EDITORIAL CALENDAR

PLAN ALL YOUR MEDIA STRATEGICALLY TO ACCOMPLISH YOUR MISSION

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WHERE I CAME FROM

WHY ME HERE NOW?

- Started
- Run
- Worked at
- Participated in
- Consulted to
- Wrote a book
- Have a podcast
THIS IS A CONVERSATION
BE GENTLE WITH ME

• I will post this presentation on the CFNCW site

• So don’t take too many notes

• Ask me questions

• Adapt what you hear to what works for you - almost nothing here is sacred

• Remember that you don’t have to do every single thing - do what you do best, get better at what you don’t

• Don’t let the perfect be the enemy of the good enough (YET don’t be lazy and rely on social media all the time for everything)
BIG PICTURE SUMMARY

TELL ‘EM

- Why we communicate
- Mission, Vision, Strategy, and Tactics
- Why make a plan (acting) rather than just addressing it on the go (reacting)
- When to make the plan
- What it should include
- How to remain agile (don’t sweat the small stuff)
TOPLINE OVERVIEW

HERE ARE THE KEY POINTS FOR REDUCING STRESS

- Before the next year starts, make a plan
- This plan includes
  - What you’re going to communicate about
  - When you’re going to communicate about it
  - Which platforms you will communicate on
  - ALL considering what reaction/response/result you desire
- Consider writing FR appeals and newsletter articles far in advance
THE BIG PICTURE

WHY ARE YOU COMMUNICATING?
YOUR LIFE IN YOUR NONPROFIT:
IMAGINE...

YOU’RE DEEP DOWN INSIDE A MINE,
SO YOU ARE AWARE OF EVERYTHING:
THE DIRT, THE WATER, THE
DARKNESS, THE COLD, THE SNAKES,
THE FROGS...
AND THE GOLD!
ORGANIZATIONS MUST BE INTERNAL PROCESSORS

WE KNOW TOO MUCH, SO WE NEED TO FILTER, AND NEED TO SHARE THE STORY...

+ ON PLATFORMS WHERE PEOPLE WILL PAUSE

+ IN WAYS THAT PEOPLE WILL LISTEN

+ WITH THE FEWEST HIGH IMPACT WORDS AS POSSIBLE

+ TO EVOKE A PLANNED ACTION/REACTION
I STOLE THIS

(THANKS ERICA BARNHART)

Essence, not everything.
PLANNING

+ PLANNING TAKES THE MYSTERY OUT OF IT
+ PLANNING TAKES THE IMPULSIVENESS OUT OF IT
+ WE MAKE POOR DECISIONS UNDER STRESS
+ PLANNING DRAMATICALLY LOWERS STRESS, SO WE COMMUNICATE MORE EFFECTIVELY
A FEW TERMS

- **Platform**: paper newsletter, Constant Contact, MailChimp, email, letter, postcard, SurveyMonkey, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.

- **Active**: anything that should drive a response

- **Passive**: a no-response-expected skyrocket message

- **Development**: fundraising

- **An ASK**: any time you actually solicit funds

- **Face to Face**: can mean that and also telephone conversation
WHY WE REACH OUT

ADMIT IT: YOU WANT SOME ATTENTION

• You offer services
• You care about our community in a particular way
• You want people to know what you do
• You also need to maintain momentum
• You need to earn supporters
• Thank, invite, thank, invite… and occasionally ask for support
HOW WE STAY ABOVE THE FRAY

IT’S A CROWDED FIELD OUT THERE
(JUST THINK OF GIVE BIG)

• Newsletters: weekly, monthly, quarterly, annual?
  • Paper, electronic, or a combination
• Updates of all kinds
  • Email - urgent
    • Facebook - passive
    • Twitter - passive
  • Postcards
• Urgent bulletins are sacred - “We just had a victory!” or “Uh-Oh”
PLATFORMS

- Newsletter
  - Paper
  - Electronic - Constant Contact, MailChimp
    - Don’t cheap out on email that leads to your site...
- Letter
  - Fundraising or other response request
- Post card - great update/bulleted/response device
- Facebook
  - Great for updates, keeping people engaged
  - Also good for people to forward to others
  - Seriously in competition with other messages in the world
- Twitter
  - Unless you’re a Big Deal, use this sparingly
  - Awesome to tag your small organization onto a Big National Story
- Instagram
  - Light, fun, visually engaging, and ties perfectly to Facebook and other platforms
PERSONALIZE
WHENEVER POSSIBLE: DEAR [INSERT NAME]

- When post office mailing something, WHENEVER POSSIBLE address it to a person or a couple… by name
  - “Dear supporter” is worse than no intro at all
- Always from *someone* at your organization: ED, Chair, some other stakeholder with contact info
BACK TO THE BIG PICTURE AND FIVE W

WHY WHAT WHEN WHERE WHO (HOW AT LEAST ENDS WITH W)
MISSION

IT’S THE CORE OF EVERYTHING WE DO
IT SHOULD BE INGRAINED IN OUR BRAINS

MISSION IS OFTEN EPHEMERAL,
SOMETIMES HARD TO EXPLAIN

IT’S THE ‘WHY’
THE MISSION OF THE METHOW VALLEY CITIZENS COUNCIL IS TO RAISE A STRONG COMMUNITY VOICE FOR PROTECTION OF THE METHOW VALLEY’S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL CHARACTER
VISION
MORE CONCRETE EASIER TO SEE... AND EXPLAIN
VISION

WHAT’S THE WORLD YOU EN-VISION?
THIS IS THE ‘WHAT’

• It’s usually easier to talk about Vision than Mission

• It’s the ‘what’ that most people want to hear about

• Vision is very often what you’re messaging about

  • We envision protected lands, safe from mining and other destructive interventions

  • We envision a population in the Methow and beyond who understand their part in reducing carbon emissions
STRATEGY

WHAT
WHEN
HOW
WHO
STRATEGY
BIG THINKING TO GUIDE YOUR ACTIONS

• These guide you through a period of time (3 months…12…36…)

• “We will achieve these goals… which fill in the picture that *is* our vision… which moves us closer to achieving the mission”

• Created by Board mainly, and some staff

  • A program
    • (tactic, tactic)

  • A fundraising goal
    • (tactic, tactic)
TACTICS

“WHO BROUGHT THE NAILS?”
“DO YOU KNOW HOW TO USE A HAMMER?”
TACTICS

BOOTS ON THE GROUND ‘HOW IT’S GONNA HAPPEN’

• Whatever we want to write about… we already know the ‘why’
• We know what we’re going to do (how then?)
• We know how much it’s going to cost (where and how to raise $)
• Now let’s raise awareness, or alarm, or compassion, or empathy… and money
• This is where your editorial calendar resides
COMMUNICATING IS ALL ABOUT THE STORY: WHAT’S THE STORY YOU NEED TO TELL?
NONPROFITS ARE ALL ABOUT THE WHY

(THE ‘WHAT’ IS TO ILLUMINATE THE WHY)
ONCE AGAIN, THINK OF YOUR NONPROFIT AS A GOLD MINE...
MOST PEOPLE DON’T CARE ABOUT ANYTHING BUT THE GOLD

AND THAT’S THE STORY YOU GET TO TELL!
WHEN SOMEONE IS GIVING YOU TOO MANY DETAILS
A FEW WORDS ABOUT WRITING
PLANNING RELIEVES THE PRESSURE OF WRITING

• Some people love writing - most people do not

• Pressure creates bad results
  • You get tunnel vision and forget things

• Your voice is compromised and often inauthentic

• Planning/scheduling your topics and your platforms, outlining them ahead of time, even writing them knowing you may re-write them… it all relieves burdens when deadlines loom
I AM NOT SUGGESTING YOU CALENDAR EVERY SINGLE TWEET AND FACEBOOK POST!

• If it helps, do it

• The print communications are the hardest - they are the ones to schedule, outline, or write in full

• Ahead of time!

• Social media will often support your print communication
NEVER FORGET THAT
FACE TO FACE
IS ALMOST ALWAYS
BETTER
ALMOST ALWAYS BETTER?

WHEN ISN’T IT?

- Sometimes you need to tell a long story, and written words do that best.
- Sometimes it’s best to raise money in writing, especially grassroots one-to-many appeals.
- Do NOT let written words substitute for much needed human contact - don’t defer to writing in fundraising that needs face to face!
NOW, ABOUT YOUR WEBSITE...
“OUR WEBSITE IS KINDA OLD… WE KEEP MEANING TO UPDATE IT.”
YOU WILL SEND EVERYONE TO YOUR
WEBSITE - IT MUST BE CURRENT

• Information must be correct
• It should look modern or classic
• It should work on mobile platforms
• A sparse, modern website is way better than a thorough old website
  • For instance…
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE (BS) CRIMINAL JUSTICE. GRADUATED: 1986.

- U.S. Marine Corps Combat Action Ribbon.
  "Equal To U.S. Army Combat Infantry Badge."

- LIBERATION OF KUWAIT MEDAL, SECOND AWARD.
  Awarded From the Post 1991 Gulf War "Restored" Royal Kuwait Government.

- U.S. ARMY SOUTH WEST ASIA CAMPAIGN MEDAL with 3 Bronze Stars.

- LIBERATION OF KUWAIT MEDAL, FIRST AWARD.
  Awarded From the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

GEORGE HUTCHINS For U.S. CONGRESS

1991 Gulf War Operation Desert Storm Combat Veteran

YOUR LOOK IS YOUR BRAND, AND IT CARRIES THROUGH EVERYTHING, REDUCING DECISION STRESS...AND CREATING A COMMON IDENTITY

DECIDE ON YOUR LOOK
BRANDING
TONE, COLORS, FONTS

• Everything you do should have common elements, so people know just by looking that they’ve found you

• Just as you personally have a communication style, so will your organization; your tone should come through: serious, folksy, hoity, jocular - but not all of these!

• Colors are a big part of branding: your logo colors will correspond to colors on all other communications - website, brochures, Facebook, Twitter, t-shirts, tattoos

• Use the same font in most things - is it formal, classic, contemporary? Match it to your overall organizational tone

• Again: this reduces decision stress! You know what your font and colors are for every single thing you’re going to put out!
NONE OF US ARE THE RED CROSS!

WE START SOMEWHERE THOUGH...

RAISING A STRONG COMMUNITY

EDUCATE - ADVOCATE - ENGAGE
WHEN
WHEN TO PLAN YOUR COMMUNICATIONS

DO THESE ALL AT ROUGHLY THE SAME TIME:

1. STRATEGIC PLAN
2. BUDGET
3. COMMUNICATIONS/EDITORIAL PLAN
AUTUMN…FALL…NOT QUITE END OF YEAR

- Your Strategic Plan gives birth to…
  - Your programs, events, and annual activities
    - The tactics to achieve these
      - Your communications/editorial plan
        - And the budget to make all of that possible
- Why October and not December? Because December is busy busy busy with end of year budget/fundraising/parties/socializing - your editorial plan will get blown off as “we’ll get to it in January.”
In 2020 we want to focus on communicating about this:

- **Maintaining** program A
  - It’s a money-maker, and really serves our mission, and people love it
  - We are identified by this program, and it’s a ready-made story with good pictures and quotes

- **Growing** program B
  - Tested it last year, got good feedback from the community; Our messaging: “this is what we heard from you, this is how it worked, and this is how we’re making it better”
    - Including less-privileged kids into the mix directly serves the mission, and is a good fundraising hook

- **Creating** program C
  - It’s a stretch, no one knows about it; new visuals, messaging; lots of work

- Fundraising event 1
  - Intimate significant donor summit/thank you (small editorial need)

- Fundraising event 2
  - Gala event, with $$ tickets, drinks, auction (large editorial need)

- Fun-raising, friend-raising event 3
  - Come one, come all, picnic in the park, raffle… what-have-you (large editorial need)

- Etcetera and so on!
AN EXAMPLE
HOW YOUR MASTER CALENDAR BEGINS

• January: make sure all thank you’s and follow-ups from end of year are done
  • Facebook:
    • post 1: “Big year in store! Thank you for last year!” (Quick recap
    • post 2: “Our first big event is on XYZ date - put that in your calendar!”
    • post 3: “blah blah”
  • Twitter: nothing unless you actually have something to say
  • Instagram: fun, light, when you have time

• February: Awaken the giant
  • Newsletter/Mailchimp:
    • Themed - priming your audience for what to expect this year
      • Articles about two programs
      • Article about something *like* what you do succeeding in another community
  • Facebook: mimic and amplify what you’ve got in the newsletter; mention newsletter so anyone on FB who does not get your newsletter has an opportunity to find our more OR even subscribe
  • Twitter: “Our newsletter just went out - find it here (link to location on website), or subscribe here! (link)”
ORGANIZE EDITORIAL CALENDAR

...BY ACTION

...AND PLATFORM
WHAT ACTIONS/EVENTS ARE BEST SUPPORTED BY...

- Paper newsletter (high cost/good read rate, gets donor envelope in-hand)
- Digital newsletter (lower cost/lower read rate, and no envelope)
  - Common mistake: expecting click-through from email
- Paper letter (fundraising)
- Email
- Postcard (reminder; call to action)
- Facebook (independent channel; also supports newsletter/other outreach)
- Twitter (independent channel; super-topical; don’t overuse it!)
- Instagram (fun, light, engaging visually)
- Survey Monkey - super valuable engagement tool
PLANNING: IN OCTOBER
EVENTS, PLATFORMS, RESULTS

• Calendar all events and messages you want to send
  • Think about each platform you want to use through the year
  • Write as much of these communications - at least outline them
  • File these and review often, just so you’re always aware

• “MailChimp:Feb” “Newsletter:April” “MailChimp:July” “Newsletter: October” etc.
  • “Appeal letter:May” “Appeal letter: November”
  • “Facebook:Jan. Facebook:Feb”…
REMEMBER A FEW THINGS
• Competition for eyeballs is fierce, so strategically:
  
  • Diagram your year around HOW you are going to communicate WHICH messages (e.g.: calendar and outline content of your newsletters and appeals in November for the following year, and decide which platforms)
  
  • Remember to message the WHY (mission) as the underlying message to *what* and *how* and cite people in writing and pics
  
  • Communicate value to the reader/viewer (don’t send pointless stuff “just to stay on their radar”)
  
  • If you want a response, make it easy to respond
  
  • If you want it shared, make it easy, and ask them to share it
  
  • Everything you send or post should have a desired outcome: tailor your message to the desired action
THE END IS NEAR
WHAT WE COVERED TODAY
TELL YA WHAT I TOLD YA

• Why we communicate

• Mission, Vision, Strategy, and Tactics

• Why make a plan rather than just dealing with it on the go (acting rather than reacting equals control vs. chaos)

• When to make the plan

• What it should include: messages, platforms, timing

• How to remain agile - not everything happens exactly according to plan (don’t sweat the small stuff)
RESOURCE SHEET AVAILABLE ON YOUR WAY OUT:

Craig Howard
www.FirstCreekPartners.com

De-stressing Outreach: Create an Editorial Calendar
NPI Summit 2019 Lake Chelan

A few resources:

Fearless Inquiry, Craig Howard
A book about a communication model for nonprofits and other environments that encourages openness, questioning, answering, leadership… and followership

Nonprofit YEAH!
My podcast, available on iTunes

Nonprofit stuff:

Inside the Nonprofit Boardroom, Charles Golding
Brief! Corny drawings! But I give this gem to anyone new to board work

Seeing Through a Donor’s Eyes, Tom Ahern
About fundraising and interacting with donors on their terms, which is how you should deal with any donor!

Joan Garry’s guide to Nonprofit Leadership
A very human approach to what it means to lead a nonprofit;
Her tagline is: Nonprofits Are Messy (I think we can all identify!)

Writing stuff:

Bird by Bird, Annie Lamott
Some Instructions on Writing and Life
(I give a copy of this to every serious aspiring writer I encounter)

Writing Down the Bones, Natalie Goldberg
Just a great book on writing - getting started, keeping at it
DON’T LET THE BIG PICTURE OVERWHELM YOU - JUST BEGIN SOMEWHERE! PICK A PLACE: …SCHEDULING, MESSAGING, PROGRAMS, PLATFORMS…