:** Start with the visual identity: - ensure you have established logo, colours (with hex codes) and the fonts you want to use. - determine whether you need a set of icons. Flaticon is a reasonably priced option to get icons which you can customize to your visual colours.
Week 5	**Asset Building:** Gather photos for your image bank and create a Canva account - pro tip make sure you apply for a free non-profit account.	**Asset Building:** - Create a brand guide that has your colours, logo and font. See the example. - Gather photos for your image bank - Create a Canva account - pro tip make sure you apply for a free non-profit account - Change your settings and upload your content (photos and icons) to create a brand guide in Canva
Week 6	**Asset Building:** Gather photos for your image bank and create a Canva account - pro tip make sure you apply for a free non-profit account.	**Asset Building:** Using Canva create the following templates: - 4-8 templates for social media with your logo, space for text and a picture. - create a template cover page that you

	90 min a week	10 hrs a week
		can make as a background in your word document and add text on top. - create a banner that you can add to the header of your documents to keep them branded. Ideal dimensions are 700px by 100px. Lean on the templates that already exist in Canva and change the colours to reflect yours.
Week 7	**Asset Building:** Change your settings and upload your content to create a brand guide in Canva	**Asset Building:** Draft up 1 page of key messages that cover the main topics you will use frequently including: what is a community foundation, what is the value add of a community foundation, what is your mision, what type of granting/impact do you have in your community, what is the best way to get in contact with your foundation.
Week 8	**Asset Building:** Using Canva create 4 templates for social media. Make sure they have your logo - space for text and space for a picture. Lean on the templates that already exist in Canva and change the colours to reflect yours.	**Asset Building:** Create a few key document templates from your messages: - draft a paragraph that describes your foundation, what is does and its purpose - draft a template letter to a potential or current donor using the template. - draft a press release using the template
Week 9	**Asset Building:** Start drafting up 1 page of key messages that cover the main topics you will use frequently including: what is a community foundation, what is the value add of a community foundation, what is your mision, what type of granting/impact do you have in your community, what is the best way to get in contact with your foundation.	**Execution:** - Create your touchpoint calendar for the next 6 months. This is your regular ongoing communications that you need to feel good about your work and could include: social media posts, announcements of funding results or calls for applications, public newsletters etc - Decide on any special projects that you want to pursue this could include things like a website revamp, a special storytelling project or large event - Decide on the channels your want to use for social media and wether you want to use the scheduling options in their platforms or an external scheduler

	90 min a week	**10 hrs a week**
Week 10	**Asset Building:** Continue to work on those key messages!	**Execution:** - Using your Canva templates create and schedule ticking over content for social media for the next 3 months. - Look at your template for your newsletter - make sure it is straightforward, relevant and low-lift. Decide your cadence, monthly is more than enough and would strongly consider quarterly.
Week 11	**Asset Building:** Using key messages draft a paragraph that describes your foundation, what is does and its purpose	**Execution:** From here onwards, try to split your time 50/50 between maintenance of ongoing communications and the special projects you'd like to pursue. This week start diving into special projects.
Week 12	**Asset Building:** Using key messages draft a template letter to a potential or current donor using the template.	**Execution:** Work on the day to day! This includes: social media, newsletters, press releases and announcements and donor stakeholder management etc. Use the templates that you created to make this easier.
Week 13	**Asset Building:** Using key messages draft a press release using the template	**Execution::** Dive into special projects.
Week 14	**Execution:** Create your touchpoint calendar for the next 6 months. This is your regular ongoing communications that you need to feel good about your work and could include: social media posts, announcements of funding results or calls for applications, public newsletters etc	**Execution:** Work on the day to day!
Week 15	**Execution:** Continue creating your touchpoint calendar!	**Execution:** Dive into special projects.
Week 16	**Execution::** Decide on any special projects that you want to pursue this could include things like a website revamp, a special storytelling project	**Execution:** Work on the day to day!

	90 min a week	**10 hrs a week**
	or large event	
Week 17	**Execution:** Decide on the channels your want to use for social media and wether you want to use the scheduling options in their platforms or an external scheduler	**Execution:** Dive into special projects.
Week 18	**Execution:** Using your Canva templates create and schedule ticking over content for social media for the next 3 months. 1 or 2 posts a week is enough!	**Execution:** Work on the day to day!
Week 19	**Execution:** Continue creating your social media content for the next 3 months.	**Execution:** Dive into special projects.
Week 20	**Execution:** Look at your template for your newsletter - make sure it is straightforward, relevant and low-lift. Decide your cadence - if you have limited capacity a quarterly newsletter is plenty.	**Execution:** Work on the day to day!
Week 21	**Execution:** From here onwards, try to split your time 50/50 between maintenance of ongoing communications and the special projects you'd like to pursue. This week start diving into special projects.	**Execution:** Dive into special projects.
Week 22	**Execution:** Work on the day to day! This includes: social media, newsletters, press releases and announcements and donor stakeholder management etc. Use the templates that you created to make this easier.	**Execution:** Work on the day to day!
Week 23	**Execution:** Work on the day to day!	**Execution:** Dive into special projects.
Week 24	**Execution:** Dive into special projects.	**Execution:** Work on the day to day!

Template Job Description

Below is a template job description which could be used to recruit a Communications Coordinator working part-time, such as on the 10hrs a week roadmap outlined above.

Who are we looking for?

You have a passion for storytelling and building relationships. You have an eye for design and the ability to simplify complex information. You can work independently but also enjoy collaboration with stakeholders. You have excellent organizational skills and can manage a complex portfolio of work with multiple deadlines and deliverables. You are adaptive and thrive when working in complexity. You uphold the values of [**CF NAME**] and have a deep commitment to the community of [**COMMUNITY NAME**].

Role Responsibilities

Communications Content Development (50%)

- Create a wide range of high-quality communications materials including newsletters, project plans, briefing materials, annual reports, brochures, news releases, Q&As, etc.
- Copy edit and proofread funding materials, including application forms, reports to donors etc.
- Create infographics, videos, and other content (for print and digital) as needed that make the community foundation's work accessible to expert and non-expert audiences.
- Ensure content respects brand guidelines, accessibility and bilingualism where appropriate.
- Reinforce the key messages of the community foundation.

Communications Planning and Strategy (30%)

- Contribute to the development of and be accountable for the delivery of the community foundation's communications strategy.
- Provide advice and recommendations to team members on the best communications approaches and tools to help them effectively manage critical issues.
- Track and analyse the outcomes of communications activities.
- Carry out media monitoring to ensure strategy takes into account trends and topics in media.

Project Management (20%)

- Plan and monitor the implementation of communications work to meet deadlines and ensure progress and updates are transparent across the team
- Contribute to the broader strategic planning, coordinating with other colleagues

Skills and Qualifications:

- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Experience in creating communications products such as news releases, blog posts, social content, media lines and Q&A
- Experience in copy editing and proofreading with a deep understanding of grammar and composition principles and tailoring content to specific audiences
- An understanding of design principles and the ability to create visual communications collateral that is clear and engaging
- Strong interpersonal and relationship-building skills, with experience working both independently and in a team
- Experience in project management with strong planning and organizational skills, including attention to detail and accuracy
- Demonstrated diplomacy and discretion in handling delicate and highly confidential matters
- Demonstrated ability to work in a fast-paced environment with multiple, changing priorities
- High standards of professional behaviour, ethical standards, and sound judgment
- Experience content creation tools such as Canva, Adobe Creative Suite and Wordpress
- Lived experiences or knowledge that contribute to community foundation's purpose.

Preferred Skills and Qualifications:

- Media relations experience including pitching, media training and managing relationships with media outlets
- Understanding of targetted communications approaches to reach equity-seeking groups including but not limited to Indigenous communities, the LBGTQ2S community, racialized communities, and OLM communities.