

Getting the Word Out!

Improving Your Agency's Communication Strategy

United Way of
Southern Chester County



Workshop Objectives

- ▶ Describe a process for developing a successful communication strategy
- ▶ Give you tools and tips to help develop your communications plan
- ▶ Provide exercises to walk you through the process with support from our team

“What We’ve Got Here Is a Failure to Communicate”

- ▶ What challenges have you faced around communications?

Communications: Telling Your Story...

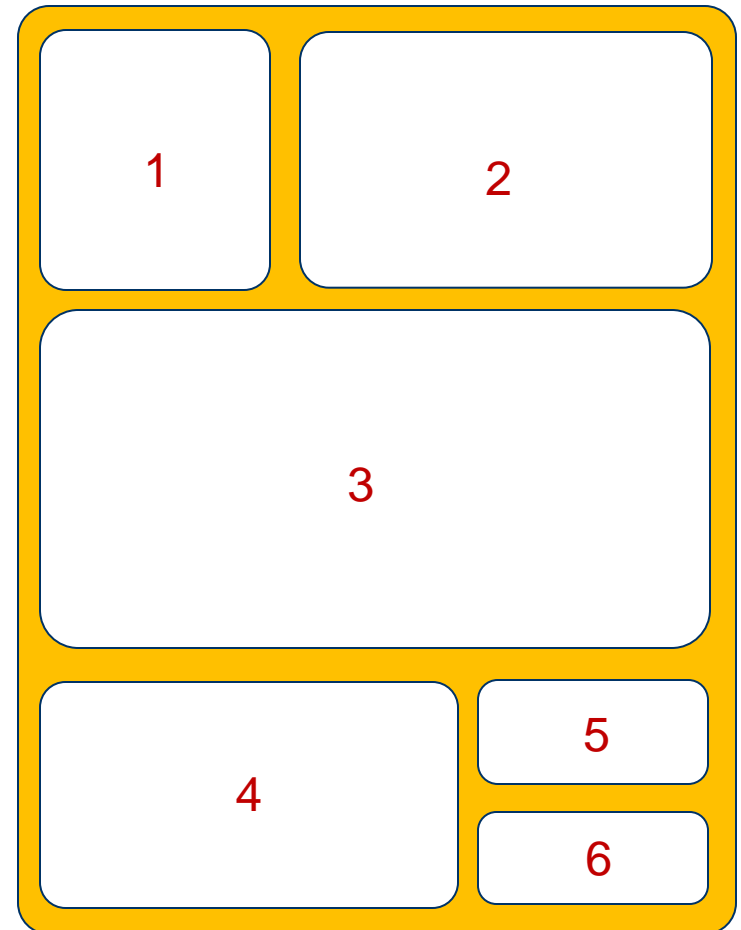
- ▶ Begins with who you are...
 - Agency mission, vision, core values
 - Who you serve in the community
 - What makes your agency unique

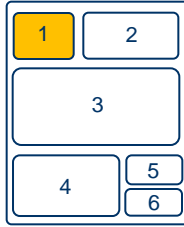
...To Achieve Your Goals

- ▶ Your communications tell your story to others in a way that persuades them to act on behalf of your agency or a cause you represent
 - Donate
 - Volunteer
 - Advocate
 - Others?
- ▶ Sounds simple... but how do you do it?

Communications Planning: 1 step at a time...

1. Program Decisions (Goal, Objective, Decision Maker)
2. Context (Internal and External Scans and Position)
3. Strategic Choices (Audience, Readiness, Core Concerns, Theme, Message and Messenger)
4. Communications Activities (Tactics, Timeline, Assignments and Budget)
5. Measurements of Success
6. Final Reality Check

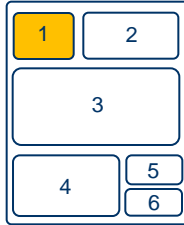




Step 1 – Program Decisions

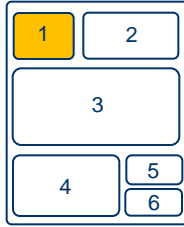
- ▶ What are you trying to do?
 - ❑ Agency Goal
- ▶ What concrete steps will you take to achieve your vision?
 - ❑ Your Objective
- ▶ Who makes your objective a reality?
 - ❑ Decision Maker(s)

Step 1 – Program Decisions: Agency Goal



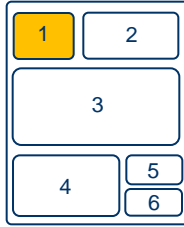
- ▶ All good communications start with a vision
- ▶ This vision grounds the rest of your plan, and helps set your choices
- ▶ Can be a long-term vision, but needs to be converted into a fairly short-term (12 month or less) work plan

Step 1 – Program Decisions: Your Objective



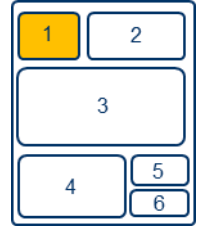
- ▶ Objective defines the next step in a plan to achieve your vision
- ▶ Remember SMART to keep your objectives focused
 - ▶ Specific
 - ▶ Measurable
 - ▶ Attainable
 - ▶ Realistic
 - ▶ Time-bound
- ▶ Avoid “silver-bullet” goal setting

Step 1 – Program Decisions: Decision Maker



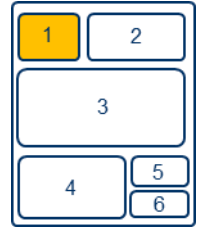
- ▶ Who are you trying to reach with your communication?
- ▶ Your plan needs to influence the individual(s) who will ultimately make a decision to act on your behalf
- ▶ Think of this as the person who votes on your change, or writes the check to fund your agency
- ▶ May approach them directly or indirectly

Program Decisions Example: United Way Chocolate Lovers Festival

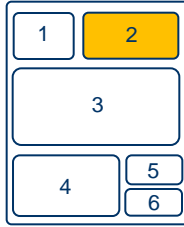


- ▶ UWSCC faced a challenge on getting the word out on our inaugural Chocolate Lovers Festival. Here's how this communications challenge could be framed
 - ▶ Broad goal: Raise sufficient money to fund \$975,000 in agency programs (Campaign goal)
 - ▶ Objective: Draw more than 1,000 people to a Chocolate Lovers fundraiser in February 2013, attracting both donations and publicity for UWSCC
 - ▶ Decision Makers: People who would buy tickets to the event; people to make chocolates to donate

Program Decisions: Team Exercise



- ▶ In your group, discuss and fill out section 1 of your communications plan:
 - ▶ Your broad goal
 - ▶ Your objective
 - ▶ Define the decision makers you're trying to reach
- ▶ Target 5 minutes



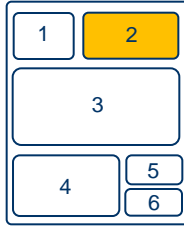
Step 2 – Context

▶ Internal Scan

- ❑ Understand your agency's assets and challenges that could impact your communication plan

▶ External Scan

- ❑ Take stock of what's happening around you that will affect your communication strategy



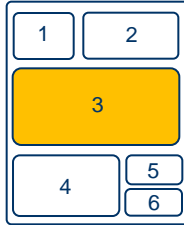
Step 2 – Context

▶ Define your position

□ Assess how your issue/need is perceived

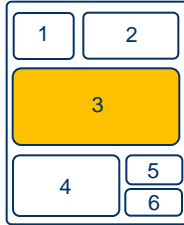
- Frame (no one is talking about your issue)
- Fortify and Amplify (you like the direction the debate is headed and want to push it further)
- Reframe (you want to change the discussion about your issue)

Step 3 – Strategic Choices



- ▶ Designing a communication plan involves many choices
 - ▶ Audience
 - ▶ Readiness
 - ▶ Core Concerns
 - ▶ Theme
 - ▶ Message
 - ▶ Messenger

Step 3 – Strategic Choices: Audience



- ▶ Ask yourself: who are you trying to reach with your message?
- ▶ Or: who needs to care enough about your message that they act to create the change you want?
- ▶ If helpful, start with all potential audiences and narrow down to those with the biggest impact on your need
 - ▶ Examples: Current donors, local businesses, foundations, past donors, local community leaders, government officials, your volunteers, etc.

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Step 3 – Strategic Choices: Audience

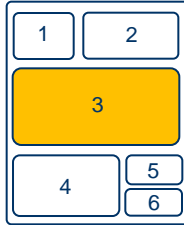
- ▶ Can have multiple target audiences
 - ▶ ...But need a different strategy for each!
- ▶ Be as specific as possible
 - ▶ “General Public” is NOT a target audience!
- ▶ Focus on those you can persuade

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Step 3 – Strategic Choices: Readiness

- ▶ Think about your issue from your audience's perspective
 - ▶ Where are they on the issue?
 - ▶ Are they ready for what you want to tell them?
- ▶ Meet your audience where they are!
- ▶ Sometimes requires communication in stages
 - ▶ Stage 1: Sharing knowledge
 - ▶ Stage 2: Building will
 - ▶ Stage 3: Reinforcing action

Step 3 – Strategic Choices: Core Concerns



- ▶ Think about what can compel your audience to take the action you want
 - ▶ This is about their value system, not yours
- ▶ Assess what barriers might be preventing them for taking the action you want
 - ▶ Anticipate and overcome these barriers in your message

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Step 3 – Strategic Choices: Core Concerns

- ▶ Consider what fits with your audience's lifestyle



Step 3 – Strategic Choices: Core Concerns

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- ▶ Consider what fits with your audience's lifestyle

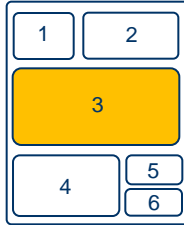


Strategic Choices: Team Exercise



- ▶ In your group, discuss and complete section 3 of your communication plan through Core Concerns:
 - ▶ Your target audience(s)
 - ▶ For your most important target audience:
 - ▶ What do they think/believe on your issue?
 - ▶ How might you convince them to act?
- ▶ Target 5 minutes

Step 3 – Strategic Choices - continued



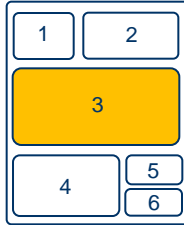
- ▶ Designing a communication plan involves many choices
 - ▶ Audience ✓
 - ▶ Readiness ✓
 - ▶ Core Concerns ✓
 - ▶ Theme
 - ▶ Message
 - ▶ Messenger

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Step 3 – Strategic Choices; Theme

- ▶ Theme is the big picture you want to convey
- ▶ You may need different themes to reach different audiences
- ▶ Each theme will require different messages (messengers)
- ▶ Select a theme to connect with the audience's values
- ▶ Consider the tone – people are best moved by optimism; hope; possibilities
- ▶ Once you pick a theme, stick with it throughout your communications efforts

Step 3 – Strategic Choices; Message



- ▶ What to say - what message will compel your audience to move towards your objective?
- ▶ Key concept: Communication is the creation of meaning; but the meaning lies within your audience (*It's not what you want to tell them, it's what they can hear*)
- ▶ Ask these questions to test if your message will resonate with your target audience:
 - Is it based on the audiences core concerns?
 - Do you overcome – not reinforce – their barrier?

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Step 3 – Strategic Choices; Message

- ▶ Test your message (continued)
 - Is the ask in the audience’s comfort zone? If not, does the benefit offered outweigh the risk/cost?
 - Does the message offer a vision or emphasize a personal reward? Does it convey hope towards success?
 - Is it consistent with the theme throughout?
- ▶ Hint: No “MY-EYES-GLAZE-OVER” words or phrases in your messages; make it brief, make it memorable!

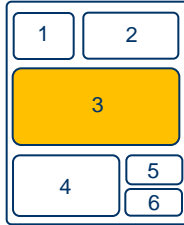
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Step 3 – Strategic Choices; Message

► “Don’t Mess With Texas”

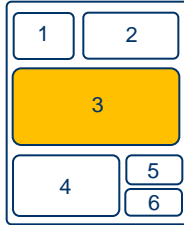


Step 3 – Strategic Choices; Messenger



- ▶ Who delivers your message is just as important as what you choose to say
- ▶ A good message delivered by someone with no credibility will likely fall on deaf ears
- ▶ Consider 3rd party spokespersons
- ▶ Hint: People listen to people more than institutions, and they tend to think “people like me” as the most credible source of information

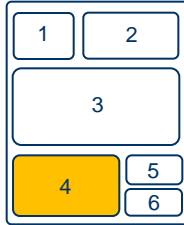
Strategic Choices: Team Exercise



- ▶ In your group, discuss and complete section 3 of your communication plan for your target audience:
 - ▶ What theme will you use to connect with your audience?

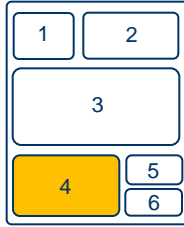
- ▶ Target 5 minutes

Step 4 – Communications Activities



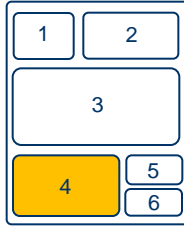
- ▶ Tactics (Communications Channels)
- ▶ Timeline
- ▶ Assignments
- ▶ Budget

Step 4 – Communications Activities; Tactics



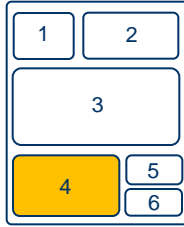
- ▶ Tactics or channels are how you carry the chosen message to the chosen audience
- ▶ These can be meetings, web-sites (social media), newsletters, press coverage, letters (paper or email), phone calls, paid advertising
- ▶ The best communications efforts use the most direct tactics possible
- ▶ Tactics should be appropriate for the target audience

Step 4 – Communications Activities; Tactics



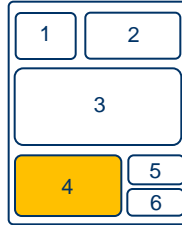
Trends in Tactics

Step 4 – Communications Activities; Tactics (trends)



- ▶ Investing in new user-focused, interactive websites
- ▶ Having real marketing and communications plans in place
- ▶ Integrating communications channels
- ▶ Using Social Media to reach new supporters
- ▶ Vying for supporters attention is getting harder than ever
- ▶ There is still fear of trying something new

Step 4 – Communications Activities; Tactics (trends)

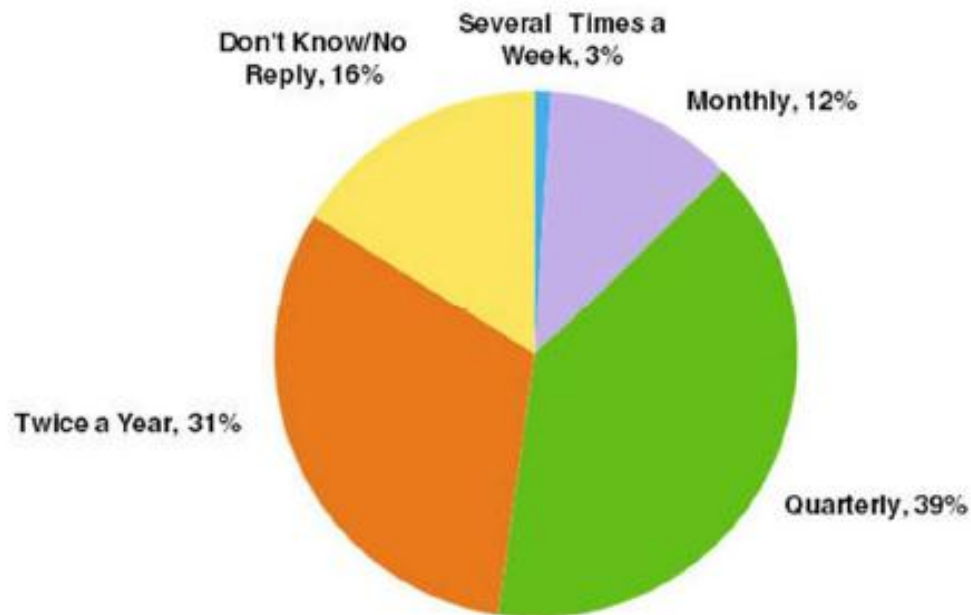


Communications Tool	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Least Important
Website	68%	25%	1%
Email Marketing - E-Newsletters	67%	22%	1%
Print (Newsletters-Direct Mail)	38%	29%	9%
In-Person Events	38%	28%	4%
Facebook	31%	49%	3%
Media Relations/PR	28%	29%	6%
Blog	9%	18%	20%
Video (YouTube etc.)	6%	24%	12%
Twitter	5%	29%	22%
Paid Advertising	5%	12%	48%
Phone Calls/Phone Banks	5%	14%	34%
Photo Sharing	1%	5%	30%
Audio (e.g. podcasts)	1%	3%	49%
Texting	1%	3%	57%

Step 4 – Communications Activities; Tactics (trends)

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How Often Will You Send Direct Mail to the Typical Person on Your Print Mailing List?

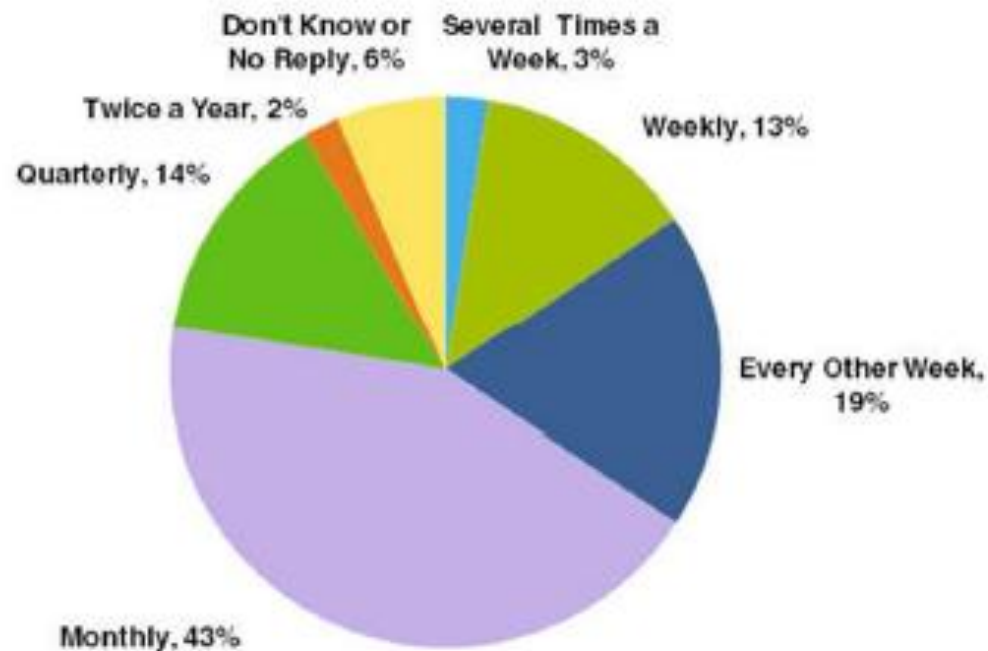


Source: NonprofitMarketingGuide.com/2012trends

Step 4 – Communications Activities; Tactics (trends)

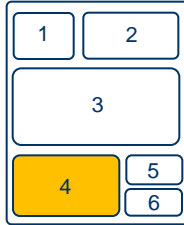
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How Often Will You Email
the Typical Person on Your Email List?



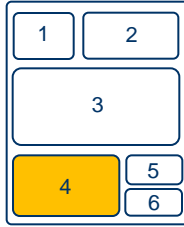
Source: NonprofitMarketingGuide.com/2012trends

Step 4 – Communications Activities; Timeline



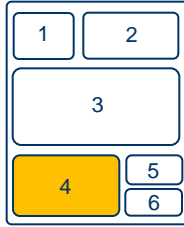
- ▶ Begin to plot out the timing of each activity
- ▶ Note external opportunities when your audience will likely be attuned to and act on your issue
- ▶ Think about what opportunities you can create for yourself through events, media coverage, and other activities
- ▶ Plan ahead for the unexpected
- ▶ Be realistic; you can't communicate 24/7

Step 4 – Communications Activities; Assignment

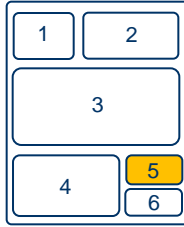


- ▶ Putting your strategy into action – assign key tasks
- ▶ Who will help you implement your strategy?
 - Staff
 - Board Members
 - Volunteers
 - Coalition partners
 - Professionals
 - Other key players

Step 4 – Communications Activities; Budget



- ▶ Time and money are finite resources
- ▶ How much of each will you allocate for implementing your strategy?
- ▶ Be realistic about what you can accomplish
- ▶ Your internal scan should provide insight into your capacity and capabilities



Step 5 – Measurements of Success

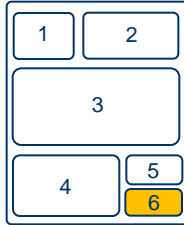
- ▶ Measures can be quantifiable or anecdotal
- ▶ Measures can be a mix of outputs (efforts) and outcomes (results from efforts)
- ▶ Measurements need to be defined early and reviewed often
- ▶ Review your results. If your plan isn't working, don't be afraid to change it up

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Step 6 – Final Reality Check

- ▶ Is the strategy doable?
- ▶ Are your resources in line with your strategy?
- ▶ Are you motivating the right people?
- ▶ Are your choices consistent?
- ▶ Will the tactics move you toward your objective? Will they reach the right audience?

Step 6 – Final Reality Check (cont.)



- ▶ Are you using the best persuasion practices?
- ▶ Are there any assumptions that require further validation?
- ▶ Is there buy-in from your organization to implement the plan?
- ▶ Are there other objectives you need to develop strategies for?
- ▶ Can you measure progress?

Workshop Objectives

- ▶ Describe a process for developing a successful communication strategy
- ▶ Give you tools and tips to help develop your communications plan
- ▶ Provide exercises to walk you through the process with support from our team

Reference Materials

- ▶ www.smartchart.org
- ▶ United Way of Southern Chester County website has today's presentation (unitedwayscc.org)
- ▶ Completed Smartchart example
<http://campaignforaction.org/sites/default/files/CA%20AC%20Leadership%20SMART%20Chart.pdf>
- ▶ Good technical analysis of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address:
<http://mannerofspeaking.org/2010/11/19/the-gettysburg-address-an-analysis/>
- ▶ 2012 Non-profit Communications Trends Report:
<http://nonprofitmarketingguide.com/freemembers/2012NonprofitCommunicationsTrendsReport.pdf>

APPENDIX

Best Practice Ideas: Content Marketing

- ▶ Content Marketing is the art of communicating with your audience without soliciting them.
- ▶ Instead of pitching your services or asking them for support, you are delivering information that makes your audience more intelligent.
- ▶ The essence of this content strategy is the belief that if an agency delivers consistent, ongoing valuable information to our audience, they ultimately reward us with their loyalty and support.

Best Practice Ideas: Content Marketing

- ▶ Content marketing products take the form of annual reports, custom magazines, print or online newsletters, blog posts, articles, success stories, whitepapers, webcasts/webinars, podcasts, video, in-person events, ebooks, research reports and email.
- ▶ Content Marketing Success Stories...
 - Big Brothers Big Sisters
 - Best Friends Animal Society
 - Make A Wish Foundation

Big Brothers Big Sisters – Leverage video to tell your story.

- ▶ Through the Start Something Web Series, the organization is shedding light on the impact that “bigs” have on “littles.”
- ▶ Participants share their stories in videos published to Big Brothers Big Sisters' YouTube channel. The stories spread through web
- ▶ Pro tip: Figure out how to turn the unique ways your organization is changing the world into content that can be used online..

Best Friends Animal Society – Harness the power of user-generated content.

- ▶ Best Friends used content marketing in the form of user-generated content, easily created through an iPhone and Android mobile app. My Dog ID lets you take photos of yourself and uses facial recognition to find your dog match.
- ▶ It's a fun app to play with, but the magic happens through user-generated content. The app prompts users to share their photo matches with friends on Twitter, Facebook and on Best Friend's user-generated Dog Wall.
- ▶ Pro tip: Mobilize the people who are passionate about your cause with fun and engaging opportunities.

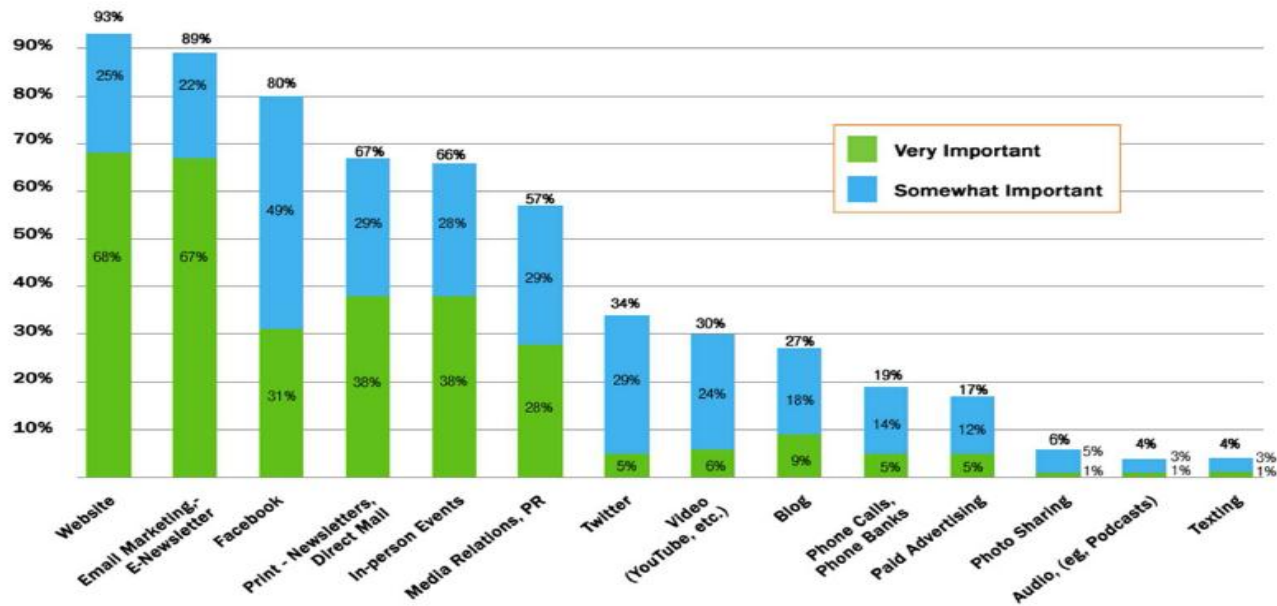
Make-a-Wish Foundation - Stay true to your brand.

- ▶ The Make-a-Wish Foundation always has material for great content, and the organization has figured out how to bring that content online.
- ▶ By sharing all video wishes on its YouTube channel, publishing every granted wish on its website, and sharing content on Facebook and Twitter, the organization has put its brand online for the world to interact with.
- ▶ Pro tip: Stay true to your brand, but find new ways to bring your message to the world.

Step 4 – Communications Activities; Tactics (trends)

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Most Important Communications Tools for Nonprofits in 2012
Combining “Very” and “Somewhat” Important Rankings



Source: NonprofitMarketingGuide.com/2012trends

Step 4 – Communications Activities; Tactics (trends)

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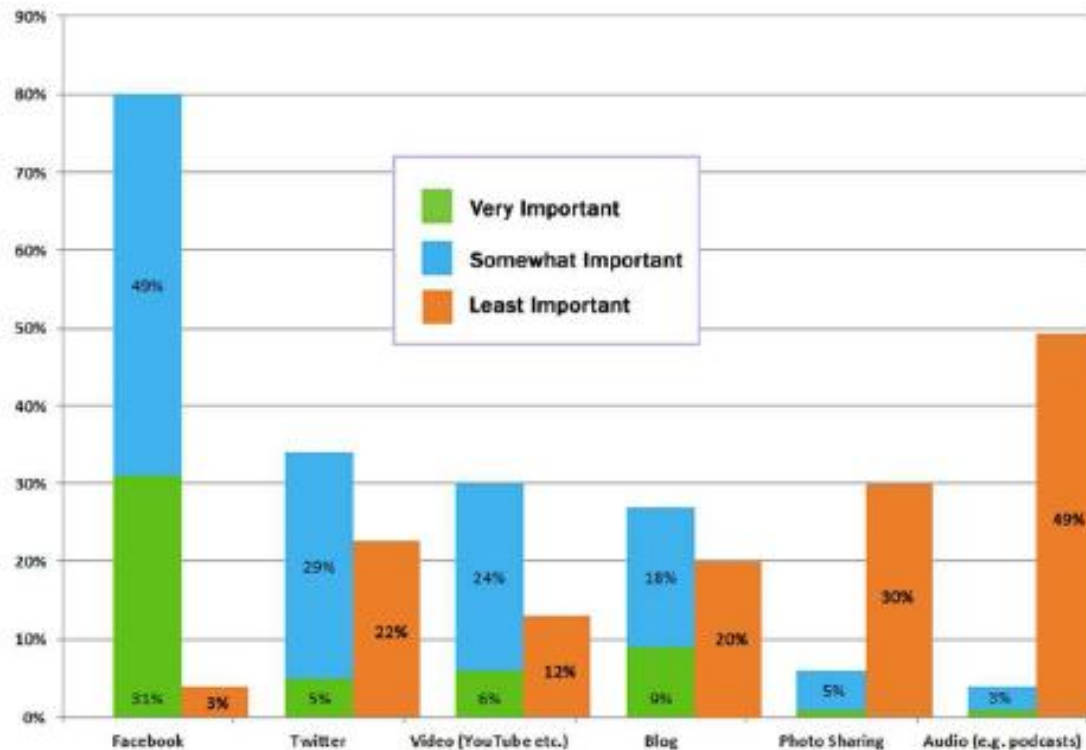
Very Important Communications Tools for Nonprofits Based on Budget Size



Step 4 – Communications Activities; Tactics (trends)

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Relative Importance of Social Media Tools
to Nonprofits in 2012

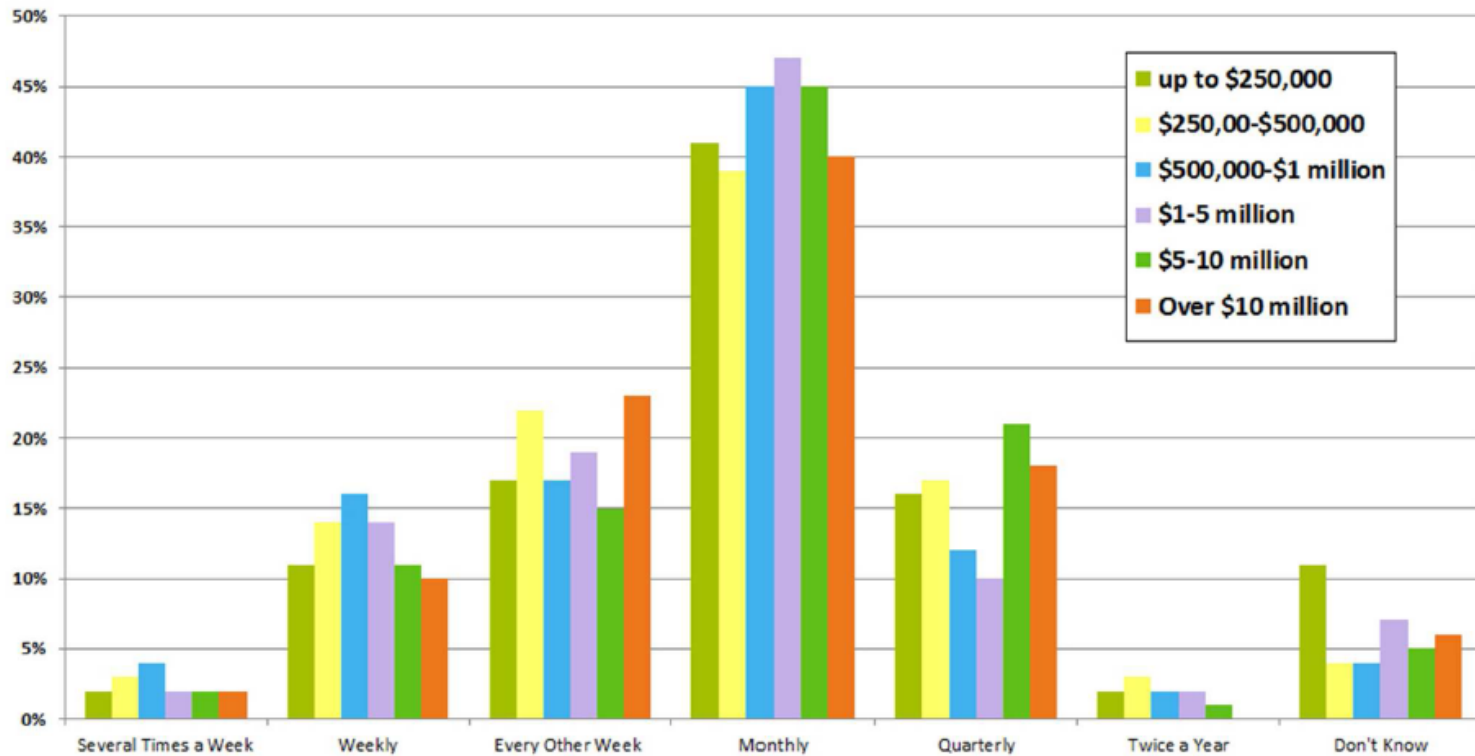


Source: NonprofitMarketingGuide.com/2012trends

Step 4 – Communications Activities; Tactics (trends)

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How Often Nonprofits Will Email the Typical Person on Their List, by Budget Size



Source: NonprofitMarketingGuide.com/2012trends

Thank You for Participating

United Way of
Southern Chester County

