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# **COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

2018-2020

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**SAMPLE ONLY**



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## Background and introduction

In 2015, Volunteer Alberta introduced a rebrand to staff and their audiences. This included the launch of a new website, new logo and brand guidelines. In late 2016, Volunteer Alberta also launched new member service packages and benefits.

However, limited internal capacity and staffing changes in the communications department over the last few years resulted in\*:

- A lack of clarity surrounding the new brand and other changes internally and externally.
- A cluttered website with poor site navigation.
- Undelivered promises to members.
- Low engagement with members, and a lack of benefit delivery and clear communication.
- Lower quality online content and low engagement on social media and in e-newsletters.
- An overall lack of strategic communications.

*\*For a detailed SWOT analysis, [see Appendix A](#).*

With limited capacity and staffing changes, Volunteer Alberta has not been able to significantly increase awareness and engagement with its target audiences, let alone establish itself as a leader in the nonprofit voluntary sector.

This communications plan for 2018-2020 intends to address and remedy these issues. If successful, Volunteer Alberta may potentially be able to position itself as a respected and recognized leader and expert in the sector moving forward.

## Strategy

It's time for Volunteer Alberta to clearly communicate who they are, what they do and why they do it. We plan to accomplish this through:

- Improved internal brand awareness and use.
- Thoughtfully communicating about our organization, the sector and volunteerism through human-centered, emotional storytelling across communications channels.
- Using data analysis to inform and improve marketing and communications' approaches and tactics.



## Target audiences

Primary Audiences	Secondary Audiences	Tertiary Audiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer Alberta members</li> <li>• Alberta Volunteer Centre Network</li> <li>• Alberta nonprofits</li> <li>• Volunteer Alberta program participants (includes post-secondary students)</li> <li>• Existing funders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberta Nonprofit Network</li> <li>• Media</li> <li>• Alberta Government</li> <li>• Potential external funders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current volunteers</li> <li>• Potential volunteers</li> </ul>

## Goal

To elevate Volunteer Alberta's profile amongst its target audiences. We want our primary and secondary audiences to know who we are and how they can get involved or interact with us. We want them to know and understand the value our organization brings to the NPVS in Alberta, and the value of the nonprofit sector and volunteerism.

By building this foundation, we may be able to position Volunteer Alberta as a leader and a collective voice for the NPVS, and as a champion of volunteerism in Alberta from 2020 and onward.

## Objectives

### Objective 1

Improve brand identity and brand cohesion across the organization and in all external communications by the end of 2020.

### Objective 2

Increase awareness of Volunteer Alberta with target audiences by the end of 2020.

### Objective 3

Increase engagement from and with target audiences by the end of 2020.

*\*For detailed key performance indicators, [see Evaluation](#).*



## Tactics

Objective	Tactics	Activities
<b>Objective 1</b> Improve brand identity and brand cohesion across the organization and in all external communications by the end of 2020.	1. Improve coordination and efficiency of the VA communications team.	1. Develop processes and tools to support cross-team functionality (e.g., editorial process, project briefs, post-mortems, etc.). 2. Identify program cycles to help inform editorial calendar and understand workflow. 3. Conduct third-party audience and online/digital strategy research (Kickpoint) to develop personas. 4. Develop and follow a quarterly editorial calendar. 5. Collect and analyze data across organization to inform and enhance communications tactics on an ongoing basis. (e.g., Conduct analytics and survey reviews including a social media report, website data, integration of learning and development data.) 6. Undergo media training (communications team, Executive Director, etc.) 7. Develop sub-communications plans to support operations and processes such as crisis communications, digital strategy and media relations.
	2. Refine Volunteer Alberta brand, including public-facing communication, key messages and increase internal brand awareness/knowledge.	1. Develop simplified, cohesive and consistent key messaging that reflect the Strategic Directions. 2. Review and refine website content to reflect key messages. 3. Create and distribute brand awareness survey internally on quarterly basis. 4. Develop and distribute brand quick reference guide to all staff. 5. Provide brand presentation to all staff. 6. Develop a style guide to inform consistent writing. 7. Develop and provide relational writing 'course' for all staff to ensure consistent voice usage. 8. Incorporate refined key messaging into all communications (e.g., newsletters, social media, emails, blogs etc.)
	3. Continuously create brand cohesion between all portfolios and other offerings by integrating refined messaging and visual brand elements across all communication pathways.	1. Develop key messages resource specifically for programs/services. 2. Update all portfolio resources with VA branding/attribution and messaging over time. 3. Integrate VA brand/messaging into program communications as needed. (e.g., emails, webpages, web portals, surveys, etc.) 4. Provide strategic communications support and input for programs/services and partnership contract deliverables.
<b>Objective e 2</b> Increase awareness	1. Develop and implement digital strategy to extend online audience reach.	1. Increase and improve social media usage and content across all active platforms (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn). 2. Initiate volunteerism-focused online promotion and storytelling. 3. Develop social media listening system to enrich online content.

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Develop short social media campaigns surrounding major topics, trends and events when needed (e.g., NVW, RAK, etc.).</li> <li>5. Explore paid advertising tactics on social media platforms.</li> <li>6. Source and write blog articles based on editorial themes and external NPVS trends on a monthly basis.</li> <li>7. Ensure e-newsletters align with editorial themes and content.</li> <li>8. Review, refine and update/maintain website including revision of site map on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>9. Promote social media platforms through other communications channels and portfolios.</li> </ol>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Enhance and leverage existing annual campaigns to extend reach. (NVW, prospect member campaign)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore and implement multi-pronged communications approaches and tactics (e.g., combined approach of media relations, digital promotion, marketing, etc.).</li> <li>2. Ensure data and/or feedback from previous years is incorporated into campaign planning.</li> <li>3. Research (as needed) new communications methods to ensure campaigns are relevant.</li> </ol>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Explore integrated marketing approaches and funding.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore benefits of an integrated marketing approach for organization promotion and other emerging initiatives.</li> <li>2. Research potential funding opportunities to support future organization marketing campaigns to increase awareness.</li> <li>3. Connect with and learn from other marketing/communications professionals in NPVS.</li> </ol>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Create and implement volunteerism initiative campaign across the province.</li> </ol>	TBD (dependent on GOA funding).
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Develop and implement media relations plan</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Investigate &amp; initiate relationship building with targeted media personalities through social media conversations at three key intervals (NVW, SCiP Launch, Holiday Volunteerism).</li> <li>2. Develop media and influencer lists.</li> <li>3. Explore media relations tactics for proactive and reactive outreach.</li> <li>4. Assign spokesperson and backup roles.</li> </ol>
<b>Objective 3</b> Increase engagement with target audiences by the end of 2020.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enhance membership and network communications to increase engagement.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop, implement and grow a community specific forum where users can share best practices, resources, learnings, etc.</li> <li>2. Proactively collect, write and promote member stories online and in e-newsletters.</li> <li>3. Ensure Member Exclusive content is relevant based on member feedback.</li> <li>4. Refine membership related documentation – public facing guides &amp; fact sheets, new sales sheets to accurately reflect membership level benefits (upon member review completion).</li> <li>5. Provide communications support to Networks and Engagement for member communications (e.g, gated resources, survey review/update, etc.).</li> <li>6. Ensure two-way communication is incorporated across communication channels based on member survey and AVCN feedback.</li> </ol>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Create new, forward-thinking messaging for membership renewal and prospect member campaigns.</li> <li>8. Elevate and inform election topics and issues to members and networks.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Enhance social media engagement with online audiences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Actively engage in social media listening to enhance audience experience with Volunteer Alberta online e.g., responding to comments and likes, post sharing, direct messages.</li> <li>2. Use social media listening to collect and share user-generated content regarding volunteerism and nonprofit experience.</li> <li>2. Actively engage with volunteers and nonprofits online by initiating online conversations.</li> </ul>

*\*For a detailed timeline and roles/responsibilities, [see Appendix B.](#)*

