Crafting Messaging
For Stakeholder Engagement

Sept 24, 2019
Agenda

● **Introductions**

● **Program**
  ○ Defining stakeholders
  ○ Why develop a collaborative communications strategy?
  ○ Talking about collaborative work
  ○ Storytelling formulas
  ○ Lessons from other collaboratives

● **Questions**
Defining “stakeholders”
Defining “stakeholders”

- Veterans, service members, family, caregivers, and survivors
- Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs)
- Military Service Organizations (MSOs)
- Benefits Providers
- Educational Service Providers/Organizations
- Employment Service Providers
- Financial Service Providers
- Healthcare Providers
- Housing Services
- Legal Services
- Volunteer/Nonprofit Organizations
- Government Representatives
Why develop a collaborative comms strategy
Why develop a collaborative comms strategy?

- Guidance is necessary for purpose-driven, and on-message communications
- Layer and share communications resources
- Increase your collective reach
- Advance your collective cause
What’s included in “communications”

- Website
- Email (individual and marketing)
- Social media (Facebook, Messenger, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, Medium, Tumblr, WhatsApp, YouTube, Snapchat, Medium)
- Traditional media
- Printed collateral
- Outreach messaging
- ...And more!
Stakeholder engagement funnel
Stakeholder Engagement Funnel

Turn community members into collaborators

- Your comms help move stakeholders to action
- Stakeholders make a decision or take an action to move between levels
- You have to make the call to action clear & compelling
- Desired action will vary based on stakeholder
Stakeholder Engagement Funnel

Stakeholders see you

- **GOAL:**
  Awareness (a.k.a. stakeholders see you)

- **HOW:**
  - Social media
  - Traditional media
  - Business cards
  - Outreach

- **CALL TO ACTION:**
  - “Learn more…”
  - “Get to know us…”
  - “See how we…”
Stakeholder Engagement Funnel
Stakeholders understand you

- **GOAL:** Stakeholders understand issues & your work, give permission to stay in touch

- **HOW:**
  - Website
  - Blogs
  - Outreach
  - Forwarded emails

- **CALL TO ACTION:**
  - “Keep in touch…”
  - “Like/Follow our page…”
  - “Share…”
Stakeholder Engagement Funnel

Stakeholder support you

- **GOAL:**
  Build momentum from ideological support to action

- **HOW:**
  - Create engaging content
  - Engage with followers
  - Email opportunities & value-added content
  - Build community

- **CALL TO ACTION:**
  - “Volunteer…”
  - “Donate…”
  - “Join us…”
Stakeholder Engagement Funnel
Stakeholders take action

- **GOAL:** Cultivate stakeholders into champions of collaboration

- **HOW:**
  - Email nurture campaigns that
    - Illustrate impact
    - Highlight potential
  - Thank you letters/certificates

- **CALL TO ACTION:**
  - “Collaborate with us…”
  - “Become a partner…”

See

Understand

Support

Act

Champion
Stakeholder Engagement Funnel
Stakeholders champion your work

- **GOAL:** Champions build awareness in their network

- **HOW:**
  - Champions leverage influence via networking, email, social media
  - Champions contribute content for blog, email, social & traditional media

- **CALL TO ACTION:**
  - “Run for chairperson…”
  - “Lead a committee…”
Talking about your work
Talking about your work

Start with why

1) Why
   Why are you convening across sectors to solve a problem?

2) What
   What is the improved future that you envision?

3) How
   How does your collaborative intend to get there?
Considerations

- You can’t message everyone with a single post / speech / email
- Demographic diversity
- Differentiate your message
Equity in messaging development
“Nothing about us without us”

- Ensure representation during the ideation and development process
- Inclusive representation can bust stereotypes
- Avoid pity
- Tell real-life stories (with permission)
- Celebrate “small wins”
Framing
Asset-based vs problem-based

Problem-based framing
- Fixing
- Problems
- Challenges
- Limited solutions

Asset-based framing
- Building together
- Strengths
- Opportunities
- Infinite possibilities
Storytelling formulas
Before - After - Bridge Formula
Make your stakeholders part of the solution

Before:
The world with X problem

After:
The world with X problem solved

Bridge:
This is how we get there

June is an Army veteran and single mom; due to a lack of affordable childcare, she's struggled to find and keep a job since she separated four years ago. Meanwhile, Townsville employers struggle to fill positions. What if June (and the hundreds of local veterans in her situation) could put her technical and leadership skills to work in our community?
The Childcare Works Fund makes childcare more affordable for single parent veterans. Invite your employer to contribute today.
https://townsvillefoundation.org/donate-veteran-childcare
Simon Sinek’s “Golden Circle”
Start with “Why”

1) **Why** are you convening across sectors to solve a problem?

2) **What** is the improved future that you envision?

3) **How** does your collaborative intend to get there?
The Carnegie Formula
How to win friends and influence stakeholders

1) Incident - relate a personal experience

2) Action - share what you to solve or avoid a problem

3) Benefit - share the benefits of the action you took
The “V” Formula
From columnist, storyteller, and playwright Dave Lieber

1) **Introduce** your main character

2) Take the story to its **lowest point**

3) Conclude with a **happy ending**

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Pete had it all: an Army career he loved, a supportive spouse, and two young boys. Then, an IED blast left Pete with a traumatic brain injury severe enough to keep him from doing his job. After his medical retirement, Pete became depressed and withdrew from his wife and kids. Worried for her husband who normally loved staying busy, Pete's wife begged him to come to an open house at Townsville Stables.

Pete connected with Lightning right away. In addition to working with his VA doctor and therapist, Pete enrolled in the Townsville Stables equine therapy program, which he said gave him “peace and purpose.” Today, Pete is active as peer educator at the stables and a tee-ball coach for his kids' team.
The Story Spine Formula
A Pixar favorite from playwright Kenn Adams

Once upon a time there was ___.
Every day, ___.
One day ___.
Because of that, ___.
Because of that, ___.
Until finally ___.
And ever since then, ___.

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Lessons from other collaboratives
Lessons from other collaboratives
Strive Partnership, Cincinnati

“Focus on the ultimate goal you seek to achieve”

● Strive started by talking about adults involved with the effort
● Transitioned to talking about the kids:
  ○ “Better results in education for every child, every step of the way, cradle to career”
● Strive Partnership noted increased understanding and excitement following this shift
Lessons from other collaboratives
United Way of Greater Cincinnati

“Don’t assume everyone understands or supports your cause”
- You and your partners are informed and invested
- Be prepared to share an entry-level introduction to what you do

“Just when you’re getting tired -- people are finally getting it so you have to double down”
- Prepare to re-engage stakeholders
- Progress updates
What questions do you have?