

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

SYMBIOTIC COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR NGOS: PRAXIS AND CHALLENGES

Preeti Oza

St. Andrew's College University of Mumbai

**Preeti Oza. Symbiotic Communication Plan for Ngos: Praxis and Challenges--
Palarch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology 18(4), 3843-3850. ISSN 1567-
214x**

**Keywords: Ngo, Communication, Corporate Communication, Social
Communication**

ABSTRACT

Communication is vital to the explanation for philanthropy and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) got to communicate more effectively to spread their message. The major Communication challenge is that the people that passionately start the NGO aren't ready to effectively communicate the cause to society. The NGO leadership doesn't understand that their job as a pacesetter is half tackling the matter, and half communicating it. As a nation, we don't have a network of NGOs or an exquisite bunch of NGO leaders who believe in communicating their cause. We even have the challenge of a mental framework and a perception problem that the general public doesn't understand that tackling social causes requires Communication. The public says all my money must attend the cause; it must not be spent on administration. The public does not want to give their money to the management; they want to give money to the "child or old woman or tree sapling". This paper discusses a number of the important aspects of the Communication methods, strategies, practices, and challenges followed by various sorts of NGOs.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is vital to the explanation for philanthropy and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) got to communicate more effectively to spread their message. The major Communication challenge is that the people that passionately start the NGO aren't ready to effectively communicate the cause to society. The NGO leadership doesn't understand that their job as a pacesetter is half tackling the matter, and half communicating it. As a nation, we don't have a network of NGOs or an exquisite bunch of NGO leaders who believe in communicating their cause.

We even have the challenge of a mental framework and a perception problem that the general public doesn't understand that tackling social

causes requires Communication. The public says all my money must go to the cause, it must not be spent on administration. The public does not want to give their money to the management, they want to give money to the "child or old woman or tree sapling". There is a growing number of NGOs who have realized that they need to communicate, many are recruiting communicators, are building Communication teams.

Even though they are not getting money for Communications, they are squeezing their budgets to set up these teams. There is a changing attitude amongst the NGOs.

In the commercial world, Market focussed companies that understand the target audience, are the most successful ones.

How would one attract a customer (a donor or a volunteer or a staff member for NOGs) if there are no efforts made towards building a brand? The applicability of marketing principles for NGOs is essential to make them realize the importance of concerted efforts and allocating resources towards it.

The marketing mix

The marketing mix is used as a tool by the managers to design marketing plans and comprises of 4 Ps: Product, Place, Price, and Promotion. Drawing a parallel with NGOs

- ♣ The Product for an NGO is the cause or idea it supports or a core program or projects like education or old age or women empowerment or old age or environment.

- ♣ Price is that the budget to be asked to the donor, the project, or program cost. NGO must have the power to elucidate what change the donation will cause. In the case of corporate donors, NGOs must project these costs as an 'investment', as the donor company has potential gains from this investment, like positive results for the brand as CSR funding

- ♣ Promotion refers to all the methods of communication that a marketer may use to provide information to different stakeholders about the product or service. In the case of NGOs, promotional and Communication material including websites, social media, community boards, etc. Innovative approaches are being used by non-profits for the promotion of a social cause, marathons' events, and campaigns help to increase awareness, while also gathering resources like champions and volunteers!

- ♣ Place: The final P, the Place denotes the ease of access to the product for the consumer.

For businesses, distribution channels and resources required are planned under this head. In the case of development projects by NGOs, the actual need on the ground is the first and foremost criterion to design a plan. For

example, If the beneficiaries are primarily students, the NGO needs to focus on campus and in community and school meeting spots.

Designing an effective Communications Plan

An effective Communications plans help an NGO in tailoring its message towards specific audiences amongst stakeholders and determining which material/ tools are best used to communicate with them. It coordinates the creation and implementation of those materials. A successful Communications plan impacts all aspects of your organization, from outreach to hiring, to program operations to fundraise, to enlisting volunteers, to influence opinion makers and policy tsars. The NGO needs to identify the organizational assets that make the NGO unique and will appeal to the audience as also to identify values and beliefs that drive the NGO. This will help formulate an effective Communications plan for the NGO as a whole, with the flexibility to break it for projects, events, person, and timeframe. This planning help brings inconsistency in Communication

Elements of an NGO Communication Plan

Determine NGO Objectives and Communication Goals-

The objective is a big picture action e.g. climbing Mount Everest and goals are small steps nested within that objective like do a mountaineering course, build stamina, eat healthily, etc. Similarly, if the NGO objective is “we want to become the prime skill education NGO in India,” then Communications goals could be “to link NGO website with Skill India website, to create flyers for the job fair, and to brief key government officials on the work of NGO.” Each step can help attain the larger objective.

(SMART goals: specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused, and time-bound).

Identify Target Audience (Stakeholders) needs

Some NGOs are now beginning to change to get a better balance of people from the professional Communications world to look at the NGO sector. But they don't find it so easy to adapt their corporate Communications environment to the NGO sector. If an NGO understands the stakeholders and what motivates them, they are in a better position to tailor the message to achieve the goals and objectives. In the case of the above-referred example of “Skill education NGO” the broad for target groups can include: Age: help determines whether a formal or conversational tone can be used in Communication. The Communication will need to be peppy, and aspirational for the first group, whereas it is more appealing to fulfill the need of the donors. The average age of a beneficiary could be “18 to 30 years-old.” And for donors, it could be over 35, and the Communication tone will be different for both groups.

Language

This is especially important in a country like ours where the beneficiaries' Communication might be in regional language and donor Communication would be in English.

Access to technology and Education

Identifying the target group's level of technology access and education level will help the NGO narrow in on which Communications materials may best serve the purpose. Twitter or Quora will work with the young middle-class audience in cities and Facebook with older ones who could be donors, whereas an av or flyer will help rural or poor students.

Define and Optimise Message and let credible messengers deliver them

Everybody is skeptical in many countries like India and NGOs serving the society need to be accountable to society. Part of the whole subject of learning to communicate and raise resources is being accountable for those resources. So it is a part of the package—you communicate, raise resources and you must be transparent and become more accountable. The simplest model is to publish an annual report and make it freely available. It should be readable, interesting, and have a summary of accounts. A message is a call to action that asks the audience to do something. Be it to donate funds, sign up for your program, attend an event, or volunteer. Credible messengers are people who serve as ambassadors for the NGO, promoting its mission, programs, and projects to a wider audience. It is important to seek out these people once NGO has defined its different messages.

Messages are best once they have 3 points:

What: the need is the NGO addressing?

How: is the NGO, program, or project filling that need?

Why: is it important?

Prioritise Communications Materials

Materials are items such as brochures, briefing notes, flyers, press releases, and other documents Ngo may need to use in the Communication. Mediums are the technology and non-technology tools to share those materials. Examples of technology mediums are social media, email, and SMS bursts. Non-technology mediums would involve newspapers, newsletters, and community bulletin boards.

Communication tool:	CEO's one-page briefing note						
Audience		Institutional Donors					

Description	High-level Organisational overview describing programs, partners, impact							
	Other donors, Governance standard							
intended use	To provide a quick and comprehensive look into the functioning of NGO							

Implementing Communications Plan

A good implementation is to make a content calendar. A content calendar is a document (or physical calendar) that tracks each upcoming Communication need, when it’s needed, and who will be overseeing each task. A google calendar or a pert chart is ideal for this.

Evaluating impact of Communications plan

It is ideal to assess the Communication plans periodically through an evaluation matrix to assess what (and if) is working. A SWOC (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges) analysis of NGO’s Communications efforts thru a few questions that can help determine the impact of the Communications and Communications plan and further action could include

Were the Communications activities adequately planned?

Was all staff involved in the planning and delivery of Communications?

Was the timeline breached and budget overshot?

Was the message understood by recipients?

Did the recipient follow the call to action?

Were the desired organizational objectives reached?

How could the Communications strategy have been more effective?

NGO- Corporate Alliance

By that specialize in the Communication challenges from NGO corporate Alliance may be a crucial challenge in today's global world. One of the important factors involved in a list of this Alliance is the Communication channel they both select and operate. some other factors are NGOs and corporate' choices of alliance partners, the number of partners with home organizations are likely to communicate, potential risks and rewards involved, the business environment and social environment in which the Communication operates, and finally the sustainability of the symbiotic

relationship through proper Communication. NGO and corporate alliances are strategic types of specific institutional Communication. The symbiotic sustainability model of Corporate Communication is the key for scaling up NGO Association also.

Most corporations communicate with a few NGOs usually only one NGO in the particular domain. it is also observed that a small set of social issues are likely to be included in

NGO corporate Communication

The cross-section of NGO and corporate Communication is found in the corporate Communication strategy of any organization. It plays a vital role in ensuring that the organization stays afloat in the industry and also maintains a credible reputation and Goodwill amongst media clients and the general public.

Communication strategy for the successful Corporate and NGO Communication - skillset required in the chief communicator -

To be able to build awareness about the NGO and its priorities impactful Communication exchange in media and other platforms.

To represent the NGO in various domains both internally and externally

To develop implement and evaluate sustainable Communication plans in collaboration with the specific corporate regarding a specific project.

To manage NGO representation in Communication college trolls along with the Corporates created for partnerships events or any other engagements Q connect and maximize the NGO Positioning.

To create meaningful relevant impactful content to focus on internal and external audiences on various platforms like print and digital media, website, social media, newsletters, press releases, blogs, or any other audiovisual content.

To know legal implications and work with the legal team video and Corporates sure that the content of the public is legally correct.

To Strengthen the branding guidelines of the NGO and the Corporates

To launch or to monitor website hockey NGO and the corporate and to align the online presence with the clients' requirements

To strengthen NGO social media and PR presence

To streamline the choice of language tone and message that would be appropriate to communicate by keeping cultural other local sensitivities off the audience.

Different types of NGOs and their Communication plans

According to the World Bank, there are mainly two types of NGOs: Operational NGOs, and Advocacy NGOs. Operational NGOs are those who work on development projects while advocacy NGOs generally work on promoting and supporting certain causes. But many corporate NGOs especially tools working as a part of Corporate CSR work in both areas. For example, Multinationals and Corporates work part of their CSR in the fields of Women's Rights, Economic Development, Environmental Protection, National and International Health Programs, Disaster Management, Children's Rights, and many other local causes. Large NGOs like Amnesty International, Doctors Without Borders, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Ford Foundation Ratan Tata Memorial Foundation, Reliance Foundation, Greenpeace, Mercy Corps, Red Cross, Blue Cross, WWF, and many others are functioning in both the areas - Operational NGOs as well as Advocacy NGOs. Apart from these two categories, NGOs can be further divided based on their specific areas of work.

Following are some of the specific NGOs working in mainly one or two core areas. It is interesting to understand their Communication strategy which is usually devised per their area of interest.

Ingo

This is an international NGO such as Oxfam or Red Cross. Their Communication strategy is usually open-ended but at the same time very culture-specific in the region where they are operating.

Engo

An environmental NGO like Greenpeace or Discovery. These types of NGOs prefer more visual content in their communication. Solid data analysis also is done on the macro-level to take up the environmental causes.

Cso

These are the Civil Society organizations like Amnesty International, Human Rights, etc. Their communication strategy is also very culture-specific. Apart from the usual Communication they also need to consider the law of the land before making the Communication plan.

Gongo

These are the government-organized or government-run NGOs supported by individual government or together with a consortium of the governments also. Their Communication strategy is usually orthodox and conservative because always needs to be politically correct. These NGOs also make sure to avoid direct or indirect conflict with the stakeholders.

Bingo

These are the big International NGOs like Red Cross or Blue Cross. Many of these collaborate with the big multinational and corporate houses to help them in their CSR activities. The Communication Strategies for big International NGOs are usually specific to the project and sensitive to the region or the country.

Ringo

These are the religious International NGOs usually run by various religious institutions or organizations. For example, Catholic Relief Services, Caritas, International Islamic Charitable Organization, Salvation Army, and World Vision. Their Communication strategy is deeply rooted in the religious values and the spread of that religion in a country or a region.

CONCLUSION

An effective communication plan is a central and the most important part of any successful NGO activity. It involves not only media but also people, practices and a right kind of organizational environment.

REFERENCES

- Maiers, Christina, Margaret Reynolds, and Mark Haselkorn. "Challenges to effective information and communication systems in humanitarian relief organizations." IPCC 2005. Proceedings. International Professional Communication Conference, 2005. IEEE, 2005.
- Shumate, Michelle, and Amy O'Connor. "The symbiotic sustainability model: Conceptualizing NGO–corporate alliance Communication." *Journal of Communication* 60.3 (2010): 577-609.
- Shumate, Michelle, and Amy O'Connor. "Corporate reporting of cross-sector alliances: The portfolio of NGO partners communicated on corporate websites." *Communication Monographs* 77.2 (2010): 207-230.
- <https://www.livemint.com/Specials/ptD3JjQZVJm5vNk1s30REK/NGOs-have-not-learnt-to-communicate-Murray-Culshaw.html>
- <https://www.Communicationstudies.com/Communication-theories>
- <https://www.humanrightscareers.com/issues/types-of-ngos/>