Plan Your
2020 Comms Calendar
January 15, 2020
Agenda

● Introduction

● Program
  ○ Defining your audience
  ○ What belongs on your comms calendar?
  ○ Mission-focused messaging
    ■ Yearly themes
    ■ Quarterly story search
    ■ Monthly topics
    ■ Weekly habits
    ■ Daily maintenance

● Questions
Defining your audience
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
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
What belongs on your comms calendar?
Special Dates

- Holidays
  - Federal holidays
  - Considerations for inclusivity around religious holidays
- Days of remembrance
- Months of recognition or celebration
- Deadlines for major opportunities
- Dates of major events for the collaborative *and* all partners
Types of Comms

- Speeches, announcements, and talking points
- Social media posts
- Emails and e-newsletters
- Blogs and articles
- Snail mail and printed literature
# Types of Comms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Sender</th>
<th>Call to action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/15/2020</td>
<td>Email Newsletter</td>
<td>Meet our team</td>
<td>New webform subscribers</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Volunteer with us!</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/15/2020</td>
<td>Social post</td>
<td>Equine therapy program</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Example Veterans Collab</td>
<td>Register today!</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/21/2020</td>
<td>Blog</td>
<td>How Example Veterans Collab Tackled Seasonal Unemployment</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Andy</td>
<td>Join our employment working group!</td>
</tr>
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Mission-focused messaging at every stage
Real-world comms lesson 1
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
Real-world comms lesson 2
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
Mission-driven comms start with your organization’s “why”?

- Together with your collaborators, pick one to three themes for the year
- Your theme is the *thread* that unites all the stories and content you share through the year
Quarterly

Take the time to surface success stories
- Ask collaborative partners to share their wins (even small ones)
- Get permission to tell stories as required
- Try to elevate an inclusive mix of stories so your constituency feels connected to them
Monthly

Each month, take a moment to plan for the month ahead

- Ask yourself:
  - What holidays or special days are there?
  - Does this month honor a particular identity?
  - What major events do we have this month?
Weekly

Pick a time to draft, proof, and schedule the week’s content

- Refer to your theme and topics when drafting
- Remind contributors to send photos, quotes, and other updates (you don’t need to create all the content alone)
- Remind your collaborative partners to amplify any important messages
Monitor regularly and engage

- Check the news to see if anything has happened that will impact your stories
- Monitor, monitor, monitor
- Engage with your audience authentically
  - Reply to emails
  - Like and/or respond to people’s comments
What questions do you have?