



Building Your Communications Plan

You've made the decision you want to run for public office. Congratulations! Now it's time to start thinking about your communications strategy.

Communications is an absolutely essential part of any campaign. A strong communications plan will help you shape your ideas into clear messages, encouraging voters to support you.

Top 5 Elements of a Successful Communications Plan

1. Define your goals: Identify and define your key audiences and how you will engage with these communities. Each audience has different needs and you'll need to tailor your messaging and approach accordingly. Here are a few important things for you to incorporate:

- ★ Current status: where do your current communications strategies and tactics stand and what tools are you using
- ★ Goals: what are your three major goals that the communications plan will help you achieve
- ★ Communications objectives: what are your measurable outcomes, such as number of email subscribers, followers, event attendees, etc.
- ★ Tactics: identify each target audience and how you will reach them

2. Identify the communications channels you'd like to employ and develop a plan for each:

- ★ Traditional media: local tv, radio programs, newspapers, your website, newsletters
- ★ Social media: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and other social networks, online communities, video and photo sharing sites, podcasts
- ★ Other outside avenues: community events, schools, colleges, libraries, non-profit community organizations, neighborhood gathering areas/points of sale/supermarkets
- ★ Internal communications: email, conference calls, memos, meetings

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3. Determine what resources you need for success: With a small dedicated budget you can invest in tools that will help you create compelling content. Top items we'd suggest include:

- ★ Tripod for phone camera
- ★ Lighting kit
- ★ External microphone
- ★ Video editing software
- ★ Graphics software
- ★ Teleprompter software for ipad or phone

4. Build your website and social media pages: A key component of your communications strategy must be ensuring that you have a fully-functioning website with pages focused on your issues and any services you offer. Make sure your website is easy to navigate and ensure it is mobile friendly. Include photos throughout the website of you throughout the community. Embed links to your social media pages and encourage engagement on social media.

Here are some general strategies to engage and build your audience online:

- ★ Post daily on social media accounts. Depending on the platform, you will want to post at least once per day, but as many as 2-3 times per day.
- ★ Develop a content calendar of special dates and moments to highlight. Have your content calendar prepared at the start of each month.
- ★ Post video and high-quality photos: Posts that include photos and videos generally have higher placement in feeds. Post photos and videos from events, speeches, behind-the-scenes tours, answering questions, meeting with community members, and more. Evaluate opportunities to live-stream events or host Q&A videos with local businesses. All videos should include captions.

5. Be proactive. Successful candidates don't wait for the local media to come to them. They are creating opportunities to get press coverage for their campaign.

- ★ Create a comprehensive media contact list of reporters and editors in your local community.
- ★ Create a communications calendar that includes press events or press conferences as well as opportunities to pitch the local media to cover your activities throughout the campaign.
- ★ Always be prepared for an interview. This includes drafting talking points and sticking to them during the interview. This helps you impart a clear message, and it helps the reporter focus on the story at hand.

*Want help writing a press release, preparing for community events and more?
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