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**Communications Planning Template**

What is Communications?

To communicate, you need three things. Someone who has a message to send (Sender); a message to send (Message) and someone who receives the message (Receiver).

Why would your business need a Communications Plan?

A Communications Plan can help your business grow and bring in customers or clients. You should consider a Communications Plan if you’re launching your business, unveiling a new product or service, entering into a new market, or if you have a major contract/produce/service that shows everyone that you’re professional and competent.

What is in a Communications Plan?

All plans seek to answer these five basic questions. A communications plan is the same. The following two tables are provided so you can answer these questions and implement a communications plan for your business.



Do some research. How are your competitors promoting their products or services? Can you recall a really effective promotional campaign? What did you like about it? Can you incorporate any of those ideas into your plan? Brainstorm and come up with answers to the following:

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| **WHY?** | |
| As mentioned above, why do you want people to know what your business is up to? What are you specific goals for your communications plan? What are you hoping to achieve? Examples:   * *Expand on reserve business by getting five new First Nations clients* * *Be the go-to company for organic bath and beauty products in Saskatchewan* * *Be seen as a leader in on-reserve IT solutions* |  |
| **WHAT?** | |
| What exactly do you want to communicate? What is your **message?** Examples:   * *X Company now expanding into Manitoba.* * *X Company now 100% First Nations owned* * *X Company is only Canadian distributor of X* |  |

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| **WHO?** | |
| Who do you want to share your message with? Who are your **audiences?** Examples:   * *Existing clients* * *Procurement managers in government departments* * *Consumers on reserve in New Brunswick* * *All Métis community council leaders in Ontario* |  |
| **HOW?** | |
| What are some of the best ways to reach your audiences? What are the **mediums?** (You can have different ways for different groups). For example:   * *Social Media* * *Attend events* * *First Nation community newsletters* * *Radio ads for First Nation community stations* * *Mailouts on reserve* * *Posters in Friendship Centre* |  |
| **WHEN?** | |
| When will you launch your communications plan? How long will it go on? (You will likely have different timelines for different mediums) |  |

You now have the basic elements of a Communications Plan. Now you need an Implementation Plan. This will take time and effort on your part. You can use the following table to help organize your communications planning elements.

Some of the tables are filled in with sample information. Delete and use as a template. The example is this plan is for an Indigenous company that sells handmade, organic soaps and other bath and beauty products.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **WHO? Audience** | **WHAT? What do you want them to know? Message** | **HOW? How will you get your message across? Medium** | **WHEN?** | **COST?** |
| Young indigenous women across Ontario | Our products are organic and sourced from traditional, Indigenous plants and ingredients. Safe for sensitive skin | Twitter. Start a campaign with interesting facts about the traditional ingredients. Link to web site | January to March | No cost. |
| Ads in university newspapers | January | $500 per ¼ page ad. |
| Posters at all Aboriginal student centres in colleges and universities in Ontario | February | $500 for graphic design, $75 to print 200 copies |
| Indigenous people in Manitoba | Our award-winning company is now in Manitoba! | Newspaper ad in Winnipeg Free Press | February | $1,000 for 1/8 page ad |
| Attend the National Women’s Show in Winnipeg | April | $1,000 for trade show booth, $500 for hotel costs |
| Place product sample in delegate bag at annual assembly for Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and set up booth | May | $500 for artist booth, $5 per sample for 100 bags = $500  $500 to place samples in bags |
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