



# Good Practices and Useful Tools

For Fundraising Communications



Canadian content Unit 2A Good Practices and Useful Tools for Fundraising Communications

Communications for fundraising has a lot to do with communications more broadly...



Communications for fundraising has a lot to do with communications more broadly, and so many of the practices and principles we will discuss in this video could apply to communications in other sectors as well.

## Build a strategic foundation

- Strong and clear organization vision and mission statement
- “Elevator’ pitch”
  - A brief, persuasive introduction to your organization, that is no longer than 60 seconds (USAID)



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For successful communications it is critical that organizations **build a strategic foundation**. Elements of this strategic foundation include having a strong and clearly articulated organizational vision and mission statement, as well as an ‘elevator’ pitch that others within the organization can clearly identify and share. An elevator pitch is a brief, persuasive introduction to your organization or program, that conveys the value of what you do as an organization and prompts your audience to want to learn more. Ensure everyone in your organization is able to give a clear, unified version of your elevator pitch. Developing these foundational pieces should be an iterative process, so consider investing in the time to test and update what is and isn’t working in your messaging. Consider presenting your messaging to Board Members, partners, or other stakeholders you work with to get their opinion on clarity and succinctness. Having this strategic foundation will really pay off in your fundraising, with all donor types.



## Tailor your communications to different donors

- Government funders and formal applications for funding
- Individual donors, including one-time and monthly donors
- A website that is easy to navigate
- Save past proposal templates

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A second practice to keep in mind is **tailoring your fundraising communications to your organization's various revenue channels**. For instance, when it comes to Government funders, it is important to ensure that your external communication materials are in-line with the information and messaging you are providing in proposals. It is also important to think about engaging with Government officials outside of a given proposal process, especially with those who have influence, as a way to promote your organization. When it comes to individual donors, we often encounter one-time and monthly donors, and so it's important to think about preparing one time asks and recurring monthly asks. It's also important that your website is set up for individual donors to quickly and easily donate, limiting the amount of 'clicks' it might take.

A good practice to follow is to save all funding templates as well as past proposal applications, so that you can better anticipate the different communication needs of different funders. If you're thinking about submitting an application to Global Affairs Canada, refer to your workbook and the 'Learn More' section to find a website that provides guidance on how concept notes and proposals are assessed, and the key components to include.

## Be strategic about your fundraising campaigns

- Campaigns should be **measurable**, **specific**, and have a **clear goal**
- Map out and plan your yearly cycle of fundraising
- Identify fundraising opportunities during key times of giving amongst your community of support



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It's also important to **be strategic about the timing of your fundraising campaigns**. Fundraising campaigns need to be measurable, specific, with a defined beginning and end, and a clear goal. For instance, think about how much you want to raise; what messaging you want to use; and what success would look like. An example of a goal could be “within the next two weeks, by the end of March, we will have secured our 100<sup>th</sup> monthly donor.” It is important to map out and plan your yearly cycle of fundraising, that reflects key fundraising opportunities, including Government funding cycles, milestone opportunities, and key giving times for various community groups. For example, one big fundraising opportunity in Canada is the period from Giving Tuesday to the end of the calendar year. Busy, annual hikes in donations can be observed around Giving Tuesday, which is typically in November, all the way to the end of the year, when people are incentivized to donate and receive tax receipts. While this is a time of great opportunity, it is also very competitive, which necessitates the need to plan ahead. It is good practice to announce the fundraising success you've had with your community of supporters, and to talk about the impact the funding will have.



## Reputation is important

- Your brand and communications are helpful vehicles to build your organization's reputation
- Investing in communications' expertise, including through cost-effective fundraising tools



**Reputation is important**, and an organization's communications and brand can be a helpful vehicle to highlight and build an organization's reputation and its impact in the sector. Having effective programming is important, and if you're able to amplify the impact and success of these programs, this can help a lot in terms of fundraising. Broadly speaking, non-profits don't often invest in communication teams or expertise, however there are effective and cost-efficient ways of building your visibility and reputation as an organization, through a number of fundraising tools.

## Communication Tools

- **Organizational website**
- **Annual reports**
  
- **Data**
- **Newsletters**

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Your **website** is often the first place funders will look when reviewing funding applications and your website needs to validate the organization's expertise and its community relationships. Check out the

Hub Spot article, in the ‘Learn More’ section of your workbook for Unit 2, to read about the best, free website builders.

The **annual reports** you develop for different donors can be leveraged for success with all forms of fundraising. These reports tell the story of your impact as an organization, and very often the audience of annual reports can be trifold, and can include the community, funders, and project stakeholders. Donors often provide organizations with templates for completing annual reports, but in cases where they don’t, it’s important to clarify with the funder what the key elements need to be, and you can develop your own templates from this guidance. Consider also reaching out to your local council for additional guidance, including examples of annual reports.

Related to your reports is the **data** you are collecting on your programming. Having up to date, accurate data can really bolster fundraising efforts, and therefore has a strong return on investment. For more complex donors, like Government funders, meticulous reporting and data collection is crucial. Finally, **newsletters** are a great tool to highlight the work of your organization and build its reputation. Please refer to your workbook’s ‘Learn More’ section for a resource on some newsletter tools.

This video is part of the  
**Building Equity: Resource  
Mobilization for Impact  
training series.**

The series is available online via the Spur Change Resource Library. Made possible in collaboration with JNC Consulting and Change the Game Academy.



Thank you