



Tasman Regional  
**SPORTS TRUST**

# SportAssist Training Resource Communication



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## **STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION PLANS**

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### **Why have a communication plan?**

- To support your organisation to achieve its stated goals and objectives
- To support or improve your operational effectiveness
- To support or improve your relationships with those who are important to your success
- To deliver measurable results to your organisation

In its simplest form, a stakeholder communication plan outlines who you need to communicate with, about what, how you are going to do it, and how often. There are also a few important considerations such as timing and budget.

### **What a stakeholder communications plan is not**

- It is not a marketing plan!
- It is not a sponsorship plan!
- It is not a business plan!

### **What it is**

A stakeholder communications plan is primarily a 'public relations' plan. It may include some wider communication tools such as advertising or direct marketing where they support your objectives.

## **COMMUNICATION PLANNING TEMPLATE**

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While communications planning is fairly straight-forward in the terms of the steps you need to follow, the biggest challenge is often ensuring the plan can actually be delivered with the resources you have available.

An easy-to-follow planning template can involve these eight steps:

1. Setting communication objectives
2. Key messages for your organisation
3. Defining and prioritising key stakeholders
4. Setting additional key messages
5. Developing effective communication tactics
6. Allocating budget and responsibilities
7. Developing the communications calendar
8. Assessing results and adapting the plan

You will need to work through the steps to develop a workable plan.

### **Basically:**

- Why communicate?
- What to communicate?
- Who to communicate to?
- How to communicate?
- What is the cost of communicating?
- Who has responsibility to communicate?
- When to communicate?
- How did it work?

## **COMMUNICATION PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

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### **STEP 1: SETTING COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES**

Objectives won't work if you make them too broad or try to achieve too much in one statement.

- Objectives must clearly support your organisation's goals.
- Objectives need to be **SMART**
- **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**imeframe

The best way to work out your objectives is to ask "in 12 months time, what do we want to have achieved from a communications point of view that will support our organisation to achieve its goals?"

### **STEP 2: KEY MESSAGES FOR YOUR ORGANISATION**

Conflicting messages can create confusion and for this reason it is helpful to define what your organisation wants to communicate. Generally you will have two sets of messages, one overriding set that is relevant to all your stakeholders and an other set that is specific to one or more of your target audiences. This section deals with the specific messages.

- What are the most important things you want people to understand about your organisation?
- What is your organisation going to achieve this year or in the years ahead?
- What projects, initiatives or events are going to be the focus this year?

These key messages should be used repeatedly in your communications throughout the year and used in conjunction with the very specific messages you decide on for individual stakeholder groups.

### **STEP 3: DEFINING AND PRIORITISING YOUR KEY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS**

Stakeholders are the groups, organisations or individuals who are critical to your organisation's ongoing success and who you can have some manageable contact with.

There are two areas you need to consider when prioritising the communication strategy for your stakeholders. How satisfied are they with your organisation? What influence could they have on the organisation's operation?

A group of coaches who are very dissatisfied may be a small group but may have the power to disrupt your whole operation, so the influence combined with the satisfaction rating would put them near the top of the list as far as priority for communication is concerned.

<b>Highest priority</b>	Most likely to receive time, resources and budget
<b>High priority</b>	Will need to give attention to their communication needs
<b>Lesser priority</b>	Still needs to communicate but less attention than 1 or 2
<b>Low priority</b>	May get some general communications

Carrying out some simple research with your stakeholders is a great way to determine their satisfaction. It will also provide you with a benchmark for the future, to see if you are improving on the things they see as most important.

## **STEP 4: KEY MESSAGES FOR EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP**

Once you have established who your key stakeholders are and prioritised them, there will be some key messages that you need to develop, specific to their concerns and issues.

Your messages should be particularly relevant to them and show that you understand their point of view.

Remembering that these messages need a time frame:

- Where are you in relation to your season?
- What is the yearly plan?
- What are your stakeholders up to themselves?

All these aspects will have an effect on determining the time frame. By when? is the classic question.

You will still need to promote the overriding key messages outlined in step two. This is necessary to keep up the repetition so they support you in achieving your organisation's business goals.

**STEP 4A: SETTING ADDITIONAL KEY MESSAGES**

For each stakeholder group.

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Issues/ expectations</b>	<b>Key messages</b>
Sports media	1	<p>Don't view X as a serious sport and don't cover it.</p> <p>Don't have a working relationship with X NZ.</p>	<p>Specific X is a fast growing sport with 7,000 members playing.</p> <p>Overriding messages New national body with international recognition.</p> <p>Need sponsors to attend world championships.</p>
Coaches	1	<p>Want better communication from national body.</p> <p>Want input into national team selections.</p> <p>Want to see the sport's profile lifted.</p>	<p>Specific All coach communication posted on website. Selection panel consists of a coach representative.</p> <p>Media plan in place to raise profile.</p> <p>Plus key messages.</p>



## STEP 5: DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION TACTICS FOR EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

This part of the plan defines exactly how you will communicate the key messages to each priority stakeholder group. You must keep very firmly in mind what you can realistically do given your budget and the skills and resources of your team.

You need to determine what and where would be the best time and place to engage with your stakeholder group. Ask, and if budget allows, be creative. It might be possible to host a function and get all your key stakeholders in one room together, if you think this is the best way to ensure your message gets through in the most cost-effective manner.

Stakeholder	Priority	Issues/expectations	Key messages	Tactics
Sports Media	1	<p>Don't view X as a serious sport and don't cover it.</p> <p>Don't have a working relationship with X NZ.</p>	<p>Specific X is a fast growing sport with 7000 members playing. Media enquiries Please contact Bill Bird, X sport's NZ manager.</p> <p>Overriding messages New national body with international recognition.</p> <p>Need sponsors to attend world championships.</p>	<p>Develop list of sports and general media contacts. Identify any existing relationships.</p> <p>CEO to visit key journalists and include on distribution list for club magazine.</p> <p>Send media releases.</p> <p>Follow up with calls when new sponsors get involved.</p> <p>International accreditation.</p> <p>National team names, etc.</p> <p>Invite sport reporters to have a go at celebrity matches.</p>

## STEP 6: ALLOCATING BUDGET AND RESPONSIBILITIES

So you know what you are going to do and by when. Now to ensure it all happens as planned, you need to make sure there are owners for each communications activity, preferably someone who has had experience with the sort of task you have allocated them.

There may be several people working on a major event, but there should be one clear "owner" who has overall responsibility and accountability for ensuring it all happens. The communication plan may work to support the event but does not necessarily organise it.

Next is the budget allocation - what do you anticipate this particular part of the plan to cost? When all aspects are added up you may have to revisit the plan and remove some items or find a more cost effective option to achieve what you want.

Stakeholder	Priority	Issues/ expectations	Key messages	Action	Who	Budget
Sports Media	1	Don't view X as a serious sport and don't cover it.  Don't have a working relationship with X NZ.	Specific X is a fast growing sport with 7000 members playing. Media enquiries please contact Bill Bird, X sport's NZ manager.  Overriding messages New national body with international recognition.  Need new sponsors to attend world championships.	Develop a list of sports media contacts. Identify any existing relationships. CEO to visit key journalists and include on our distribution list for our magazine.  Send media releases, follow up with calls when new sponsors get involved.  International accreditation, national team names, etc.  Invite sport reporters to have a go at celebrity matches.		

**STEP 7: DEVELOPING A QUARTERLY COMMUNICATIONS CALENDAR**

The purpose of the calendar is to give an “at a glance” list of all the things you have included within your plan and when they need to be actioned by.

This ensures you can see what is coming up and start planning with sufficient warning. It also works to ensure there is no overlap between key events and activities and that you can handle all your communication requirements throughout the year.

**STEP 7: DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATIONS CALENDAR**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Website	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Media	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
CEO news	■		■			■			■			■
National conference					■							
Events calendar	■			■			■			■		
Member newsletter		■		■		■		■		■		■
Coaches’ forum	■						■					
Celebrity match										■		

## COMMUNICATION

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### Step 8: Assessing results and adapting the plan

- Conduct some in-person interviews
- Key stakeholder forum or session
- Collect news clippings
- Include a survey in your newsletter
- Develop an on-line survey

### Tactics Cheat Sheet

<b>Tactic</b>	<b>Positives</b>	<b>Things to Note</b>
Website	Great information resource.  Accessible 24/7 Secure sections for member information only.  Can run surveys, competitions and transaction services.	Expensive for initial set up.  Need a site you can update easily yourself.  Can be time-intensive.  Must be updated if you want people re-visiting
Online newsletter	Fast and easy dispatch.  Cheaper than printing and posting.  Can easily be forwarded to other interested parties.	Need to keep email lists updated.  Should be short and well written.  Can be viewed as spam. Must print out to take away.
Advertising	Total control of message.  You choose what magazine or brochure.	Can be expensive.  Badly written or designed will be not noticed, and affect the way you are perceived.

## **SUMMARY**

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That is a simple communication plan template for your organisation.

Without planning you may achieve some or none of your goals but with a plan taken through to the yearly calendar stage, you are aware of:

- Why you need to communicate?
- What you need to communicate?
- Who you need to communicate with?
- How to communicate it?
- What is the cost of communicating?
- Who has the responsibility of communicating?
- When to communicate?

**All at a glance**

**And lastly – DID IT WORK?**

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