

# COMMS

## Instructions for Building Sustainable Communication Plans





WE LOVE A  
GOOD PLAN.

If you've been hanging around here long, you have probably figured out that we are checklist people. We love a good plan. And we love adapting a good plan to make it a great, timely plan. But you can't adapt if you don't know how to start.

So here you are. **You know lack of planning is holding your communications back, but what do you do about it?**

You've come to the right place. Welcome to Communications Planning 101. We're so glad you're here. Consider this resource your communications planning kit. Some assembly is required, but we have all the tools you need right here. It's like a piece of IKEA furniture, but without the cam locks. Or meatball dinner.

**Having a plan allows you to make the shift in your brand's communications from being reactive to proactive.\*** As you plan further ahead, you have the opportunity to become more strategic, choosing intentionally what content is released where and when.

\* NOT SURE WHAT PROACTIVE COMMUNICATIONS LOOK LIKE? [CHECK OUT THIS RESOURCE](#) →

This may seem like it will take a lot of your valuable time. The truth is, it will take some time, especially at the beginning. But **once you get into a planning rhythm, you will actually become far more efficient and effective. An investment in planning up front will save you lots of time in the long run.** Not only that, it will allow you the breathing room to adapt your plan as necessary.

A plan also allows you to distribute the workload. Once you know what needs to be communicated when, you can bring in other team members to assist. A plan is also key to clarifying the purpose of your content—so you can set better goals and track progress.

**Here's your  
step by step  
instruction  
manual.**



## DEFINE YOUR COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS

How do you communicate with your audience? First make a list of all the different ways you connect, and who you reach, through each channel. This might include email, website content, social media, or print pieces.

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### THINK ABOUT TIMING

For each communication channel you identified, think through what an ideal schedule looks like. Does your organization do monthly email newsletters? How often do you want to post on socials? Make a note next to each channel.

CHANNEL	IDEAL SCHEDULE

# 3

## SELECT TOPICS

This is a great time for a group brainstorm! Consider important dates that impact your organization, like holidays, or key local events.

Next, pinpoint dates, events, and launches that are specific to your organization. For example, do you have an annual fundraising event? What about a milestone or major anniversary? Want to try a promotional campaign or contest? Put it on the list.

HOLIDAYS	MILESTONES
EVENTS	IDEAS

Each of the things you listed above is a potential content catalyst. Major holidays can be acknowledged in your communications. Fundraising efforts should be promoted. Local events give you a chance to connect with your community.



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## CALENDAR IT OUT

At this point, your plan starts to build itself out. Take a few minutes to actually fill out a calendar with every communication you'll distribute in a month. Using this visual prompt allows you to see how often your communications reach your audience—so you can stay in the forefront of their mind without being annoying.

We've included a digital template to save you some time, and for those of you who need to physically put pencil to paper, there's a printable version at the end of this resource. (You can find these on pages 14-15)

# 5

## ASSIGN CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

If you work with a team, this is a great time to pull them in. Spread out the workload by assigning different communications pieces to different team members or volunteers. Putting the assignments into a spreadsheet or project planning platform keeps you on track with research, writing, gathering images, and posting on schedule. And you can write the content when you have time, instead of the day it's due to be distributed. Clearly communicating deadlines will keep everyone on schedule.

### PEOPLE WHO COULD HELP WITH CONTENT

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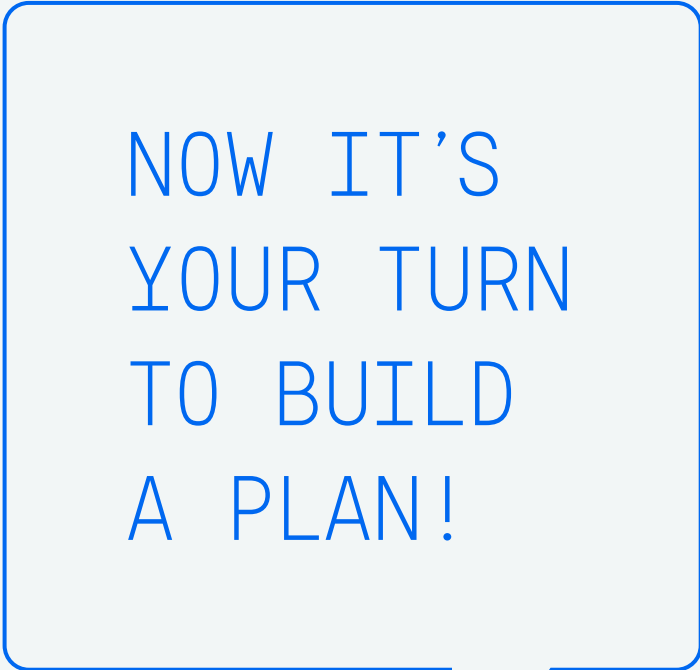
## MAINTAIN + ADAPT

This final step is where you should spend most of your time. You can plan out as far in advance as you're comfortable.


The way we see it, your communication calendar is less like a code to crack and more like a puzzle with multiple solutions. If you're not seeing the results you want, switch up!

One of our core values is Plan + Adapt. We're planners who love change. We write plans in pencil and execute them in pen. Connecting authentically means we plan strategically, but always look for ways to creatively adapt to more effectively reach people.

Part of a strong communications plan is knowing when to react. There will always be a need for some reactive communications, but these should be the exception, not the rule. Because you've invested time up front in developing a calendar, if an important announcement or update needs to be made last minute, you can pause your content and rearrange your planned communications to create space.



NOW IT'S  
YOUR TURN  
TO BUILD  
A PLAN!



All of these tips come from our experience of trial and error. You can tailor these plans to the needs of your organization.

Try different methods of planning and calendaring until you find the process that fits you and your team. Try different types of content until you find what resonates best with your audience. Pay attention to the results of your communications efforts. You'll soon be able to look back at your calendar and make connections between the results you see and kinds of communications that your audience responds to.

We hope this resource has been helpful, and we would love to partner with you to discuss how we can support you in your communications planning. We'll bring the meatballs.

Email us at [hello@annamontgomery.co](mailto:hello@annamontgomery.co) to get started. We'd love to hear from you and have a conversation!

# Grab the template and get started!

[ACCESS DIGITAL TEMPLATE →](#)

# Building Out Your Communication Plan

**Define your communication channels** ♥ List of all of the different ways you connect, and who you reach, through each channel.

**Think about timing** ♥ Consider what an ideal schedule looks like for each communication channel.

**Select topics** ♥ Think through the important things you want to communicate.

**Calendar it out** ♥ Write it down.

**Assign content development** ♥ Get other people involved—remember, teamwork makes the dream work.

**Maintain + Adapt** ♥ Plan well, but always keep an eye open for opportunities to adapt your plan for strategic or essential messages.

ALL THE  
COMMUNICATION  
CHANNELS

HOLIDAYS & EVENTS

TOPICS, THEMES,  
INITIATIVES,  
& KEY MESSAGES

*Add these content ideas to your calendar!*

# Communication Calendar

(Add dates and proactively plan out your communications.)

MONTH							YEAR
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	



**anna**  
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GOM  
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& CO