

Pop Talk: Get People Talking About Your Event

How To Design A Communications Plan For Your Event

Here are the 12 commandments of creating a communications plan for your event.

1. **Communication starts when you pick your event date.** Make sure there isn't a conflicting event. Weekends can be tough in terms of getting TV to your event.
2. **Start at least 3 months out from your event.**
3. **Create your message points** - Why are you having the event? Who are your audiences? What do you want people to learn? What action do you want them to take? What is your specific call to action (CTA)? Don't forget to weave in your organization's overall strategic messaging.
4. **Identify your spokespeople** - Who can talk about the event leading up to event day? Who can speak to media during the event?
5. **Identify your target publications.** Research lead times (the cutoff before they go to print).
6. **Draft your media alert and press releases.** Be sure to include driving directions and parking information for media. Send your media alert one month out, two weeks out, one week out, day of and call newsrooms to follow up.
7. **Many media outlets have print/digital event calendars.** Add your event through the website, being thorough and following directions. Start 2-3 months prior to be included in print editions.
8. **Make it easy for people to share your event.** Create pre-written tweets and ask people to share. Get your staff on board! Do you have "friends of" your organization or brand evangelists who can spread the word about your event?
9. **Use a tool like Facebook or Evite to create a digital event reminder.** Don't use this exclusively to make the media aware of your event but it can be a helpful reminder for interested parties.
10. **Identify and utilize your existing communication channels.** Website/ blog, email newsletters, social media sites, digital signage, advertising, posters etc.
11. **Surveys** - Survey people after the event to learn what you can improve upon next year, or, better yet, if you have access to attendees' emails, you can survey them beforehand to make sure you're delivering what they hope to receive.
12. **Plan post-event communication.** Draft a post-event press release and fill in the blanks after the event. Send photos with captions, highlighting successes (volume of attendees, key takeaways etc.)
13. **Create a post-event summary of your PR efforts.** Who did you pitch and when? What worked and what didn't? Compile PR clips into one document.