ABC of communications

Contents

Communication tools for DPOs

Communication is crucial for Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) – whether in the form of dissemination, guidelines, recommendations, advocacy, promotion, persuasion, consultations, dialogue, education, conversation, roundtables, counselling or entertainment.

Sometimes, **providing information** is the most powerful strategy available. Information is a tool that helps people help themselves, in a 'fishing-pole-rather-than-fish' sort of way. Information is also the lever that people need to hold government accountable and to ensure transparency in participative and empowering processes.

But communication is often about more than providing information. It is about f**ostering social awareness and facilitating public democratic dialogue**. It is about contributing to evidence-based policy, and about building a shared understanding which can lead to social change. It is about creating space for the voices of the underprivileged to be heard, and, ultimately, it is about redistributing power.

However, these positive effects of communication do not come automatically. More communication does not automatically mean more development. This is why it is important to communicate better.

We hope this toolkit can help.

Why communicate?

We usually communicate evidence, information and knowledge in order to inspire and inform development policy and practice. In order to improve our communication, there are several steps we can take to make it more inspirational and informative.

The first step is simply to think through why we are communicating in the first place. Communication, when it is done well, does not only benefit the 'recipient'. It also benefits the 'sender'. This aspect of communication is often overlooked. We tend to think of communication as a process of teaching others – or of telling others everything we know ('spread the good news!'). But communication is also a process whereby the 'senders' themselves can learn a lot.

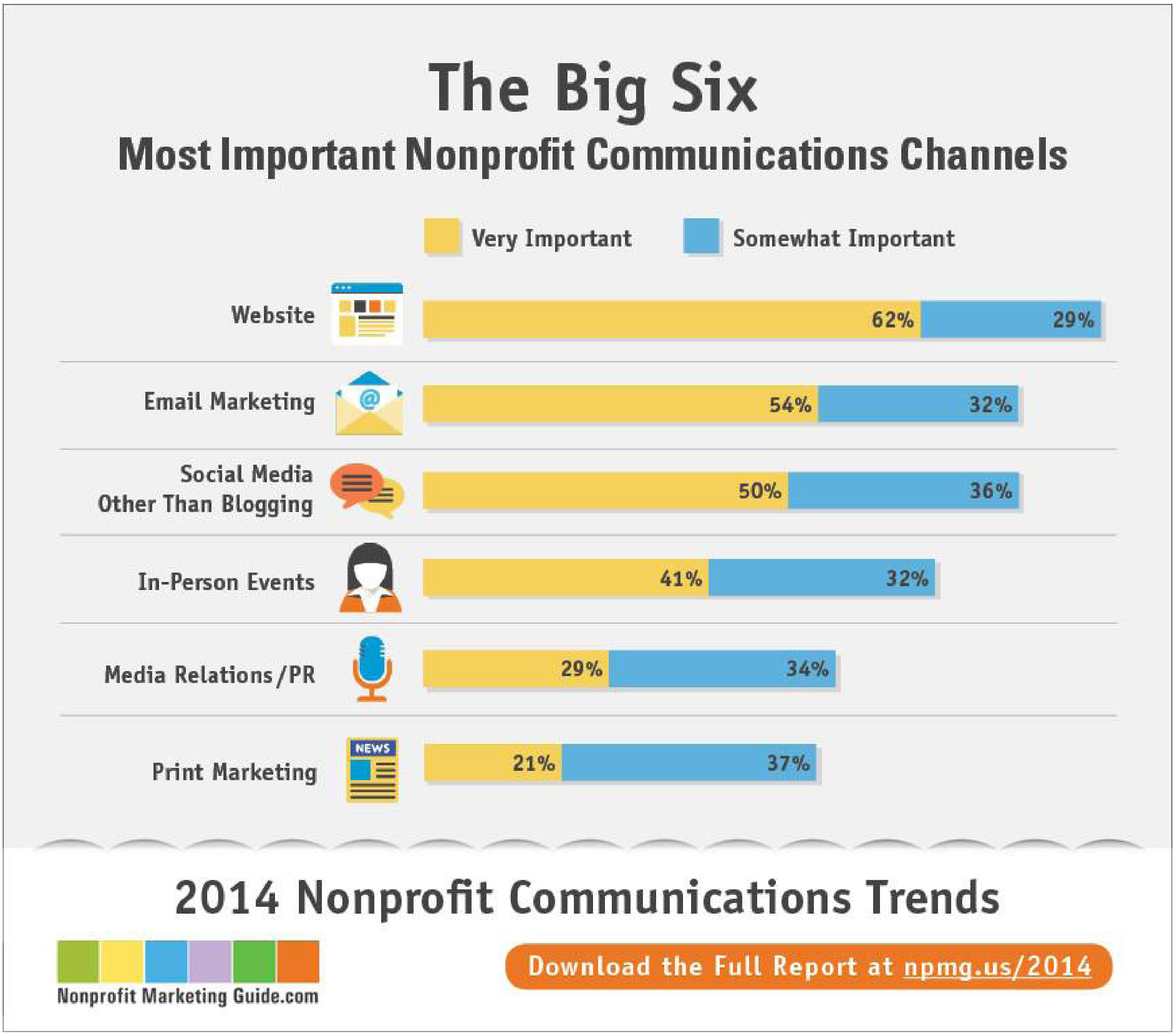
If we think strategically about the communication process, we can maximise our own benefits too. We learn different things by using a range of communication activities, or by strategically choosing the communication activity that will give us most information in return. For example, by putting documents on the web, and tracking which of them are downloaded or picked up by other websites, it is possible to get a sense of which topics spark an interest in which networks. By hosting workshops or public meetings, it is possible to get a sense of which research is regarded as credible, and which is not. By asking for feedback as part of our communication activities, it is possible to get a sense of the needs and frustrations of the target audience, and therefore of how we might increase the impact of our knowledge.

Why are effective communications important for NGOs?

Good organizational branding and positioning will help your NGO attract potential staff, volunteers and donors. Good communications skills will position your project in a desirable way in the community, who in turn will believe you, support you and join your project. If you are an advocate, good communications skills will help you promote your ideas more effectively.

We based our tips on the recent Nonprofit Marketing Guide 2014 done by Kivi Leroux Miller. According to this research: Websites, email marketing, and social media other than blogging are the most important tools, followed by in-person events, media relations/PR, and print marketing.

Facebook remains king of nonprofit social media with 95% identifying it as a top social media site. Twitter was selected as a most important social media site by 64% of nonprofits, followed by YouTube at 38% and LinkedIn at 26%. Monthly email newsletters are the most popular frequency at 42%. Most nonprofits (59%) will send an e-newsletter at least once a month. What type of content gets the best results? Presentations in person, email newsletter articles, and print fundraising appeals topped the list.



The Purpose of having a communication strategy

Effective communications are one of the most important skills necessary for an NGO to survive and be successful. Still, most of the time, many NGOs are not devoting enough attention to communications. Some groups limit their efforts to having a Facebook page, and others sometimes invite mainstream media to their events but rarely will devote time and resources to review organizational communications needs in an organized way or develop a comprehensive communications strategy. Below are tips on how to improve your organization's communications approach in an easy way.

What is a communication strategy?

A communication strategy examines the program and identifies the points at which communications can be instrumental. It can be developed for an organization, a project, or an activity. In creating a communication strategy for an organization, you should consider all of the projects and departments in the organization.

A communication strategy for a project will address one particular project and its objectives, constituencies, donors, and participants.

An activity communication strategy, for example for a fundraising event, a marathon, or a festival, will examine that particular event and how different communications approaches and tools can be used to make the event more effective.

You need to take into account following objectives when preparing a communications strategy:

- visibility
- building credibility
- changing stereotypes
- reaching out to additional audiences
- retaining the donors

Never plan a single shot - think of a series of continuous communication activities, which should be tied together as part of a comprehensive strategy.

How do I develop a communication strategy?

Drawing up a communication strategy is an art, not a science and there are lots of different ways of approaching the task. The advice provided below is only a guide. Whether your communication strategy is designed for a specific project or for the same period as your organisational strategy, it should establish the following:

- Objectives
- Audiences
- Messages
- Tools and activities
- Resources
- Timescales
- Evaluation

A communication strategy should start by reviewing the objectives (organizational, project or activity) – that is, what you want to achieve. It should also include communications objectives that can support those programmatic objectives. Communications **objectives** are objectives that can be reached by communications means. Your objectives are the key to the success of your communications strategy. They should ensure that your communication strategy is organisationally driven rather than communications driven.

Your communications activity is not an end in itself but should serve and hence be aligned with your organisational objectives. Ask yourself what you can do within communications to help your organisation achieve its core objectives.

Aligning your communications and organisational objectives will also help to reinforce the importance and relevance of communications and thereby make a convincing case for the proper resourcing of communications activity within your organisation.

Example

If your organization plans to expand work into a new region in the upcoming year, the communications objectives might be:

1. Raising the profile and positioning of your organization in the given region by getting five regional media reports;
2. Getting media from that region to cover your annual marathon;
3. Getting one key sponsor from the target region in the next annual budget.

Communications objectives will always have **target audiences** – the key audiences that you want to reach. In order to move the audiences to act, we need to develop **messages** for them.

The messages should have several components, such as:

1. Why the issue is relevant to the target audience?
2. What the target audience needs to do? – a call for action.
3. What will be the benefit of the action?

Last but not least, you should plan for **activities** to deliver messages. These could include media conferences, interviews, development of social media, paid marketing (posters, billboards, stickers). Determine who will do it, when, and how much the activities in the strategy will cost.
You should identify those audiences with whom you need to communicate to achieve your organisational objectives. The best audiences to target in order to achieve an objective may not always be the most obvious ones, and targeting audiences such as the media may not always help achieve your objectives. Everyone would like a higher media and political profile, yet activities aiming towards this may ultimately be self-serving and only communications driven, with no wider impact. They can even have a negative effect if you dedicate resources towards this that would otherwise be put towards communicating with key stakeholders.

Strategic targeting and consistency are key to your organisation's messages. Create a comprehensive case covering all the key messages, and emphasise the different elements of the case for different audiences. To maximise impact you should summarise the case in t**hree key points** which can be constantly repeated.

Remember that communications is all about **storytelling**: use interesting narrative, human interest stories and arresting imagery.

Identify the **tools and activities** that are most appropriate to communicating the key messages to the audiences. These will be suggested by your audiences, messages, or a combination of the two. Ensure that you tailor your tools and activities to the level of time and human and financial resources available.

The key rules to observe are always to **deliver what you promise** and never over promise. Use your resources and timescales to set legitimate levels of expectations and outline the case for more dedicated resources.

Consider performing a communications **audit** to assess the effectiveness of your strategy with both your internal and external audiences. You should use open questions with appropriate prompts and benchmarks and, if possible, get someone independent to do the work. Consider and discuss the results carefully and use them to amend your strategy.

Reminder!

A typical beginner's mistake is believing that more is better; it is not!

Sometimes, if strategically designed, a few small activities can bring about change.

Strategy is about achieving change with minimal resources employed – including human, financial and time.

This planning tool can help you develop high-impact communications strategies: www.smartchart.org

What's in a name?
(Re)branding

Branding Principles:

Use your purpose, uniqueness, personality and audience as a focus for strategy and a filter for your daily actions and decisions.

1. Purpose
   Clearly define the organisation's vision, mission and values to identify its reason for existence and the values it upholds. These should remain constant. Define your organisation's goals and objectives – usually through the process of strategic planning.
2. Uniqueness
   Identify your organisation's unique positioning. This will become the shared focus for your community – inside and outside of the organisation.
3. Personality
   Discover your organisation's 'personality' – the essence of who you really are. Understanding the personality of the organisation will make the creation of communications material much easier.
4. Audience
   Identify your audience, what they want to know and address any concerns they may have. Then tailor key messages and communications accordingly.

What is a brand?

Every organisation has a brand – whether they like the idea or not. Your brand is a collection of perceptions about your organisation formed by every communication, action and interaction.
It's what people say, feel and think about your organisation – the collective set of expectations and beliefs about what you do and how well you do it. This makes branding as relevant for not-for-profits as it is for commercial business.

Why is branding important for an NGO?

Our natural response to an organisation is similar to the response we have to people. If we meet someone who is authentic, confident and engaging, we look forward to talking with them again. However, if they behave differently next time we see them, we lose confidence in our original perception and the connection is lost.
So, be consistent in what you stand for, how you look, how you act, what you say and how you say it. Build a consistent identity that people can trust and form a meaningful relationship with.
This is the essence of branding!

The brand strategy

Clear and well-defined vision, mission, values, goals and objectives are the starting point for all successful not-for-profit organisations. Branding doesn't happen in a day, it's a process delivered over time.

The brand in action

By identifying vision, mission, values, goals, positioning, personality and the audience before creative work begins, all your communications will reflect your organisation's true meaning and reason for existence.

source: Key2Creative

The brand identity

Key Messages

Develop your 'key messages' in such a way that they complement the visual identity, to form a cohesive whole. Key messages include your tagline, unique positioning statement, elevator pitch and the messages relevant to the audience, as well as the tone-of-voice that should be used.

Visual Identity

Review your 'visual identity'. This is important because it's how people see your organisation. Your logo, communication style and imagery aids recognition and forms a perception about what your organisation stands for.

Your organisation's personality should be used to drive the selection of images, colours, and typefaces.

Tools

Develop the communications tools and templates required for communicating with your audience.

Develop a brand style guide to maintain consistency in design style, messaging, writing style and tone-of-voice across all of your communication materials.

Brand integration

A successful brand is shaped as much by the way it operates and acts as it is by what it says.

So how do you go about unifying staff and creating an operationally integrated organisation with strategic systemwide thinking?

Training Train staff around what you truly stand for. This is an opportunity to rally them around your cause. Train staff to be well-versed in the messages you are seeking to send out. Train staff and inspire them to take pride in the organisationand its reputation, by modelling it internally. This is essential because perceptions about your organisation are formed by the interactions staff have with people everyday.
Operational Integration Embed processes into the operational side of your organisation and its people structure (HR). Align activities and strategies, to enable a shared understanding of the organisation's true meaning and reason for existence.
Cultural Integration Continue to drive internal brand alignment by demonstrating the importance of commitment to the organisation's brand and the need to demonstrate it in everyday actions and interactions.

Traditional and innovative ways of communicating.

Websites

The web aims to make information available, freely and in forms that are easily accessible ('click and go' information; multimedia options for accessing information and/or the option of collecting and/or providing feedback). The array of computer software and graphics packages and the capacity of the web as a publicity tool, information source and forum for public input or electronic democracy is expanding, increasing the application of this participatory tool.

Websites are particularly useful for people in remote areas accessing project information and are more effective than information repositories in this regard. They are readily updateable and can be used to dispatch information with relative ease. The web is an emerging consultation tool and both its application and number of users continue to expand.

Strengths

- Can provide publicity, information and limited public input
- Capable of reaching very large numbers with enormous amounts of information
- Offers a low cost way of distributing larger documents
- Offers a highly accessible forum for posting project updates

Weaknesses

- Many people still cannot access the web
- Many people are still not web literate
- Its success as a participatory tool is still relatively unknown
- Information overload and poor design can prevent people from finding what they need

Method

- Contact a web designer, or find someone within the organisation with web design skills.
- Discuss the 'architecture', all the levels of information, links and illustrations available and necessary to inform and engage the user.
- Do some background research, web-surfing in your chosen area or field. Discover what works well on other websites, what they cover, what they omit, and use this information to improve your own website.
- Trial the website before releasing it to the public. A bad experience with a website can mean people do not return. Ensure all links are working, and that the material scrolls smoothly with minimum delays.
- Launch the website with suitable coverage in the media, in newsletters, in a public forum.
- Ensure that you have alternative communication options for those who are not web-literate or do not have access to the web.
- Place the website address on all correspondence and other printed material from the organisation.

How do people behave online?

- Users are **impatient**, they are generally short of time or might be paying for their connection.
- Users want instant gratification, they **want to see the value of a page immediately**, if they do not, there are many other pages available to them.
- Users are **active** not passive, the Web is a user-driven medium where users have the power to **move easily from page to page** and want to use it.

Why is reading online different from reading on a page?

- Reading from computer screens is tiring for the eyes and **25% slower than paper**.
- Each page must **compete** with hundreds of millions of others, which can be easily accessed, people are less willing to commit the time investment to reading a page in the hope that it is useful.
- Web pages do not have the same credibility as known journals or books, users make **judgments** about the value of information based on different criteria.

How do people read on the web?

- Eight out of 10 users don't read – they **scan** the page looking for the information they need.
- Users **don't scroll down long pages** unless they are clearly told it contains something useful
- Users don't like hype, the Internet is full of **marketing** that users have **learned to ignore** when looking for specific information.

Social Media

With its growth in popularity, social media has become one of the hottest topics in the non-profit sector for organizations of all sizes and across verticals. What started out as a way to reconnect with friends and family has grown into a means for non-profit organizations to spread awareness about key issues, mobilize supporters, raise funds and create online advocacy movements.

Despite its widespread adoption, many organizations still have questions about how to use social media to further their missions and how the tools can benefit programs. Common obstacles non-profits face when adding social elements to their communications and marketing efforts include: resourcing, understanding best practices, learning the nuances of specific tools, and measuring ROI.

As with any new technology, familiarity builds confidence. Additionally, having clear objectives simplifies planning and execution. Social media need not be overwhelming or difficult. It is a supplemental communication channel that can add tremendous value to your supporters and organization.

Social media is a low-cost, effective marketing channel that allows you to empower your supporters to share your organization's mission and achievements. It also makes it easier for potential supporters to discover you.

Some of the benefits for utilizing social media include:

- Building **awareness** of your mission by driving traffic to your website and social media properties.
- Growing your organization's **influence** by cost-effectively acquiring new supporters, donors and volunteers.
- Harnessing the passion of your most active supporters by empowering them to promote your organization's various programs.

To be successful in social media, you need a basic understanding of social platforms and technologies, their benefits, and how to construct a plan that ensures you're putting the right tools to work for your organization. In this guide, we'll uncover the advantages of various strategies and tactics so you may begin to develop a plan for incorporating the right social media techniques that support your marketing and communications objectives.

What is social media?

Social media refers to online communication channels that facilitate interaction and media distribution between people. Unlike more traditional online channels, social media allows for participation, engagement and real-time feedback on the part of supporters and constituents.

In the past, organizations could only broadcast messages with the use of email or a website. Now, online channels have opened and permit anyone to create content through blogs, hold real-time conversations on micro-blogging platforms, and develop a network of both personal and professional contacts. In other words, social media is creating a fundamental shift in the way people communicate online—changing your interactions to be more of a conversation with supporters.

Why does this matter to non-profits?

At the core of social media are the **social elements** it enables. In short, it's all about connections. To non-profits, this is crucial as these tools help build relationships by relating to the personal interests and emotions of supporters, thus building stronger bonds.

Key Benefits of Social Media for Non-profits

Learn what your supporters are saying and sharing about you and your organization.	Drive traffic to your various web properties: website, blog.	Improve results on search engine result pages with keyword rich content.	Drive visitors to online donation pages.
Empower your most passionate and influential supporters to promote your organization.	Acquire new contacts.	Humanize your organization.	Increase trust and loyalty by allowing people to share their voice through feedback forums.

Five Things To Do Before You Get Started

Before you dive in, review these five tips every individual should do before implementing social media at the organizational level.

1. Start using the tools **yourself**—there is no substitute for real world experience.
2. Teach **stakeholders** how to use the tools, explaining the benefits and problems they can solve for your organization.
3. **Listen** to what your constituents are talking about on social channels.
4. Sign up for **alerts** of your brand with tools like Google Alerts or Social Mention.
5. **Follow** thought leaders to gain insight into trends and topics of interest.

Editorial guidelines for blogs

Issues, not Personalities:
Many of the blogs on the internet are personal diaries. Institutional blogs are different – they are collaborative weblogs, produced by several members of staff to shed interesting perspectives on topical issues. So focus on hot topics, issues that are either on the development agenda or issues you think should be. Writing in the first person is default blogging style. However, avoid excessively personalising the posts – although you should by all means link to your previous articles or posts as relevant.

Stick to What You Know and Add Value:
Before you write, make sure your intended topic is within your area of expertise. Postings will result in feedback – so be prepared to write or speak in more detail about your area of expertise. If you are not comfortable about a specific topic, leave it to others. Stick to the facts and only posit an argument or opinion if you can illustrate it concretely. Before you post, ask yourself: 'Am I adding value?'

Be Clear, Complete, Concise:
Your text should be clear, complete and concise. Avoid jargon and explain things using simple language. Make sure your argument or the point you want to make flows well. Run a spell check before you share your views. Remember, once you have pressed the 'send' button, your post is in the public domain! If you make a mistake, quickly correct it and admit your error, before someone else does it for you.

It's a Two-way Street:
The web is all about links; if you intend to write, make sure you look around and read what others have posted. Referring to the work of others or linking to it will provide readers with more material to read, and will also generate backward linkages. Each post should contain at least one link, ideally two or three, to work related to the issues being raised.

Be Who You Are:
Many bloggers work anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. To be credible, it may be more effective to be transparent and honest. In an institutional blog, staff will usually use their own names (and will have a summary of their expertise available).

Love Your Audience: You should not post any material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, libellous, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful or embarrassing to another person or to any person or entity.

Respect Copyright Laws:
In order to protect your institution, you must respect laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work. Refer to other people's work and link to it.

Caveat Personal Opinions:
If this is an institutional blog, postings by staff are the institution's liability. However, any personal comment on particular issues should be prefaced or proceeded by a caveat: 'What I'm about to write/have just written is entirely my personal view, and is not intended to represent official organisational policy or positions'.

10 tips for NGOs on Twitter:

Twitter is fundamentally changing the way people, companies and organizations interact and share ideas. With that said, and especially in the case of NGOs, it is very important to learn how to utilize Twitter in order to achieve the goals and objectives you are trying to promote.

1. **Monitor Discussions & Relevant Updates**:
   Once you've signed up and chosen the right Twitter name, avatar and background for your NGO, start out by doing a search. This will familiarize you with the relevant content on Twitter and will give you a taste on how to proceed further.

2. **Identify & Follow:**
   Identify the most influential and interesting Twitter users in your sector and follow them. You can also look up your friends and colleagues since they might help you get more exposure for the cause you are promoting.

3. **Customize Your Account:**
   Add a descriptive bio, a related link and customize your page to encourage people to follow you. There's just enough room for a short description in your Twitter bio so use it; explain what you're doing or, if you're representing an organization or campaign, and describe your activities.

4. **Create a Relevant Voice:**
   Perhaps you want to inspire debate by asking pertinent, open-ended questions or maybe you want to inform about issues. It's up to you which tone of voice you use but avoid going into rants or being idle.

5. **Patience, Grasshopper:**
   There are many services out there that promise huge number of followers, forget about them; what you really want is quality not quantity. Having 50,000 people who aren't listening to you or retweeting you is not as valuable as 100 advocates who will evangelize your cause. The way to do this right is by being active through posting relevant and interesting messages and responding and engaging with followers.

6. **Engage Your Audience:**
   Twitter is flooded with millions of tweets per day, make sure that yours count. If you post interesting stuff, people will want to talk to you about it. Twitter is two-way communication so don't be surprised when people want to talk to you or ask questions.

7. **Revisit Your Tweets:**
   Sometimes you might get so caught up in your tweeting that you will forget to check up on the quality of your tweets. Therefore, every once in a while, you need to check your profile page to can see all the tweets you've posted and get an idea of just how funny, interesting or informative you have been. You may be surprised but you can assess, adjust and improve accordingly.

8. **Use a Twitter Client:**
   The easier you make it for yourself, the more likely you will post messages more often. There are tons of Twitter clients out there which can make it easier for you to follow up on and organize your tweets (Hootsuite, Brizzly).

9. **Be Creative & Innovative:**
   As an NGO, the chances are that your followers are actually interested in what you have to say; they really want to hear from you, especially if they are potential donors or volunteers. However, although it's quite common to post the latest blog article or retweet an interesting titbit, you still need to add more value to your followers by being creative in your tweets and the information you share.

10. **Checkout HashTags:**
    You'll often see words like #healthday #spinabifida #hydrocephalus and so on, these are known as hashtags which you can include in your tweets to make it easier for others to follow that topic.

Example

- The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) has focused their **social media investment** on their Facebook profile webpage: http://www.facebook.com/humanrightscampaign
- Through data analysis and monitoring of posts, HRC were able to isolate topics and **programs that generated the most buzz** and fine-tuned their online offering.
- As a result, HRC has seen **tremendous growth** intheir fan base—more than 400% over 14 months, jumping from 80,000 to more than 350,000 fans.
- Facebook also directs 30 to 50% of web traffic to HRC's **blog**, consistently making it the top-referring site.
- In the last 12 months, HRC also added more than 23,000 **new email addresses** to its email list from Facebook users taking action or submitting surveys posted on HRC's profile and signing up through the integrated Convio-driven form on the "Join HRC" tab of the organization's profile.

Advocacy and Campaigning - Practical tools

Planning Tools

1. Stakeholder Analysis

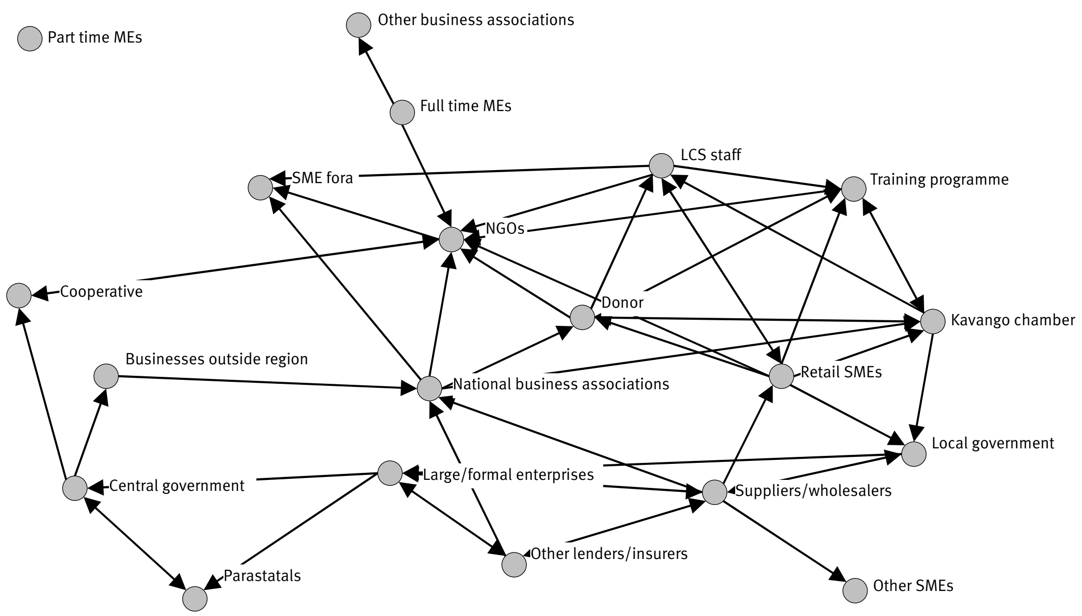
A stakeholder is a person who has something to gain or lose through the outcomes of a planning process or project. In many circles these are called **interest groups** and they can have a powerful bearing on the outcomes of political processes. It is often beneficial for research projects to identify and analyse the needs and concerns of different stakeholders, particularly when these projects aim to influence policy.

The first step is to **clarify the policy change objective** being discussed (see: Problem Tree Analysis in part 2). Next, **identify all the stakeholders** or interest groups associated with this objective, project, problem or issue.

A small group of about six to eight people, with a varied perspective on the problem, should be enough to create a good brainstorming session. Stakeholders can be organisations, groups, departments, structures, networks or individuals, but the list needs to be pretty exhaustive to ensure nobody is left out. The following grid[1] may help organise the brainstorm, or provide a structure for feedback to plenary if you are working in break-out groups.

The final step is to **develop a strategy for how best to engage different stakeholders in a project,** how to 'frame' or present the message or information so it is useful to them, and how to maintain a relationship with them. Identify who will make each contact and how, what message they will communicate and how they will follow-up.

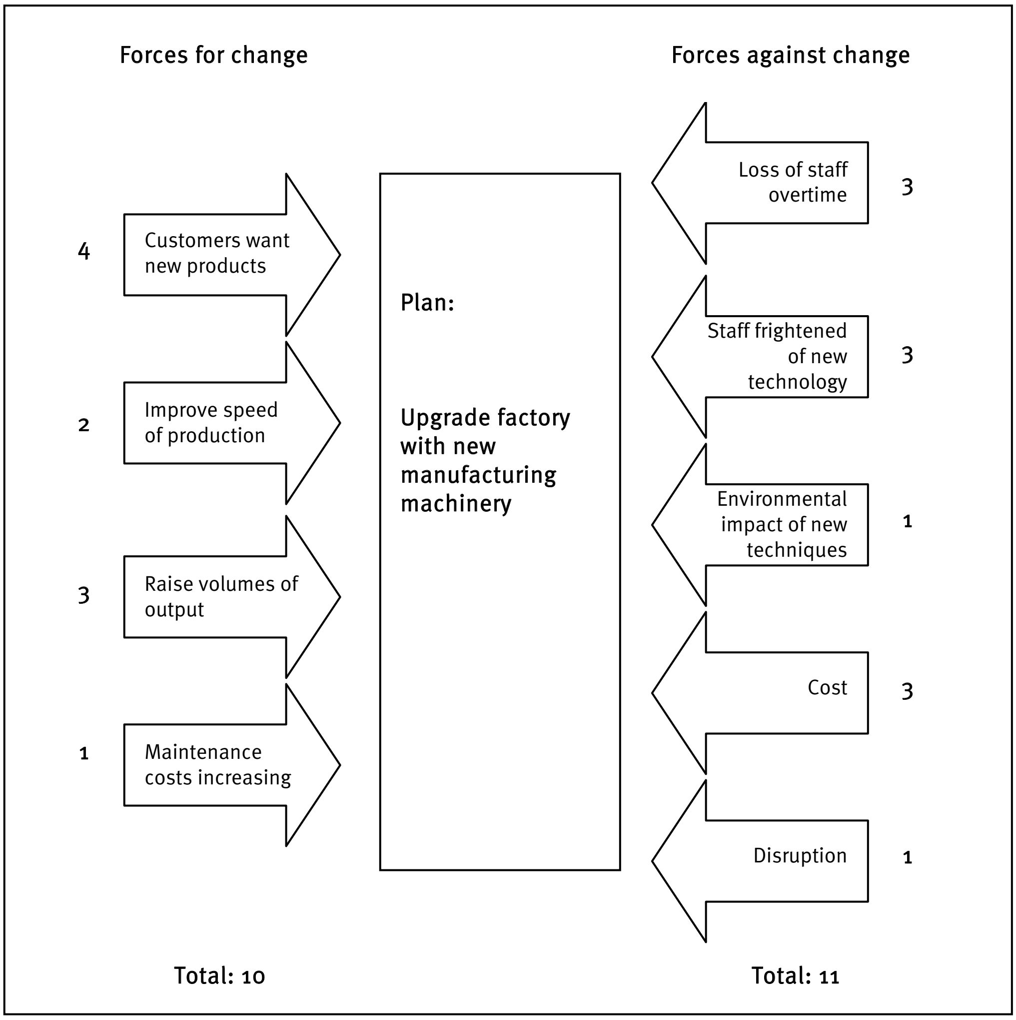
1 Source: Biggs and Matsaert (1998) in Rick Davies (2003)



2. Force Field Analysis

Force Field Analysis was developed by Lewin in 1951 and is widely used to inform decision-making, particularly in planning and implementing change management programmes in organisations.
It is a powerful method for gaining a comprehensive overview of the different forces acting on a potential policy issue, and for assessing their source and strength.

Detailed outline of the process
Force Field Analysis is best carried out in small group of about six to eight people using flip chart paper or overhead transparencies so that everyone can see what is going on. The first step is to **agree the area of change** to be discussed. This might be written as a desired policy goal or objective. All the **forces in support of the change** are then listed in a column to the left (driving the change forward) while all **forces working against the change** are listed in a column to the right (holding it back). The driving and restraining forces should be sorted around common themes and should then be scored according to their 'magnitude', ranging from one (weak) to five (strong). The score may well not balance on either side. The resulting table might look like figure below[1].



1 Source: Mind Tool, see: www.psywww.com/mt-site/forcefld.html

Packaging Tools

1. Visioning Scenarios - Show the Future

Scenario testing is a group activity. But the basic premise can also be used more widely in all kinds of communication, whether in a policy paper (e.g. outline three possible future scenarios in the introduction), a workshop presentation, or an email debate. Generally, scenario testing would deliver **three scenarios**: a positive (or optimistic), negative (or pessimistic), and neutral (or middle of the road) scenario.

By actively using 'scenarios' in all kinds of communication activities, several concerns and outcomes can be communicated at the same time. You are able to:

- Identify general, broad, **driving forces**, which are applicable to all scenarios;
- Identify a variety of **plausible trends** within each issue or trend (trends that vary depending on your assumptions so you get positive and negative perspectives);
- Combine the trends so you get a **series of scenarios** (for example, mostly positive trends identified in relation to an issue would give a positive scenario).

Scenario testing's greatest use is in developing an understanding of the situation, rather than trying to predict the future. Scenarios are a way of **developing alternative futures** based on different combinations of assumptions, facts and trends, and areas where more understanding is needed for your particular scenario project. They are called 'scenarios' because they are like 'scenes' in the theatre – a series of differing views or presentations on the same general topic. Once you see several scenarios at the same time, you better understand your options or possibilities.

Method

- Invite participants who have knowledge of, or are affected by, the proposal or issue of interest.
- Invite participants to identify the **underlying paradigms or unwritten laws of change**; trends or driving forces and collect into general categories (economy, socio/political, etc.); and wildcards or uncertainties.
- Consider **how these might affect a situation**, either singly or in combination, using these steps:

- review the big picture;
- review general approaches;
- identify what you know and what you don't know;
- select possible paradigm shifts and use them as an overall guide;
- cluster trends and see which driving forces are most relevant to your scenario.

- Create **alternative scenarios** (similar to alternate scenes in a play) by mixing wildcards with trends and driving forces; keep the number of scenarios small (four is ideal because it avoids the 'either/or' choice of two, and the good/bad/medium choice of three).
- Write a **brief report** that states assumptions and future framework; provides observations and conclusions; gives a range of possibilities; and focuses on the next steps coming out of this study. Each scenario should be about one page.

2. Tell a Story

Most campaigns are based on an oral history that contains a range of multiple and conflicting perspectives. An effective campaign is based on stories and the extent to which these are accepted by different parties.

A compelling story can provide the ideal vehicle for ideas, learning and good practice; simple, familiar and immediately understandable, it can also accommodate many points of view, strong emotion and difficult truths. Storytelling can be used to:

- identify and exchange learning episodes;
- explore values and inspire people towards the possibility of change;
- enrich quantitative information with qualitative evidence, illustrations and real examples;
- identify connections and create shared purpose;
- improve the effectiveness of strategic decisions by creating a better loop of understanding between strategy and implementation (source: www.sparknow.net).

Good stories are generally those that are interesting, unusual, provocative, serious, controversial, surprising, intriguing, or inspiring in some way. A few entry points into good stories include the following:

- Include a '**human interest**' element, i.e. clearly describe the people who will be affected by the issue or cause you are covering.
- Tell the big story from the point of view ('through the eyes of') someone who is **directly involved**.
- Sometimes the most powerful effect is achieved by simply telling the story of **one individual**.
- Achieve a **balance** between words from human beings and statements from organisations.
- Tell the story of a **successful** intervention.
- Tell the story of an **unsuccessful** intervention.

3. Be Persuasive

The Harvard Program on Negotiation (see: www.pon.harvard.edu) has spent many years understanding human needs in order develop clearer guidelines for those wishing to **reach agreement** with others without giving in.

They believe that as more attention is devoted to positions, less attention is devoted to meeting the underlying concerns of the parties. In positional bargaining you try to improve the chance of a favourable settlement to you by starting with extreme views and stubbornly holding on to them. It becomes a contest of will with negotiators asserting what they will and won't do.

Being nice is also no answer. If you are too concerned about keeping relationships sweet and play a soft game, you run the risk of reaching an agreement that does not serve your needs, especially if the other side plays a hard game. The alternative involves:

- separating the people from the problem
- focusing on interests, not positions
- inventing options for mutual gain
- insisting on using objective criteria

The first point responds to the fact that human beings have emotions. Participants should see themselves as working side by side, attacking the problem, but not each other – there is no reason why they should not empathise with each other's predicament. Taking positions, however, makes things worse, as people's egos become attached to positions.

The second point reflects the fact that compromising between positions is not likely to produce an agreement which will effectively take care of the human needs and interests that led people to adopt those positions.

Trying to come up with a solution that successfully fulfils both party's needs and interests requires a creative approach which can often be inhibited by having a lot at stake and being under pressure. It is best to set aside time to lay out options for mutual gain, without any pressure to agree on them. Finally, to ensure that no one party blocks proceedings by being irrational or stubborn, it is important to insist on objective criteria.

Targeting Tools

1. Writing Policy Papers

The purpose of the policy paper is to **provide a comprehensive and persuasive argument justifying the policy recommendations presented in the paper**, and therefore to act as a decision-making tool and a call to action for the target audience.

In preparing to write your policy paper, consider the policymaking process that you are involved in and research that you (and your colleagues) have done to answer the following questions:

- Which stage(s) in the policymaking process are you trying to influence through your policy paper?
- Which stakeholders have been/are involved at each stage of the policymaking process?
- Have you identified a clear problem to address? Can you summarise it in two sentences?
- Do you have sufficiently comprehensive evidence to support your claim that a problem exists?
- Have you outlined and evaluated the possible policy options that could solve this problem? What evaluation criteria did you use?
- Have you decided on a preferred alternative?
- Do you have sufficient evidence to effectively argue for your chosen policy alternative over the others?

Young and Quinn (2002) also include checklists for the following: policy paper outline; title; table of contents; executive summary; introduction; problem description; argumentation; policy options; conclusions and recommendations.

2. Lobbying

Organisations engaged in lobbying activities seek to **persuade public bodies** of the reasons why certain issues, policies or laws should be supported or rejected. Despite its somewhat tarnished reputation, lobbying remains a useful tool for charities seeking to make an impact in the public sphere. Lobbying is a means by which organisations can further their objectives by influencing the direction and content of government policy decisions.

Techniques for lobbying government

- Remember that ministers are not usually experts in the fields they represent. Your charity should aim to establish itself as the foremost authority in its field while fostering a relationship with the relevant department. In time you may be called upon for comment or advice.
- Consider seeking to influence other groups that are integral to the political process. Backbench MPs, opposition politicians, select committees, all-party groups, lords, civil servants, think tanks and the media may respond well to your message.
- Be positive in your approach. Seek to shape and respond to government policy rather than criticise it.
- Consider the specific structures, interests and needs of regional government.
- Be aware of the agenda and language of the current government. Tailor your approach and adopt a tone that is in tune with the people you seek to influence.
- Time your approach carefully. Inopportune lobbying is counterproductive and reveals your organisation’s lack of understanding in the political process.
- Consider lobbying government in conjunction with other organisations that share similar goals to your charity. This tactic has the benefit of maximising a minister’s time while impressing upon them the weight of support for your cause.
- Use examples of existing toolkits on health advocacy: http://globalgenes.org/toolkits/

Campaigning online: PUSH! platform

What is PUSH?

We are aware of enormous challenges and issues that people with spina bifida and hydrocephalus face. These issues come from small organisations lacking proper communication strategies and staff who could dedicate time to make their voice be heard and push the stories forward.
The inequalities in healthcare almost all over the world and the terrible neglect of the fact that many people with spina bifida and hydrocephalus are growing older with no regulation or agreement about how their needs can be met. Even in the most developed countries where healthcare is excellent, there are other emerging issues.
When people have something so fundamental in common, across all nationalities and creeds, then great strength can be gained from forming a united bond with global reach. That's why we formed **PUSH! - People United for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus**.

Why to join PUSH?

Through the PUSH online platform we can support one another by:

- sharing information and knowledge
- giving our skills and expertise to one another
- building the world's biggest resource of life experience with sb/h
- forming networks of like-minded people to bring about change
- coming together to meet and support each other

PUSH is not a tool for fundraising. Its objective is to focus on non-financial rewards for campaigns and to create a vast community for information sharing. We use campaigning, advocacy, political skills and the authority of a truly international community to bring about change by:

- organising campaigns that represents thousands and thousands of voices across the world
- giving international support in order to strengthen and highlight national or regional campaigns in member states
- offering our support and encouragement to local groups, whoever they are in the world, who are working towards improvement or to challenge injustice and inequality.

www.pu-sh.org

PUSH! is a global community where there is a place for every individual with spina bifida and hydrocephalus, every family, every professional fighting for better services, every individual who cares about these issues.

Become a member:

- to immediately join the first global community of people affected by sb/h
- to be able to access members of the PUSH community as it grows to find out where there are people who share ones concerns/life experience
- to be invited to push for campaigns and policies designed to improve life of people with sb/h around the world
- the membership is free and only you are in charge of your campaign!
- you can translate the website and help us grow (so far we have Englishm French and Spanish language versions)
- join as a National Coordinator and get involved in the communication and campaignign trainings
- use our vast social media audience to pass on your message!

PUSH! in 2 steps:

- Join the movement: http://pu-sh.org/en/users/sign_up
- Take action and start your own campaign: http://pu-sh.org/en/campaigns/create_campaign

STEP 1 SET UP YOUR GOALS	STEP 2 IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET
Decide what you want to achieve: • Make sure your aims are reasonable and clear, and that everyone involved agrees with them. • Write your aims down so you can refer back to them later if you feel you are losing focus. • Be creative! Your campaign will have greater credibility if you can present imaginative solutions to the problems you have identified. • Think about what you want in the long run.	Before you can plan a campaign you need to think about the key players - the people who may help or hinder your campaign. Targets could be divided into three categories: **The primary targets**: the persons or institutions detaining the power to bring changes. These are often the formal authorities which are able to shape the legislation and policies or to ensure their implementation. **The secondary targets**: the persons or institutions able to influence the primary targets. These could be the persons that the decision-makers will listen to, such as advisers or other politicians, but they can also be the media, NGOs or other associations. **Opponents to your campaign**, which will try to hinder your steps. It is important that you determine how much a threat to your campaign they can be, and what could be done to decrease their influence.
STEP 3 PREPARE EVIDENCE	STEP 4 BUILD ALLIANCES
Make your case well and get your facts right! Types of evidence to prepare include: • searching statistics showing the numbers affected • personal testimonies of people who have been affected – sometimes called case studies • research from other sources showing how what you are proposing has worked elsewhere • information showing the financial implications, where possible, including the cost of your solutions, and savings that could be made by the local agencies if they are put in place • supporting information from professionals, such as social workers, speech and language therapists or GPs. Make sure you get their consent before using these testimonies. Adapt your case and materials for your audience.	• Your campaign is more likely to succeed if you act in cooperation rather than alone. • Acting in group will not only increase your chances to be heard, but will also allow to share information, know-how, resources and workload. • Try to seek potential partners in other NGOs, but also associations, businesses, local authorities or trade unions. You should not forget to look for alliances beyond your own policy sector. • The disadvantage of alliances, however, is that you will inevitably have to compromise. Set clearly from the outset the responsibilities of each and agree on a common strategy. • Include a wide range of people. The more people you can engage to speak 'with one voice' in support of your campaign, the greater your credibility with decision makers will be. • Working as a group gives you the opportunity to share tasks, pool information, talk things over and get a better overview of what is needed locally. It can also help to dispel the concerns some people may have about being seen as a 'troublemaker' or jeopardising services they already receive.

STEP 5 RIGHT TIMING	STEP 6 CHOOSE METHODS
In a campaign, timing is everything. The same action will have a different impact at different times, depending on the context and on the interplay of actors. Decision makers have to make certain decisions at particular times, and may not be able to consider changes at other times. It is much better to challenge a decision before it has been finalised and definitely before it has been implemented. This is because it is easier to stop something happening than to get a decision reversed. If your local council is planningto close a day centre, for example, it is better to campaign for the day centre to remain open before the final decision has been made and definitely before the day centre actually closes. • Find out when the key activities you need to influence will take place and work around them. • Make sure you get information to your target audiences, your allies and the media with plenty of time for them to act. • Wherever possible, try to avoid campaigning at 'downtimes', like the summer holidays, when people will be away or busy.	As NGOs often have a low budget, it is better that you prioritise the use of the cheapest campaign strategies. Contrary to widespread beliefs, it is possible to campaign efficiently for a low cost. For example, you could privilege the use of the Internet over other kinds of communication. You could also avoid costly advertising techniques for your campaign and instead privilege working with the media. • The easiest way to start a campaign is to write a letter or email. This might be a very simple letter to a politician or other decision maker, stating your concerns and what you want to change. If you want to start a letter writing campaign, encourage as many people as possible to get involved, whether or not they are directly affected by the issue. Tell people who they should write to, what points should go into the letter and what evidence can back up these points. • The best way to get your message across to decision makers is to meet people in person. Try to arrange a meeting at a crucial point in your campaign. • Public meetings provide an opportunity for you to demonstrate the level of concern to decision makers and to attract new supporters to your campaign. They can be particularly useful at the beginning of a campaign and around 'pressure points', such as key decision or budget times. • **Use new media to advance your campaign: create and share your campaign via PUSH!**
STEP 7 DESIGN AN ACTION PLAN	STEP 8 EVALUATE- MEASURE IMPACT
1. Timeline: Establish a campaign calendar 2. Activity: Plan meetings, set benchmarks 3. Resources/Budget: What other costs may be incurred? Ensure you have enough members involved. Decide on printed material. Other costs that may be incurred? 4. Potential offensive and defensive strategies: Know our campaign's strengths and weaknesses. Spell out strategy – who is assigned, who should be involved & when? Establish a media strategy. Consider the unexpected. 5. Publicise your success!	During and following a campaign, it's a good idea to try to evaluate your success. This helps you to understand what was good and what was bad about your campaign and so improve your campaigning in the future. • Did you ask for the right things? Were you too ambitious? • What worked well and what went wrong? Is it possible to say why? • How many people have taken action on your behalf? Was this enough? What prompted people to get involved? Could you have got more people on board? • How did the media respond and was this helpful?