"Be not simply good — be good for something."
— Henry David Thoreau

Nonprofit Communications Report

MONTHLY COMMUNICATIONS IDEAS FOR NONPROFITS

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Some of What's Inside…

Share Your Strategic Plan

For some people, a strategic plan is all about the planning. If you're one of those types, stop reading. If not — and if you'd like to ensure your plan won't just gather dust — consider the following tips:

1. Make sure all staff, board members and key constituents receive a copy of the plan. Use the plan as a reference and guideline during meetings with those people. Also make sure copies are available in your office for volunteers and donors to review.
2. Encourage staff and board members to use the plan as a reference in meetings with sponsors, donors and volunteers. It can be a concrete way to show those people how they can help the organization reach its goals.
3. Send a postcard to your mailing list that includes a website link to the plan.
4. Hold informal group gatherings and discuss the plan with your constituents.
5. Assign a small team or specific staff member to make sure the plan stays top of mind.
6. Notify constituents and the media when goals in the plan are reached.
7. Agree on a formal way to report progress (or lack thereof) on the plan. This could be handled in a quarterly meeting or a monthly report.

Five Ways to Use Data in Communications and Marketing

Many organizations fail to collect and utilize data to drive their communications. Instead of broadcasting irrelevant content to unfamiliar audiences, nonprofits must apply strategy in order to build powerful messages. Because the most effective communications and marketing plans are those informed by data, nonprofits should focus on conducting research first.

"When I began working with nonprofits almost a decade ago, I realized that very few apply problem-solving tactics to their communications strategies, but this is so necessary," says Digital Marketing Consultant for Spring Media Strategies, Rebecca Reynandez. Collecting data that reflects your audience's interests and behaviors will strengthen your ability to communicate in ways that are most likely to resonate.

Reynandez shares five ways nonprofits can apply this data strategically:

1. **Uncover problem areas.** "First, make sure that nothing is broken," Reynandez says. "If your numbers are declining or stagnant, then this needs immediate attention." Conduct internal research to confirm that new e-newsletter subscribers are clicking links, that Web visitors are completing online donation forms and that links on your website redirect to the appropriate landing pages. Google Analytics and a first-hand audit can uncover areas for improvement.
2. **Identify opportunities.** "If certain articles consistently perform well, then use this data to inform future content," Reynandez says. "Examine the messages that drive the most action and find potential new partners by recognizing external websites that link back to your own."
3. **Get to know your audience.** "Explore their interests and the language that they use so you can mirror that in your own communications," Reynandez says. "It's critical to understand the different audiences you serve via your social media channels, e-newsletters and website, because they are never exactly the same." Analytics provided by social media platforms can be powerful resources for collecting details pertaining to audience demographics, behaviors and interests.
4. **Make strategic decisions.** Your communications should always lead your audience back to a functional, user-friendly website. Use your website as a tool for collecting behavior-related data. "Look beyond numbers. Examine the behavioral patterns of website visitors to determine periods that drive high traffic," Reynandez says. "This data will help you determine the best time to release reports, launch campaigns and introduce new initiatives."
5. **Measure progress.** "Track everything — e-news subscriber sign-ups, social media shares, resource downloads and responses to event invites — then determine which of these data points actually matter," Reynandez says. "It's easy to be misled by impressions, but if those points of contact fail to result in actual conversions, then they aren't entirely useful. Regularly confirm that the data points you measure are appropriately aligned with your end goals."

Source: Rebecca Reynandez, Digital Marketing Consultant, Spring Media Strategies. Phone (612) 850-4807. E-mail: rebecca@springmediastrategies.com. Website: www.springmediastrategies.com

How to Deal With an Argumentative Individual

You're bound to run into someone who wants to argue. If you engage in an argument, you lose — you either lose the argument or win the argument but lose whatever it is you're after. As a poet once wrote, "A man convinced against his will, is of the same opinion still." It is best to avoid an argument altogether, but if that's not possible, try this:

Get the individual to argue with an imaginary third party. If someone makes a statement that you know is wrong, get him/her to argue with an imaginary third person. Example: "Well, Bill, that's a very good point, but how would you respond to someone who would tell you that statement is incorrect?"

This approach will hopefully lead that person to recognize that his/her own perspective is incorrect, to back down from a position and to still save face.

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Use Dashboards to Measure Communications

If your nonprofit has a strategic communications plan, then you already have a set of goals and a step-by-step strategy in place to assist you in reaching them.

Consider the ways that new marketing and communication initiatives can impact these goals, and then track the corresponding metrics in an easy-to-read dashboard.

"The purpose of a dashboard is to quickly keep you focused," says Planning and Communications Manager for Covenant HealthCare (Saginaw, MI), Kristin Knoll. "Dashboards should be simple and manageable, otherwise you won't use them."

Knoll suggests measuring the impact of your communications by collecting metrics generated from the three O's:

1. **Outputs:** Your outgoing communications.
2. **Outtakes:** The information the reader takes away from your communication.
3. **Outcomes:** The actions your reader takes as a result of your communication.

Start by looking at your organization's goals and strategic plan, then hone in on the key goals within it. Make sure your goals are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound). Next, uncover creative ways that your marketing and communication can directly impact these goals. Start logging metrics in a dashboard — use an Excel spreadsheet or another easy-to-read visual. Depending on your organization's needs, monitor them on a monthly, quarterly or seasonal basis to determine if your tactics are leading you in the right direction.

Some examples of your organization's goals and corresponding metrics might include:

- **Education.** "If you are an organization who wants to train people in a specialized space, such as first aid and CPR, create a video and set an attainable goal of having 300 people view it," Knoll says. By keeping tabs on views, you can easily determine which communications were most effective in leading your audience to watch your video.
- **Donations.** Perhaps you are an organization who has launched a capital campaign to raise $20,000 through your online giving process. Record e-newsletter opens and website visits to learn more about the materials and behaviors that are converting your readers into donors.
- **Awareness building.** If you have a goal to host 10 community talks annually with more than 30 people in attendance at each, you can measure which topics and communications were most effective in attracting attendees. Log those outcomes in a dashboard to inform future strategy.

"The more digital the world becomes, the more data we can collect," Knoll says. "Free data from Facebook, Twitter, Google Analytics, YouTube and other cost-effective tools like SurveyMonkey® and e-mail apps can help you pull critical information, as long as you know how those metrics support your end goals." Knoll also recommends referring to donor software, or even using handwritten checkboxes to source metrics that can be viewed in an easy-to-understand dashboard.

"Ultimately, KISS (Keep It Simple, Strategist). With all the data available, it can be tempting to create too big a dashboard to be effective," Knoll says. "Use your car as an example. Only mission-critical things are displayed on your car dashboard."

Source: Kristin Knoll, Planning and Communications Manager, Covenant HealthCare, Saginaw, MI. Phone (989) 583-7655. E-mail: kknoll@chs-mi.com. Website: www.covenanthealthcare.com

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Telling Your Story

Radio Station Shares Organization's Stories Weekly

By Yvette Boysen

Every organization wants to tell its story, and one Illinois nonprofit is turning to the airwaves to do so.

Each Friday, during the iHeart Radio 103.5 KISS FM's Fred and Angi show, a 60-second segment highlights inspirational stories about children, families and volunteers touched by the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana (Oak Brook, IL).

According to Kathy DeVries, vice president of marketing and communications, the partnership was forged after Fred, co-host of the morning show, helped to serve meals at the organization's houses late last year.

"He was so touched by the experience that he wanted to tell the stories of our families and the incredible work we do to support them during a time of incredible difficulty," DeVries says.

The segments, known as Fred's Fridays of Giving, began in January and will continue throughout the year. As it happens, this year is the organization's 40th anniversary, a prime time to share stories.

"We ask families and volunteers to be part of the program," DeVries says. "They willingly come forward to talk about the impact we have had in their lives."

The interviews, which are recorded in advance, are played or summarized for on-air listeners and highlighted on social media as well.

An example of one of the stories was how a four-year-old cancer patient's sister collected, with the help of her school and community, one million pop tabs. Like all of Fred's Fridays of Giving features, it aired during a time when the radio station has a reach of approximately 568,000 listeners, 18 and older. This particular story also garnered nearly 1,000 likes and hundreds of comments on social media.

Another example is the story of Justin Wegner, a college baseball player from Naperville, IL. While he underwent cancer treatments, his family stayed with RMHC-CNI. As a way to honor the young athlete, his friends raised $10,000 in gift cards for the organization.

DeVries says iHeart Radio's 103.5 KISS FM was chosen as a partner because of the station's overwhelming presence. While undisclosed, she explains that the cost of the partnership is a portion of the organization's overall marketing investment.

She adds, "We are getting back more than we invested due to their incredible reach and commitment to RMHC-CNI."

Source: Kathy DeVries, Vice President of Marketing and Communications, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana, Oak Brook, IL. Phone (630) 623-3672. E-mail: kdevries@RMHC-CNI.org. Website: www.RMHC-CNI.org

Best Practices

Introduce Your Communications Staff

By Megan Venzin

A nonprofit's communications team is critical in delivering the vision and message of their mission. So why do so many organizations fail to formally introduce their staff to their many constituents? Showcasing the unique talents and backgrounds of your organization's most important point people is an effective way to demonstrate the value and credentials of your staff.

The University of New England (Portland, ME) has prioritized the task of introducing its communications team through a well-managed page on its website (www.une.edu/communications/staff).

"People should know who is being entrusted with the mission of the company or association, including those who offer support services to the organization's core business," says Vice President for Global Affairs and Communications Anouar Majid. "A clear introduction will allow discerning observers to quickly gather that all employees are being valued, that a culture of rigor is taken seriously, and that talent and accomplishment are expectations. This can only build trust in the nonprofit and lead to a positive climate all around."

Majid offers the following tips for introducing your communications team:

1. **Emphasize specialty skill sets.** "A graphic designer and a media relations person have very different training, skill sets and self-perceptions," Majid says. "Acknowledge these differences while presenting a coherent, well-functioning team."
2. **Highlight education first.** "It's important for your internal customers to realize that they are dealing with highly trained professionals," Majid says. "In elitist environments like those of universities, it's easy for professors to dismiss anything that is not academic as somewhat irrelevant, so we need to show our professors and senior administrators that our staff are well-educated, accomplished and talented."
3. **Showcase special recognitions.** "We have staff members who have published books, exhibited art in major venues and who have won major prizes," Majid says. "These are elements that can enhance any profile and show the strength of the Office of Communications."
4. **Encourage your team to share accomplishments.** "Faculty members are often reticent to share the good news of their work, so it's my job to encourage them to update me regularly on their accomplishments," Majid says.
5. **Keep it current.** "We gather information for this page as soon as we hire someone and make sure to publish it on our site promptly," Majid says. "Web profiles should be programmed to be updated and edited anytime, so the information in them should always be current."

Source: Anouar Majid, Vice President for Global Affairs and Communications, University of New England, Portland, ME. Phone (207) 221-4447. E-mail: amajid@une.edu. Website: www.une.edu

Eight Steps for Communicating Change

When Georgia's WellStar Health System (Marietta, GA) acquired five hospitals from Dallas, TX-based Tenant Healthcare and merged with West Georgia Health (LaGrange, GA) in 2016, they more than doubled in size overnight. As this dramatic transition took shape, WellStar's marketing and public relations teams were tasked with clearly communicating change to their internal and external stakeholders.

"To communicate change within an organization, it's important to truly understand what you are getting into and who it is you intend to reach," says Director of Public Relations Tyler Pearson. "To be successful in any type of communication, particularly about change, your audience must believe that you and your organization are both trustworthy and accurate. If you can proactively build relationships with your internal and external audiences, then everyone will be more likely to accept change and change communication."

WellStar prepared an extensive change communications strategy, which they defined in eight steps:

- **Research:** Collect information to determine the potential effects of change.
- **Define audience:** Identify internal and external stakeholders.
- **Determine needs:** Proactively pinpoint potential problems or concerns, and develop targeted key messages to address pressure points.
- **Develop blueprint:** Outline a strategy for addressing these concerns with a clear communications plan.
- **Get buy-in:** Present the communication strategy and make sure leadership and stakeholders understand the plan.
- **Create content:** Craft marketing, public relations, social and internal communications for each audience sector.
- **Execute:** Launch your communications plan in a manageable and consistent manner.
- **Assess:** After launching the plan, continually monitor your success and alter communications to account for any deficiencies.

"Our process was successful because we knew who we were communicating to and spoke specifically to those audiences with deliberately crafted messages," Pearson says. "Through acquisitions, we now serve a larger community, so we wanted to share our vision of healthcare with these new audiences."

Media relations, a new marketing campaign and a robust speaking tour provided a strong foundation from which WellStar broadcasted changes to their growing audience. "Communications efforts must be integrated," Pearson says. "Marketing, social media, public relations and internal communications must work together to build a cohesive strategy, so stakeholders — both internal and external — are receiving consistent and targeted messages across multiple touchpoints."

Source: Tyler Pearson, Director of Public Relations, WellStar Health System, Marietta, GA. Phone (470) 644-0283. E-mail: tyler.pearson@wellstar.org. Website: www.wellstar.org

How to Communicate More Effectively

Have you ever found yourself bouncing from one topic to the next when someone asks about your organization? After all, you don't want to leave any details out.

While this method is well-intentioned, there is a more effective way to share your organization's story. To begin, narrow your focus.

"Do yourself a favor and distill down to your four core values," says Minna Taylor, founder and CEO of Energize Your Voice (New York, NY). "What are the values that really represent your organization, the pillars on which your mission stands?"

Taylor explains that as you continue to refine these pillars, you can more easily anchor conversations on just one of them, thereby avoiding the feeling that you have to cover every single detail. By focusing on one specific area, she says it's more likely your listener will understand. Additionally, you'll pique their curiosity and communicate a sense of value. Both of which lead to exactly what you want — the start of a conversation.

Now that the door is open, Taylor offers specific techniques to further increase the effectiveness of your storytelling.

- **Attach stories.** She recommends attaching one or two personal stories to each of your organization's four core values. These should be specific examples that illustrate how a particular pillar relates to your organization as a whole. Taylor calls this "moving from the personal into the universal."
- **Be concise.** Again, limit your message. Turn your focus to listening.
- **Elongate vowels.** "Vowels are the emotional component of speech. Our consonants are the action components," Taylor explains. "If we can find ways to highlight that vocally, it gives people a real sense of color and dynamics and vibrancy to the communication and will keep your listener engaged."
- **Bring a sense of possibility.** To do so, be conscious of your body language. Taylor suggests smiling, making eye contact, having an open posture and keeping your hands "alive" and available.
- **Engage your listeners first.** After a brief and generalized statement about your organization, turn the table on your listeners. Find out what interests them, if they've ever volunteered or donated to a cause. Learn what you can and then "frame" your conversation based on that knowledge. This allows you to develop a customized approach with greater effectiveness.
- **Do not apologize. Be confident and present.** When speaking with your listeners, Taylor stresses the importance of being present and engaging them. As long as you're doing that, she says there is no need to apologize for speaking about your passion, consciously or unconsciously (e.g., upward voice inflection, locking your body, etc.). Instead, exercise confidence. And as she puts it, "Confidence, to me, equals presence or presence equals confidence. They are synonymous."

Source: Minna Taylor, Founder and CEO, Energize Your Voice, New York, NY. E-mail: minna@energizeyourvoice.net. Website: www.energizeyourvoice.net

Tips for Producing an Award-Winning Impact Report

By Megan Venzin

Is your nonprofit contributing to your community in extraordinary ways? Share that information with an informative report that effectively demonstrates how your efforts are positively impacting economic, social and cultural growth.

For nearly 150 years, Buffalo State College (Buffalo, NY) has played an important role in shaping Western New York and beyond. Their award-winning 2016 Buffalo State College impact report shares a multitude of numbers to support this, from the $680 million they deliver in total economic impact annually, to their impressive base of more than 107,000 alumni they boast nationwide.

"When crafting an award-winning impact report, the most important thing you can do is identify a very specific message, and then present it with tight copy and excellent design," Brian Kantz, publications director, says. "Focus on the ways that only your organization impacts the community."

Kantz shares his tips for developing award-worthy impact reports.

1. **Invest in design.** "Because nonprofit budgets are often tight, many people make the mistake of producing their reports with a Microsoft Word template or Publisher," Kantz says. "We are fortunate to have a talented graphic designer on staff who utilized colors, typography, photos and layout to produce an engaging and readable report. Investing in design is always worth it, because if you want your constituents to view you as a professional organization, your publications must reflect that."
2. **Go beyond finances.** "In our 2016 report, we decided to expand our definition of impact to include those unique things that only we contribute to the community, such as academic impact, social impact and cultural impact," Kantz says. "This allowed us to showcase the graduates we produce and the valuable research we perform, as well as our college's involvement in community service and the campus cultural events and programming we provide. Including this information allowed us to paint a more complete picture of how we impact our community."
3. **Start logically.** "Create a strong outline that conveys a clear, primary message, and then write the copy and have an editor review it," Kantz says. "If the writing is weak and filled with typos, or the photography is out of focus and amateur in appearance, it will reflect on your organization," Kantz says.
4. **Go light on copy.** "The last time we produced an impact report, we printed 24 solid pages of well-written, informative text, but we found that few people had the time to read it," Kantz says. "This time we provided just as much information, but chose to include infographics and white space to make the piece more reader-friendly and reflective of current design trends."
5. **Be on record.** "Your organization's leaders can verbally communicate your impact to community leaders, but it's vital that you have a high-quality written piece that people can refer to whenever they want, and that your staff can distribute to key constituents," Kantz says.

Source: Brian Kantz, Publications Director, College Relations, SUNY Buffalo State, Buffalo, NY. Phone (716) 878-4203. E-mail: kantzbc@buffalostate.edu. Website: www.buffalostate.edu

Sell Internship Benefits To College-Aged Students

Need some specialized help with a project? Don't overlook college-aged interns to help with your communications and PR efforts.

Here are just a few of the benefits students receive by becoming interns:

- Opportunities to apply academic learning on the job.
- Mentoring from nonprofit leaders.
- Professional work experience and job skills.
- Training in specialized areas.
- Experiences that enhance their résumés.
- Professional work references.
- Opportunities to examine careers in nonprofit organizations.
- Opportunities to help other people.

Seek Key Players' Input

If you're in the process of revamping your website or testing new collaterals, involve key donors in the process. Asking their opinions takes little time and can garner useful feedback. Doing so also makes donors feel as if they are making a positive contribution to the organization — one that's not monetary — and fosters goodwill.

Conducting Interviews

The Art of the Video Interview

Filming an interview can make a subject's words dynamic and personal. Copy on a page can convey a perspective, but video and sound have the power to bring that story to life. With careful preparation and execution, video interviews can serve as an effective way to both entertain and inform your audience.

"With any video interview, I always remember Author Steven Covey's advice: 'Begin with the end in mind,'" says Todd Boruff, a video producer for the University of Notre Dame (Notre Dame, IN). "Having a clear understanding of my audience and the goal behind my video always gives focus to the interview process."

Boruff offers his advice for conducting effective and appealing video interviews.

1. **Hold a "pre-interview".** "Take some time to talk to your subject before the actual interview, whether it's in person or on the phone," Boruff says. "Explain what the interview will be like and ask preliminary questions in order to get to know your subject and their work. This pre-interview will put their mind at ease, build rapport and help you ask better questions when the cameras are rolling."
2. **Envision the story.** "When crafting your interview questions, it's helpful to think about a story arc," Boruff says. "Consider the subject's past, present and future, and don't be afraid to uncover problems or conflict. People love to hear about overcoming adversity, so find ways for your subject to express transformation."
3. **Edit as needed.** "At the interview, remind your subject that they can stop or start over as needed," Boruff says. "Then tell them that the most important rule of the interview is to answer in complete sentences since the question will not be heard in the video. Be prepared to have them repeat their response if they forget. Your editor will thank you!"
4. **Keep it conversational.** "Once the ground rules are set, start an informal conversation and keep that conversation going," Boruff says. "Ask your questions in a conversational tone rather than just reading them as written, and really listen to the answers that follow. Be ready to ask your questions out of order depending on how the conversation wanders, and never settle for boring, stock responses."
5. **Uncover personality.** "If your interview subjects are shy or nervous, start with basic questions to get them warmed up," Boruff says. "If you feel like you aren't getting natural answers, throw in a personal question in the middle of the interview to help break the pattern. This sort of curveball can help shift your subject from 'interview mode' into conversation, which will allow them to return to your questions with a fresh perspective."

Source: Todd Boruff, Video Producer, College of Arts and Letters, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN. Phone (574) 631-3887. E-mail: tboruff1@nd.edu. Website: www.al.nd.edu

Virtual Tours

Build a Google Street View

Virtual tours provide an exciting opportunity for nonprofits who wish to share their spaces, and those of their members, with their communities. Today, drone-sourced photography and tools provided by Google help make these online visits more dynamic than ever.

"Many of our members are looking for a cost-effective way to increase their online presence, and the Google Street View technology fits the bill perfectly," says Holly Allen, director of marketing and communications for the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce (DACC; Dayton, OH). "Many consumers do online research before they make the decision to buy a product or patronize a business. These tours have the power to lure customers in before they ever leave home."

In an effort to add value, DACC partnered with Places Mobile, a certified Google photographer, to build tours for chamber members at a discounted rate. "Places Mobile takes a series of 360 degree photos, which are then seamlessly cut together to create the tour," Allen says. "Businesses can also choose to embed media, such as short videos or text pop-ups, at different points throughout the tour to highlight their capabilities, facility features or special offerings." Places Mobile communicates with Google on behalf of DACC to ensure that tours meet the requirements necessary to be displayed by Google. The partner also maintains DACC's Chamber Guide, which can be viewed at DaytonChamber.org.

Consider these tips when building your Google Street View tour:

1. **Research your options.** "When seeking certified Google photographers, be sure to take a look at samples of their work and ask about their present relationship with Google," Allen says. "Requirements for these tours change often, and it's important to partner with someone who keeps up-to-date with the latest regulations."
2. **Hire local photographers.** "You don't want your members or partners waiting too long for service," Allen says. "Opt for local or nearby photographers who schedule shoots often to ensure timely output."
3. **Seek sunny days.** "Our partner photographers try to schedule shoots during warmer months when the grass is green, the sun is shining and the trees have leaves, as these factors make for lively, attractive photos," Allen says. "We also encourage our members to showcase portions of their facility that are likely to appeal to their target demographic."
4. **Offer creative insight.** "Some of our local realtor members are using the drone capabilities of our partner to show shovel-ready spaces, while manufacturers are highlighting their pristine shop floors and high-tech equipment," Allen says. "Many members have reported that customers have decided to visit following a view of their Google tour."
5. **Make it newsworthy.** "We scheduled a two-day shoot to kick off the project, and earned great media coverage as a result," Allen says. "Offering this service is a benefit to our business community and especially to our members because of the discount they receive."

Source: Holly Allen, Director of Marketing and Communications, Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce, Dayton, OH. Phone (937) 226-8245. E-mail: hallen@dacc.org. Website: www.daytonchamber.org

Invite Four Types of Article Submissions

Intriguing stories of healthcare research and innovation develop constantly at Texas Medical Center (TMC; Houston, TX), the world's largest medical center. Every day, stories, press releases, accolades and event announcements are submitted for coverage consideration by TMC's 58 member institutions, comprised of hospitals such as MD Anderson Cancer Center and Texas Children's Hospital and academic institutions such as Rice University and the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. These submissions are used to fuel the content found in TMC Pulse, the Texas Medical Center's monthly print publication, as well as weekly e-newsletters and TMC's online editorial library and social media channels.

"Each member institution has its own marketing and PR team that is responsible for acquiring media coverage for their organization," says Vice President of Communications Christen David Bagley. "We've designed our website to make the task of sharing story pitches and other important announcements as easy as possible."

Four simple online submission forms help these member teams connect with the most appropriate contacts at TMC's News and Communications Office. Upon receipt, Bagley's team must determine where these stories and announcements are likely to fit best within TMC's editorial suite.

"These forms and outlines keep us organized," Bagley says. "Even with the high volume of submissions we receive, we still know exactly where to delegate assignments and coverage." An example of TMC's online submission form can be viewed here (www.tmc.edu/news/submissions/submit-a-story/).

Member institutions can use these four forms to pitch content, event listings and other breaking announcements:

1. **Submit/pitch a story.** When more than a simple mention or listing is required, individuals are invited to submit developing stories or pitch ideas for stories based on trends or breaking news. Submissions collected with this form are used to produce more of the long-form editorial content found inside TMC Pulse and on www.tmc.edu/news.

2. **Submit an event.** Member institutions may submit their healthcare-related events to be featured on TMC News' online calendar. Select events are also featured in the weekly e-newsletter, based on their relevance, newsworthiness or human interest appeal.

3. **Submit a press release.** When PR professionals at TMC's member institutions want to share announcements quickly, they can submit formatted content to be featured on the Press Releases section of TMC News' website. "In most cases, the PR team has already shared this information on the national newswire," Bagley says. "We're giving them another channel to post their news, and journalists appreciate being able to access press releases from multiple institutions in one convenient location."

4. **Submit an accolade.** TMC physicians, researchers, executives and students are winning awards, conducting breakthrough research and changing lives every day, so this form provides their respective institutions with a way to commend their achievements and share that information with TMC's news room. "It's challenging for us to keep tabs on the achievements of TMC's 106,000 employees and 60,000 students, so this form is the best way for people to give us news about promotions and major accomplishments," Bagley says.

Source: Christen David Bagley, Vice President of Communications, Texas Medical Center, Houston, TX. Phone (713) 791-8838. E-mail: cbagley@tmc.edu. Website: www.tmc.edu/

Media Coaching Benefits Employees and Organization

As a member of your nonprofit's communication team, you're likely quite comfortable talking with the media. But others within your organization may not feel the same.

To address this, the University of Rochester (Rochester, NY) offers media coaching to interested faculty, staff and students preparing for print, radio and television interviews.

"The more a person understands the media environment, the easier it is for that person to effectively get his or her point across," explains Peter Iglinski, communications officer, social sciences. "For one thing, it's easier to control stress when a person knows what to expect. In the end, an important message gets out to the public and the individual's reputation is enhanced. And since that individual represents the university, the institution benefits as well."

Whether preparing for a press conference, a talk show or a soundbite in a national news story, a coaching session at the University of Rochester covers a variety of topics ranging from what to wear to how the media works to what terminology best conveys the message.

"We cover quite a bit of territory in our coaching sessions, but several areas stand out," Iglinski says. "We tell people it's perfectly fine to elaborate, but not to digress. Focusing on the specific question being asked helps the interviewer to understand the message and makes it easier for a broadcast reporter to come up with soundbites and video clips. In the case of research faculty, we stress the need to use everyday language and avoid technical jargon. Also, we tell individuals to think of little stories that can illustrate the points they want to make."

According to Iglinski, much of the media coaching done at Rochester consists of mock interviews. These interviews allow the individual to prepare his or her answers in response to anticipated reporter questions. Coaching sessions typically take place in a studio similar to a television station. This not only familiarizes the individual with a studio setting, but also allows mock interviews to be taped for review and evaluation.

Iglinski estimates eight to 10 people take part in Rochester's media coaching each year.

Source: Peter Iglinski, Communications Officer, Social Sciences, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY. Phone (585) 273-4726. E-mail: peter.iglinski@rochester.edu. Website: www.rochester.edu

Case Studies

Nothing Draws Attention Like a Challenge

When students move out at the end of the spring semester, they have to be picky about what travels from the dorms to their overpacked cars. Nonperishable food items are often bulky and left behind. At University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg (Pitt-Greensburg; Greensburg, PA), cans of soup, bags of pasta and other kitchen essentials are being donated to food drive bins rather than landing in the trash.

Nearly a decade ago, Assistant Director of Housing and Residence Life Brian K. Root took note of this trend and discovered a unique opportunity to give back to the community. "I regularly volunteer at the Westmoreland County Food Bank, so I know they are always looking for community food drives to support their mission," Root says. "Two of our five residence halls have full kitchens, so we knew we would be able to source a lot of leftover nonperishable items from those locations." Each year, donation bins are placed in the residence halls during the last two weeks of classes. Since 2009, Pitt-Greensburg students, faculty and staff have contributed more than 8,200 pounds of nonperishables to the local food bank.

The annual Campus Food Bank Challenge has grown into a friendly competition between Pitt-Greensburg and four other prominent area institutions, including Seton Hill University, St. Vincent College, Westmoreland Community College and Penn State New Kensington. "Participation seems to be higher with drives that tout a challenge, because everyone takes pride in striving to be the best," Root says. "The competition aspect has encouraged faculty, staff and commuters at all of the schools to donate as well."

Root says that the annual Campus Food Bank Challenge has improved PR for his university in the following ways:

1. **Opens new doors for cross-promotion with local nonprofits.** "The challenge has helped us build a positive relationship with the Westmoreland County Food Bank, and their reach is significant," Root says. "They prepare their own newsletters and have a great social media presence, so it goes far when they share announcements with their audience on our behalf."
2. **Strengthens relationships with like-minded institutions.** "This standing challenge facilitates regular contact with other local educational institutions," Root says. "Those relationships are stronger as a result of this binding project."
3. **Creates opportunities for local media coverage.** "The Tribune Review covered the Campus Food Bank Challenge for the first time this year," Root says. "Challenges create excellent opportunities for human interest stories. Obviously, this is a great way for us to share the extraordinary work of our students and staff with our community."

Source: Brian K. Root, Assistant Director of Housing and Residence Life, University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, Greensburg, PA. Phone (724) 836-7470. E-mail: b.k.root@pitt.edu. Website: www.greensburg.pitt.edu

Professional Opinion

Know Where You Spend the Most Time

When it comes to your professional responsibilities, what consumes the greatest amount of your time?

"The Office of Communications at Norwich University (Northfield, VT) serves as a steward of the Norwich University brand. Therefore, my primary focus is placed on creating a strategic awareness of, and appreciation for, the rational, cultural and emotional attributes of the Norwich brand. My tasks are centered around ensuring that this message is clearly defined, understood and presented consistently and repeatedly for recognition. These factors impact the long-term value of our university's offerings, and help to engender affinity and cachet with our many stakeholders and constituencies.

"By 'beginning with the end in mind' and clearly identifying qualitative and quantitative outcomes prior to the investment of resources (time, people, dollars, etc.), I always aim to manage and balance daily tactics aligned with our long-term objectives. I am able to do this because I have a clear understanding of our brand, including its attributes, costs and values. Knowing our target audience and how each segment perceives and values our offerings helps my team understand why our university matters in the marketplace.

"When allocating your time to specific responsibilities, I suggest focusing on activities and investments that are likely to deliver the greatest impact, outcome and influence for your organization. Also, remember to take time to reward innovation and creativity, because thinking outside of the box and risking change for greatness are both vital to an empowered and accountable culture."

— Kathleen A. Murphy-Moriarty, Associate Vice President of Marketing and Communications, Norwich University, Northfield, VT. Phone (802) 485-2292. E-mail: kmurphym@norwich.edu.

"At FundJoy LLC (Houston, TX), my daily tasks revolve around prospect research, proposal writing and fundraising. I schedule my tasks the same way I do meetings. On a weekly basis, I enter my tasks with a start time, end time and estimated duration. I recommend timing yourself while performing each task. That way, you know exactly what you can accomplish in a given amount of time. Another tip is to allow distractions. For example, I schedule extra minutes in my day for potential distractions. During this 'distraction time,' I catch up on e-mails, return phone calls and cater to other needs as they arise.

"As an organization that adheres to timelines, we have systems in place to manage our time effectively. For project management, we use Asana. Asana is an effective time management tool, because it centralizes an entire project (files, conversations, etc.) to one location. Slack instant messaging helps our clients receive solutions faster than they would if they were communicating with others via e-mail. G Suite also offers products that save time. For example, nonprofit professionals can add their own comments to working documents, which eliminates the hassle of e-mailing back and forth. Using productivity tools like these empower us to really focus our time and streamline our efforts."

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