

Creating the Communications Plan

Elements of the Plan

What Drives the Plan?

- Your organization's goals
- The vision as expressed in the mission statement
- Your organization's values and beliefs



Typical Communication Goals

- Enhancing visibility and reputation
- Planning for crisis management
- Generating positive media coverage
- Changing attitudes or teaching new skills
- Generating public support
- Fund raising



Vision and Mission Statement

- The cornerstone of the plan.
- Provides overall direction for media activities.
- The plan must advance your organizations agenda.



Organizational Values & Beliefs

- People can prevent forest fires
- A mind is a terrible thing to waste
- We don't use animals in the testing of our products

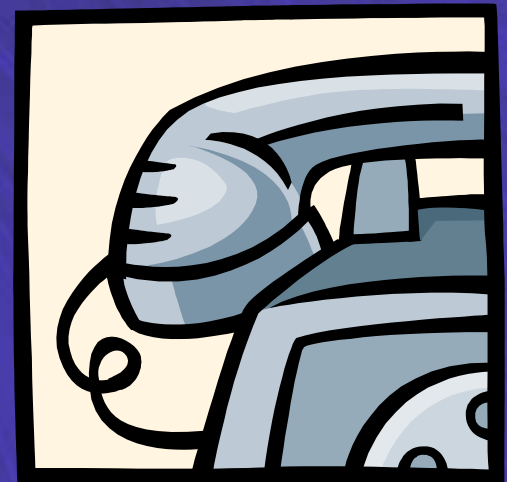


Six Critical Elements

1. Understand your target audience and how to reach it
2. Research past media coverage and public opinion about your issue
3. Determine key messages
4. Determine key materials to be produced
5. Obtain resources for staff and equipment
6. Develop written work plan

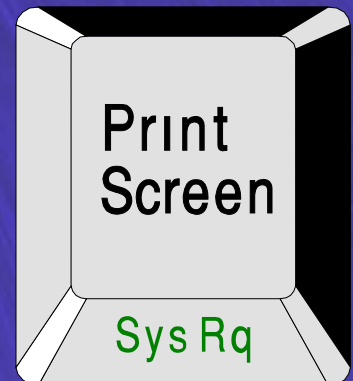
Identifying Target Audience

- List your stakeholders
- What do they like to read or watch
- Obtain demographic info from media
- Don't forget internal audiences



Research

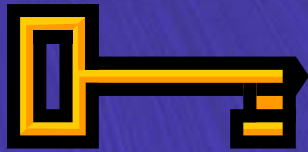
- Use the internet to conduct media trend analysis
- Analysis should include story placement, tone and bylines
- Look within your own data for newsworthy research



Developing Key Messages



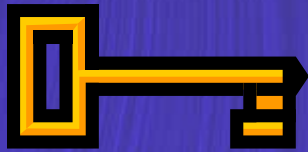
- A phrase of 4 to 10 words you want to see in every story



- Produce 3 or 4 key message points



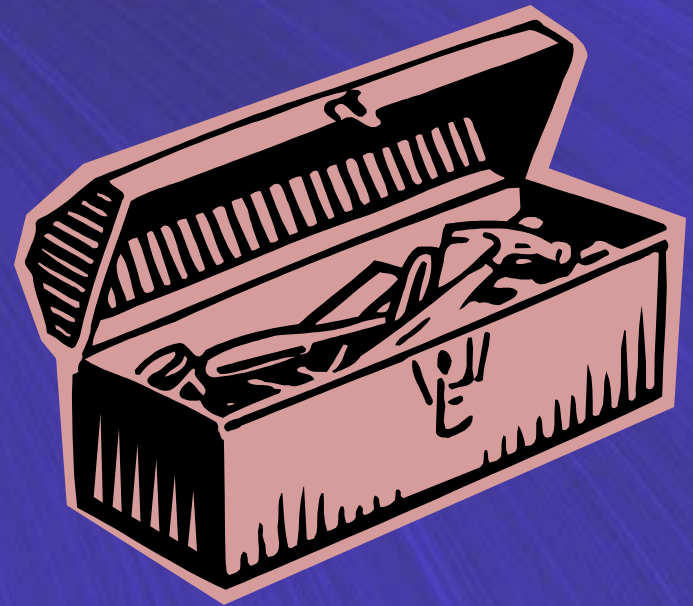
- Imagine the headline



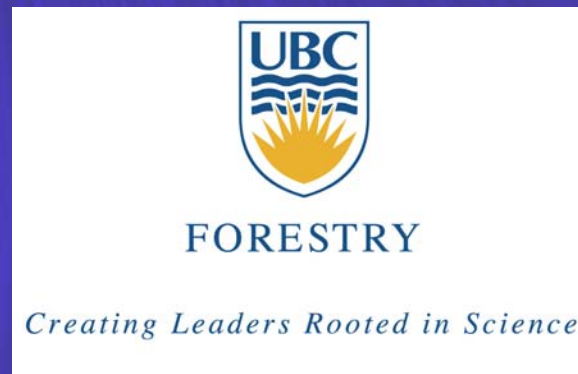
- Review, revise and repeat

Developing Effective Materials

- Strong visual identity
- One page fact sheet
- Press kit
- Brochures
- Videos, slides
- Reports, bios
- Newsletter, news stories



Examples of a Visual Identity



Assessing Resources

- Assess staff time and in-house services
- Arrange for training if necessary
- Designate a communications leader
- Develop a budget



Develop Written Plan

- Create time lines, calendar of events, priorities
- Assign tasks
- Review progress, enforce or revise deadlines
- Reassign tasks as needed



Increasing Positive Media Coverage

A Step by Step Plan

Step 1..The Goal

- To enhance the reputation of the organization by raising awareness of its positive achievements.



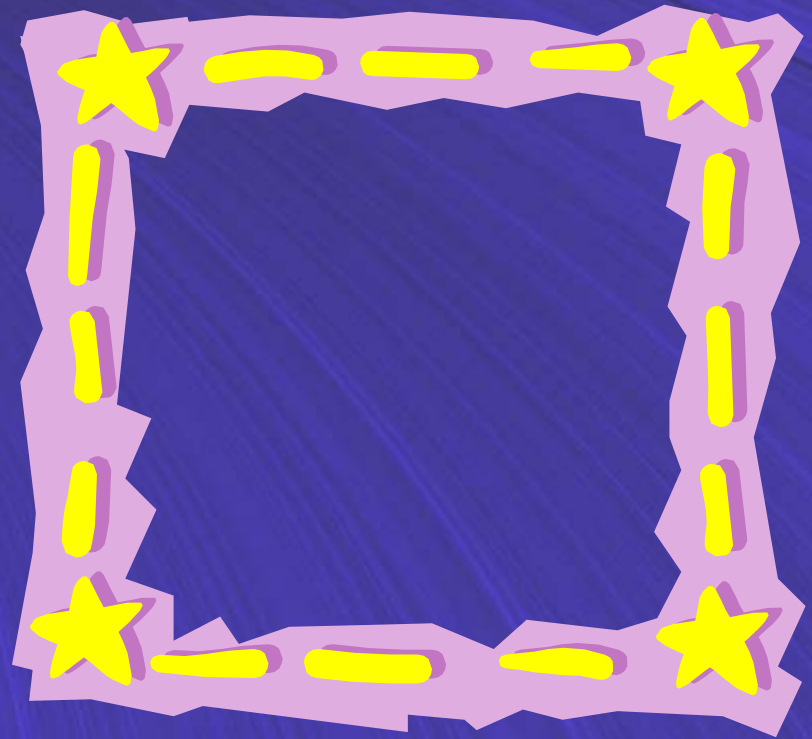
Step 2..The Objective

- To increase the frequency of positive earned media to at least five articles a month in 2002, an increase of 500% over 2001.



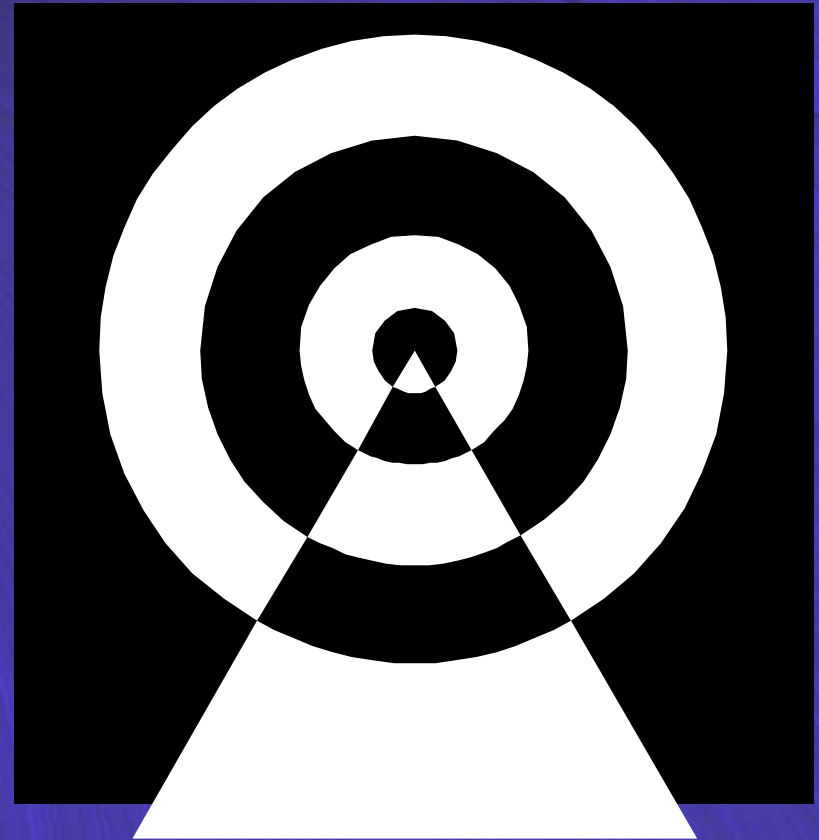
Step 3... Strategy

- Identify potential stories and frame them
- For example:
- A shortage of funds is threatening the survival of a program the public desperately needs



Step 4... Target Audience

- Sources of funding, government officials, public donors, alumni donors
- Media contacts who can reach these audiences



Step 5...Research

- Conduct an Internet search on your topic to review media and public opinion
- Prepare data, graphs etc. for the media as factoids on your topic



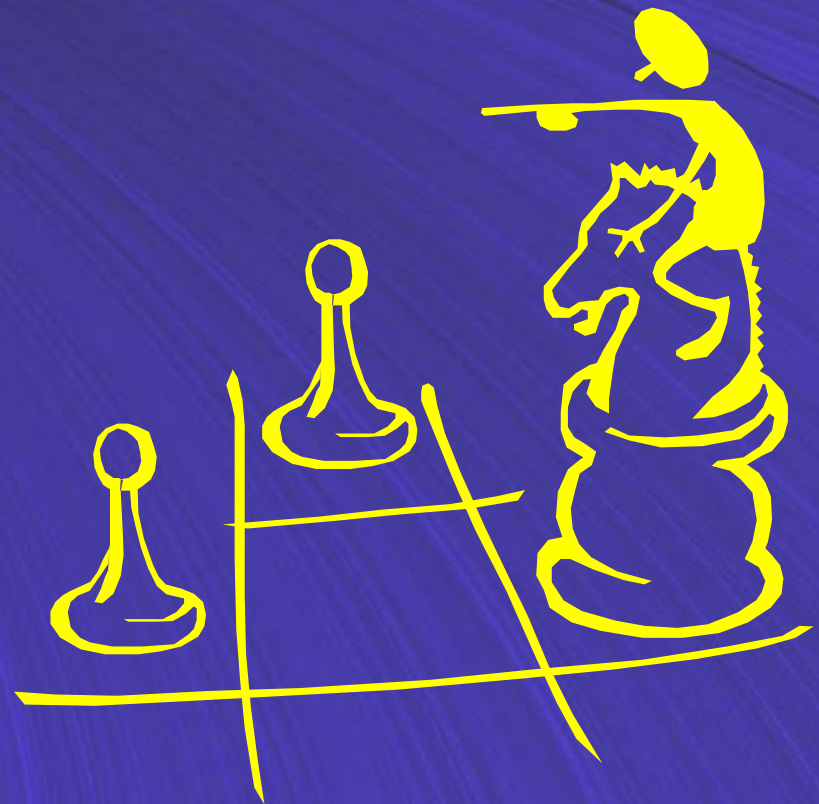
Step 6...Create your Message

- A lack of funds has put a vital service in jeopardy
- We need \$50k by the end of the month to save it.
- Saving this program will save the taxpayers millions.



Step 7...Tactics

- Write and send press release
- Hold media briefing
- Pitch target reporters
- Stage media event such as a fund raising challenge contest



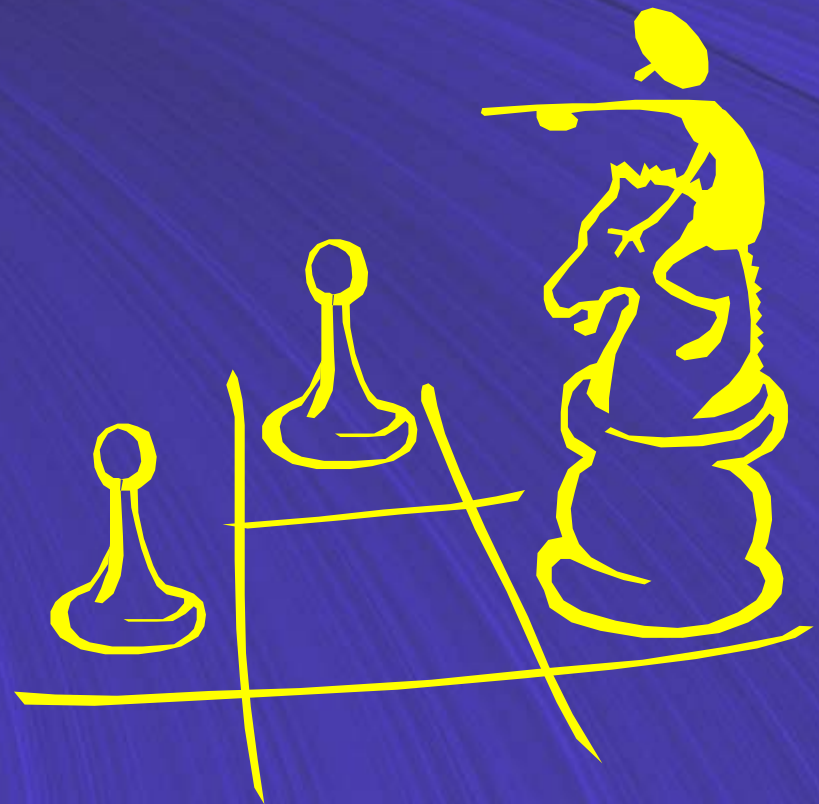
Step 7...Tactics cont.

- Write and place op eds
- Book radio and TV shows
- Write and place Letters to the Editor
- Coordinate efforts on the Web site



Step 7...Tactics cont.

- Produce PSAs for TV and radio
- Set up visits and interviews with real people affected
- Find celebrity endorsement
- Mobilize internal spokespersons



Step 8...Evaluation

- Did we hit our target audiences
- Did we accomplish our goal
- Did we meet our timelines



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