Plan Your 2021

Communications Calendar

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Agenda

● Introduction

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

● Questions
Defining your audience
Stakeholder Engagement Funnel
Turn community members into collaborators

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

- Veterans, service members, family, caregivers, and survivors
- Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs)
- Military Service Organizations (MSOs)
- Benefits Providers
- Educational Service Providers/Organizations
- Employment Service Providers
- Financial Service Providers
- Healthcare Providers
- Housing Services
- Legal Services
- Volunteer/Nonprofit Organizations
- Government Representatives
What belongs on your comms calendar?
Special Dates

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

- Speeches, announcements, and talking points
- Social media posts
- Emails and e-newsletters
- Blogs and articles
- Snail mail and printed literature
Mission-focused messaging at every stage
Yearly

Mission-driven comms start with your organization’s “why”?  

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

Take the time to surface success stories

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

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

- Ask yourself:
  - What holidays or special days are there?
  - Does this month honor a particular identity?
  - What major events do we have this month?
Pick a time to draft, proof, and schedule the week’s content

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

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