

Promoting your organisation

Overview

Welcome to this toolkit on promoting your organisation. The aim of the toolkit is to help organisations to achieve their aims and objectives using the active promotion of their work as one of their strategies.

Civil society organisations get set up by people who feel concerned enough about an issue to want to do something about it. Actively promoting their organisation in a planned way is usually far from everyone's mind as they work intently – and passionately – on getting work done and achieving their organisation's objectives.

Promotion work is often left out. Yet it is vital. It helps deepen your organisation's roots in the community or sector in which it works – be that local, regional, national or international. It gives your organisation a public profile. This helps strengthen your organisation in many ways. We do promotion work for many reasons, for example, to develop a profile, fundraise, or recruit volunteers.

Your promotion plan and promotion strategies ideally should emerge from, and be guided by, your organisation's overall strategic plan. This is because promotion work is just one strategy to help your organisation achieve its aims.

Promotion work requires careful thought, creativity, detailed planning, and a budget. Monitoring and evaluation must be built into your plan, and help guide you in future promotion work.

These other CIVICUS toolkits should help you in planning to promote your organisation:

- *Strategic planning*
- *Monitoring and evaluation*
- *Action planning*
- *Overview of planning*
- *Budgeting*

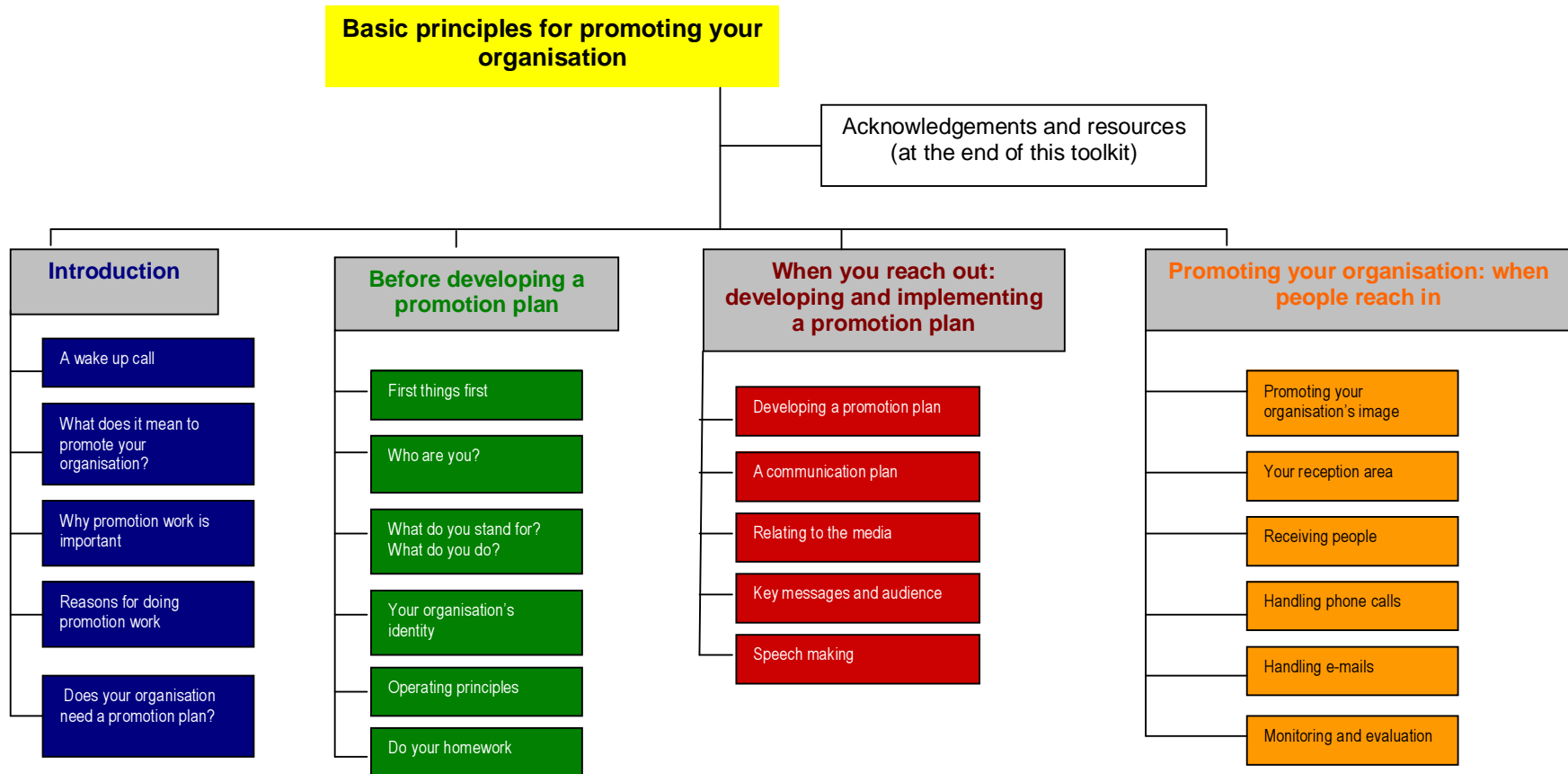
Other CIVICUS toolkits that focus on communication and complement this toolkit are:

- *Writing Effectively and Powerfully*
- *Writings within your organisation*
- *Handling the media*
- *Producing your own media*

We refer to these toolkits and sections within them throughout this toolkit.

Promoting your organisation

Site map: Toolkit for promoting your organisation



Promoting your organisation

Who will find this site useful?

This site will be useful for all organisations that want to promote themselves. It will be especially useful for organisations that are new to promotion work. It will also offer food for thought and some tips for organisations that already have experience in promotional work.

A brief description of the toolkit

This site offers you an opportunity to think hard about whether your organisation needs to promote itself. If you decide you need to, it offers practical guidance on how to do it.

On this site you will find:

- **Introduction**

Here we look at why promotion work is important and what it means. We look at different reasons for doing promotion work. We give you a checklist to see whether you think you need to engage in promotion work.

- **Before developing a promotions plan**

Here we alert you to important things to look at before you dive into a promotion plan. We emphasise the importance of your promotion work emerging out of your organisation's strategic planning. We offer you guidelines and examples on how to go about establishing your organisation's identity, and what its operating principles are. We give you some things to do as background work – your organisation's homework!

- **When you reach out: developing and implementing a promotion plan**

We go into developing a promotion plan. We offer steps and examples. From there we look at what a communication plan entails. Emerging from this we look at relating to the media. We highlight the importance of identifying key messages and who your target audience is for different promotion work. Finally, we offer lots of suggestions for nervous speechmakers.

- **Promoting your organisation: when people reach in**

A large part of an organisation's work happens through telephone contact and with visitors coming to your office. If you put people off with a negative attitude when people phone in or visit, you will probably end up having an organisational image not to your liking. So, we look at promoting your organisation's image in this context. We give ideas about your reception area, how you receive people, handling phone calls and e-mails. And we end off looking at how you can monitor and evaluate your organisation.

Promoting your organisation

Introduction

Here we look at what it means to promote your organisation, and why organisations do this.

- **A wake-up call**

You work for a literacy organisation. You wake up one morning and as usual tune into your favourite early morning current affairs radio programme. Being interviewed is a dynamic educator from a national literacy organisation. She explains the work they do in alleviating illiteracy, and how successful their unique teaching methods are. She is articulate and passionate about her work. The interviewer is impressed. Other listeners must be too. And so are you.

You are impressed about the work they do (which is not dissimilar to what your organisation does), and impressed that they managed to get national exposure this way. It gets you thinking. You wonder if any funders are listening. What other spin-offs will this three-minute interview at prime time have for that organisation? Dynamic members of your organisation come to mind – they can also talk inspiringly about your organisation's work. As you get dressed, your mind buzzes. Why on earth has your organisation not thought of proactively promoting itself like this? It could boost your drive for corporate learner-sponsorship. It could make your learners feel proud to be associated with your organisation... it could....

You arrive at work with a new item for your organisation's morning agenda!

- **What does it mean to promote your organisation?**

When your organisation decides to raise awareness and campaign around the issues it tackles, then you are involved in lobbying and advocacy. You will join forces and create networks or alliances with other organisations to achieve your aim. But when your organisation decides to promote itself, then you have decided to raise your public profile and raise awareness about your organisation, what it does and what it has achieved. You may have one or more reasons for doing this – we include some ideas a little later in the section called *Reasons for doing promotion work*.

This toolkit focuses on promoting your organisation and what this means.

- **Why promotional work is important**

This is a question that you are best placed to answer for your sector. When you reflect deeply about your context, you will probably discover a range of reasons to promote your organisation.

We suggest you think about your organisation first within the big picture – globally and/or nationally. Then look at the general context. And finally locally, where you work.

Promoting your organisation

For democracy to flourish and human rights to be enjoyed, civil society organisations need to exist. They need to express themselves and be able to engage with broader society and its forces. The visibility of civil society organisations is important in this context. Which is why promotion work is important.

The big picture

The big picture is important because everyone is part of the “global community”.

Globalisation has led to increased and easy:

- Networking and information sharing between civil society organisations.
- Visibility – the possibility for even small, remote organisations to become known internationally. Websites and e-mail have helped accelerate this.
- Exchange of information within the funding community.

There has been an increase in international conferences and other sharing forums that specifically address issues of concern to civil society. More and more linkages are being forged. Global social movements are being forged.

But globalisation has also brought with it problems for poorer countries, and especially for the poorest people within them. Many people argue that globalisation has overwhelmingly benefited rich nations at the expense of the poor through, for example, new World Trade Organisation agreements. Civil society is mobilising, through social movements, against the negative effects of globalisation. There is an increasing need to be connected to others to strengthen these movements, since many of the organisations we work with, and for, see to the needs of the poor. Hence the importance of organisations raising their profile and forging links and alliances – and promotion work is one way to do this.

The general context

Social, political and economic contexts vary from organisation to organisation, regionally and nationally. Your context would be different if you are working in a small community-based organisation in a deep rural area, or a national urban-based non-governmental organisation. Here are some things to think about with general context.

- There is greater awareness and recognition of the vital role that civil society organisations play in society. For example, in monitoring and exposing causes of poverty, unsustainable corporate environmental exploitation, damage to the environment, keeping the poorest of the poor alive, and promoting and monitoring human rights issues like gender-based violence and child labour
- Media of different kinds increasingly bombard people.
- There is increased communication and information technology, like cellular phones and the Internet with e-mail and websites.

Promoting your organisation

- There is greater competition for scarce resources, like funding, committed volunteers and staff, and skilled board members.
- Funders require more sophisticated reports from beneficiary organisations – they also want proof of good governance and clear outputs.

Locally

What is your local context with:

- Other civil society organisations – do you complement each other or compete?
- Funding?
- Networks?
- Your members, volunteers, staff, board members?
- What is your relationship to your beneficiary community?
- Are you achieving your aims?
- Are you well-known?

For a more detailed analysis of your organisation's context, go to the CIVICUS toolkit *Overview of planning* and to doing a SWOT analysis in the Planning tools – overview part.

And finally...

You've thought about the big picture, the general context and your local context. Do you think you have reason to promote your organisation? If yes, why? If no, why?

▪ Reasons for doing promotions work

Here are some reasons why organisations put time, energy and resources into promotions. They may want to:

- be visible
- launch or re-launch
- have a clear identity in their community or sector
- increase communication with stakeholders
- increase membership
- have more volunteers
- have more beneficiaries
- do more work
- locate themselves politically
- get more funding
- do marketing.

Promoting your organisation

▪ **Does your organisation need a promotion plan?**

Many civil society organisations are over-stretched. They operate on a task-to-task, day-to-day basis. Often, it is hard enough keeping our organisations going let alone having to find extra time to promote them. This approach, although perfectly understandable, is not ideal. It could even lead to organisations closing down.

Time, creativity, energy and resources invested in promoting your organisation now may well be what helps to sustain it for years to come. If you are wondering whether your organisation needs to promote itself, then have a look at this activity.

Activity: Do we need a promotion plan for our organisation?

	No	Yes
When someone asks us what we do, and we tell him or her which organisation we are involved in, do they say: "Oh, that's interesting. Never heard of it."		
Do we tend to do promotions in an <i>ad hoc</i> , knee jerk way?		
Do we have limited resources both in time and money?		
Do we sometimes miss important opportunities to promote our organisation?		
Are we a relatively new organisation that not many people know about?		
Have we changed what we do since we began but not really communicated this broadly?		
Do we operate in an increasingly competitive environment?		
Are there other non-governmental or community-based organisations doing similar work and getting more secure funding than us?		
Do we generally feel that promotion work is a waste of time – we should rather get on with "real" work?		
Do we do work that more people should be aware of?		
Do we have a profile "out there"?		
Is there a possible beneficiary grouping that is largely unaware that we exist?		
Do we need to raise funds?		
Do we need to attract more volunteers?		
Do we need to attract more members?		
Do we need to attract appropriate board members?		
Do we need to show accountability fairly broadly?		
Do we have a negative image that we need to turn around?		



Promoting your organisation

If you have answered yes to any of these questions, then it is time to put a promotion plan in place.

Of course, a vital question to ask is: "If we are successful, will we cope?" Any promotion plan must include how you will handle any extra demands on your organisation, and your organisation must anticipate these.

But there are some important things to think about before you start on this.

Before developing a promotion plan

- **First things first**

Before you promote your organisation you have to be clear about what your organisation is all about, what it stands for, what it does and what its identity is. That is why we pay great detail to these in this section.

If you do promotional work in a scattered, on the spur of the moment way, you will be less effective. Can you afford to waste resources on hasty bits and pieces of promotion work without a thought for impact or implications – or how it fits in with your organisation's strategic plan? A promotion plan and its strategies shouldn't be a goal in itself. Your promotion plan must emerge from your organisation's vision, values, mission, overall goal and immediate objectives.

So, to be effective, your promotion plan should be an integral part of your organisation's strategic planning.

If your organisation has not done a strategic plan, we recommend that you go to the CIVICUS toolkit called *Strategic Planning* for a strategic planning process. You will find information and a practical guide there. *The overview of Planning* toolkit is also very useful.

- **Who are you?**

Yes, who are you? What do you tell others so they can easily understand who your organisation is?

Here's an example:

readWRITE is a non-governmental organisation that promotes literacy, numeracy and a culture of reading amongst adult members of the town of Hatha.

How would you explain who your organisation is in everyday language to an interested passer-by? Think about it and write your explanation down. See if other members of your organisation agree.

- **What do you stand for? What do you do?**

If you have not thought through these vital elements of your organisation's existence, visit our CIVICUS toolkit called *Strategic Planning*. It takes you through a step-by-step process. You will find this in the section called Defining the strategic framework.

Here we take you through what goes into answering the questions *What do you stand for and what do you do?* We do this through using an example.

Promoting your organisation

Vision

Vision in this context is about the future. When you state your organisation's vision, you say what your organisation believes society could or should be like in the future. Of course you know your organisation will not be able to achieve this vision on its own. But you believe that if enough projects and organisations share the vision and work towards it, it could be achieved. Your vision guides your organisation in its work.

Here is an example of readWRITE's vision:

We strive to contribute to a society where every citizen has equal access to educational and job opportunities.

For help in working on your vision, go to the *Vision* section in the *Strategic Planning* toolkit. It offers you an exercise for developing a vision statement.

Values

Your organisation's values underpin the work you do – they are your operating principles. They help guide you in your work. You return to and remind yourselves of your operating principles when making decisions about how to go about your work, both at the macro and micro levels. It is worth writing up your values as a poster in your office as a constant reminder to yourselves and your beneficiaries.

Your values:

- Help guide you in making decisions. A community newspaper could use its values to help it decide on whether to have cigarette or alcohol advertisements. Or whether to accept corporate sponsorship from a company known for exploiting child labour.
- Help guide you on who to work with, and your method of working. If you value participatory democracy, then you would structure your organisation and its operations in a way that will facilitate this.
- Help guide you on what to spend money on. For example, if your organisation is pro-poor people then you would not choose to raise funds to buy luxury cars for your organisation's senior staff members.

Literacy organisation ReadWRITE could have values like:

- *We will have beneficiary participation in our decision-making. (As an operating principle, they would then include learners on their management committee).*
- *We will only accept funding from labour-friendly corporations.*
- *We will conduct co-operative rather than competitive relationships with like-minded organisations.*

For help in working on your vision, go to the section called Values, which is in our CIVICUS toolkit called *Strategic Planning*. There you will find an exercise for developing consensus around your values.

Promoting your organisation

Mission

Your mission tells of the special way that your organisation intends to make a contribution to its vision coming true. Developing your mission helps you to concretise things.

Your mission describes:

- What your organisation is.
- What your organisation aims to do or achieve.
- Who the work is aimed at, and who it is done with.
- Broadly how your organisation does its work (like the methods it uses).

For example, readWRITE's mission might read something like this:

We are a non-governmental organisation working in the town of Hatha. We aim to increase literacy, numeracy and promote a culture of reading amongst adults in our town. We also aim to promote learners' employability. We will do this by offering literacy and numeracy classes, by writing and publishing reading material for newly literate people, and by helping to resource and promote the town library with material aimed at our learners.

For help in working on your mission, go to the section on Mission, which is in our CIVICUS toolkit called *Strategic Planning*. It offers you an exercise to help you develop a mission statement.

Overall goal

Your overall goal emerges from the significant problem you have identified that your organisation is working on. It is derived from your vision and directly related to your mission.

For example, the significant problem readWRITE identified could be:

readWRITE identified that levels of literacy and numeracy are extremely low amongst adults in Hatha. readWRITE found that there was a chronic shortage of appropriate reading materials. Through research, it found that historically and currently many families could not afford basic education. This hinders adults' access to job opportunities and therefore income earning potential.

You need to state your overall goal very clearly. It states what you want your organisation to achieve.

For example, readWRITE's overall goal could be:

Within five years, 90% of adults in the town of Hatha will have literacy and numeracy skills, and will have easy access to appropriate reading materials. Employment levels amongst previously illiterate adults will have increased.

For help in working on your overall goal, go to the Overall goal section in the CIVICUS toolkit called *Strategic Planning*. It offers you an exercise to help you develop your overall goal.

Promoting your organisation

Immediate objectives

Your immediate objectives are directly related to the causes of the problem that you have identified. To set your immediate objectives for your organisation, you need to restate the problems as positive statements.

Here is an example of how readWRITE might state some of its immediate objectives:

- *Within one year we will have trained twenty volunteer literacy and numeracy teachers in the Freire method.*
- *Within six months we will have designed curricula and produced materials for literacy and numeracy learners and teachers.*
- *Within four months there will be an effective promotion plan with strategies aimed at potential learners, funders and the town's businesses.*
- *Within six months there will be a positive working relationship with the town's librarians.*
- *Within 18 months there will be high quality literacy and numeracy classes available to adults at times convenient to them.*
- *Learners will be assisted with finding job opportunities; the curriculum will include writing a CV and handling job interviews.*

For help in working on your overall goal, go to the section called Immediate objectives which is in our CIVICUS toolkit called *Strategic Planning*. It offers you an exercise to help you develop immediate objectives. You could then move on to the section called Key result areas.

Now that you have worked through the vital issues of what you stand for and what you do, you are ready to start working on your organisation's identity. Once you have done this you can move on to planning your organisation's promotion strategy.

▪ **Your organisation's identity**

What is identity?

At a personal level, your identity is what goes into making you unique. It could include: your values and beliefs, your skin colour and race, your hair and eye colour, your size and shape, your home language, your cultures and traditions, what you do, where you were born, and where you went to school.

In an organisational context, an organisation's unique identity is built and shaped by a wide range of things, some of them similar to personal identity, like organisational culture and traditions, and what you do.

The corporate world uses the term "branding" to describe identity, which is made up of the company name and logo, its reputation and its product.

Promoting your organisation

Here we look in detail at what goes into building a civil society organisation's identity. This includes:

- The type of civil society organisation you are – for example, community-based organisation, non-governmental organisation.
- The sector you work in, for example literacy, peace and justice, agriculture, gender equality, poverty-relief, research.
- Your organisation's vision, values and mission.
- Your organisation's culture, like customs and traditions, like an annual celebratory focus day, or perhaps annual affirmations of staff and volunteers
- Your organisational structure and operating principles. Do you, for example, have hierarchical or democratic decision-making? Is there an ethos of transparency? Is teamwork is encouraged?
- Your work environment. For example, is staff, volunteer, or board members' skills development actively encouraged? Do senior people keep their distance or does mixing across hierarchy happen? Do you have an informal or formal work environment? What is your organisation's dress code?
- Your organisation's "symbols, look and style". This has to do with the way your organisation's name is printed, what image your logo projects as a symbol of your organisation, your slogan, the colours you use and the meaning given to them, the style of your media.
- Your reputation, like the quality and reliability of your work, and how you treat your beneficiaries and stakeholders.

So many different things go towards making up your organisation's identity. But all of the elements that make up identity should complement each other. For example, if you are a literacy organisation then your publications should be written in everyday language.

You can test your organisation's identity by asking "*What image do I have of this organisation?*" As you answer, you will be able to see whether the image matches up to the identity.

You could ask beneficiaries, "*What image do you have of our organisation?*" If part of your organisational identity is collective leadership but a beneficiary's experience is that one person runs the show, then your outside image does not match up to your identity.

Next we offer you an activity called *Guiding questions: establishing our organisation's identity* for help in establishing (or checking) your organisation's identity. You will obviously want to rework it for your needs.

Promoting your organisation

Activity: guiding questions on your organisation's identity

You can work through these questions in an individual, reflective way. Or you could facilitate a workshop, and have your organisation work in groups and report back. It is usually good to include volunteers and board members if you can.

We suggest you use thinking and writing tools, like *freewriting* and *mindmaps* to work with these questions. You will find these in our CIVICUS toolkit called *Writing Effectively and Powerfully*. Honesty from everyone is vital when doing this activity, especially for the value-based questions. You can expect to find different perspectives from people in your organisation. Perspectives are not right or wrong.

- What type of civil society organisation are we?
- What sector or sectors do we work in?
- What are our organisation's vision, values and mission?
- What is our organisation's culture? What customs and traditions do we have, if any?
- What kind of organisational structure and operating principles do we have?
- What kind of work environment do we have?
- Do we have a coherency with "symbols, look and style"?
- What is our reputation with our beneficiaries and other stakeholders?

Once you have worked through all of these questions, ask:

- Does our organisation have a coherent identity? If yes – great! If no, what is out of synch?

Elements of identity

In this section we look at some elements that go into building organisation identity. Of course, everything you do – both verbal and non-verbal – must support your organisation's identity. Here we look at just some of the elements:

Logo

You use a logo as a symbol through which you promote your organisation. It tells people something about your organisation. It should capture and promote the main value/s that your organisation holds dear. It can be verbal or non-verbal.

For example, readWRITE's logo could reflect that they believe every adult has the right to be able to read and write.

Promoting your organisation

What makes logos work?

Stop for a moment. Visualise some logos. They could be from the civil society sector, from government or business. What is it about those logos that help you to recall them? Was it:

- an evocative symbol?
- because it was bold and clear?
- because it was simple?
- the colour/s?
- the shape?
- the way the writing was used?
- because you have seen it so many times?
- because of something you associate it with?

Make sure that your logo is effective. When you work on your logo, try it out on your beneficiaries to get feedback on what kind of identity they think it gives your organisation.

Where can logos go?

Apart from letterheads, you can think of putting your logo on:

- Other stationery, like fax cover sheets, press releases, memos, envelopes, writing paper, folders, address labels, business cards, invitations, cards (courtesy, festive season, year end, any occasion).
- Presentation materials, like on overhead transparencies, handouts, files.
- Promotional gear, like cloths, scarves, caps, t-shirts, badges, bags, ties, curtains, table cloths, cushion cases, mugs, flags.
- Any media you produce, like brochures, pamphlets, all reports, booklets, posters, banners, web sites, e-mails.
- If you have computers, as screen savers and on mouse pads.
- Your building – at the entrance, on your office doors, notice board.

Some tips with logos

Only have one version of your logo so that you create a consistent look.

- Keep your logo simple and yet powerful. Let it stand out with uncluttered space around it.
- A complicated logo can be difficult to reproduce by hand onto things like banners.
- Your logo could be your organisation's name written in an interesting way.
- Make sure your logo does not make any of your stakeholders feel excluded or insulted in any way.
- If you are not a wealthy organisation, try to stick to a one-colour logo. The more colours you have, the more costly to reproduce it.
- Try to encourage the printing company that you use (especially if you use it quite a lot) to either print some of your requirements for free, or at least at a discount.
- You could try and print some iron-on versions of your logo, so that you can put it on to clothing.

Promoting your organisation

Creative logos

You may like to think of doing something special with your logo. You could:

- Mosaic your logo in a prominent place – either as a temporary or permanent feature.
- Do a wall mural with your logo on it. Your mural could capture your organisation's vision and values, as well have your logo on it. Done boldly, it can make a powerful impression on visitors.
- Do the same as above but on a large cloth – it is mobile and can be taken to events.
- Get people together to embroider your logo onto cloth.
- Screen your logo onto a flag, and set it up on a flagpole, prominently displayed.

Putting these ideas into action need not be costly. With a bit of initial expertise and planning, it is an ideal project for volunteers with the potential spin-off of organisation building. Every community has creative, artistic people to draw on.

Slogan

It is useful to have a slogan because you can use it in your promotional work – like on stickers. Your slogan should capture your values, vision and mission in some way. Big corporations have worked hard at getting consumers to associate certain values with their products. So, for example, they promote the idea that a certain fizzy drink will promote friendship. Or getting goals associated with products –wearing certain shoes will help you achieve your dream. And so on. We suggest you creatively capture your organisation's values, vision and mission in one main slogan. You could also have additional slogans that you think of and use at particular times of the year – as part of your communication plan. Slogans should ideally consist of as few words as possible.

For example, as a literacy organisation, readWRITE might think about slogans like:

It is your right to write (raising awareness, promoting activism, it is part of readWRITE's mission to teach people to read and write)

Literacy. Jobs. Empowerment. (captures readWRITE's mission)

Half of Hatha's adults cannot read this. (raising awareness of the problem of illiteracy in the community – part of a campaign)

Reading and writing – tools for transformation. (captures some of readWRITE's vision)

Widen your world. Read. (suggesting what being able to read can offer an individual. Captures part of readWRITE's mission)

Promoting your organisation

Look and sound

Please also see the section later called *Promoting your Organisation*: when people reach in. It focuses on the message people get about your organisation when they call in, communicate through the Internet, or visit.

Your organisation can decide how professional looking it wants to go. So we offer these as issues to think about.

A style guide

A style guide is something that your organisation can develop over time. It is useful in helping your organisation to promote an image of unity and purpose.

If all the pamphlets or information sheets that you produce look like they could have come from different organisations, then you are not giving your organisation the credit it is due. You are losing out on building its identity.

When we talk about developing a style, we are not suggesting that all your media should sound and look the same. That would be far too boring. We are suggesting that you develop a style guide that will give you scope for creativity whilst building and promoting your organisation's unique identity. Your style guide would include things like:

- Identifying and profiling your target audience for your various regular publications, like pamphlets, newsletters and annual reports. Your members might be your primary audience for the newsletters, but funders may be your primary audience for your annual reports. Visit our CIVICUS toolkit called *Effective and Powerful Writing*, especially the section Know your audience to think about this more.
- What kind of language, style and tone to use for the different publications. You may decide you want all your publications written in everyday language. Your annual reports, for example, may have a more formal style and tone than your newsletter, which could be quite chatty. You would probably want a policy on jargon, like not using it or making sure it is explained every time it is used, or only using technical terms if you know your audience will understand them. You'll find some basic guidelines on style in our CIVICUS toolkit *Effective and Powerful Writing*, especially the section called Edit for effectiveness.

For example, as a literacy organisation, readWRITE might say its style would be, amongst others, to communicate:

- *in simple, everyday language*
- *with imagination*
- *in learners' home languages*

Promoting your organisation

- When writing in English, decide whether to use United States or United Kingdom spelling. It gives an inconsistent feeling for your readers when you mix these. It is best if your organisation makes a decision on one or the other which everyone sticks to for all organisational writings.
- Give guidance on what languages certain media should be published or conducted in. If you are translating, make sure you use people who are skilled at translation – preferably the person translating should be doing so into his or her first language. It will be more expressive this way.
- Suggestions on the use of non-sexist, non-racist, non-class discriminatory language. Instead of fireman, you can use fire-fighter, for example. You could include in your style guide examples of what could cause offence, be derogatory, or biased against a group.
- If you have a Web site you are writing for, bear in mind that reading from a computer screen is tiring. People prefer to read short pieces that do not stretch too long across the screen. Present everything simply and make it easy to read. You need to present information in short sentences, short chunks, use sub-headings and paragraphs. Have links that your site visitors can click on to get more detailed information.
- Formatting standards, for example:
 - Align all text to the left margin, and have a ragged right (as this toolkit is).
 - Use a particular lettering, for example Times New Roman 11 point for the body of your text and Arial 12 point bold for your headings and sub-headings. You may vary this according to whether you are producing a conversational pamphlet or your annual report. We advise you not to use more than two or three different kinds of lettering in one publication otherwise it can get a bit messy. Of course, if your newsletter has special adverts or announcements, you may want to go a bit jazzier with your different lettering. But uppermost: do not create a publication that looks too busy, and keep it easy to read. For more ideas around design and layout, have a look at that section in our CIVICUS toolkit called *Producing your own media*.
 - Your organisation's logo, address, contact details and contact people should appear on your media.

Promoting your organisation

Service

What service are you clearly identified as offering? You need to make this very clear in your promotional work. Sometimes organisations find that they have started to perform services that they have gone into without thinking about whether doing them will help the organisation achieve its stated aims and objectives. Or whether they need to rethink their mission.

Here is an example of stating services offered.

For example, readWRITE offers:

- *Literacy and numeracy classes*
- *Reading material for newly literate people*
- *Reading resources for newly literate people at the town library*
- *Training for volunteer teachers*

Overall image

What overall image does your organisation want to project? From all your organisation's thinking about its vision, values, mission, overall goal and immediate objectives, you are in a position to say what overall image you want to project about your organisation. This is something that everybody in your organisation needs to be part of deciding, and responsible for upholding.

For example, the image we want readWRITE to project is that of a visionary literacy organisation that delivers effectively and efficiently on its promises.

Your organisation will need to monitor whether the image you aim to project is the same image that your beneficiaries and other stakeholders have of you. The image you want to project will help guide you when you promote your organisation.

▪ **Operating principles**

Here are some things to think about before you decide you how you will promote your organisation.

Be honest

One of the values to uphold when you promote your organisation is honesty. Assume people are intelligent. And assume people will get to hear both the good and bad about your organisation.

Promoting your organisation

If your organisation has been in terrible difficulties and you are asked about it there is no point in denying it. News leaks out through the tiniest of cracks. Part of your strategy here would be to work out the best way of explaining what went wrong and what you are doing about it. See our CIVICUS toolkit called *Handling the media*, especially the section about handling a crisis.

Be sensitive

Obviously you support your own organisation and its causes, otherwise you would not be involved in it. But not everybody you want to reach might feel the same way. For example, not everyone supports the right for women to choose to terminate a pregnancy. Not everyone believes the girl child has equal right to educational opportunity as boys. Not everyone believes that gay people should be allowed to marry.

Knowing you do not have consensus should not dilute your organisation's values. But it should influence your strategies around promoting your issues.

Sensitivities include:

- faith/religion
- language
- beliefs
- power relations
- age
- sexuality
- gender
- race
- ethnicity
- class
- disability
- political beliefs
- traditions
- culture

▪ **Do your homework**

Before you develop a detailed promotion plan, it is a wise and a constructive use of resources to:

1. Understand your context through an environmental scan.
2. Understand perceptions about your organisation.
3. Understand your organisation's internal strengths and weaknesses, and external opportunities and threats.

Promoting your organisation

Doing an environmental scan

When you do an environmental scan you assess the context in which your organisation is functioning and will function. You are acknowledging that the social, economic, political, technological, ecological and legislative context in which you work has a profound effect on your organisation's ability to do its work.

How do you do an environmental scan?

1. The *PEST* technique presented in our CIVICUS toolkit *Overview of planning* offers you a step-by-step process to do an environmental scan.
2. Request someone with a solid understanding and analysis of the context in which you work – broadly and your sector – to paint this broader picture in a session with your organisation. The person you ask could be from within your organisation or outside of it. After they have done the input, have a session in your organisation where you list the main trends or issues in the environmental context that are likely to affect your organisation over the next three to five years. This helps you to keep the bigger picture in mind when you plan. It will help you to feel confident that you are not just doing promotional work in an *ad hoc* way. You will be thinking carefully and strategically. When you develop your plans and strategies around promoting your organisation, you will feel a greater sense of awareness. You will make more informed choices about what promotion strategy to use when. And you will be using your resources more effectively.

Environmental scan in the context of promoting your organisation

When you do an environmental scan you usually do it as part of your organisation's strategic planning. Because you want to develop a promotion plan, you need to include a specific focus on the media environment that you will be operating in.

If one of your strategies in your communication plan (see the section in this toolkit called a Communications plan) includes relating to mass media or community media, then it is important to understand each one's politics and ideology. For more depth on this visit our CIVICUS toolkit *Handling the media*, and specifically the sections: What is the media, Why relate to the media? and How the media works.

For example, the outcome of readWRITE's environmental scan could be:

Main trends and issues

- *Government, through constitutional obligation, guarantees adults the right to literacy. But it is not allocating adequate funds to adult literacy in its education budget. It seems to have an unspoken strategy to leave adult literacy to civil society organisations to provide for.*
- *Examining the government's budget over the past three years we can see that funding for adult literacy dropped by 1% , then 1.5 % and then most recently by 2.2%.*

Promoting your organisation

- *Increased government expenditure has gone towards poverty relief.*
- *There is less international donor funding for literacy – the trend is towards poverty alleviation and gender equality projects.*
- *Poor people who are most affected by illiteracy, are starting to mobilise around their constitutional rights.*
- *With general elections coming up in two years time, we will probably see political parties focusing on the needs of the poor in the lead up to it. (The poor do not have money but they do have the vote)*
- *Unemployment rate is high (40%) and increasing.*
- *Our economy, except for the rural sector which is labour intensive, is demanding more highly skilled workers to operate the new technology. Literate workers are needed.*
- *HIV/AIDS is starting to hit people's lives hard with funerals on the increase.*

The value of the environmental scan is that it will help you to choose effective promotion strategies.

Main trends and issues: specifically with the media

- *Ownership of the mass media is in the hands of national and international capital, and with government via public broadcasting (television and radio).*
- *There is no community television station. But there are some community-orientated programmes on the public and private television channels and radio stations.*
- *One regional newspaper has started to carry a supplement that focuses on sustainable development.*
- *The media does not focus much on the lives and issues of poor people – although there are individual journalists who are committed to reporting on development issues.*
- *There are a few non-profit community newsletters/newspapers. They are generally faith-based and focus on issues facing poor people.*
- *There is one community radio station in Hatha wherein 50% of its adult residents tune into between 17h00 and 20h00 on weekdays.*

This information will help readWRITE to think of what promotion strategies to use.

Understand perceptions

Here are some questions to answer before developing a promotion plan:

- How do we perceive our organisation?
- How does the public perceive our organisation? How do we want them to perceive our organisation?
- How do our different stakeholders perceive our organisation? List them, and work through each one. How do we want them to perceive our organisation?

Promoting your organisation

- Where are there differences in perception?
- What can we draw out of this exercise about perception that could help us to develop our identity, a main message, a slogan, maybe even a logo? (See also the section later on *Key messages and audiences*).

Do a SWOT analysis

A SWOT analysis is a vital method in any organisation's strategic planning. SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. When you do a SWOT analysis you are saying "hold on, before we go any further, let's reflect on our situation so that we can plan strategically." Most organisations do not think about their promotion work, let alone have a big budget for it. Your SWOT analysis will help you to plan on how to use organisational resources most strategically.

You do a SWOT analysis so that you can identify your organisation's internal strengths and weaknesses, and the external opportunities and threats your organisation faces. You can also very effectively use a SWOT analysis for an individual project or programme your organisation has taken on.

Ideally, before doing a SWOT analysis for promotions planning, your organisation would have done one as part of its general strategic planning.

You will find step-by-step support for doing a *SWOT analysis* in our CIVICUS toolkit called *Overview of planning*.

Here is an example of readWRITE's SWOT analysis

In relation to promoting our organisation, what are the threats facing us in the next period of time?

- ◆ *Lack of funding.*
- ◆ *General government disinterest.*

In relation to promoting our organisation, what are our opportunities?

- ◆ *There are journalists (print, radio and TV) who we can build relationships with.*
- ◆ *One of our board members is editor of a daily newspaper.*
- ◆ *International Literacy Day is part of our country's events calendar.*
- ◆ *Next year, government's focus is on getting the nation reading.*
- ◆ *There are some companies that would be interested in sponsoring public events that we run – so long as we advertise their products.*

In relation to promoting our organisation, what are our strengths?

- ◆ *We have a good reputation for delivering quality literacy and numeracy training.*
- ◆ *We are seen as being interested in the community's well-being – for example our focus on HIV/Aids, and our work in strengthening the newly literate section of the community library.*
- ◆ *We have some learners, staff members and board members who make good public speakers.*
- ◆ *We are known and people would be interested in public events that we host.*

Promoting your organisation

- ◆ *We have people in our organisation who are interested in doing promotion work.*
- ◆ *We have people with creative ideas in our organisation.*

In relation to promoting our organisation, what are our weaknesses?

- ◆ *We do not have journalistic writing skills in our organisation.*
- ◆ *We do not know much about how the media works, and how newsrooms work.*
- ◆ *We do not have much time or money to do promotion work – we are overstretched with our resources.*
- ◆ *We did not plan to include promotion work in our strategic planning.*

Next we put this into a chart.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a good reputation ◆ seen as being interested in the community's well-being ◆ good public speakers ◆ public interest ◆ people interested in doing promotion work ◆ people with creative ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ do not have journalistic skills ◆ are not familiar with how the media works ◆ do not have much time or money for promotions ◆ did not include promotion work in our strategic planning
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ journalists to build positive relationships with ◆ board member is a newspaper editor ◆ International Literacy Day coming up ◆ national focus on reading coming up ◆ companies interested in sponsoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ lack of funding ◆ general government disinterest

Then discuss and come up with answers to these questions:

1. What can we do to maximise our strengths?
2. What must we build or develop to overcome weaknesses or problem areas?
3. What do we need to do to make use of the opportunities?
4. What can we do to minimise or neutralise threats?

After that, prioritise by asking and answering:

What is really important for our promotions work for now and the future?

What should we not ignore?

When you reach out: developing and implementing a promotion plan

▪ **Developing a promotion plan**

When you develop a promotion plan, you refer to all the thinking work you have done before developing a promotion plan, and realise what a good investment it has been.

The plan that you develop for the year may have a communication side and an activities side. For the purposes of this toolkit, we use this distinction in this way:

- Communication – a plan that focuses on the use of media to promote your organisation.
- Activities – a plan that focuses on the use of activities (like events) to promote your organisation.

Planning for both of these requires you to think carefully about and answer:

1. Who/what is our organisation?
2. How are we perceived?
3. What are our organisation's goals and objectives?
4. What is the objective of each of our communications/promotional activities?
5. Who is our primary audience/target group?
6. What is our key message, and other secondary messages (if any)?
7. What method will we use to get our message across?
8. What is needed to get our plan into action?
9. How will we implement it?
10. How will we monitor progress and evaluate?

Context

Organisations operate in an increasingly competitive environment. Most operate with stretched resources. Promotion work is not just how you relate to the media, or how you run events. It is how you communicate your work in every way that you interface with current and potential stakeholders, the public, and with each other in your organisation.

Here are some thoughts as to why developing and implementing a promotion plan can help your organisation:

- It will alert you to the vital (and often neglected) role that communication can play in promoting your organisation and its work – and helping to sustain itself.
- It will help you uncover and think about the many ways that communication about your organisation happens. You will probably discover weaknesses and strengths, and develop creative ideas on how you can do even better through effective communication.
- In working through the whole process that leads up to the plan, it will help you become conscious about what image your organisation projects and people's perceptions of your organisation.
- The steps you take in developing a promotion plan help you to analyse your environment and understand the bigger picture better.

Promoting your organisation

- It will give your organisation a higher profile. This should have spin-offs for things like funding, sponsorship and membership.
- It will help you think about and use resources in a more effective, powerful way.
- It will be a strategy to help your organisation to achieve its aims and objectives.
- It will help your organisation to respond in a reflective rather than knee-jerk way.

Here we talk about communication plans as plans that have to do with what media your organisation may want to produce, and also how you will relate to the media. Promotional activities are about activities, like debate forums or family picnics that you think will help to boost the image of your organisation. But to start off with, a lot of the same questions have to be answered for both types of plans.

Introduction: what goes into a plan?

A good plan, obviously, is well thought out. Your plan aims to help your organisation to meet its aims and objectives. Promotional work should not happen for its own sake. In summary, what thinking do you need to do to come up with a great plan?

1. Know who you are.
2. Know how you are perceived.
3. Know what your organisation's goals and objectives are.
4. Know concretely what you want to achieve through your promotion plan.
5. Know who you want to communicate with and why.
6. Know what your key messages are for each different audience.
7. Know what the best way is to communicate with each audience.
8. Know what you need to be able to implement your plan.
9. Know how you will go about implementing your plan.
10. Know how to monitor implementation and know how to evaluate your plan's effectiveness.

Each project within your plan will require careful thought, and going through these steps again to make sure you are on the right track.

How do you go about developing a promotion plan?

From the start, try to involve as many people from your organisation as you can. Especially a range of people, like volunteers, staff members (programme people and administration), board members. Have a workshop.

If you can afford it, try and get a promotions/communications expert who understands and supports the work you do to help facilitate your planning. It can help a great deal to have an outsider view, and someone with this expertise. It eases the burden on your organisation's people for organising the workshop. And it releases everyone's creativity into the process. It works well to have a promotion committee that is responsible for implementation.

Promoting your organisation

Step-by-step: elements of a promotion plan

1. Who are we?

- ◆ Who are we?
- ◆ What is our organisation's history?
- ◆ What do we stand for? What do we do? Why do we do it?
- ◆ What is our identity?
- ◆ Who do we aim to serve?
- ◆ How effective are we in meeting our aim and objectives?
- ◆ How can we tell? What has changed for the better as a result of our work?

This emerges from your organisation's strategic planning. It is the document that informs and guides your promotion work, including your communication and promotional activities plans.

2. How are we perceived?

- ◆ What is our organisation's profile at different levels?
- ◆ Is our organisation well known?
- ◆ Are the issues we deal with commonly known about and reported on in the media or in other forums?
- ◆ How does the outside world respond to the issues we are involved in?
- ◆ How does the outside world perceive our organisation?
- ◆ How does it perceive the work we do?
- ◆ How different is this to how we see ourselves?
- ◆ How do we compete with, or complement, other organisations?
- ◆ Do we need to find out more about any of these questions above?

You will draw some of this information out by doing a SWOT analysis and an environmental scan. *see this toolkit)

3. What are our organisational goals and objectives?

- ◆ What is our organisation's vision and mission?
- ◆ What do we want to achieve and how will we achieve it?
- ◆ What indicators have we set to measure our success?

This too will emerge from your organisation's strategic planning. Your strategic plan comes first. Your promotion plan comes after. It is designed to complement and help your organisation achieve its aims and objectives. Every communication or promotional activity must have as its goal to strengthen your organisation's aims and objectives.

4. What do we want to achieve through our promotion plan?

- ◆ Why do we need a promotion plan?
- ◆ What do we want to achieve through it?
- ◆ How will this help to achieve our organisation's aims and objectives?
- ◆ How will we measure whether we have been successful?
- ◆ Set measurable goals.

5. Who do we want to communicate with and why?

- ◆ Who are our different target audiences/groups?
- ◆ Do we want to prioritise just one?
- ◆ What is our reason for communicating with each one of them?
- ◆ What do we want the people we aim to reach to know, think, feel or do as a result of our communication or promotion activity?
- ◆ How will we measure our success?

Have a look at the *Audience analysis tool* in the CIVICUS toolkit *Writing Effectively and Powerfully* for this part of your communication plan.

6. What are our key messages for our different target groups?

- ◆ We have clearly identified our target groups, and why we want to communicate with them. Now we need to come up with simple, clear and compelling key messages for each different group.
- ◆ This is the creative part! Capture your key message in a sentence, even better would be in a slogan.
- ◆ Working through the previous steps will help you to arrive at your key messages.

7. What is the best way to communicate with each target group?

- ◆ Now you are ready to come up with strategies for communicating with each group that you have identified in Step 5.
- ◆ Remind yourselves what you want to achieve, and then ask yourselves how this will best be achieved.
- ◆ Develop your different strategies as part of your promotion plan, e.g. get more stories into mass media, have a literacy fun day, etc.

8. Getting the plan into action

- ◆ What will it take to implement your promotion plan?
- ◆ What will each strategy cost in time and resources.
- ◆ Come up with mini-budgets for each strategy and then an overall budget.
- ◆ Do we have the money and resources to do it? If no, rework plans.
- ◆ Draw up a schedule/timelines.

9. Implementing our plan

- ◆ Decide how you will implement your plan.
- ◆ Write down who is responsible for what and by when.
- ◆ And who is responsible overall.

10. Monitoring and evaluation

- ◆ Check that all tasks get done.
- ◆ Monitor progress with plans.
- ◆ Evaluate afterwards in relation to measurable goals set out in Step 4.
- ◆ You will then be ready to develop your next promotion plan for the year or two, based on your learnings from this plan.

Adapted from IMPACS 1999-2000

Promoting your organisation

Summary: developing a promotion plan

We have gone through all the main elements of a promotion plan. If your organisation works through it, you will probably find that you come up with several strategies. You will also probably come up with more exciting ideas than you will ever realistically manage. You will also probably come up with some ideas that will not necessarily advance your organisation in achieving its objectives as much as others will. Make sure that you decide to do the things that will be most effective in helping your organisation to achieve its aims and objectives. You will have to prioritise, and then end up writing a clear brief for each element of the promotion plan. This is vital for keeping you on track.

The basic questions

When you do your promotion planning (as part of your strategic planning), there are basic questions to ask:

- Who do we want to communicate with?
- Why do we want to communicate with them?
- What do we want to communicate with them about?
- What is the best way to communicate with them?
- How much will this strategy cost? What is our budget for this?
- How will we get this done?
- How will we know if we have been successful?

Next we look in more detail at these questions.

Who do we want to communicate with?

Be clear about who your primary audience/target group is for your communication or promotional activity plan. This will clearly emerge from your objective. Prioritise amongst all the possible different target groups.

If you are a literacy organisation, for example, you may decide to have a public event. Your objective is to let potential learners know of the work you do so that more people join up for classes. Ultimately you will be increasing literacy levels in the community. You will gear all elements of your event to meeting your objective. But through your event you also want existing and potential funders and corporate sponsors to get a sense of what a great organisation you are, so that you grow your income to finance your growing work. But it would be a big mistake to market the event for potential learners and then have your speeches more directed at funders.

Why do we want to communicate with them?

Be clear about your objectives. Do you want to:

- Raise money?
- Make more people aware of the services you offer?
- Get more people to use your services?
- Change perceptions about your organisation?
- Lobby – get people to sign a petition?
- Do advocacy?

Promoting your organisation

- Thank people who have given you support?
- Raise debate?
- Sign up more volunteers?

You will know what your organisation's primary needs are, and be able to set out your objectives clearly.

What do we want to communicate with them about?

Once again, answering this question forces you to focus on your objectives. You need a clear message. This should evolve out of knowing what you want to communicate with your primary audience about.

For example, you are a literacy organisation and you want to sign up new learners. But you need more potential learners to know about you first. You may decide to produce a pamphlet and do a mail box drop to tell potential learners about your organisation. But they cannot read and write. So you will have to communicate with the people in the household who can, and get them to pass your message on. So, what is your main message/s on that pamphlet? You might use something like this:

*All adults have the right to be able to read and write.
Those who cannot do so have help at hand.
They can register for a readWRITE class.
We are in your neighbourhood.
Tell those in need.*

And then your pamphlet would give the details of where to find readWRITE's offices, and maybe the days and times of classes, and cost, if any. You might even draw a map to your office that has drawings of landmarks that an illiterate person can follow. This would be a way in which you show that you are conscious of the needs of illiterate people in everything you do. You would encourage people to come to your office to find out more.

We offer ideas and suggestions about how to promote your organisation to visitors and callers in this toolkit, *Promoting your organisation: when people reach in.*

What is the best way to communicate with them?

Your communication strategies should be informed by your objectives, context and resources. Also, you have to put yourselves in your target group's shoes and think about what will work most effectively. This is a really important step because your communication could be wasted if you choose an inappropriate communication method. Your available resources – people, skills, equipment, time to do it in, budget – are all factors that will influence the method you choose. You could decide to communicate through:

Promoting your organisation

- Media that you produce, like:
 - letters e.g. direct mail, e-mail
 - newsletters
 - reports
 - posters
 - pamphlets
 - information leaflets
 - banners
 - radio insert
 - Web site

(See our CIVICUS toolkit *Producing your own media*. It also includes a section on Planning a media strategy).

- The mass media – for programmes and advertisements:
 - print – newspapers, magazines, inserts
 - radio
 - television

(See our CIVICUS toolkit *Handling the media*)

Most countries have public service broadcast stations that run development orientated programmes as part of their role. There are also public service advertisements that some stations will run free of charge. Here are some ideas of promotional strategies:

- Community media – for programmes and advertisements:
 - radio stations
 - television stations
 - newspapers
 - newsletters
 - web sites
- Civil society organisation media, like:
 - Networks of non-governmental organisations' publications
 - publications of different kinds, e.g. newsletters, magazines, updates
 - web sites
- Outdoor media, like:
 - billboards
 - graffiti
 - banners – on fences, walls, out of windows, at conferences and so on
 - light aircraft flying with a banner (for those who can swing a sponsorship for it!)

Promoting your organisation

- Telephones, for things like:
 - direct calling
 - mobile phone technology like SMS messages
- Promotional events – your own or others', like:
 - fun days
 - national and international focus days that relate to your work
 - learning events, like conferences, workshops
 - debate forums
 - photo exhibitions
- Networks
- Door-to-door organising

What is our budget for this?

When you did your organisation's strategic planning and action planning, promotional work should have been part of what you planned and budgeted for. But you probably would have done quite broad costing and budgeting. Now is the time for a revised budget.

With each communication or promotional activity strategy that you have come up with, you must develop a detailed budget. Think through what has to be done step by step so that you leave nothing out. Be thorough. If one person has the job of drawing up a draft budget, make sure the promotion committee checks it to see nothing has been left out. Remember that a budget is not just about spending, it is also about anticipated income.

If you are organising an event, for example, have you included:

Spending

- transport and accommodation costs for people you are sponsoring to come, and for any other transport costs
- food and refreshments, for example, meals, snacks, drinks, plates, and cutlery if necessary, etc.
- equipment hire, for example, chairs, tables, overhead projector, sound system
- venue hire
- writing up and printing of promotional media, e.g. banner, pamphlets, stickers, badges (and all the costs that go into that)
- producing promotional gear, e.g. t-shirts, caps, scarves (and all the costs that go into that)
- childcare facilities and entertainment

Income

- any income you expect from sales or registration fee, for example
- income from funding, sponsorship

Create main headings for the different categories of things you have to budget for, then itemise the detailed costs under each heading. Get three quotes for

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Promoting your organisation

expensive items – and use the quote collecting process to explain what you are doing and that it is for a good cause. See our CIVICUS toolkit *Producing your own media* and especially the *section Dealing with service providers* for tips on this.

Remember that there is usually something that you have forgotten to budget for, so include an amount for miscellaneous spending, or see whether you think you need to build in cost increases.

If your plan costs more than you have budgeted for, you will have to decide what to prioritise. Do some cutting and reorganising of your plan.

Try to get discounts and sponsorship. After all, civil society organisations are not driven by profit, and help to improve the world we all live in.

After the event

After the event, record and account for all your actual costs, and work out whether overall you kept to your budget. Keep all of this information for future annual or multi-year budgeting as it will help with future planning and budgeting.

How will you know if you have been successful?

Remind yourselves of what your objectives were and then ask lots of questions.

If, for example, you aimed to sign up 100 new members, how many did you end up signing up? Were there more or less? What strategy worked well, what did not? What would you do next time?

If another objective was to get an article about the work your organisation does into the mass media, was there one? If yes, was it the positive coverage you hoped for? If yes, great – what strategy did you use to be successful? How can you build on it? If there was no article, why not? What went wrong? What can you learn from this? How would you do it differently next time?

Summary of questions to ask

- What were our objectives?
- Did we meet them? Go through each objective and strategy, and ask the same kinds of questions of each.
- What was our strategy? Did it work?
- What can we do to build on our successful strategies?
- What can we learn from unsuccessful strategies?
- What should we do differently next time? Generate new ideas here, too.

Next we offer you an example of a basic promotion plan: setting objectives.

readWRITE's communication plan – an example of setting objectives

Strategic communication goals

readWRITE's strategic communication goals will be developed using its strategic planning document.

Promoting your organisation

Immediate objective

Let us say that readWRITE has an immediate objective of developing an effective promotion plan aimed at potential learners, funders and the town's businesses.

What are the strategic goals of this promotion strategy?

1. Raise readWRITE's public profile and positive reputation.
2. Increase our income and material resources from international and national funders, and from the town's businesses.

How does this help us to meet our organisation's objectives?

It supports our efforts with:

- Attracting volunteer teachers.
- Enrolling more learners.
- Upgrading our computers to produce higher quality materials.
- Financing an expansion of our work.

Next we offer an example of readWRITE's strategic communication goals, strategies and outcomes for this.

readWRITE's strategic communication goals, strategies and outcomes

Strategic goals	Strategies	Outcomes
Raise our public profile and positive reputation	Host a public event in the area our potential learners live.	- 100 new learners sign up.
	Attend and speak, play a visible role, or at least display our banner and promotional materials and exhibition, at other organisations' functions.	- More people exposed to and impressed by the work we do.
	Launch a media initiative.	- A successful meeting with media people (editors and journalists) about our work. - More stories published in our field of work. - Being regarded as literacy and numeracy experts.
	Either regularly write stories or link the media to stories about our programmes, learners, events, debates in our field.	- More stories published in our field of work. - Funders and business people get a positive image of us and the importance of our field of work.
Increase our income	Write persuasive letters and funding/sponsorship proposals to funders and business people; include a promotional brochure about our work.	- 25% increase in our funding and sponsorship of 20 learners. - Computer and printer donated

ReadWRITE would now work from this to more detailed development of a communication plan. We look at this next.

Promoting your organisation

▪ A communication plan

The previous section looked at overall development of a promotion plan – incorporating communications and promotional activities. With any plan, answer *the basic questions* first, which you will find earlier in this toolkit. We do not repeat them in this section. For this, see the section called *Developing a promotion plan*. Here we look specifically at communication planning.

We offer you an example of a communication plan after this. We suggest you use it as a framework to develop your own. You will see that we have set out the basic questions to answer in a summary form. Each column would lend itself to a more detailed plan that you would work on. We also offer you an example of an *Event communication planner: inviting people*.

Be creative

We urge you to start off by using thinking tools, like freewriting and mindmaps. If you go straight to making lists and filling in a table you will lose out on what the thinking tools and collective brainstorming can offer. They will help you to use creativity and come up with original, innovative and exciting ideas that will give your organisation the edge. Go to our CIVICUS toolkit *Writing Effectively and Powerfully* and especially the section *How to get started* with its tools *freewriting* and *mindmaps*.

Suggested steps in developing a communication plan

1. Do the foundation work spelt out earlier in this toolkit.
2. Brainstorm, using thinking tools (like freewriting and mindmaps), about whom you want to communicate with, why, and what the best strategy is to achieve your objectives.
3. Be absolutely clear as to your reasons for communicating with a particular audience, and how this will support your organisational objectives.
4. Next, more detailed thinking and planning around your strategies, costs, and an action plan for each communication strategy.



Promoting your organisation

Example of a communication plan

The CIVICUS toolkit *Writing Effectively and Powerfully* has a section on audience analysis. In this table, your target group is your main target group. The secondary and tertiary audiences are lesser important groups for the purposes of this specific communication.

Who do we need to communicate with?	Why do we want to communicate with them?	What do we want to communicate with them about?	How? (strategy)	When/how often? How will we distribute?	Cost	Who is responsible?	Monitor and evaluate success
<p>Primary audience/target group:</p> <p>Our learners</p> <p>Secondary targets:</p> <p>Potential learners</p> <p>Potential volunteer teachers</p> <p>Funders and sponsors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To keep them informed about and interested in developments in our organisation. ◆ To keep them interested in supporting the organisation. ◆ To recruit new learners. ◆ To recruit new volunteer teachers. ◆ To keep existing funders interested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Organisational developments, services, events. ◆ News and information that will help them in their lives. ◆ What we do and how to contact us. ◆ What we do. That we need volunteer teachers. How to contact us. ◆ Organisational developments, 	<p>Newsletter</p>	<p>Each month</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Through classes and teachers. ◆ Through public service institutions, e.g. libraries, clinics, schools. ◆ Through direct mailing. 	<p>P6 000 per issue</p> <p><i>You would do a separate budget for this that includes all the production and distribution costs of each issue. See the CIVICUS toolkit "Producing your own media", especially the sections on newsletters and dealing with service providers</i></p>	<p>The media co-ordinator</p> <p><i>The organisation would have a plan of action with deadlines for who will do what in the newsletter production. The co-ordinator would make sure everything gets done in time, and that the budget is not exceeded. There would be a written plan for this.</i></p>	<p>The media co-ordinator and the media committee through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Checking if new enrolments. ◆ Any new volunteers. ◆ Sustained or increased funding ◆ Readership survey.



Promoting your organisation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ in us. ◆ To attract new funders. ◆ To attract sponsorship, e.g. of events or equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ services, events. ◆ What we do and how to contact us. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Through the Internet. 			
Existing and potential funders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To keep them funding our work. ◆ To interest new funders in funding our projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Progress in meeting our objectives. ◆ Account for how we have used funding. 	<p>Annual reports</p> <p>Newsletter</p>	<p>Once a year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Through direct mailing. ◆ Personal visits and delivery. ◆ On our web site. 	<p>P24 000 (<i>you would do a separate detailed budget for this. Also see our CIVICUS toolkit called "Producing your own media"</i>)</p> <p>See above</p>	<p>The director</p> <p><i>You would have a plan of action with deadlines for who will do what in getting the annual report done.</i></p>	<p>The director, through getting feedback from existing funders, and feedback from potential funders after sending funding proposal.</p>



Promoting your organisation

Who do we need to communicate with?	Why do we want to communicate with them?	What do we want to communicate with them about?	How? (strategy)	When/how often? How will we distribute?	Cost	Who is responsible?	Monitor and evaluate success
The public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To raise our profile. ◆ To make people aware of the serious problem, and the consequences, of illiteracy facing our town. ◆ To get people to spread the word about what we do to those who need or could support our service. ◆ To be seen as the authority in our field. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What we stand for, what we do. ◆ Interesting, informative, educational, and consciousness-raising stories from our field of work. 	<p>Print, television, radio and Internet stories, discussion panels and interviews.</p> <p>We will write some stories. We will organise training in journalism, and relating to the media.</p>	Featured at least six times in one year.	<p>Difficult to ascertain – our time in setting up, and also in writing for targeted publications.</p> <p>P20 000 for two people to attend courses.</p> <p>Build in writing and allocate time as part of job descriptions.</p>	<p>Media co-ordinator, working with media committee and writers.</p> <p><i>Here you would develop a separate communication plan with strategies, targeted media, roles and responsibilities, timelines.</i></p>	<p>Media co-ordinator, director, whole organisation.</p> <p>Keep a record of all publicity, published articles, etc. Assess the coverage and what it has achieved for our organisation.</p>



Promoting your organisation

Who do we need to communicate with?	Why do we want to communicate with them?	What do we want to communicate with them about?	How? (strategy)	When/how often? How will we distribute?	Cost	Who is responsible?	Monitor and evaluate success
Journalists and editors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Get stories published. ◆ Become expert resource in our field for them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What we stand for, what we do, what our expertise is. ◆ Interesting feature story ideas, news stories. 	<p>Promote and nurture relationships with journalists – have meetings with our senior representatives, bring media people to classes, events.</p> <p>Press releases</p> <p>Training in press releases and understanding what makes a story.</p>	<p>Develop a plan for setting up meetings with editors and journalists.</p> <p>Ongoing nurturing of relationship.</p> <p>Regular supply of news, information, new angles on our work.</p> <p>When the opportunity arises. We will be proactive.</p>	<p>Allocate time for this.</p> <p>Time.</p> <p>P15 000 for one person to attend.</p>	<p>Media co-ordinator.</p> <p>Media co-ordinator, director.</p>	<p>Document meetings and responses. Keep a track of media calls to us for information, ideas, and interviews.</p> <p>Keep clippings and notes on exposure.</p>

Event communication planner: inviting people

Here is an example of issues to work through when communicating with people to make the event a success. This event is a panel discussion on a burning issue. It will be held on 13 November.

Who do we need to communicate with?	Objective of communication	What do we need to communicate?	What is the best way to communicate with them?	By when?	Do we need to follow up? If yes, when?	Who will do it?
Panellists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Invite them as panellists. ◆ Find out whether they can attend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Objective of the event. ◆ Participants. ◆ Date, time, venue, map, programme. ◆ A detailed brief on what to prepare. 	Telephone call Posted / email invitation with written brief.	13 Sept.	Yes. 20 Sept., and then a couple more times to check still on track.	Chairperson Event organiser
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Inform them of the event. ◆ Ask if they can help with preparations and on the day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Objective of the event. ◆ Participants. ◆ Date, time, venue, map, programme. ◆ Action plan for who does what in preparing for the forum. 	During a volunteers meeting. Print-out of forum planning	1 Sept.	Yes, regularly to check tasks are done, and still available to help.	Event organiser
Members, other relevant organisation and institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Invite them to the event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Objective of the event. ◆ Participants. ◆ Date, time, venue, map, programme. 	Newsletter Posted / email invitation	30 Sept.	Yes, via e-mail reminder	Event organiser
Journalists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Interest them in coming to the event to report on it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Objective of the event. ◆ Date, time, venue, map, programme. ◆ Prominent speakers. ◆ Some background information on why important. 	Press release. Telephone call. Posted / email invitation.	20 Sept., once panel-lists confirm	Yes, telephone calls, email.	Chairperson/ event organiser
Funders – existing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To make them feel part of our events. ◆ To get their contribution during open time. ◆ To highlight that we are doing cutting edge work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Objective of the event. ◆ Participants. ◆ Date, time, venue, map 	Posted / email invitation.	30 Sept.	Yes, a courtesy call encouraging them to come, and email.	Event organiser designs and email / posts invites. Chairperson/ director does follow up call.
Funders – potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To interest them in the issues we deal with and highlight their importance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Objective of the event. ◆ Participants ◆ Information brochure on our organisation. ◆ Date, time, venue, map. 	Posted / email invitation	30 Sept.	Yes, a courtesy call encouraging them to come, and email.	Event organiser/ secretary

You would also be working out the budget and logistics in another planner.

Promoting your organisation

▪ **Relating to the media**

In this section we will look specifically at relating to the media with regards to a promotion strategy. It complements our CIVICUS toolkit called *Handling the media* which looks at understanding the media, ownership and control and how the media works. That toolkit also covers the following, which will not be repeated here:

- How to handle interviews
- Newspaper, radio and TV interviews
- Handling media requests for comment
- Writing a press statement
- Working with journalists
- Handling a crisis

Getting the media interested in your organisation

The media will be interested in you if:

You do newsworthy things

This may include:

- doing something new, unusual or controversial
- being able to tell an evocative human interest story
- hosting an interesting event
- offering a vital service
- hosting a newsworthy event.

If getting stories about your work and your organisation published is one of your communication strategies, then you have to think like a journalist. Is this newsworthy? You have to ask yourselves. If not, how can we make it newsworthy? You have to be able to offer the media stories with an interesting, newsworthy angle. It has to be something the newspaper readers, radio listeners or TV viewers will find interesting and meaningful. Put yourself in the journalists' and editors' shoes.

You say newsworthy things

This may include:

- giving an unusual, controversial, unconventional view on something that has happened
- offering up-to-date statistics
- offer results of recent research that gives deeper insight into something.

You offer support

This may include offering support to journalists, producers and editors by:

- understanding the pressure most media workers operate under
- being able to supply journalists with information very quickly, if necessary
- helping them network
- assisting with appropriate photographs or illustrations
- offering names of people who you think would be useful to interview.

It does not matter if the story is not about your organisation. Being able to be a resource to media people means they will come back to you again. It helps you to build a strong relationship with the media.

Promoting your organisation

You offer ideas

Sometimes journalists struggle to find ideas for something new to write about. If you can offer interesting ideas for stories, with new, unusual angles or interesting people to talk to, you will be doing them a service.

Your timing is good

There are certain times of the year, like Christmas in Christian countries, when the media are hard up for stories to publish. Plan to get stories to the media during these as well as other times – your chances should be good.

Finding a story angle

A story's angle is your specific focus within a topic or issue. It helps to keep your writing to the point, clear and interesting. It can be very hard to come up with a new angle on your work. But, using thinking tools like mindmaps and freewriting, and by talking to people, reading and networking, you will be amazed at how you can find a new angle for the media – even on what might seem like a “tired” topic.

Ask yourself:

- Is there something unique about what our organisation does or how it does it?
- Are we planning to do something that will bring about significant change?
- Do we have members, beneficiaries, staff members, board members with an interesting story to tell?
- Are there interesting comparisons we can make?

Communication with the media

If you have decided to host an event, communication strategies must be a vital part of your planning. You would already have worked out your aims and objectives for the event. Answer more questions:

- Who do you need to communicate with to make the event a success?
- What is the objective of the communication?
- What do you need to communicate about?
- What is the best way to communicate with them?
- By when do you need to have communicated with them? Do you need to do follow up communication?
- What resources (budget, skills, time, equipment, etc) do we need to successfully implement our plan?
- Who is going to implement what part of the plan, and who is going to be responsible overall for implementation?
- How will we know if our communication was successful?

Press releases

When you want to get information to the public, you can do so through a press release. Your press release, like all press releases, needs to be clear and include all necessary information, otherwise the media is unlikely to use it. See also our CIVICUS toolkit called *Handling the media*, and especially *writing a press statement*. Your organisation will have its protocol for who approves press releases.

Essentials of a press release

Your press release needs to:

- Be written on a letterhead.
- Have the heading *Press release*.
- Have a clear heading telling the reader what it is about.
- Give the most important information next.
 - what has happened/is happening
 - when, where and how it happened/is happening
 - who is involved
 - why it is happening/has happened
 - any extra information that will make it an interesting, newsworthy story for the media to carry. For example, how what is going to happen is going to impact on people's lives.
- The contact details of a person that people can get hold of for further information.

Points about press releases

- Keep them concise
- Write them in clear everyday language (cut the jargon)
- Use a catchy heading that will hook the reader
- Your main message must be crystal clear and obvious
- Put all your most important information at the beginning – straight after a catchy introduction
- Be clear about which audience the press release is for
- Provide all the necessary information
- Make it clear if your information is factual, or someone's opinion – and state whose opinion
- State when the press release ends by writing ...*ends*, and also indicate how many pages it is (try to keep it to one)
- Make it newsworthy. But remember, what might feel newsworthy to you may not seem newsworthy to an outsider
- Design them so that they read easily
- Include a good quality photograph or illustration if it will complement your press release
- Check spelling and grammar
- Provide a contact person who is easy to get hold of
- Provide full contact details of your organisation – through the letterhead
- You can e-mail, fax or deliver a press release
- Follow up with a phone call to those media that you particularly want to carry your press release.

Next is an example of a press release.

Promoting your organisation

Example of a press release for an event

readWRITE
159 Main Street, Hatha, Halib, 4079
telephone: 893-3665 fax: 893-3666 e-mail: readwrite@jambo.org.ind

press release

A festival to celebrate the power of reading

readWRITE is hosting a daylong festival to celebrate the power of reading.

It will be on Saturday 23 March 2005
From 10h00 to 16h00
At the Central Hatha Park
Everyone is welcome

Why a festival?

Our town has very high adult illiteracy rates. Not being able to read or write, or deal with numbers disadvantages people. They struggle to find jobs, to read to their children, to deal with paperwork. readWRITE was set up to run literacy and numeracy classes, and we are proud of what our learners have achieved in a short time. This made us all want to celebrate and show what light literacy and numeracy can bring into people's lives, and how important it is for our town's economic development.

What is planned?

- Famous and much-loved writer, Dina Singh, will hand out graduation certificates and also read from some of her writings.
- Learners will read from their writings.
- Learners will share what becoming literate and numerate in their lives means.
- Popular singers, Roshene and Nishara will entertain us with their poetry and song.
- The Hatha classical youth dancers will perform.
- Children from the Hatha Primary School will perform their short play "children in chains".

Other attractions

- Book stalls
- Food stalls
- Children's play area and entertainment
- Story telling
- Photo taking

To find out more, contact festival organiser Perusha Naicker on 893-3665

Know your media

It is important to make decisions about which media to use for what. Know which newspapers are more likely to publish your press releases. Know what it means to be newsworthy. And build positive working relationships with the media. You can help each other.

Promoting your organisation

▪ **Key messages and audience**

We focus on this because it is critical for effective communication. If people do not receive your message in the way you intended, you are in trouble. If you are not crystal clear about who you are communicating with, and how to phrase your message for that audience/target group you are in trouble. All kinds of problems can occur.

Here are some examples:

- On a radio interview you say something that listeners misinterpret in a negative way because you have not been clear. You will end up having to devise a media strategy to deal with negative publicity.
- You want to invite community members to an event but you advertise it in a very academic way.

Know what your message is

Whether you are communicating with the media, or communicating with your members:

- Your message must be clear and easy to understand and pass on.
- Your message must be unambiguous – not open to misinterpretation either honestly or mischievously.
- You must also have thought out the implications of your message.
- You must not have too many messages.

Know who your message is for

See our CIVICUS toolkit *Writing Effectively and Powerfully*, especially the section called Know your audience.

It is really important that you identify, profile and understand who the target group receivers of your message are to be. Try to test your message out on someone or some people who represent your target group before you go public with your message.

Put yourself in your audience's shoes.

▪ **Speechmaking**

Welcome opportunities to make speeches and other presentations. This is a great opportunity to promote your organisation. Also try to create opportunities. Accept invitations, offer to speak.

Introduction

Delivering speeches and other inputs, like presentations are part of the terrain when you promote your organisation. See Presentations in our CIVICUS toolkit *Producing your own media*. Most people get nervous at the thought of standing up in front of many people and delivering a speech. This is natural. You *are* on stage. But welcome opportunities to develop and strengthen your speechmaking skills. There is a thrill about delivering an effective speech, both for yourself and for the positive impact for your organisation. Here we offer you some guidelines and tips that will help you feel confident about it. Many of the guidelines are common sense and will reassure you.

Promoting your organisation

Most people find the prospect of delivering a speech scary. Questions like this start flooding your way:

- How can I make it interesting?
- What am I trying to achieve?
- What if I make mistakes?
- What if my hands shake and everyone can see I am terrified?
- What content should I cover?
- Who will be there?

These, and others, are all good questions to ask. In this section, we offer some ideas on how to handle them. It is perfectly natural to feel anxious. It is your anxiety that will drive you to prepare well and do your best. It also reflects the respect you have for the needs of your audience.

Effective speeches: an activity

A lot to do with delivering effective speeches is common sense. Personal experience is a great teacher.

Activity

Jot down some honest and free answers to these questions:

- What was the worst speech I ever listened to? What made it so bad? Write down: *it was bad because.....*
- What was the best speech I ever listened to? What made it so effective? Write down: *it was effective because...*
- If you have delivered speeches before, write down: *my previous speeches went well because.....* And then write down: *what did not go so well was that....* This way you can draw on your own experiences, reflect, and remedy in your next speech.

You can use freewriting as a thinking tool. You will find it in our CIVICUS toolkit *Writing Effectively and Powerfully*.

Getting started: you need a brief

Always work from a clear brief for your speech. If you do not have a brief, you will probably waste a lot of time wandering around in the enormity of your task. Your brief is your guide. It is best to have it in writing so that you can easily refer to it.

If you are invited to give a speech then ask the organisers to write the brief, and tell them what it is you need to know. If they cannot give you a written brief, then write up your brief from your discussion, and check that you have got it right with them.

To write an effective speech you must know:

- The date and time that you must deliver your speech.
- The venue. If you are not familiar with the venue, you need a map.
- You may want to know more things about the venue, for example is it inside, outside, small, large?
- What equipment is available? Do you need to use an overhead projector, for example. Will there be a microphone? Do you need one?
- The full programme and where you fit into it. Especially important is to know what comes before you, and what after.
- The purpose of the event you are speaking at.

Promoting your organisation

- Your topic. If you have been given a vague topic like *The impact of globalisation on poor nations*, it is far too broad. Try and get it pinned down to a manageable, meaningful topic. Be assertive about this.
- Why you have been asked to speak.
- What the occasion is.
- Who will be at the event.
- Which part of that audience you are most going to focus on as your target audience. You need to know more.
- How many people will be there?
- What diversity will be represented, for example:
 - ◇ gender
 - ◇ race
 - ◇ class
 - ◇ ethnicity
 - ◇ age
 - ◇ sexuality
 - ◇ faith
 - ◇ disability
 - ◇ regions, nations
 - ◇ languages
 - ◇ political affiliations
 - ◇ knowledge levels

Later, you will do an *audience analysis* (you will find this in our CIVICUS toolkit *Writing Effectively and Powerfully* once you get going on your content preparation. Ask your contact person if it is okay that you get back to them later should you have more questions.

- What the objective of your speech is.
- How long you are expected to talk for. Just remember the longer you speak for the less your audience will remember, and most of your speech could become a blur for them.
- What is on the programme for before and after your speech? If someone is going to cover a similar theme, you need to make sure that yours will be different to the other person's or people.
- Will you talk alone, or are you part of a panel discussion or debate? This will help you to prepare appropriately – especially if you are being asked to speak because you hold an oppositional view to another speaker.
- What you want people to know, think, feel or do after they have listened to your speech.

Getting started: thinking comes before writing

The best way to get started is by thinking, talking, reading and jotting down rough thoughts. Do not try to write the speech out perfectly first go. Writing is a craft. Tell people about the speech that you have to write, and start discussions about it. Gather in ideas, references, resources, contact people, do some networking. This will strengthen your ideas.

Promoting your organisation

Use the thinking tools from the CIVICUS toolkit called *Writing Effectively and Powerfully*. These include *freewriting* and *mindmaps*. Generate lots of ideas, talk with people about them, do your research, and allow yourself some time for ideas to develop.

You will find the writing process set out in our CIVICUS toolkit *Writing Effectively and Powerfully* very useful.

Tips for an effective speech

- Always work from a brief.
- Know your objective. What do you want people to know, think, feel or do after your speech? As you work on your speech, keep asking this question so that you stay on track. This will help you with your focus.
- Know why you are giving the speech. It could be to:
 - ◇ motivate
 - ◇ inform
 - ◇ educate
 - ◇ organise
 - ◇ persuade
 - ◇ get support for an idea
 - ◇ *what is your reason for giving the speech?*

See our CIVICUS toolkit *Writing Effectively and Powerfully* and specifically the section called Know why you are writing.

- Aim for having one key message/point, and not more than two or three additional messages. Do not give in to the temptation to cover too much. You will be less effective.
- Become so familiar with your key message/s that it will not matter if your speech notes get lost on the day.
- Create a short, simple, clear and straightforward speech. This means Getting feedback (from our CIVICUS toolkit *Writing Effectively and Powerfully*) when you are preparing your early drafts.
- Tell people something new in an interesting way.
- Plan your speech.
- Develop an outline.
- Have an effective structure, with an exciting beginning.
- Make sure that you have translation conducted during your speech if your target audience does not speak the language you are going to deliver your speech in. Translation should be arranged in advance.
- Decide what language, style and tone will be most appropriate for your primary audience. See our CIVICUS toolkit *Writing Effectively and Powerfully*, especially the section Language style and tone.
- Use words that your target audience will understand. Everyday language works best for most audiences. Avoid jargon.
- Do not alienate your audience by using fancy words. If you use jargon, explain it.

Promoting your organisation

- Be creative in thinking about how to present your key message/s. Ask questions, like *how can I talk about this in a way that people will remember, and be able to confidently tell others about it*. Often this is through telling a story that will stick in people's minds. It is easier to remember a story than lots of facts.
- Know who your target audience is. Analyse their knowledge level on your topic. Understanding their needs and expectations is a critical step in deciding what to include in your speech. See Know your audience from the CIVICUS toolkit *Writing Effectively and Powerfully*. This is critical to selecting what to say and how to say it.
- Once you have written your speech and it is edited and proofread, create your speech notes on small cards. Highlight key words or phrases that will help you to remember the logical flow of your speech. Brief speech notes help you to have the confidence to speak from memory and from your passion and interest in your subject.
- Practise, practise, practise.
- Even if you are only on for a short part of the programme, it helps a lot to attend from the beginning of the programme if you can. Or at least for some of the items before. This helps you to get a feel of the audience, and how the event is working out. You may have to adjust your plans on the spot to make your input even more meaningful for the audience.
- Find ways to relax while you prepare for your speech. If you panic, do deep breathing, and before it do exercises like stretching, yoga, jogging, dancing. Tell yourself "I can do this". Make it your friend.

Planning your speech

It can be hard deciding what to include in your speech. When you know you have a speech to do, start off with developing a planner for when you must have completed each part of the writing process by. This will help you to make sure that you give it the attention it deserves. Think of these as elements of the writing process with writing and delivering speeches. Set up a schedule for when you will have completed each step by:

1. Formally accepting to do the speech
2. Getting a brief
3. Clarifying, if necessary
4. Reflecting on your brief
5. Thinking, talking, reading, researching, interviewing, freewriting and doing mind maps
6. Writing a wild draft
7. Getting feedback on your ideas
8. Incorporating feedback
9. Writing drafts, filling in gaps, revising
10. Getting feedback
11. Revising, incorporating feedback
12. Finalise

Promoting your organisation

13. Editing for content, language, style, logical flow, etc. See the section Edit for effectiveness and Editing tips from our CIVICUS toolkit *Writing Effectively and Powerfully*
14. Sub-editing for spelling and grammar and flow
15. Proofreading – as your final check
16. Make your speech notes on small cards
17. Sending your speech to organisers (if necessary)
18. Presenting
19. Getting feedback

See the section called Writing an outline in our CIVICUS toolkit called *Writing Effectively and Powerfully*.

Develop an outline

Once you have done your initial thinking, reading, and research for your topic, you should be ready to develop an outline. Next we offer you an activity for developing one.

Activity: developing an outline

Work through this outline, capturing what you want to say very briefly.

My topic is....

My target audience is...

My secondary audience is...

My objective is...

My main message is....

I will substantiate it by these points..... (around three to five)

I will make my introduction interesting by starting off with....

I will lead from my introduction into....

The main body of my speech will consist of:

- (a) point followed by example, fact, and experience.
- (b) point followed by example, fact, and experience.
- (c) point followed by example, fact, and experience.
- (d) point followed by example, fact, and experience.

I will conclude by saying/asking/quoting (however you decide to end off most powerfully)

I will handle feedback by....

I will assess the effectiveness of my speech by.....

Promoting your organisation

Beginning, main body and endings

Your speech needs an attention-grabbing beginning, a main body and a powerful ending.

Effective beginnings

Your introduction is the most important part of your speech. If it is dull, people will switch off straightaway and it will be very difficult to draw their attention back again. If you start off in a catchy way, you will grab their attention. Your job will also be to keep your speech interesting throughout so that you achieve your objectives! Quite a tough challenge.

Try to avoid starting your speech in a tired, overused way. Like “Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking...” It has been done a million times before and you are unlikely to grab people’s attention this way.

Try to be fresh and original. Can you think of another way of expressing the same thought, the same emotion? For example, “as a child I used to sit in community meetings where comrade Xola would talk about our fight against the toxic gases the petrol company was spewing into the air, into our lungs and making us sick. I see comrade Xola here tonight. It is due to him that I am here talking as a chemical engineer about this ghastly problem. For it was he who encouraged me to study in this field. Thank you, comrade Xola and other veterans here. You opened the path for us to follow.” Today I will be talking about (a) main message, (b) second message and (c) third message. I will be backing up what I say with facts and experiences....

Start with an attention grabber

Do try to be original. So long as it supports your message and will capture your audience’s interest, you could use, amongst others:

- an anecdote
- a story
- a shocking fact
- a previously unknown fact, like a historical discovery
- an evocative quote
- a personal disclosure
- a short piece of music
- a poem
- a picture
- someone else who could do something
- an object that will illustrate your message
- a joke

You could also use some of these during your speech, so long as the reason for doing so supports your objective, and helps to keep your audience interested. But do not use something just for the sake of it, or because you have been longing for the opportunity to use it. Make sure it is appropriate.

Promoting your organisation

What is not appropriate:

- saying, insinuating or doing things that will offend people in your audience – like sexist, racist, faith-based or ethnic jokes.
- saying something that is unconnected to your topic – you will confuse people
- talking down to your audience – unless you are doing this tactically. It makes people very angry.

Your introduction must

- Clearly illustrate what it is you are going to talk about in your speech.
- Contain your main message – loud and clear.

The body of your speech

Every speech will be different. The main body of your speech should:

- Have clear subheadings to help you guide the reader.
- Be spent substantiating or illustrating your main message, through things like facts, experiences, information, opinions.
- Be accurate.
- Flow logically.
- Start off simply and become more complex, if you are dealing with a topic that requires complexity.

Your conclusion

Your conclusion is what should leave the lasting impression since it is the last message you will convey.

Conclusions are an opportunity to *very quickly* summarise your main message. Your conclusion is your last chance to motivate your audience towards achieving your objective. It could contain a challenge, a question, information, a suggestion on what to do next.

Your conclusion must support your objective and what you wanted people to know, think, feel or do as a result of your speech. Just like with effective beginnings you can be creative with how you end off. But make sure it is a strong ending. Your conclusion should be memorable.

Tips for when delivering your speech

You will have heard a lot of these during your speech tips before. Some of the tips are so important that they have been used for generations and will continue to be way into the future.

Body language

Body language is your non-verbal communication. It includes your facial expressions and how you move your body. When you are giving a speech (in fact in all your visible communication with others) people listen to what you have to say and how you say it. You pass important messages this way too. If you are insecure about your speech, people will probably notice.

Posture

- Stand (or sit) tall, with your shoulders back.
- When you pull your upper body straight, you give a sense of confidence and of being very present.
- Face your audience.
- If your hands are shaking, put your notes on a podium and hold your hands in a calming way.
- Breathe naturally and take everything calmly.

Hand and body movements

Your hands can support your message. You may want to move away from one spot to make a point. But do not distract your audience by wild movements all over the place. You will then be remembered for being a lively speaker rather than for the important message you want to get across. Use your body for emphasis or illustration where appropriate.

If it is appropriate, you may want to walk into your audience a bit but whatever you do, do not make them feel anxious or embarrassed.

Facial expressions

Your facial expressions will help to bring your speech alive and make it memorable. Practise in front of a mirror.

- Use expressions, like smiling, frowning, looking questioning.
- Without causing people to focus on your non-verbal communication more than your verbal communication, let the audience see your emotions. This can help to make your speech very powerful and moving. But do not overdo this.

Eye contact

- You need to have eye contact with your whole audience during the course of your speech. This is partly what grips their attention. You can practise doing this.
- Eye contact is important because you can convey non-verbal messages with your eye contact – like honesty, sincerity and inclusiveness.
- Do not fix on one person and deliver your entire speech to him or her! It excludes everyone else, and leaves that person feeling awkward.
- If you look down at notes all the time, or read your speech you will lose a vital eye link with your audience and they will switch off more easily.
- How do you feel when someone is giving a speech and they stare out of the window or just to the back of the hall? Does it make you feel inspired as a member of the audience?
- When you look at people, you are including them and making them feel important.
- Steady eye contact can give your audience the sense that you are sincere about and believe in what you are saying.

Promoting your organisation

Your voice

Your voice tells a lot about yourself. Make sure that:

- Everyone can hear you – not just the sound of your voice but the words that you are saying.
- You vary your voice tone – a monotonous voice will put people off to sleep even if you are talking about something interesting.
- You use your voice differently for your punch lines – you may want to speak more slowly or louder, for example
- You talk at a pace that people can absorb what you are saying. Too fast and you've lost them, too slow and you've put them to sleep. Keep everyone on track.

Other tips:

- Talk clearly, with expression, with sincerity, confidently.
- Talk in an appropriate tone with your audience. Even children know when they are being patronised.
- Do not mumble, or fade out towards the end of your sentences.
- Try not to use sounds or repetitive words like “ummm” and “okay”.
- If you are a soft-spoken person, you will have to practise speaking louder and projecting your voice.

Achieve your objective

This is a real challenge. Because people do easily tend to get distracted, it is important that you make your main point clearly and powerfully right at the beginning of your speech. People must go away remembering what your main message is.

After your speech

You have delivered your speech. Well done! But you are done yet. Your audience needs an opportunity to respond to it. Otherwise, they are left in a passive mode.

Question time

- People will have questions, comments, and a need to clarify your meaning. If a speech ends and everyone moves on to the next thing, it can leave people dissatisfied. Interaction is important.
- If there is a good chairperson, they should make sure that a good spread of people gets a chance to ask questions or make points.
- Thank people for raising their points, or adding their comments. Do not get defensive.
- When listening to a complex question, take notes. And then clarify that you understand the question by saying something like: *I understand you to be asking me....* The audience can get very frustrated when you do not answer the question that was asked.
- You will probably not always have an answer. Admit it when you do not. Think of ways of throwing it back – ask if anyone in the audience knows the answer. Or if there is someone on the panel or in the audience who you think does know, refer the question to him or her. Or suggest ways that the answer could be found – refer people to an organisation, a book, a person, a Web site address, for example.



Promoting your organisation

- Handle hostile questions or responses calmly. Do not take them personally. Acknowledge the question, and respond in a logical, unemotional way. Provide statistics or other factual information to back up your response if you can.

Other feedback

We strengthen ourselves through receiving constructive feedback. After your speech, think of ways to get feedback about your speech. Ask the organisers if they received informal feedback, talk to people afterwards who were in the audience. Celebrate the positive feedback, and take note of the constructive criticism. The more you identify weaknesses, the stronger your next speech will be.

Promoting your organisation

Promoting your organisation: when people reach in

Have you ever visited an office and heard the people working there talking in a negative way to each other? How did it make you feel about the organisation?

It is really important to come across to promote a positive image of your organisation. Even if there are people in your organisation who do not agree with each other, or do not like each other, this should not come across to outsiders. Everyone in the organisation's job is to promote confidence in your organisation, to show it in a good light.

How do people feel after having contact with your organisation? Are they greeted with attentiveness and professionalism? Do your organisation's ambassadors – your members, staff, volunteers, board members – inspire confidence in your organisation?

▪ Promoting your organisation's image

Vital opinions are formed when people come into contact with your organisation. Has your organisation developed procedures for how you receive and handle callers, visitors and e-mailers so that you promote the best possible image of your organisation? Next we offer a workshop activity you could use for developing procedures with regard to communicating with callers, visitors or e-mailers.

A workshop

to develop our organisation's reception procedures

with regard to communicating with callers, visitors or e-mailers

You probably need about three hours in all for this. It is a worthwhile investment.

Resources

You need:

- a facilitator
- someone to record what comes out of this workshop
- chart paper, felt-tipped pens, lined paper, something to stick the chart paper onto the wall with.

The process: a rough guide

1. Get consensus that it is in your organisation's interests to have this workshop as part of promoting a positive image of your organisation.
2. Set date, time, venue. Arrange snacks, if you can, to help people feel relaxed and valued. Send around the programme for the session.
3. Gather everyone in your organisation together at the agreed time and date.
4. Remind people of the aim of the workshop – that it fits in with your promotion strategy.
5. If you have a lot of people in your organisation, then work in groups, with report backs and summaries.
6. Ask people to reflect on your organisation's values. (You should have captured and documented these during your organisation's strategic planning. If not, you will have to spend some time developing them – your workshop may take longer. Or you may want to start with a workshop on values, which become your operating principles. See the section on *values* in this toolkit, and for more depth our CIVICUS toolkit called *Strategic planning* and the section on *organisational values* within that. There we offer you an exercise for developing consensus around your values).

Promoting your organisation

7. Explain to people that your organisation's values and operating principles should inform your communication procedures. That in this workshop you are specifically concerned with procedures that will enhance the image of your organisation when people communicate with you. This is part of your promotion strategy.
8. Ask people to think about what procedures will promote the image of your organisation – specifically when communicating with callers, visitors, or e-mailers?

An example of this might be: we value grassroots participation in our structures. Regarding communication, this means we must be:

- ✧ welcoming
- ✧ respectful
- ✧ able to offer help quickly and effectively
- ✧ able to speak in the language that people need to converse in

You might also come up with ground rules or code of conduct for members of your organisation. This could include something like: like callers or visitors should not witness disagreements, fights or disrespectful behaviour between staff members/volunteers, as this will tarnish our organisation's image.

9. Round off by asking people to put themselves into the shoes of visitors and callers. Start off with asking them to complete this sentence: *If I were a visitor to this organisation, I would want...* And then *if I were a caller to this organisation, I would want...*
10. Pull all that has come out of this session together – write it up and have a draft procedures document for handling callers and visitors. You can circulate it for comment amongst staff, and then finalise as a formal document.
For example, you may agree that:
 - ✧ visitors remain in the reception area until the person they are waiting to see comes to greet and fetch them
 - ✧ no-one should be kept waiting for longer than three minutes
 - ✧ all calls should be returned within 24 hours
 - ✧ anyone who leaves the office must notify the reception of where they are going and when they will return
 - ✧ if you use mobile phones, then these are switched off during a meeting with a visitor
11. Once you have completed this exercise, make sure everyone receives a copy. Establish how you will monitor and evaluate.

▪ **Your reception area**

If you have an office with a reception area, try to:

- Keep your reception area looking organised, neat and welcoming.
- Attend to visitors very quickly – do not keep them waiting while you finish a conversation with a colleague or carry on with a phone call to a friend.
- Have somewhere for visitors to sit where they do not feel they are in the way.
- Offer a glass of water, cup of tea or something to help the person feel at home.
- Have a public notice board regularly updated with forthcoming events, photos of your activities, interesting and relevant newspaper articles (especially if they are positive ones about your work), meaningful sayings, and useful contact details for other organisations that share your vision and values. (For more ideas on notice boards go to the section *Notice board* in our CIVICUS toolkit *Writings within your organisation*.)

Promoting your organisation

- Have your organisation's vision and mission written up as an attractive poster.
- Have something for visitors to do should they need to wait for a while. Display promotional materials, maybe even have a photo album of your organisation's activities handy for people to look at (and be inspired and impressed by!).
Have some toys, paper and crayons for children if you do get child visitors.
- Have a visitors' book and encourage people to fill it in.
- Have a suggestion box in your reception area, with paper and pen next to it to make it easier for people to write down their suggestions.
- Do not allow conflict within your organisation (if you have it) to spill into the reception area.

▪ **Receiving people**

First impressions do count. The receptionist – whether a volunteer or a staff member – is usually the first contact that a visitor or phone caller will have with your organisation. Put yourself in the caller or visitor's shoes. They want to be greeted in a respectful way and helped as quickly as possible. If someone arrives for an appointment, imagine the impression created if the receptionist lets his or her frustrations spill, saying: "Oh, I don't know if he's here. He's always late and unreliable. You'll just have to sit and wait and see if he comes."

If you do use volunteers at reception, make sure you train them, keep them informed, and that they know what your reception procedures are. It also does not sound good if someone says, "I'm just a volunteer here, I can't help you with that."

A staff member or volunteer's conduct is something to raise and deal with internally. The reception must always know where the organisation's workers are, and how to contact them. It is, however, their responsibility to keep reception informed either verbally, through internal e-mail, or by using an "in/out" board in the reception area.

It is important that callers and visitors feel that they are:

- valued
- welcomed and respected
- helped as quickly as possible,

▪ **Handling phone calls**

When you talk with someone face-to-face, you have non-verbal as well as verbal communication. You can see expressions on people's faces and their body language. You communicate with each other in words and in this non-verbal way. This is removed when you communicate over the telephone. So your communication has to be very clear.

Phone call guide

- When you answer the phone:
 - ◇ greet in a friendly way;
 - ◇ say which organisation (and department, if appropriate) the caller has reached;
 - ◇ say who you are;
 - ◇ ask how you can help;
 - ◇ listen carefully to the caller's response;

Promoting your organisation

- ✧ in your own words, repeat the caller's request, to test whether you understood them correctly;
- ✧ wait to hear what they say;
- ✧ help them yourself, if appropriate, or direct them to help;
- ✧ if you are putting them through to another person in your organisation, put the caller on hold. If you have a switchboard system, tell the person you are putting them through to who is on the line; and
- ✧ connect them!

Here's an example of how a professionally handled telephone call might go.

Hello, you have reached readWRITE. My name is Shanti. How can I help you?

Hello. I want to start attending literacy classes. I need to know who to speak to about it. Can you help me?

So, you would like to start attending one of our literacy classes?

Yes...

That's great! I will put you through to Nishara, who co-ordinates the literacy classes. Could you tell me your name, please?

My name is Rasika.

Thank you, Rasika. Could you please hold while I put you through to Nishara.

(Whilst Rasika is on hold) Hello, Nishara. I have a caller for you called Rasika. She would like to join a literacy class.

Hello Rasika, you are going through to Nishara.

This way of answering the phone helps the caller to respond quickly and clearly. You have put them at ease and offered help. Listen carefully to their response and assist them by offering information they may be looking for. Or put them through to a person in your organisation who can help them.

- Value telephone calls from people interested in, or working with your organisation. Their call shows that your organisation is alive.
- Put a special effort into sounding warm and friendly – your voice becomes the “face” of the organisation.
- If you are going to transfer the caller through to someone else, do it smoothly.
- If you have to keep a caller waiting longer than about thirty seconds, ask if you can get the person they are holding for to call them back. You can also ask the caller whether she or he wants to carry on holding.
- Thank them for their patience while they are on hold, and if necessary keep returning to them, so they know that you have not cut them off or forgotten about them.

Promoting your organisation

- When you take down the caller's details, do so in a message book. Make sure to ask how the person spells his or her name if you are unsure of it, and get their correct contact number. Repeat it back to them to make sure. If they do not receive a response they may think you did not pass on the message.
- Be patient and understanding with callers. If they are angry about something, try putting yourself in their shoes. You could say something like "I understand that you are feeling annoyed about XYZ. I will do my best to assist you."
- If you are talking with a caller on a landline and you have another phone that rings, (for example a mobile phone) do not dump your first caller and take a second call. Complete your business with the first caller. Let the mobile phone take a voice message. It can be extremely irritating to have to hold when someone does this to you.
- If everyone in your organisation is in a meeting, put your telephone answering machine on if you have one. Make sure that after the meeting, everyone receives their messages quickly, and encourage people to return organisational calls speedily. If it is a long meeting, you may have to arrange for a volunteer to come in and take calls and see to visitors.
- Have an answering machine that works effectively. The answer-phone voice should preferably be from your organisation rather than a foreign sounding voice that you get on some answer-phone systems.
- If you have background music with your callers are on hold, use music appropriate for the image of your organisation.

▪ Handling e-mails

Many organisations use e-mail for both internal and external communication. Here we focus on some protocol issues in organisational e-mail communication. Obviously each person develops their own relationship with people they work with. But it is important to remember that you are communicating as a representative of your organisation at all times, so keep to a friendly yet formal manner

What's great about e-mail communication?

- It can be a very effective and efficient way of communicating when you do not need voice-to-voice or face-to-face interaction.
- It can help speed up communication.
- It is great for providing information, seeing to some requests, responding to inquiries, courtesy messages, follow up information after a phone call request.

Problems with e-mail communication

When you send out an e-mail message, you promote a particular image of your organisation through the language, style and tone you use. It is vital that you consider yourself an ambassador of your organisation when sending e-mails. With e-mail, you do not have the advantage of seeing facial expressions or body

Promoting your organisation

language, or even hearing expression in a voice. Your message can only come through in the words you select to use.

There is a danger, because e-mail is so quick and easy to use, that you might:

- Avoid talking with the person when that would be a more appropriate method for your communication.
- Overuse it, and waste valuable time with unnecessary messages.
- Write messages that are too long, or too abrupt.
- Adopt an inappropriate tone. Once you have established a too familiar tone with someone, it becomes very difficult to return to friendly yet formal.
- Respond, before thinking carefully enough about the words you have chosen, or about your tone. Because of the nature of e-mail this can quickly lead to misinterpretation and negative exchanges.
- Drop greetings – which can become very abrupt and impolite.
- Become sloppy with spelling and grammar.
- Assume someone has received your e-mail message, which may not be the case. People sometimes have trouble accessing their e-mail. Depending on the purpose of the e-mail, you may have to follow up in other ways, as a matter of courtesy.
- Send something that is confidential, without being vigilant about the extremely public nature of e-mails. E-mails can be easily forwarded to others, altered and forwarded – misrepresenting what you have written, and attacked by a virus that happily sends your e-mails to thousands of others.

Do not use e-mail:

- If you have a disagreement or dispute. Now is the time to make a direct call, or have a meeting.
- When you have not carefully thought through your response – once you've clicked the send button you can't get it back.
- When you are in a big rush – that is when you may make mistakes that will take time and energy to explain and undo.

Keep it KISSS

Reading messages from a computer screen is more difficult than reading a message on paper. So keep it short, simple and straightforward (KISSS).

▪ **Monitoring and evaluation**

We suggest you include evaluating how people find interacting with your organisation into your annual evaluation. Your reflections on your image may lead to new ideas for future planning. This could, for example, mean training some staff or volunteers in public relations. For a detailed look at this area, go to our CIVICUS toolkit *Monitoring and evaluation*.

In monitoring the image your organisation projects from the “users” point of view, you could have a simple, unintimidating “how are we doing” form that people can fill in that includes space for offering suggestions. For people who are illiterate, you could ask for someone to assist them to fill it in, or you could design a form that is done in graphics.

Next see an example of a “how are we doing?” form.

Promoting your organisation

Example of an evaluation: How are we doing?

☺ excellent ☹ just okay ☹ bad	☺	☹	☹
On the telephone			
Was it easy to get hold of us on the phone?			
Did we answer the phone in a clear, professional way?			
Were you made to feel welcome when you phoned our office?			
Did we take your issue/request seriously?			
Did we put you in touch with the right person?			
Did we keep you waiting on hold for a long time?			
Could you hear any distracting or disturbing background noises when we answered your call?			
What kind of overall impression were you left with about our organisation?			
Did you have to wait a long time before we attended to you?			
When you visited our offices			
Did we greet you in a friendly and polite way?			
Did we attend to you quickly?			
Did we take you seriously?			
Did we offer you a seat if you needed to wait?			
Did the person you had come to see respond quickly?			
Did you think that our office was an interesting place to be?			
If you had to wait, was there something to read or look at whilst waiting?			
Did you form a good opinion about the people working in our office?			
Did you form a good opinion about how the people in our office work together?			
How can we improve?			
Please tell us what you think we could do to improve. Thank you.			



Promoting your organisation

Acknowledgement and references

We used the following resources in developing this toolkit. We acknowledge the authors' valuable work and recommend them to you.

Advanced Communication Skills – for organisational success by Lisel Erasmus-Kritzinger, Marietta Swart and Vusi Mona. Published by Afritech, South Africa (2000)

CIVICUS documents – from the communications department

CIVICUS toolkits, www.CIVICUS.org

Strategic planning

Writing Effectively and Powerfully

Writings within your organisation

Handling the media

Producing your own media

Communicating Effectively – for dummies by Marty Brounstein. Published by Hungry Minds. (2001)

Communications Planning from IMPACS's website, www.impacs.org

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation is an international alliance established in 1993 to nurture the foundation, growth and protection of citizen action throughout the world, especially in areas where participatory democracy and citizens' freedom of association are threatened. CIVICUS envisions a worldwide community of informed, inspired, committed citizens in confronting the challenges facing humanity.

These CIVICUS Toolkits have been produced to assist civil society organisations build their capacity and achieve their goals. The topics range from budgeting, strategic planning and dealing with the media, to developing a financial strategy and writing an effective funding proposal. All are available on-line, in MS-Word and PDF format at www.civicus.org and on CD-ROM.

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