



15 November 2005

## Communications Tool Kit

This kit is to assist you in getting your key information across to the general public and stakeholders. The aim is to build on this kit over time by sharing information and experiences throughout Tangata Whenua and the community and voluntary sector.

**Developing a Communications Plan – an outline..... 2**  
*This section deals with the strategic and practical tools for developing and implementing good communications, including how to develop a communications plan and some tips on how to write a press release.*

**Working with the Media..... 5**  
*Writing a media / press release can be one of the major links to the outside world for your organisation. Many organisations do not make use of the opportunities available to use the media. This section provides some basic tips on writing a press release, what to include and what not to include and how to structure it.*

**Understanding Sponsorship ..... 8**  
*Sponsorship is part of the community and voluntary sector's funding mix. This section goes through some of the basic rules for seeking and securing sponsorship, as well as some tools that can help you to improve your approach.*

For further information or if you have suggestions for further information you would like to see developed please contact Anna Kominik or Maree Wilson

**This communications toolkit has been prepared and is copyrighted by Ideas Shop**

# Developing a Communications Plan – an outline

## 1. Background

The Background section should contain some statement about the subject of the plan and the scope of the plan. This could include:

- What is the subject of the plan?
- What is the scope of the plan, i.e. what does it cover?
- What benefits it offers?
- What major issues it raises?

## 2. Objectives

It is important to define as clearly as possible, what it is you want to achieve through communication.

## 3. Identifying Key Audiences

It is not possible to communicate effectively without having thought carefully about the different audiences you may need to communicate with. Typically, audiences include the likes of staff, community groups, the media, developers etc

Write down what you are planning to do, step by step, in the course of the project. Look at each step and ask the question, 'Who will be affected by this?', and prepare a list of all major audiences

## 4. Identifying Issues

Having identified key audiences, you need to identify the issues that affect/concern/influence these audiences. A good preliminary to identifying issues is to carry out a simple analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis). List these issues and identify the level of risk each issue represents.

## 5. Decide on the Strategic Approach

This involves deciding on the overall strategy you intend to employ. Some important questions to answer:

- Does your project lend itself to taking a pro-active or a reactive communications stance?
- Is there any one audience or audience sector (e.g. the local community) who will make or break the plan?
- Is there any particular issue which requires more time and attention than any other?

## 6. Specific Actions

- At this point, it is helpful to develop a grid which involves the following elements:

Audience	Action	Deadline	Responsibility

This way you can see at a glance what actions are required to deal with the specific issues that affect the audiences you have identified. You should also have a column for assigning responsibility for doing the work.

## **7. Develop Key Messages**

- Key messages are the short memorable phrases used to convey a position on particular issues. They are developed by:
  - Analysing the relevant issues and their relevance to or impact on the different audiences
  - Identifying the negative aspects of the issue
  - Identifying the corresponding positives
  - In the light of the work already done, determining the organisations bottom-line position
  - Finding a brief and memorable way of expressing the bottom line position

## **8. Identify tools**

Tools are the materials you will need to support your communications initiatives. Typically they will be drawn from the likes of:

- Media Statements
- Background papers
- Q&A sheets
- Position papers
- Media monitoring
- Letters
- Memos
- Fliers
- Brochures
- Powerpoint or overhead presentations
- Videos

## **9. Determine Accountability**

Accountabilities and timeframes should be assigned for each communication activity. Timeframes do not mean specific dates but an estimation of the time involved and an indicative period in which the activity will start.

As part of this process, it is also important to identify key spokespeople. It is often worthwhile to have more than one spokesperson to ensure availability.

## **10. Measuring the Result**

The success of the communications plan can be measured at two levels. Firstly, by measuring the extent to which the outcomes have been achieved and secondly through measuring the success of individual communication activities. It is advisable to have an idea of what your baseline position is before you implement the communications plan. This can

be achieved by formal or informal surveys. Measuring the results of communications activity can be difficult. The most common methods of measuring results is by:

- Surveys
- Analysis of media coverage

## **Working with the Media**

The relationship with the media is always symbiotic. The important thing to keep in mind when dealing with the media is that they have a job to do, just as you do.

The most successful relationship and the most effective means of delivering a message to the public is to build a relationship of understanding and respect.

Getting to know your local reporters is a good way to build that relationship.

### **How to Write a Press Release**

Press Releases can be used most effectively to announce an event, a key appointment or a new service.

The first thing you have to remember is that a Press Release is a "news" item.

It needs to "inform" people, NOT sell them something. For example, they will read the press release to learn something that will BENEFIT them.

This must be conveyed in the form of a "newsworthy" Press Release.

If you haven't written a press release before a good way to get into the style is to grab the latest daily newspaper and read some of their informational articles.

Notice how each article is written and pattern yours after the same format. After you do a few of them -- you'll be able to "get the picture."

Most media outlets are deluged with press releases. Therefore, it's worth considering alternatives to the press release format.

### **Alternatives to Press Releases:**

- Fact sheets: who, what, when, where, and why.
- Position statements: containing a brief explanation of the issue and why your group really cares about it.

***The following two pages contain an example and key elements of a press release.***



2

1

3

**Embargo: For Immediate Release - 18 October 2005**

**COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR CALLS FOR NEW GOVERNMENT TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE**

An independent coalition of Tangata Whenua and leading community and voluntary organisations, has today written to the Prime Minister [1], appealing for her to give the Community and Voluntary Sector portfolio to a Minister inside Cabinet with other complementary portfolios.

The coalition, called COMVOICES, is a pilot communications project set up by seven key sector umbrella groups and organisations to promote the voluntary sector and the huge contribution it makes to New Zealand society.

4

5

Executive Director of the New Zealand Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations, Tina Reid said:

*"Prior to the election, the Labour Party issued a policy which was light on detail. The sector is going to be looking for a Minister who can address the key issues facing the fast growing sector, especially at a time when government is increasingly reliant on voluntary organisations for provision of child care and protection services"*

*"The Labour Party's pre-election policy announcement for the sector gave no hint of how it was planning to address the critical sustainability and funding issues facing the sector."*

*"There was also no indication whether a Labour-led government will continue to support the Community Sector Taskforce past this year. The Taskforce is a vital mechanism for building a sound and successful sector for the future."*

6

*"This parliamentary term, the sector is going to be looking for some concrete commitments from this government. There is a lot of work to do to improve working relationships with the sector and progress some key social initiatives."*

**ENDS**

7

[1] [Click here to read letter to PM](#)

**NOTES:** COMVOICES was launched in July 2005 and was founded by the following voluntary sector organisations: New Zealand Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations; Funding Information Service; Healthcare Aotearoa; Community Sector Taskforce; Association of Non-Governmental Organisations of Aotearoa (ANGOA); Philanthropy New Zealand; New Zealand Council of Social Services

For more information, please contact:

8

**Tina Reid**  
04 385 0981 (w)  
04 389 9873 (h)  
027 6846640 (m)

**Andrea Goble**  
04 499 4090 (w)  
04 972 3569 (h)  
021 1578375 (m)

**Iris Pahau**  
04 526 2036 (w)  
021 1771012 (m)

## **Key Elements of a press release**

1. Embargo: tells the news desk when the story is for. If your story is time sensitive, make sure that the embargo is clearly and unambiguously stated on the press release.
2. Title: attention grabbing (but not over-laboured) pithy words in the title of the press release.
3. Intro: get the main gist of your story out within the first or first few sentences – who, why where and when.
4. Location: where news is happening and whom it concerns – could be a regional or national focus
5. Spokesperson: clearly indicate who is commenting on the story.
6. Quotes: provide comment on the 'news' and why it is important. Not all the quotes may be used, but providing more than one allows reporters to choose from a selection. Think soundbites.
7. Notes and links: do not forget references and links to important aspects / documents relevant to the press release so that reporters need not look for them. Remember, reporters prefer to write up stories, not spend time researching them.
8. Contact: It may seem obvious, but provide your telephone numbers. Always include your out-of-office number.

# Understanding Sponsorship

The following are the most common reasons companies use sponsorship:

## **Shape consumer attitudes**

Brands with huge ad budgets and high unaided recall do not need sponsorship to generate visibility. Instead, they often sponsor for the lifestyle association the sponsored property represents. They are looking to the event to have a rub-off effect on their image and ultimately their sales.

## **Communicate commitment to a particular lifestyle**

The era of the mass audience is gone. Instead, companies are targeting and tailoring specific messages to small, targeted segments. Sponsorship is an effective vehicle for this type of individualized communication. Opportunities are divisible by age, income, geography and gender. They segment markets along geographic, ethnic, psychographic and demographic lines. Sponsorship allows companies to hone in on a niche market.

## **Differentiate product from competitors**

This objective is what is driving much of the sponsorship by service industries like banking, insurance and telecommunications. Sponsorship provides companies a competitive selling advantage because it offers opportunities for category exclusivity and can be used as a platform for creating currency with customers.

*Sponsorship offers the possibility of achieving several goals at once; most companies expect the medium to deliver a combination of the above benefits.*

## **Some Practical Tips**

Sponsorship is most often a business relationship between a provider of funds, resources or services and an individual, event or organisation, which offers in return some rights, and association that may be used for commercial advantage.

While there is no one-size fits all formula to follow, the approaches for sponsorship generation that work best are detailed below.

- **Learn Their Business First.**

To position your opportunity as a platform for building the prospect's business, you must first identify how you deliver value back to them.

Do not contact a prospect until you have a clear idea of how your opportunity can benefit the sponsor. Hot buttons include: corporate responsibility, strengthening customer relationships, acquiring new customers and incenting their retail and distribution channels.

- **Pitch the Meeting, Not Your Property.**

Once you've identified what you offer, send a one pager and follow it up with a phone call. Companies are not going to buy sponsorship from an unsolicited call or proposal, so the objective of your initial contact should be to get a meeting.

- **Connect Your Opportunity with the Interests of their Customers.**  
Proposals now undergo a two-step screening process. Sponsors used to just look at how well an opportunity matched their brand objectives and demographics. Today, they first look at how closely an opportunity matches the interests of their customers.
- **Market Experiences Not Eyeballs**  
What distinguishes sponsorship from advertising is its ability to create an emotive link with an audience. Do not fall back on standard but not meaningful benefits like signage and impressions—after all the amount of interaction a brand has with its customers is far more important than the number of eyeballs reached. What sponsors want are experiential-branding opportunities where audiences don't just recall their name, but their personality.

## **Contacting Potential Sponsors**

### **How to find sponsors**

- Find would be sponsors through Yellow Pages and your local Chamber of Commerce.
- Use your networks - Ask the advice of a local businessperson: they could help point you to a local company who may be interested, or to an individual who supports your organisation.
- Target companies with a history of sponsorship and/or ties with your organisation/ area (also consider their competitors)
- Have one person co-ordinating all sponsorship proposals - this person should be available on the phone during working hours

### **How to make the first contact**

- All letters should be typed and always address your letter to a named person phone up the company and ask who deals with sponsorship/marketing
- Depending on the size of the proposal it may be worthwhile to ask a local dignitary or celebrity with ties to your area/ organisation to support your scheme. This could be through introductions to potential sponsors or through the associated increased media interest
- Initial letters should be no more than one page long

### **Making your offer**

- Show what you can offer the sponsor in return for their investment
- Always give a figure of how much sponsorship is required and what it will be used for - state who will benefit
- A more detailed breakdown of your proposal should be available on request. This should include: a more detailed marketing document about your organisation, relevant history and achievements; a comprehensive breakdown of all the costs and full details of what you can offer any potential sponsor
- Always follow up your initial contact, either by letter or preferably by phone. Even if the response is negative.

***Perseverance is likely to be the key to success***