

USE OF MULTIPLE CHANNELS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

A TOOLKIT



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Introduction

Role and Contribution of Voluntary Organisations

Indian voluntary organisations are considered as vibrant and independent. The evidence based analysis of domestic as well as global policies are the major contribution of Indian VOs. Similarly, it also has decades of history of playing important role in serving most marginalised communities. In almost every disaster the Indian VOs have played important role in its mitigation, prevention and rehabilitation. However, VOs are very poor in communicating their achievements and challenges to the policy makers and common people. Indian VOs are active in almost all the states of India as well as on all the issues having impact on the lives of people.

Existential Crisis of the Civil Society

Communication today has become an integral part of our society, people and institutions communicate to achieve various objectives. Voluntary sector too is using this channel for effective communication across its stakeholders and other audiences. It not only ensures transparency and accountability from within but caters to a range of objectives: to boost awareness around the issues, to inform political and business actors to alter their behaviour, and to raise resources, reach out to news media and promote the organisational narrative across masses. Looking at the present scenario one can easily establish the fact that the shrinking space of civil society has redefined the relationship with various stakeholders like government, media, community and private sector. The weakness of effective communication also leads to a negative narrative of the sector amongst the general public worldwide. Various studies have confirmed this as a global trend. The imaginary and sensational stories, which promote negative narratives make space in the mainstream media, as we either keep quite or we don't proactively portray our side of the story. When our regulatory framework is inadequate and our language has become more and more complicated, this distance is bound to widen up.

Using Multiple channels for Effective Communication

Multichannel communications is all about using available technology to ensure that the target audience is presented with information or the ability to react to information across multiple channels. Audiences expect to receive personalized or relevant communications that capture their attention despite their busy schedule. And, they are more likely to react to the message if it is delivered via their preferred media. In practice this involves sending the right message, at

What is Digital Media?

Today, one of the fastest growing trends in communications is the shift from physical/ conventional to digital communications. We are truly surrounded by the digital products enabling and delivering experiences. Digital Media is a blend of technology and content, and building digital media products requires teams of professionals with diverse skills, including technical skills, artistic skills, analytical and production coordination skills. All of these skills need to be balanced on a team, with all team members focused on creating the best user experience.

However, in today's digital age, a modern marketer needs to be aware of a plethora of channels available so that each campaign has a truly multichannel approach.

Digital Platforms

Multiple components comprise a digital platform. These components must be aligned and integrated to create better experiences for users.

Digital platforms enable a data-driven world rather than a process-driven world. The digital platform handles an end-to-end business process necessary to achieve the improved experience for audience, employees, and partners. Digital platforms cut across traditional organizational structures, silos, policies, and technology investments to enable the new operating model. Leveraging the latest technologies helps businesses achieve greater success, drive innovation, and gain competitive advantage.



The need for Effective Communication

A GUIDE TO

Effective Communication

HOW TO PRESENT YOUR IDEAS TO AN AUDIENCE

STEP 1



Do your research to back up your claims.

STEP 2



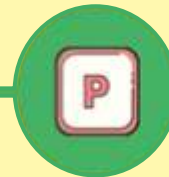
Gather your ideas and come up with an outline.

STEP 3



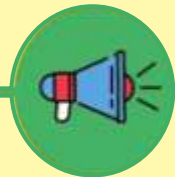
Create a presentation using your outline, relevant data, and visuals.

STEP 4



Make sure you have your materials on the day of your presentation.

STEP 5



Engage your audience by speaking clearly and confidently.

Four key foundations for effective communication:

CLARITY

This involves making sure we understand what audience needs are and ensuring content delivers these needs. Effective communications is like having a conversation. It should only be about things the person you are talking to is interested in.

CONTEXT

We need to give our audience the content that is relevant to their needs.

CHOICE

Organizations drive choice, not consumers. By giving people the opportunity to choose how they receive their communications means you can increase audience engagement.

CONSISTENCY

All of the benefits of multichannel communications are lost when there is no consistency. This means coherence when it comes to messages, images and colors. Multichannel communications platforms provide you with tools for creating consistency, in a sustainable compliant way.



Communication During COVID 19

The man made or natural disasters always come as a challenge for Voluntary Organizations. Most of these disasters appear suddenly and test the strategy, commitment and resources of Voluntary organizations. Each and every VO has to respond by demonstrating innovations to counter challenges. COVID 19 also came as a challenge which was turned by numerous VOs as opportunity to showcase their commitment.

Sharing and learning:

Sharing and learning from each other is the key to the communication strategy during COVID 19. The operating space was already reduced due to depleting resources and increased reporting requirements, but VOs opted new and innovative communications tools. They wanted to share and learn horizontally and vertically with each other.

Indian VOs, especially at grass roots, were not familiar with various communicating tools like Zoom, WhatsApp, YouTube, etc. However, extensive use was done as face-to-face communication was restricted. Online seminars were organized not at national, global but even at state level.

The COVID-19 pandemic taught us that communication during crisis has to be:

- 1. Message has to be Clear and precise highlighting:**
 - a. Challenges
 - b. Achievements
 - c. Extending and seeking support
- 2. It is also time to build the brand, so target is**
 - a. Common people
 - b. Government officials
 - c. Policy makers
 - d. Potential donors
- 3. We need to make use of**
 - a. Human resources within VOs
 - b. Volunteers and supports
 - c. Solicit pro-bono support
- 4. Build linkages with,**
 - a. Experts
 - b. Supports
 - c. Support organizations
 - d. Donors
 - e. Thematic and strategic platforms
- 5. Build the capacities in use of Communication tools of**
 - a. Team of organization,
 - b. Beneficiaries
 - c. Communities
- 6. The message should carry**
 - a. Case studies
 - b. Interviews
 - c. Data on services
 - d. Use of resources
 - e. Promote accountability and transparency.

Designing Communication Strategy

Civil Society Organisations in India need to be aware of a plethora of channels available so that each campaign has a truly multichannel approach. Although major organisations understand the importance of using multiple communications channels to reach their audience, many still struggle to meet this challenge. Part of the problem is that many still consider the traditional channels such as print, broadcast and outdoor as separate and distinct from the newer digital ones.

The secret of a successful campaign is to look at the importance of each channel individually and see if it fits with your overall communications strategy. Not every campaign requires all online and in the same vein not every campaign requires all offline. The idea is to mix and match whichever channel best suits a campaign to achieve the overall marketing goals.

Here's some advice on identifying the channels and making them work for your brand.

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1. Understand your audience

Before undertaking a campaign you need to work out what platform your customers are using and how they prefer to interact with brands.

Do not use a channel just for the sake of it — be strategic in your thinking.

2. Choose the right channel

Choosing the right channel for your day to day communication or for the specific campaign is a huge task as a lot of factors decide the audience engagement online. Most CSOs in India lack resources thus need to adopt the cost effective solutions in limited resources. The reality is that some channels may initially seem to be too cost-prohibitive to enter, but ultimately deliver the right message to the right audience and drive the desired results. This will pay back much stronger than something you bought at a much lower cost per thousand. Whichever channel you

3. Think 'brand engagement'

Digital marketing has shifted its focus from brand awareness to brand engagement. To create real longevity you will need them to interact with you. This is often referred to as 'conversational marketing' and it works well.

4. Tailor the campaign

Although the message needs to be consistent, a truly successful multichannel strategy needs content specifically tailored to suit each channel. Organisations expect the same approach to work across both traditional and digital mediums, but unfortunately the same strategy won't work across both print and mobile platforms as each approach needs to be customised to a specific medium. Remember to make the content different, but the message consistent — especially if the marketing is spread across different teams or different external agencies.

Digital communities have emerged as important tools in a multichannel strategy. The challenge for marketers is to ensure the brand message remains consistent when delivering different content across channels. If not, it will cause confusion in the mind of the end consumer and the marketing efforts will have been wasted.

Components to Consider

- Who do you want to reach?
- What information needs to be included?
- Is there an existing template and/or example?
- Who is going to help create?

Key Messages

- What do you need to convey?
- What is your program purpose and definition or scope?
- What are the key benefits or attributes?
- What are your short term (1 year) and long term (3-5 year) program goals?
- Is this a new topic for your audience? Have they/how/what has been communicated previously?

The path to success with a digital platform

The best approach is an “experiences” approach, focusing on the people who will use the digital platform – the end users, whether they are customers, employees, or ecosystem partners. Therefore, it's vital to think about the moment that matters most to each type of user. If the platform delivers the experience that matters, it will be a success, and the organisation will gain competitive advantage.

Channels for Communication

The digital era means a whole new set of media transmission methods and devices, with more developed features every year. These days, most types of digital media fit into one of these main subgroups:

Audio: Audio forms of digital media include digital radio stations, podcasts, and audiobooks. This year during the pandemic we saw a huge rise in the creation of podcasts.

Video: Many digital media outlets are visual, from streaming movie and television services such as Netflix to virtual reality surgical simulators used in medical institutions. One of the biggest players in visual digital media is YouTube, which hosts billions of videos. Launched in 2005, the website is one of the most popular destinations on the web.

Social Media: Social media includes sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Snapchat, which enable their users to interact with one another through text posts, photographs, and videos, leaving “likes” and comments to create conversations around pop culture, sports, news, politics, and the daily events of users' lives.

Advertising: Advertisers have made their way into the digital media landscape, taking advantage of marketing partnerships and advertising space wherever possible. The internet has moved away from the use of pop-up and auto play ads, which flooded early websites and drove away visitors. Instead, advertisers look toward native content and other methods of keeping consumers invested without overselling their product.

News, Literature, and more: Traditionally, people consumed text via books, print newspapers, magazines, and the like. Even though digital media has proliferated, the desire for those kinds of reading experiences has endured. The proliferation of literary websites, the popularity of resources like Wikipedia, and the rise of e-readers like the Kindle all further underline the continued importance of written work in digital media.

Effective Communication

BENEFITS OF MULTICHANNEL COMMUNICATIONS

One single platform can be used to implement an integrated multichannel communications strategy across an entire enterprise. This empowers the organization to produce, optimize and deliver communications via both paper and digital channels, depending on the target audience preference.

A successful multichannel campaign enables you to:

SPEED UP AUDIENCE ACQUISITION: by efficiently targeting individuals through their preferred channels

GROW AUDIENCE SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY: by providing clear, targeted and consistent customer communications via any channel

REDUCE OUTSOURCING COSTS: by bringing document creation in-house

IMPROVE YOUR BRAND IMAGE: by reducing manual errors thanks to the automation of batch document creation

BOOST OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY: by merging data and streamlining business processes to create, produce, deliver and track customer communications

ENSURE BRAND CONSISTENCY: by taking control of all of your document design and template management

INCREASE TIME TO MARKET: by designing documents once, maintaining less templates and consolidating assets such as pdfs, Word documents and logos into one single controlled environment

Analyzing Communication

The analysis should start with social media platforms since they form the biggest part of any digital presence. Every brand now has different accounts on different platforms. The most popular platforms are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. There are many aspects that you should evaluate when you analyse the performance of any brand on different social platforms.

Project Objective

What is the campaign goal?

How can communications support it?

Who are the project sponsors?

Are there any environmental, historical, or political sensitivities to be aware of?

Audience Analysis

You should always start with identifying who your target audience is. The most common mistake that organisations make is assuming that their product targets everybody. There is no single product that targets everybody. Your target audience should be specific, in other words, you should identify all the details: age group, gender, social class, profession, lifestyle, interests, preferences, and pain points. The more you know about the behaviour of your consumer, the better your marketing strategy will be.

Who does this campaign impact?

How much influence and interest do each of the stakeholder groups have?

What is the right level and frequency of communications to each group?

Key Messages

What does your audience need to know? What will resonate most with them?

Is branding required to ensure your messages are consistent?

Communication Channels

What channels are available? (Tip: Consider the channels your audiences already use/read/access and add your messages to them.)

Channel examples: social media, websites, existing newsletters, webinars, etc

Community

Community is all about the people that the business attracts. That involves the number of followers on the page, their age, gender, interests, and the language they use. You can analyse what they love or hate the most about the brand. Moreover, you should analyse how the brand responds to the community. How does the business respond to negative comments and reviews? Does it reply fast enough? How efficient is their call to action buttons? Is social media a part of a seamless experience that the customers have across all other platforms?

Content

Content composes the most important part of social media. Users come for social media platforms for content. From a business point of view, content is the method to deliver their messages to the target customer.

Every word a business uses on social media counts. Therefore, when performing an analysis, you should pay close attention to all the details. Language, tone, wording, repeated messages, grammar and spelling mistakes are all a part of the analysis.

Visuals

Visuals are part of the content for sure, but one should take a look at it separately. Most studies would tell you that images and videos attract the highest engagement. That's a well-known fact by now. When you're analysing visuals, you must also consider the different types of visuals out there on social media.

Website & SEO

It has a huge impact on gaining credibility and trust. Website is like a backbone for any organisation. Your website shows your portfolio of products, success stories, and it has all your contact info and location. In addition, your website also has your blog which is supposed to attract visitors to your website by giving them valuable information.

Your website's visual aspect also indicates how big your business. As you might have heard, building a website isn't cheap. So, having a good-looking, optimised website shows that you're willing to invest in your digital presence.

SEO

The simple definition of search engine optimisation is how attractive a website is to search engines, especially Google. Google and other search engines are powerful marketing tools that contribute to many conversions. Researchers go to these search engines willingly to look for topics they are interested in. During your digital marketing analysis, you must remember that SEO is an important part of the assessment. If the brand you're in charge of doesn't put any effort into its SEO, it definitely needs a facelift.

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- India's Development Cooperation with ASEAN (English & Hindi)
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VANI

Celebrating 30 Years

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