

SPORT GOVERNANCE WEBINAR SERIES

LA GOUVERNANCE DU SPORT SÉRIE DE WEBINAIRES

BUILDING A COMMUNICATION PLAN

HOSTED BY

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Sport Research
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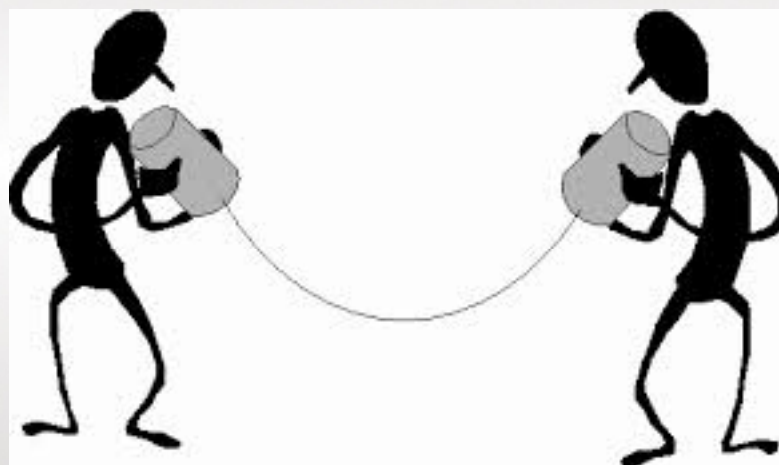
Sylvie Bigras has owned and operated her own communications company for over fifteen years, and includes the federal government, not-for-profit organizations, and corporations amongst her clients.

Sylvie holds a Masters Degree in Sport Management from the University of Ottawa, and has worked in the communications field at fourteen Olympic Games. Sylvie is currently preparing for her work with the CBC and Radio-Canada, for the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi.



Communications planning is a “step by step process to ensure that the intended message is received, understood and acted upon by the recipient. It involves: (1) determining the objectives, (2) choosing the audience and (3) selecting appropriate channels to reach them.” (Business Dictionary)

But really ...



SENDER → MESSAGE → AUDIENCE

It is simply about...



Presentation Overview

- Context
- Plan Objectives
- The 5 “W’s” and 1 “H”
- Branding and Key Messages
- Spokespersons
- Key Partners and Stakeholders
- Target audiences
- Public Relations
- Media Relations
- Marketing
- Social Media
- Issues Q & A
- “Event Brief”
- Critical Paths and Timelines

Why a plan?

- Complex communications environment moves at lightning speed.
- Windows of opportunity open and close in hours instead of days.
- Attention competition is fierce while attention spans are fleeting.

Context

Statement of the context:

Don the event, or on the organization, for which the communications plan is being written.

If it's an event:

- specific circumstances
- environmental or political influences
- any information that can be helpful.
- situational analysis – potential opportunities/issues.

Context

Beijing 2008 Olympic Games

- First time China hosting the Olympic Games
- Human rights issues
- Tibet
- Environment/Traffic/Pollution



Plan Objectives

What do you want your plan to accomplish?
Example...



Glasgow 2014
Commonwealth
Games

Plan Objectives

Primary objective of the Communications Plan for the 2014 Canadian Commonwealth Games Team is:

“To position the Team in the forefront of the sports and mainstream media in the lead-up to and during the 2014 Games.”

Plan Objectives

Secondary objectives:

“To use the team’s participation in the 2014 Games in Glasgow to build relationships with leaders in the Canadian sport community, governments and other partners.”

“To honour Canada’s place in the Commonwealth, and strengthen its position as a leader in sport in the Commonwealth.”

COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING

POLL

Plan Objectives

Benchmarks:

Many plans will include measurable objectives, targets or performance indicators such as:

- Increasing Twitter followers, FB likes, web;
- Increasing presence in broadcast or print media;
- Increased information requests;
- Increased registrations for an event; etc.

5 « Ws » and 1 « H »

A communication plan includes:

“Who” - the target audiences

“What” – the key messages articulated

“When” – timing, it will specify the appropriate time of delivery for each message

“Why” – the desired outcomes

“How” - the communication vehicle (how the message will be delivered)

“By whom” - the sender (determining who will deliver the information and how he or she is chosen)



5 « Ws » and 1 « H »

SPORT EXAMPLE:



“Who” – Participants, Spectators, Sponsors, Partners

“What” – A weekend tournament in “x” sport

“When” – Saturday and Sunday, x date, 9am-5pm

“Why” – to qualify regional teams for provincials

“How” – news release, media match, social media

“By whom” – Tournament organizing committee



QUESTIONS?

Branding & Key Messages

Brand - What is your “brand”?

The “image” you want to portray that differentiates you from others.

For example, the 2014 Commonwealth Games Team brand is:
“Enabling best ever performance while celebrating Canada’s Commonwealth heritage”



Key Messages

A key message is a strong statement about an organization's belief about itself. It can also be a strong statement about a particular issue about which the organization takes a stand.

Key Message Elements

- What's valued, what's at risk
- Answer questions: Why care? Why act?
- Designed to achieve and support organization's main goals
- Motivation and support building
- Framed with a specific audience in mind
- Try to focus on three key messages and their supporting points
- Keep sentences short and create stand-alone sentences

Key Messages – What is different or unique about this event or your organization?

- Rugby tournament in Fredericton
 - January 12th and 13th in Fredericton
- Games will start at 9am.

Key Messages – What is different or unique about this event or your organization?

Instead:

- Come see rugby in the snow!
- The winner of the tournament goes to the Snow Nationals in Edmonton in February!
- This will be the first EVER snow rugby tournament held in New-Brunswick
- Premier David Alward will play in our « Celebrity Kick Off Game »

Key Message Samples

“Gold Medal Plates is the ultimate celebration of Canadian Excellence in cuisine, wine, the arts and athletic achievement.”



Key Message Samples – Secondary Key Messages

Culinary excellence – 8-10 top chefs in 11 cities

Wine, beer and spirits - has become an integral part of the success of Gold Medal Plates

Olympians - Canadian Olympic athletes host corporate share their remarkable

Key Message Samples – Secondary Key Messages

Entertainment - Gold Medal Plates is known for its intimate and unique combinations of Canadian talent. Jim Cuddy, lead singer of Blue Rodeo is the Gold Medal Plates national entertainment advisor

Unique experiences - Week-long adventures that combine great food, wine, entertainment and activity ...These experiences can ONLY be purchased at GMP dinners.

Key Messages – Can Be Added for Specific Events:

Examples:

- « Theme of an event – e.g. 50th anniversary »
- « The event is sold out »
- « A record number of teams have registered for... »
- « The following athletes will be joining us at... »
- « Date, location, time details... »

Don't just « announce » something – make it different and interesting!

Spokespersons

Who will speak to these key messages and represent your organization / event / announcement?

Example- At the Canada Games, the following could be spokespersons for Team Saskatchewan:

For Sask Sport– President, CEO, other senior staff (speak for the organization - corporate)

For Team Saak – Chef de Mission, Assistant Chef de Mission, (speak for the Team - sport)

Key Partners and Stakeholders

You will want to identify those who are key to helping you deliver in your communications plan:

Sport Examples

NSOs, Sport Canada, Canadian Heritage, Athletes, Coaches, Staff, SIRC, Canadian Sport Centres/Institutes, corporate partners, etc.

Key Partners and Stakeholders

Another example:

Re-tweeting

Have others re-tweet your tweets...

Bal Gosal re-tweets a lot!



Scott Russell, MP @SportsWkndScott

Great to see [@AlexGoughLuge](#) on the podium again!!! She lights up
[#SportsWeekend](#) [#RoadtotheOlympics](#) today at 1ET [@LugeCanada](#)
[@CBCOlympics](#)

Retweeted by Bal Gosal, MP

« WHO »

Target Audiences

Who will you direct your communications plan to?

- partners and stakeholders
- a specific plan and messaging for each of your target audiences.

Internal: Clubs, NSOs, Sport Canada, Canadian Heritage, Athletes, Coaches, Staff, Canadian Sport Centres/Institutes, corporate partners, parents, etc.

External – Media, Fans, potential corporate partners, governments (municipal, provincial, federal), etc.

« WHO »

POLL

Public Relations

«Getting others to talk about you»

One definition of PR is:

The profession or practice of creating and maintaining goodwill of an organization's various publics (customers, employees, suppliers, fans, teams, etc.) usually through publicity and other nonpaid forms of communication.

Public Relations

Getting “others to talk about you” or “third party” coverage is usually done through strategic communications to a variety of partners, such as NSF’s, corporate partners, governments at all levels, athlete blogs, etc.

Basically – you want these organizations to reproduce your messages and information through their own channels. Media can also act as PR conduits.

This is often effected through social media platforms – which will be addressed later on in the presentation.

Media Relations

Organizations should have a media relations plan as part of their overall communications plan.

Elements of a media plan will include:

- Targeted media
- Identification of key announcements or events that will be publicized to media
- Media advisories and releases
- “Announcement” events
- Media protocols (who, what, media availabilities, messages, etc.)

Marketing

While PR is « getting others to talk about you », marketing is « you talking about yourself ».

“Marketing is the process of communicating the value of a product or service to customers, for the purpose of selling that product or service.”

Social Media

A digital strategy is an essential component of any communications plan. So many social media platforms are now available to organizations in order to communicate their key messages, events, announcements, etc.

Social media is an easy, inexpensive way to reach a huge audience. Be sure to use as many platforms as possible!

Social media is often used to “draw” people to other sites, such as your web site or Facebook page.



Social Media

The digital strategy needs to be intimately integrated into the broader communications strategy.

There is no strategic separation between communications and e-communications; most communications are now digital.

Social media guidelines should be developed as an adjunct to the communications plan.

Link everything!

Social Media

Link everything!

- News release on a story
- Photos and story on your Facebook page
- Photos and story – lead item on your website
- Tweet goes out – with link to your website
- Instagram-photo – with link to story on your website
- YouTube – short clip related to the story

Issues Q & A

Along with your key messages, your organization should have an « Issues Q&A » document. This is used by your spokespersons should questions come up on a topic.

Think of any « tough questions » you could get asked, any past, current or potential issues, and ensure that your spokespersons have suggested speaking notes on each and are briefed ahead of time.

« HOW »»

POLL

Issues Q & A - Samples

Uniform supplier – where are your team uniforms produced and how?

Doping infractions – past or potential

Polluted environment where you are competing

Financials – e.g. « going over budget »

An athlete not being selected to a team or a competition

Etc...

Critical Paths and Timelines

Communications plan should also include a critical path that outlines in chart form the critical path of activities, as well as timelines and key events. The five Ws can be reflected in the document with individual columns. It can also included (under « How ») the different communications vehicles (magazines, newspapers, web sites, newsletters, etc.) that will be used to communicate the information.

Critical Paths and Timelines - sample

Timeline	Event/Activity	Location	Lead	Tools/Tactics
When	What	Where	Who	How
(Can be broken down in Phase 1, Phase 2, etc.)	e.g. Press Conference	Give specific details	Name and title of person leading	E.g. Media advisory, social media posts, etc.



The Event Brief

Tool to share a summary of the information in your communications plan around a specific event, announcement, meeting, etc.

Event briefs can be produced for each event as needed, and should reflect the organization's key messages and branding throughout.

The Event Brief - Contents

- ✓ Name of event
- ✓ Date, time, place
- ✓ Participants (Speakers, invited guests, media)
- ✓ Event requirements (food & beverage, photographer, A/V, staging, signage, etc.)
- ✓ Scenario (minute by minute – arrival, set-up, AV, videos played, welcome by emcee, speeches, photo opportunities, etc.)
- ✓ Key messages
- ✓ Key messages by speaker
- ✓ Emcee script (bilingual)
- ✓ Speeches

So... Remember:

1. Describe your context
2. Establish the objectives for your plan
3. Create your key messages
4. Identify your spokespersons
5. List the key partners and stakeholders
6. Build in sections on public relations, media relations and importantly, your digital strategy
7. Create a Q&A for potential issues
8. Build and share your « Event Brief »

An event or organization is never too small to have a comprehensive communications plan.

“If you think you’re too small to make a difference, try sleeping in a room with a mosquito.”



Questions

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THANK YOU



January 14

Canadian Olympic Team Marketing Vision

Derek Kent

March 25

Leadership in the Eye of the Storm

Marg McGregor

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