"eSkills for Volunteers"

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH

MODULE 4: Digital Marketing Strategy	
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Contents

MODULE 4: DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY

4.1 A short introduction

4.1.   A short introduction
Now that we have set up the basis, it is the time to get more advanced into Digital Marketing and to start designing strategies in this field. A few decades ago, Digital Marketing was a "nice to have", but with the fast development of the Internet and new media, it became now a "must have" and nongovernmental organisations can not be left behind. Let's see what chapters we prepared for you to lead you in this journey:

4.2.   The ABC of Digital Marketing Strategy
You don't need to be a Marketing expert in order to design a strategy for your organisation. So, let's start with the beginning: what is a strategy, how to define and implement it, how to decide what channel or content is the most suitable and perhaps the most difficult part: how to set up key performance indicators (KPIs) and evaluate them.

4.3.   Building a visual identity
Decided to get to the PRO level as an organization? Then, it's time to start thinking about what you do with a closer look: is your logo well-designed, easy to remember, hard to confuse? Do you know which colours you would like to define your identity? Ready to design your first promotional materials? (header, header pages, business cards, banner, flyers, T-shirts etc.)

4.4.   Having an editorial plan for a cross-channel communication
It is trendy to set up a Facebook page, a group, a website, an Instagram account, to create a new Facebook page or website, but when "much" is "too much"? What do you need to know in order to mix properly this channel and what do you need to know before deciding to create a new communication channel for your activities?

4.5.   Managing an online community
An NGO without supporters can not exist, or at least it won't have any long lasting impact. Online communities are an easy way to catch attention, and this is why we dedicated this chapter on getting a better understanding on how we can build them and get inspired by some good practices.

4.6.   Social Media Management Policies
Almost every organisation owns at least one social media channel. At a first sight it seems to be easy, free of charge and a good option to engage with your community. But, as the times goes and the organisation has more complex activities, what are the aspects that you should really focus on in order to avoid problems related to your social media accounts? Follow the chapter and get your tips and tricks.

Now that you are full of inspiration, is time to dig into the wonders of Digital Marketing. Time to shine!

4.2 The ABC of Digital Marketing Strategy

What is it a Digital Marketing Strategy?

In the context of actual digitization, NGOs also need to have a Digital Marketing Strategy. Digital Marketing Strategy is a plan for maximizing the organization benefits which is reflected in series of actions in order to achieve the organization's marketing goals.
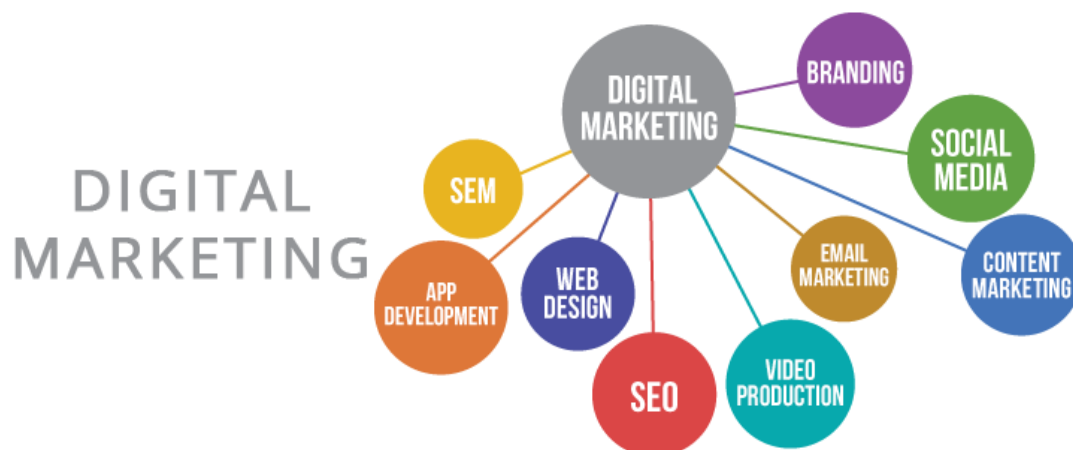
How to implement a Digital Marketing Strategy?

Having an online presence does not mean just to have a website and posting few times per weeks on some social media channels. Nowadays, the digital area is more complex and requires great attention to details, modern functionalities and constant improvements for better results.

In the following pages we want to point some main components of a digital marketing strategy which are also suitable for a non-profit organization.

Website

As a vital part of a digital strategy, your website represent your organization and it is important to have a relevant content and user experience design.

Tips:

- Have responsive and mobile friendly website
- Have call to action buttons on every page (ex: Facebook like & share Button, subscribe button, call button on mobile version, clear contact form etc)
- Communicate your organization's values up front
- Use updated content
- Integrate your social media channels on your website

Blog

Usually, the NGOs have presentation websites with some information about their activity, past projects and contact page. But, considering that in the last years, having a blog on your website can increase the number of visitors by 55%, we no longer need to mention that the blog is essential to a good website.

Tips:

- Create content that represents your organization's values
- Be original and offer a variety of content types; write about interesting topics related to organization's activity (ex: e-books, case studies, infographics etc)
- Easy for readers to subscribe
- Easy to share through social media
- Easy to interact with you by commenting on posts.
- Share relevant content across all social media channels to present your company to a wider audience
- Use current and past successes to show the evolution of your organization - this increase the credibility and impact in your community

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

If we are talking about website, SEO is mandatory! The reason is because showing on Google means you reached your group target and you can be known in digital area.

Tips:

- Make sure each page of your website is optimized for the search engines (recommended article: 7 Ways to Optimize a Web Page for the Search Engines).
- Use these keywords on your website and through social media.

E-mail Marketing

E-mail is one of the most important tool of communication nowadays; this is way you need to pay a special attention to this topic. For example, the e-mail signature of an organization member could reflect the professionalism of the organization, could promote its values, which are very important especially for NGOs because they differ by a business by their causes and values.

Tips:

- Create a quality design for your email template so it ties in with the look and feel of your website, completing a comprehensive marketing strategy.
- Provide useful, relevant information through email on a regular basis to have more followers.

Social Media Channels

Source: [Digital in 2017 Global Overview](#)

Tips:

- Provide an opportunity to create a community around your organization by interacting with those who are interested in your activity.
- Remain on people's minds by posting status updates, media, blog posts, and information about your organization regularly.

How to evaluate a Digital Marketing Strategy

Step 1: Identify the Organization Objectives and Goals

Examples:

- To raise awareness about a human rights campaign for 2 months
- To get a sponsorship for a specific project
- To engage youth in some educational activities etc.

Step 2: Identify the Key Performance Goals and Indicators

Setting a main goal means also to identify the proper key performance goals for a future tracking of the results and also the Key Performance Indicators, which will measure the achievement rate.

Examples: Sharing articles/news > Views on social media channels / number of clicks on posts / number of interactions etc.

- Education about the cause and mission > number of downloads of an informational brochure; number of subscribers to a newsletter on a specific theme/event.
- Fundraising > number of donation
- Volunteer recruitment > number of applicants for an open position.

Step 3: Identify your organization targets

For a relevant evaluation of a digital strategy, you need to set specific targets / numbers for your key performance.

Example:

- Sharing 5 articles/news in order to get to 500 people interested in the subject
- 400 interactions on social media channels (likes, shares)
- 100 downloads of an e-book
- 200 subscribers to newsletter
- Get donations worth $ 1000
- Receive 50 applications for a volunteer position.

Step 4: Choose the Right Channel for Your Organization

This mean you need to establish which channel you will use for every action of your digital strategy.
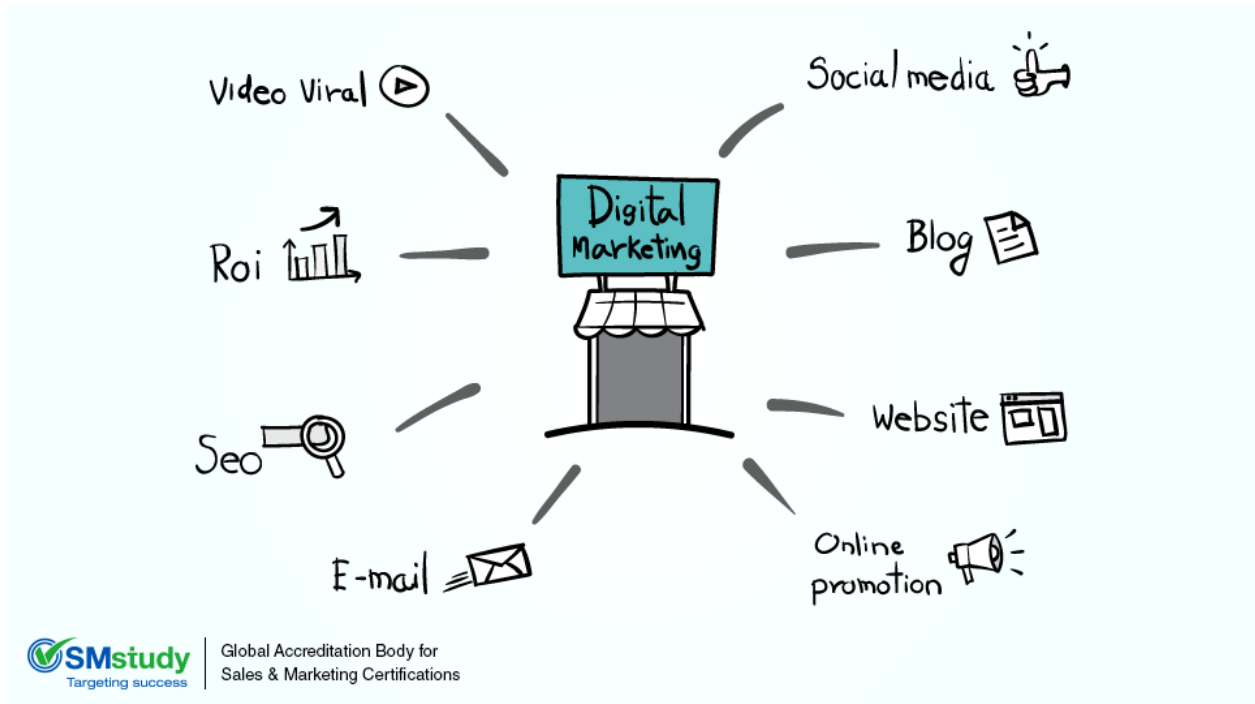
Examples:

- Facebook / LinkedIn for sharing articles
- E-mail marketing for raising awareness about a social event you host (ex: invitations)
- Competitions on social medial channels / website also for raising awareness
- Website - to promote your ebook etc.

Step 5: Create Your Content Strategy

Planning your content is very important because without this you cannot reach your audience.

A very helpful tool is a schedule / template in which you can plan all your actions for a project (see section: Social Media Management Policy) and you can set the channel, the time and frequency of posting, the person in charge, the results etc.

Step 6: Monitoring the results

Analytics

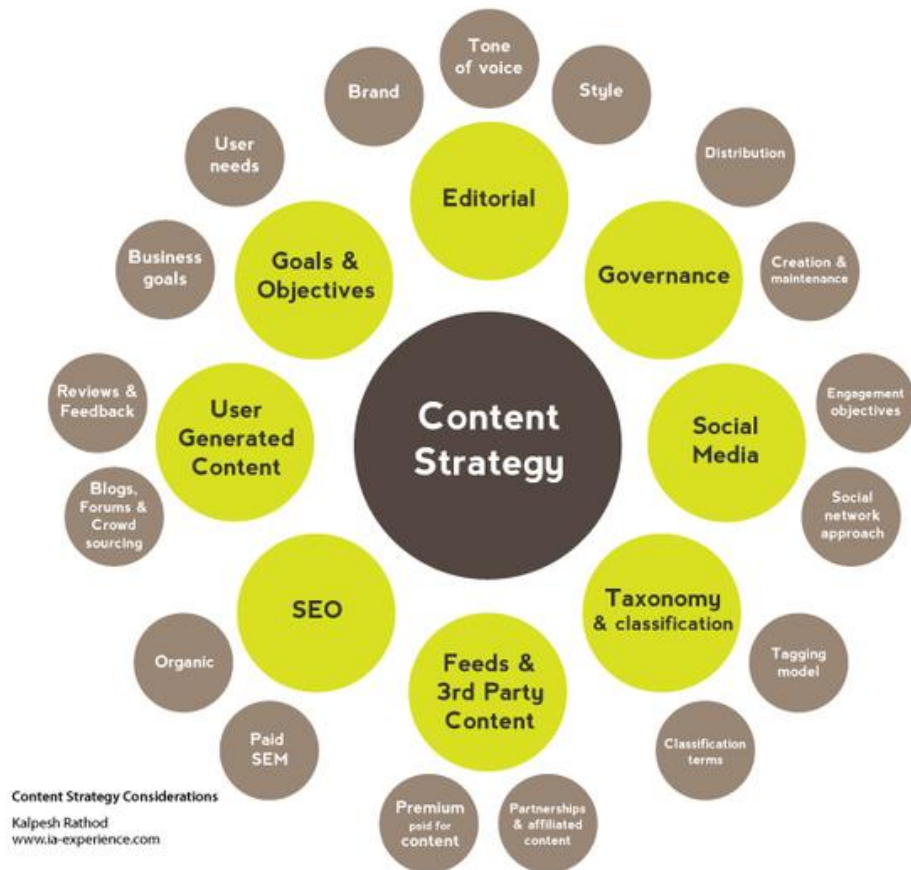Measuring the results of your organization, blog, e-mail campaigns, search engine ranking and social media reach plays a crucial role in any online marketing strategy. The best way to monitor your results is to use specific tools, such as Google Analytics, Facebook Reports, Hootsuite (for social media) etc.

Examples:

- **Website:** Site visitors, page views, pages per visit, average time on the site, bounce rate, top landing and exit pages, top content, leads & conversions.
- **Blog:** Subscribers, views / visitors, conversions, comments, clicks, rank, inbound links, social media shares.
- **SEO:** Page rank, # of indexed pages, # of inbound links, # of keywords sending traffic to your site, long-tail keyword rank & opportunities.
- **Email Marketing:** # sent, bounces, spam reports, opt-outs, opens, clicks, forwards.
- **Social Media:** # of likes, followers, connections, etc., growth, engagement, momentum, results.

4.3. Building a visual identity

Building a visual identity has became more than a need, has became a necessity. Building your brand around certain elements can boost your business or can brush it beneath the carpet in seconds. The first visual effect determine your audience to interact or not with your brand. Also, in the first few seconds they immediately associate your image with a feeling. It can be trust, they can feel that they can strike a chord with your brand or you can lose their attention and interest just after they had the first contact with you. So, who can make your brand to be the one that stands out? The answer is simple: build an effective visual identity that says to your customers that you are the one they need.

Understanding the concepts

1. Branding

To start to build a brand you need first to understand what is the meaning of the word. CEO of Amazon, Jeff Bezos said that "your brand is what other people say about you when you're not in the room.", in other words, your brand is your reputation. Building a brand is more just creating a product or a service that can solve a problem. Building a brand is creating an experience. This experience is made by all the interactions that your customers have with you business, including the visual experience, the emotional experience and also the buying experience. Even if your business does not sell anything, there is still an exchange that occur between you, as a brand, and they, as a customer. Make sure that the whole experience is a pleasant one and reflect your values as a brand.

2. Visual Identity

Now that you are familiar with what a brand is, and what a brand does, we can dig deeper into the subject. The visual identity is a customer sees when he interacts with you. Either we talk about logo, fonts, color palette or images that you associate with your brand, all of them together must say a single message. All your visual effects must be connected and complementary to say the same story. If you logo is colorful, but the rest of your website is painted in tones of grey, there will appear a discrepancy that will confuse the customer.

How to build a visual identity

As I said in the beginning, building a visual identity became a must. After introduction you to the concepts, I must asking you to do a quick revision of your brand. The image that your customers are seeing when they look to your brand, the image that you want to promote? Has your brand a coherent, clean, simple to understand image? Can your customers associate immediately the parts of your visual identity with your brand? If the answer is no to more than one question, you are to the right place. I will teach how to transform your brand identity from 0 to a 100 real quick.

1. Define your audience

The first magic step that you need to do in order to achieve your goal is to determine who is your audience. Are we talking about a specific niche? Are we talking about a targeted age group? Are we talking about people that share some passions together? This are just a few questions that you need to ask yourself to define who is watching you. For a more simple approach I suggest you to write down the answers to the following questions and build a profile of your customers.

- What is their age, gender, job and education level?
- What hobbies and interests do they have?
- What solutions are they looking for when they come to you?

These three simple questions can push you in the right direction and change the whole perspective about your brand.

2. What is the "why"?

In order to be successful you have to ask yourself what is the "why" of all of this. Why are doing this? Why is your product reliable? Why is your product worthy? Why they should choose you?
Defining the mission of your business may help to see a clearer image of your brand. When you are determining the reasons why your customers should interact with your brand you can understand what they expect from you and your business and how you can fulfil their expectations. Take a moment and decide what is the purpose of your business, determine who it can help, how it can help and why they will want to come to you.

3. Brand personality

For building a visual identity you must take into consideration all the aspects of your brand. The brand personality is determined by the language you use when you transmit the information and the interaction that you established between you and your customers. Social media platforms changed the whole game when it comes to business. Nowadays is easier than ever to have a relationship with the customers. It is only up to you the nature of this relationship.

The relationship between a brand and its customers can influence their decision to become a loyal or not. If the brand strategy is to build an approachable, friendly and empathetic figure that it is close to the customers, the language should be more informal, the feedback should be always the bench-mark when a decision is made and the interaction has to be the main focus. As you determine what your brand personality should be like, make sure that every visual component starting with the language, approach, fonts, images, logo and website design support that personality and build together a strong and powerful message.

4. Visual elements

Coming to the creative part of building a visual identity, I wanted you to fully understand the phenomenon before the fun part. The visual elements of your brand says almost everything about it. The logo, the fonts, the colors that you use, the way your website looks and also the way your social media accounts look are part of your visual identity. Starting with the most visible and also the most important aspect of any business, the logo.

4.1 Logo
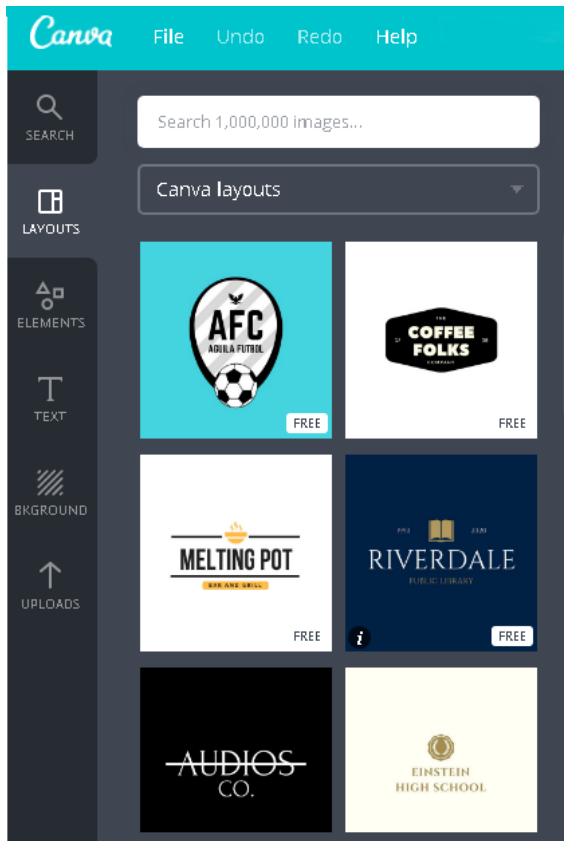
A logo should be SIMPLE! Simple and easy to be recognized. A logo is something that defines your business and express the main idea of it. Also, an important aspect that you should take into consideration is the level of customization. The logo should be easy to be integrated in any header, footer, invoice or banner is needed and look good both color and in black and white.

How to create your logo? The logo can be created by a specialized company or by yourself. If you chose to get help from a specialized company you should expect to pay prices starting with 20-30 euros for a logo. If you decide to do it by yourself, there are a lot of free tools that you can use which can help you to build your visual elements. One of the most popular is Canva.com (left picture), which has also a section called "logo" from where you can get inspiration.

As you may see, the platform is really easy to use and also quite intuitive. After searching through the tens of designs to get an idea of how you want your logo to look like is time to choose the colors, the font and also the images if they are needed.

Considering a study made by Thelogocompany.net, the colors are extremely important in a visual identity. Talking about colors in branding is actually talking about the emotions that they are connected to. For example, yellow is the optimistic color. When your business is doing some charity work or volunteer work, yellow is a great choice for your logo. Blue is related to trust. If you are building something that your customer should trust and believe in, then blue is the color you need for your logo. The examples may continue with all different kinds of tones, but because as humans we tend to remember easier and information that we saw in an image or in an infographic, I will give you this:

Source:Thelogocompany.net

4.2. Color palette

We already found out how important are the colors that a brand is using. As a prosecution of the process of creating a visual identity, we will discuss about choosing a color palette that is complementary, appropriate and suitable for the business.

Each color has two unique codes, one in HEX system and the other in RGB system. To see the codes of a shade you can simply look for it on htmlcolorcodes.com. For example, for the color named NAVY we have the HEX code: #000080 and the RGB code: RGB(0, 0, 128).

If you are using Paint or Microsoft Word and you need to find the codes, just take a look on the screenshots that I prepared for you.

PAINT
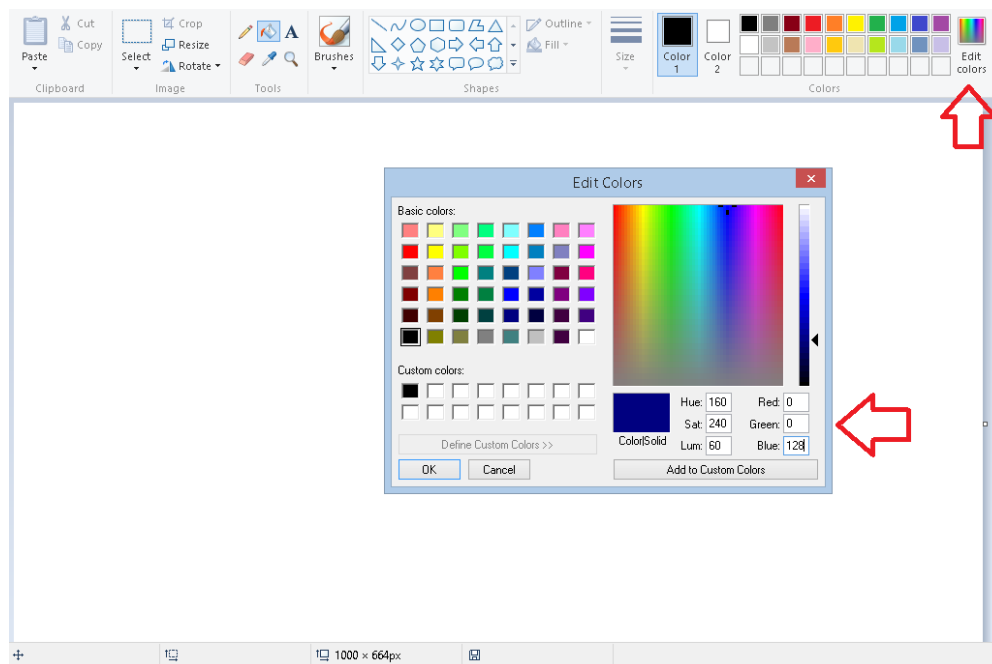
Step one: find that little rainbow in the right side with "*Edit colors*" text under it.

Step two: after you press it, a box like the one in the picture should appear in your project.

Step three: complete the RGB code in the three little boxes in the right. For our example, NAVY, the RGB code was (0, 0, 128) so I put the first value (0) in the box that says red, the second value (0) in the box that says green and the last value (128) in the box that says blue. Voila! Now we have the exact shade that we needed.

WORD
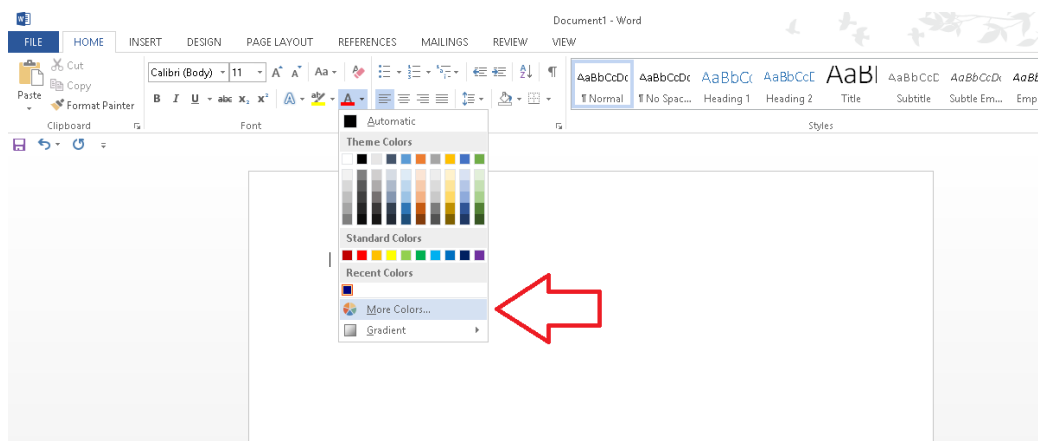
Step one: press on the "*A*" button to change the color.

Step two: find the option called "*More Colors*"
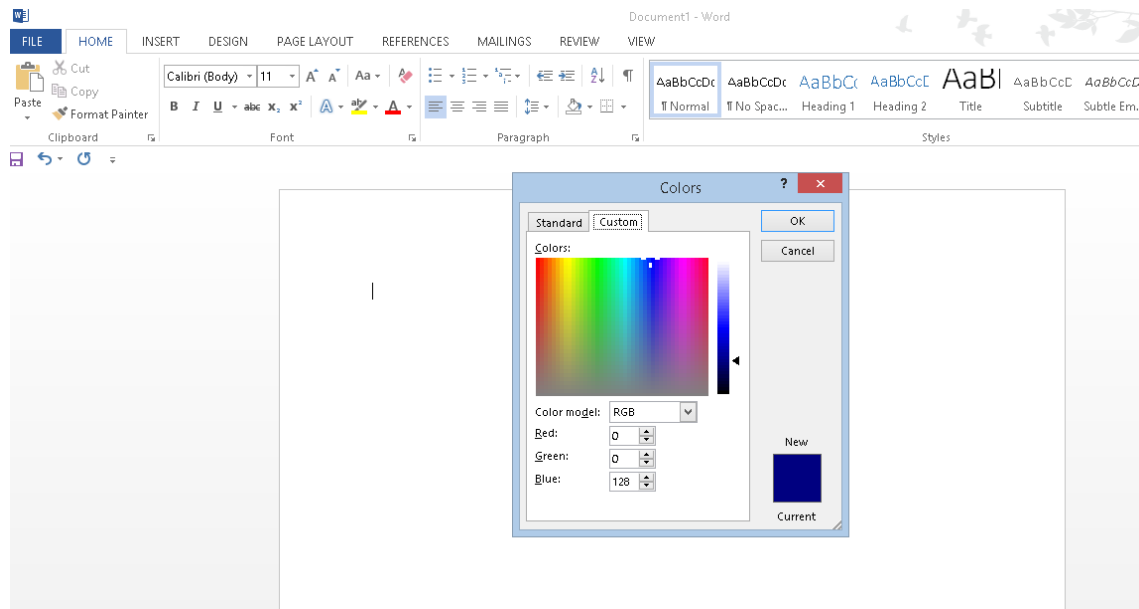
Step three: in the box that will appear you have two tabs called "*Standard*" and "*Custom*"; press "*Custom*"
Step four: select RGB and introduce the values that you have for the desired color. Easy and quick!

If you already decided that you will chose as a primary color blue, for example, you need to find some complementary shades that will fit with your choice. First, think about the impact that you want to make. Do you want you website or banners to have vibrant colors or you want something more chill and calm? Do you want to look friendly or more like professional? Establish those aspects and start to look for the right colors. To help you making an idea, I will show you and example for each of the situations from above.

Example 1

Color Run website is the definition of happiness. With a bunch of complementary colors especially chosen for boosting your mood, this website stands out. It says what is needed and also is exactly what the event is promoting - happiness and colors.
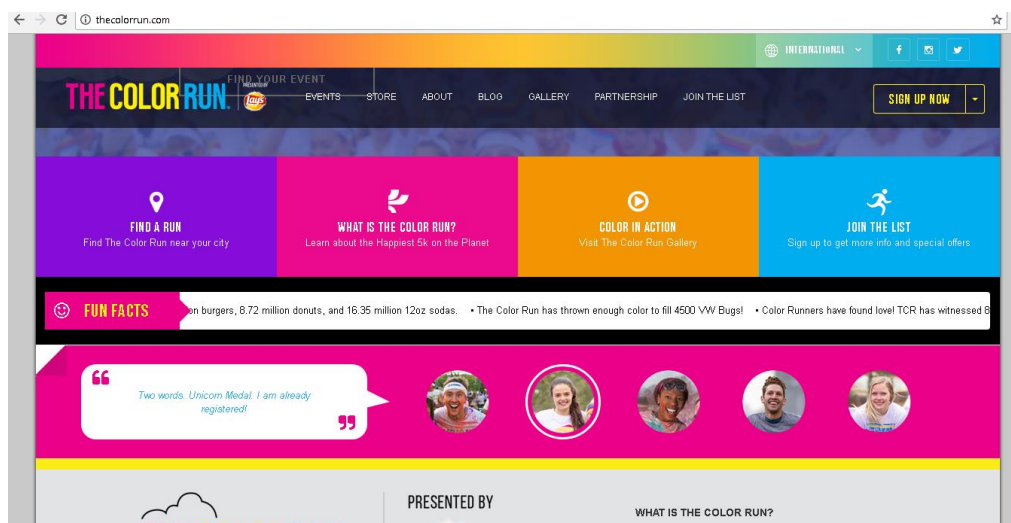
Example 2

Apple has a simple, yet classy design. Focusing on the quality and no quantity, Apple's brand image is easy to recognize, found in all its products and commercials.

4.3 Fonts

Fonts are more important than you think. Is the way you wrap your content and present it to the audience. Using the right font can help you to communicate more effectively the information and get straight to the point. From the beginning try to define the 2 maximum 3 fonts that you want to use and see how they look together. Do they match? Do they round with the colors, with the design? If yes, you have the winners.

Put them all together

After finding all the elements that your brand needed, put them all together and make a coherent, yet authentic image of your business. Make sure that they transmit the right message and they are accordant with your audience. Build a library where you put all you visual elements and share it with everyone from your team. Be sure that they understand the message that the business should transmit and work together for better results.

Inspiration

Building something from the scratch was always a challenge so to help you more, I will give some practical example from our organization to use in the process.

GEYC website has a clear, simple and easy to follow design. With a logo made from two strong colors, GEYC wants to create a relationship of trust with its audience and also to show professionalism in its work. Blue color contributes by giving an emotion supported by the testimonials situated under the menu. The GEYC logo is customizable and can be fitted in a lot of formats and has the same value in black and white. The GEYC logo can be easily put on business cards, flyers, catalogues, rollup banners, banners, T-shirts and so on.

GEYC logo - color

GEYC logo - black and white

In the end of this chapter, I hope you have a better idea of what visual identity means and how important is for your brand. In order to qualify how simple, brief and useful was the information I invite you to solve a small quiz with questions related to the chapter that you just finished reading.

4.4. Having an editorial plan for a cross-channel communication

Understanding the concepts

1. Editorial plan

The editorial plan is a tool to organize the content you deliver. It aims to support the priorities of your communication strategy. Due to its purpose, it is way more than an agenda or calendar with topics, timeline, milestones and deadlines. Besides these key elements, the editorial plan implies prioritizing content to reach the desired target audiences, choosing frequency, linking and promoting messages on different channels, drawing indicators to monitor and evaluate the impact of our communication endeavours, defining roles and estimating the needed resources. You can have a general editorial plan that extends over the years and break it down into short-term plans, that go for a specific period of time, usually 6 or 12 months. While there are many templates for this complex tool, the best idea would be, of course, crafting one of your own, to respond exactly to your communication needs. The following inputs in this chapter will guide you to create the editorial plan that best suits your goals.

2. Cross-channel communication

The cross-channel communication refers to creating and maintaining coordinated conversations across multiple channels. Unlike the multi-channel communication, the cross-channel communication implies engaging target audiences and preserving continuity and context across the various channels. Thus, it means not only communicating the best content, through the right channels, measured against well-considered organizational and communications-specific goals, but also creating a unity between all these messages.

Creating cross-channel messages

Communicating efficiently implies creating specific content for each channel and your target audiences that can be found there. The key to an efficient cross-channel content is to unify the messages across all these channels. It is important that, although the different channels will require various ways of expression, the goal and message remains

the same throughout. A consistent content across channels will support your audiences to get a clear understanding of what you communicate and not get mislead or puzzled.

1. Cross-channel communication inside the team

Having a cross-channel communication within your working team means not only communicating among people in different departments within the same organization, but also having a clear coherent and structured way of maintaining professional conversations across channels, from defining the timeframe in which issues should be replied to, the way of replying to various type of content on different channels, the signature, the topics that can be raised on social media, etc. Of course, each of this specificities should have consistency and not contradict one another. For example, if your position is Project Manager, do not sign your emails with Unicorn Chief, then have your title on the website/ internal platform as Magic Fairy and Report geek on Linkedin, unless you are calling your teammates for a costume party. Change tone (formal/ informal) when needed, but not the message itself. If those who work are already confused, imagine how will your target audiences be when trying to understand you.

2. Cross-channel communication with outside audiences

While there are many tools that allow you to instantly repost your message on multiple channels, this can be tricky if your content is not tailored on the particularities that make it stand out. For example, while you post a great story on Facebook that gets huge engagement, the same message could be not so efficient on Twitter if it is too long and does not have hashtags. Instead, you could create a special Tweet and link it to your Facebook post. In the same way, a short but powerful statement with the trending hashtags could get huge response on Twitter, while the same message shared on LinkedIn may appear extremely unprofessional and superficial if it is not accompanied by a detailed infographic or a short report.

* Tips: Because conversations go well with a coffee and vice versa, you can check here a funny explanation on the content particularities on various social media channels.

How to develop an editorial plan for cross-channel communication

Tailoring an editorial plan for cross-channel communication must start from some key elements included in your communication strategy. If you do not have one yet, don't worry, here are some steps you can follow in order to create one:

- Set your main goal.
* Tips:
It should be simple and clear. Think of it as your dream holiday destination. It might sound fancy that you want to reach "a wonderful exotic and virgin island near a blue lagoon that has only pink flowers and coconuts", but some clear coordinates such as the name of that Island and a pin on that specific spot on the map would certainly be more helpful in order to book the tickets and go there. Dream big, but do not forget to be realistic.

- Define your target audiences.
* Tips:
Use different tools to collect data such as focus groups, observations, surveys and questionnaires. The more in-depth the analysis of your target groups are, the easier you will find more ways to reach them. Do not limit yourself to age, location, occupation and gender. Try to find out more about their lifestyle (e.g.: work and leisure behaviour patterns),

socio-economic and cultural background, as well as their communication preferences (e.g.: what social media do they use and how often are they online, where they browse, what, when and where they search for, what languages do they use, how do they approach one another, etc.). Nevertheless, make a needs assessment in order to find out what are their needs, expectations and motivation to (re-)act in a certain way.

Combining these data will help you divide your target into specific reachable audiences. Keep in mind your main goal and pay attention that, depending on it, a too specific target group can cause missed opportunities, whereas a too broad one can lead to losing focus.

- Set specific, measurable and time-bound objectives that can help you reach the main goal.

* Tips: You can use S.M.A.R.T approach.

1. Choosing what you communicate. Prioritizing.

Now that you have defined your main goal, target groups and objectives, the first lesson you will have to learn while designing an editorial plan is prioritizing. Even if you focus on a very specific matter, choosing what you want to communicate might not be a task to be done in a second.

You will probably want to spread the word and let them know everything about what you have planned. But do you remember the data you have collected? Well, the world might be interested in finding out about you, but also has its own needs, expectations and habits that you should carefully consider. Linking your main topic of interest to your audiences' preferences will support you in engaging them to your cause, so you might want to share with them various type of content. Do not be afraid to share external content, but be careful to choose relevant and trustworthy sources. Showing a broader image of your topic and transforming "talking about me" into "talking with you, about us" will only increase your credibility and reinforce your message.

* Practical example: Let's say you want to make a campaign to reduce waste in your community and you address it to three target groups, namely: company managers in the region, educators and teenagers. Of course, the main focus will be on this topic, but do not forget that sometimes less is more. Thus, link your own campaign to the work and leisure habits of your audiences.

Company managers could be interested in new technologies to reduce the ecological footprint of their businesses (share with them on Facebook interesting videos on Youtube or a well-written and documented article), in regional, national or international conferences on the matter (share with them on LinkedIn the calls for participants) or new policies regarding this issue (start a Twitter debate or inform them via newsletter). The attention of the educators could be drawn by innovative learning tools to be used in the class such as new methods or manuals (share with them on a professional Facebook group or on LinkedIn various resources) and sharing best practices sessions they can relate to (share details during info sessions in schools). In the same way, you can deliver relevant entertainment multimedia content for teenagers (on Facebook, Instagram or other popular channels among them) or let them know about volunteering opportunities, biking tours and recycling workshops.

In this phase, an effective approach could be:

- Brainstorming. Come up with all the issues that could be linked to your main goal and specific objectives. Find relevant content for different types of audiences that can be distributed on various channels. In this stage, do not mind to find a balance between information and entertainment. Focus on any content, relevant for you and your target groups, that you could, at some point, share, in order to add value to the conversation you are creating.

- Connecting the dots. Now it is time to make sense of all the ideas you have come up with. Try to mix and match the content with the most appropriate channels and your target audiences. As you already guess, not all the content has to be shared on all the channels. Choose only the most efficient ones for the type of message you want to spread.

  For example, if you want to share a relevant image for youth, focus on Instagram and Facebook. Do not bother to use direct mailing, newsletters or LinkedIn. Instead, on those channels try to catch the attention of other target groups, by sharing professional articles, reports or analysis.

  Sharing different type of content for different audiences on different channels does not mean not having a coherent communication. All these communication products will be linked by the relevance to your main aim and the adherence to the values you support. So, while connecting the dots, be careful not to have contradictory messages across your channels. Do not tell the youngsters on Facebook that it is cool to drop out of schools and then try to engage teachers on LinkedIn in a professional community that supports teenagers to continue their education. Your credibility will count as zero.

- Prioritizing. Now that you have a list of ideas you want to share and ways of expression > channels > target groups to be reached, it is time to prioritize your messages. Go back to your main goal and your specific objectives. Rate the most and the least important content and try to make an hierarchy among the other ideas. See how to prioritize when everything is #1.

  * Practical example: What is the most essential content you want your audience to find out? Perhaps you want to encourage them to donate blood during the national campaign you are running. The most important message would be to let them know what is the event, when and where will take place and how they can join. You would want to make this content available on all the channels and you will boost its visibility (You can, for example, use a special profile picture with the poster/logo of the event for all your channels and make the details a pinned post). But unless you want to be treated as spam, you will never share this message at every two hours, hoping more people will join. In order to reach your goal, you could instead share various type of other content on different channels: relevant videos about how important it is to donate blood on Youtube and Facebook, key statistics and reports on your website and LinkedIn, stories of donors on blogs, Facebook and mass media, related quotes of the day on Twitter and Facebook. Although not focusing on it, you could also share, from time to time, interesting insights on the national health system and policies or recommendations for a healthy lifestyle on your blog, funny facts about human body on Twitter or inspirational and motivational live videos on Instagram and Facebook.

- Frequency, finding the balance. Alright, so you have prioritized your content. You know what messages you want to share, on which channels and to whom you will address them. But how will you know it is not to much or too little content? Each of the channels has a specific rhythm that should be kept. Thus, it is said, for example, that you should post at least once per day on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, once per week on LinkedIn and blogs. But, of course, the frequency of your messages depends on your main goal.

  Curious to find out more? Check how frequently you should post on social media according to pros.

  *Tips:

  Think of this process as the preparation of a soup. If you put all the ingredients in the right proportion, all the flavours will mix in a delicious meal. But if you just drop a full bowl of salt, you will not taste anything else but the saltiness.

  The soup itself is your main message, as all the chosen ingredients are relevant yet diverse content for specific target audiences. Be careful, maybe your main group you want to spread the word to is composed by vegetarians. Make sure you will not cook your favorite chicken soup for them. Pay attention if they like carrots and peas, or perhaps they will enjoy more a mushroom cream.

  Once the soup is properly cooked, you will have to serve it. The way you do it, represents the channels you use to deliver the content. Once again, go back to the description of your target groups. Some might like to

have it during the evening, in a hot cup at home, others in a bowl in a fancy restaurant for lunch, others will prefer to take it to go and eat it in the park during the break, while others will just drink it in the car, in the parking, on weekends. Whatever is their style, make sure to deliver it that way. Thus, if your audience is on a specific channel at a certain time, start the conversation there and then.

Moreover, even if your target groups are the biggest soup fans ever, they will eventually get bored if you serve the same dish every day. Or maybe they will want to order the main course and Be creative, vary the recipes from time to time and find new dishes from the relevant ingredients, yet keeping the soup always available, as the most traditional order on the menu.

2. Timing

After creating the appropriate messages and knowing where you can find your target audiences on each channel, you come to the timing. Each channel has its own optimised timeframe, specific moments where the maximum users from your target groups are expected to be able to get your message and interact with you. Anyway, carefully consider working hours and official holidays, as well as special days for celebration (e.g. You might be interested in celebrating the International Peace Day or the Human Rights Day with a special content if your main message relates to it).

Getting all timings right is where cross-channel communications can get a little complicated. Although many analysis tools will provide you with statistics about the best hour to deliver your message, consider the trial and error method, as it might help you find the best solutions for scheduling your content.

Wondering what is the best time to post on social media? Here you can check what 16 studies say about it.

Having in mind the data you already know (maybe your target groups are more likely to be found on a specific channel during the evening or early in the morning or only on weekend), try communicating at different hours and see how it goes.

Remember that having a cross-channel communication does not mean delivering the same content, at the same hour and equally often on all the channels.

3. The 3 R's: resources, responsibilities and results

Once the content is scheduled, you must focus on three other details. Remember them as the 3 R's:
- Resources. Think of what you need in order to create and deliver the content on each channel. Maybe you need some new media tools and devices or some special data to prepare it, and definately a specific time and human resources with particular key competences.
- Responsibilities. Clearly define the roles: who manages the communication on each channel (creating, delivering and monitoring the content, as well as replying to the target audiences' requests and questions), who coordinates the overall editorial plan.
- Results. Find and plan how to use analytic tools in order to assess the efficiency of your communication across channels. You can check these 47 free social media monitoring tools to improve your results.

4. Checklist for your editorial plan

If you have followed the recommendations correctly you should, by know, be the happy possessor of an editorial plan for a cross-channel communication. Bellow you can find a checklist to make sure you did not miss anything.

Editorial Plan Checklist

✔ General timeframe of the plan
✔ Message delivered
✔ Type(s) of content
✔ Importance of the message (high, average, low)
✔ Channel(s)
✔ Targeted audience(s)
✔ Date & time for the message to be delivered
✔ Needed resources
✔ Responsible person
✔ Monitoring & evaluation tool(s)

Useful digital tools to set up an editorial plan for cross-channel communication

As you could notice already by now, creating an editorial plan for a cross-channel communication requires a little bit (more) of work. You probably think that there is a too large quantity of information to handle. Worry not, there are lots of free digital tools to help you out. Below there is a fine selection that can ease your effort.

- Google Drive Spreadsheet. You can create and update the editorial plan in real time and share it with all the people involved, from various devices. You can also use it to make sense of data collected (during needs assessment, export results from Google forms or some analytics tools).
- Google forms. You can create and analyze surveys in order to get to know your audiences better.
- Google URL Shortener. You can create short URLs that can be easily shared, tweeted, or emailed. You can also manage and monitor links and see the number of clicks, devices used, location and platforms.
- Hootsuite. You can set up posting across all the different channels at varying times and dates and monitor the cross channel campaign through one dashboard.
- Thunderclap. You can get a single message to be mass-shared, flash mob-style, on various social networks.
- Google AdWords. You can create and assess online communication campaigns.
- Google Analytics. You can use analytics tools to measure website, app, digital and offline data to gain customer insights.
- Facebook Ads. You can create and manage the advertising of your content on Facebook.
- Facebook Analytics. You can check the efficiency of your communication and optimize your content on Facebook.

Your editorial plan could now look like this:

4.5. Managing an online community

In the last few decades the Internet has begun to connect people around the world. If in the past the access to the Internet was restricted and mediated communication was mostly limited to employees in the government, military, or university research communities and to work-related tasks, nowadays everyone can have access to the Internet, regardless their religion, sex, ethnicity or their belonging to any social group. As more diverse groups of people gain access to computer networks, a new type of communication group, known as an online community, has begun to emerge. What is an online community (also called a virtual community or an electronic community)?

What is an online community?

In the Oxford dictionary the online community is defined as "a group of people who regularly interact with each other online, especially to share information and opinions on a common interest; (with the) users of the Internet (or in early use, a computer network) considered collectively."[1] So, thanks to the new technology different group of people that have quite the same interests, hobbies, interact with each other and create online communities. An online community can become a sort of family for the members because it is much easier to build relations with people (even unknown people) when you share with them the same values and principles about life in general.

Constance Elise Porter from the University of Notre Dame in a paper entitled *A Typology of Virtual Communities: A Multi-Disciplinary Foundation for Future Research* offers this definition: "a virtual community is defined as an aggregation of individuals or business partners who interact around a shared interest, where

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[1] https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/online_community.

the interaction is at least partially supported and/or mediated by technology and guided by some protocols or norms"[2].

In an online community people have the freedom to post, can start different discussion on a certain topic, can give some advices or hints to the other members or can ask for the advice of the others. So this kind of community could be seen as an information platform which is guided after a set of rules, values such as democracy, human rights, education, nature, sport, information, sustainability, communication ecc.

Let's introduce some numbers: the biggest online communities in the world are: Facebook (with **over 1.9 billion users**, followed by Twitter and LinkedIn with **around 0.5 billion users**. These super large online communities have several features that allow their users to create their own groups and sub-communities according to their interests.

Classification of online communities

There are different criteria to classify the online communities: their attributes, their supporting software, their contact and relation with the physical communities and the relation within the online communities.

1. Attributes
Some attributes of an online community could be[3]:
• A shared goal or interest that provides the reason for being a part of the community
• Intense interactions and strong emotional ties
• Shared activities between community members
• Access to shared resources
• Support between community members
• Social conventions, language, or protocols

2. Supporting software
The online communities can be classified based on the software they use. The software is a key point in every community because facilitate the communication between the members. By supporting software we understand newsgroup, list server, and a web-based bulletin board ecc.

The list server is a software program that distributes messages to an online mailing list[4].

A newsgroup is an online discussion forum which contains discussions about a specific topic. This newsgroup could be moderated or not, that means when is moderated the moderator chooses and approves posts in order for them to become part of the discussion. In the second case, when the newsgroup is not moderated, any topic and post can be included in the discussion[5].

The web-based bulletin board was used during the 1980s and early 1990s and represented a popular method of sharing and disseminating information[6].

3. Relations with the physical communities
The online communities have strong bonds with the physical ones, but they are not wholly based on a specific geographical location.

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[2] Porter, Constance Elise. (2004). A Typology of Virtual Communities: A Multi-Disciplinary Foundation for Future Research.

[3] Classification Schema for Online Communities, Jonathan Lazar Jennifer Preece, Department of Information Systems University of Maryland Baltimore County

[4] http://www.dictionary.com/browse/list-server

[5] https://techterms.com/definition/newsgroup

[6] http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/encyclopedia/Bre-Cap/Bulletin-Board-Systems-BBS.html

The online communities are based on news, events, people, and locations in the physical community. Government services can be provided via these online communities. Citizens can access government information, such as transit maps, license and permit information, waste collection schedules, and zoning information. It is also possible for citizens to contact their local government officials. But information in a geographically-based online community is not limited to government information. There is also educational information, business information, cultural information, religious information, sports information, and social information[7].

Online communities can be or totally based on physical communities, or partially based on physical ones or not related to any physical communities. In the second case community members may meet face-to-face periodically at conferences, but continuously communicate through computer-mediated communication channels.

4. The relations within the online communities

This is determined by the type of activities that the online community develops and the design behind. When the community is tightly bounded, the communication is very strong and takes places especially among the members of the community. Vice versa, when the online community is loosely bounded, the members are more concentrated on the social life outside the community they are part of.

5. The role of online communities

The main role of the online communities is to bridge and bond the members of the society in general, seeing that there are unlimited choices and minimal constraints nowadays on the Internet. If many taught before that the traditional way of communication could suffer different types of erosion because of the Internet, the emergence of the online communities showed us that these communities have the capacity to supplement, restore, or even replace these social contacts.

The online communities deepen the knowledge and the experience of their members by helping them to connect to others with different beliefs or backgrounds or by reinforcing and strengthening existing social networks.

Types of participation in the online communities

There are two major types of participation in online communities: public participation and non-public participation, also called lurking. Lurkers join an online community and they don't participate actively. In contrast, public participants, or posters, are those who join virtual communities and openly express their beliefs and opinions. Both lurkers and posters frequently enter communities to find answers and to gather general information.

A similar model can be found in the works of Lave and Wenger, who illustrate a cycle of how users become incorporated into virtual communities using the principles of legitimate peripheral participation. They suggest five types of trajectories amongst a learning community[8]:

- **Peripheral** (i.e. Lurker) – An outside, unstructured participation
- **Inbound** (i.e. Novice) – Newcomer is invested in the community and heading towards full participation
- **Insider** (i.e. Regular) – Full committed community participant
- **Boundary** (i.e. Leader) – A leader, sustains membership participation and brokers interactions
- **Outbound** (i.e. Elder) – Process of leaving the community due to new relationships, new positions, new outlooks

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[7] http://aisel.aisnet.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1457&context=amcis1998

[8] "Lave and Wenger". *What is an online community?>Virtual Community online community or e-community>Membership life cycle>*. Retrieved 19 July 2011.

Source: www.johnsonee.com

How to build up your community?

First of all let's make a difference between an audience, which is passive, does not interact and watches only and read and a community which is based on the opposite principles: it is a two-way conversation and it is very active, vivid. Of course, there are some members who do not interact that much or at all, but most of them participate very actively and share what they do with the community or the community's activities with their friends.

We can identify at the beginning **some key-points** based on which we can create an online community, but the list can continue depending on the needs and the values that an online community promotes.

1. try to **lean towards the community which you are part of** and to find the interests, passions, hobbies of the people ecc.;
2. do not talk about yourself, but **put yourself in the shoes of the members** of the community;
3. very important **how often you post different materials** in the community, the **content of the posts** and the way you present it. If everything is scheduled and will be post automatically, even if you are not in front of the computer, you can raise the community's awareness and unintentionally you can make it be active.
4. if the **content** is good and **catchy**, the members of the community will share it with the others without asking them to do it so.
5. the **content** must be most of the time **short and on the subject** and to include one of the **interests that your members have** (e.g. education, sports, democracy, international project and so on and so forth);
6. **be active and ingenious** to make the members become the same way;
7. you become closer to the members if you **ask questions**, if you **put questions**, which means that **their opinion is valuable, important and you care about it**.
8. understand that **you collaborate with people and not with robots**
9. the **empathetic component** plays an important role in an online community because it **strengthens the relations and the trust between you and the members** and between the members as well;
10. If you plan to create an online community, you need to take into account from the beginning the valuable content that you would like to post, to share
11. **promoting some active members** by posting different articles about them and their activity in the community, some **interviews or videos** with them, you have the big chance to **make the other members more active and interested** in the discussions or project of the community;
12. if **you are professional and your work reflects that**, you gain trust and credibility in front of the others and you community has the chance to become bigger, stronger;

Why to create a community?

- to have a data base for the recruitment process in the forthcoming projects, activities, conferences;
- to break the geographical barriers between the members who have the same interests, hobbies, ideals (the community can gather members from all over the country or even from several countries);
- because you can spread the information about/for young people in the digital format easily;
- to valorize some members (the active ones);
- to monitor the course and the activity members in order for you to select them in the projects that fit them the best and to measure the impact;
- to raise the transparency of your organisation towards the members;

Case Study- GEYC Community

The GEYC Community, which right now has over 2,500 members, was created after the foundation of the NGO itself. The Community has an internal group formed of the most active members and the community itself.

GEYC Community became step by step a big and strong one thanks to the shared content that fits the needs and the interests of the young people nowadays. Every member that is very involved in the community is promoted with different articles or videos that make other volunteers become the same. It is like a second family, an online one, where you can share with the others your ideas and you have the occasion to learn something from the others.

The community develops its activity both online and offline. This way, the members have the opportunity to get to know each other better and to strengthen the trust online. In this regard we developed the initiative "In the visit at…", first locally and after that internationally too. The members have the opportunity as being part of the community to make their voice heard and to improve themselves personally and professionally. This way, there are many topics on which the community focuses on and according of that the members can participate in different national/international mobilities (Youth exchanges, Seminars, EVS stages) and conferences. These topics are human rights, democracy, digital, employment and entrepreneurship.

GEYC created also the #**GEYCulet** (a Romanian style diminutive of "GEYC"), the so-called role-model member that respects the norms and the values promoted by the NGO and by the community and who can help the others to become like him. GEYCculet tries to put himself in the shoes of every member to understand their needs and also their complaints to help the community strengthen its relations.

For example, GEYCulet is looking for different national and international projects and summer camps for high school students. Every conference that may interest the members of the community, GEYCulet finds it and publishes it in the community. Right now s/he gives also some advices to the volunteers who will go on EVS, travel and career tips and many more.

Also, GEYCulet takes the burden of the mistakes made by the Community members and he presents it as a learning experience. GEYCulet is never failing, always learning something out of it.

Be like GEYCulet!

Source: www.amazon.com

4.6. Social Media Management Policies

Over the last few years, social media had become an important channel communication with the main purpose of connecting to a large audience spreading across the globe in real time. A proof of this is the statistic of Digital trends 2017 showing that 37% of the world population is active on social media channels.

This is way also non-profit organizations, just like any other business or institution, need to have an online presence in order to increase recognition and credibility, to create awareness in their communities and to reach their target and goals.

A recommended way to create an online presence is to have a well-defined social media policy, which by its rules, contributes to achieving the organization's objectives.

Thus, in the lines below we detail what exactly entails a social media policy, how to apply and what benefits brings to the non-profit organizations in particular.

Defining Social Media's role in a communication strategy

Considering that a non-profit organization differentiates itself from a business by its non-profit values and purposes, is important to reflect this aspect in the communication strategy and nowadays, the website, blog and social channels are the main instruments of communication through which the values of the organization can be shared.

This is the reason why all the actions, including communication and digital activities should be aligned to the organization's values.

"Social media shouldn't be out there alone; it should be integrated and aligned with your strategic goals and target audiences" - Beth Kanter *– Consultant for non-profit organizations*

A social media policy is especially important because it creates the communication guidelines and principles in social media channels. A strong social media policy will empower organizations to take action and make wise decisions while promoting its values and identity.

Reflect the values and purposes of an organization through social media

Depending on the specifics of an organization, you can have one or more of the following purposes:

- Engaging community
- Acquiring and retaining volunteers/ donors / contributors
- Generating brand/ identity awareness

Therefore, it is important to identify who the social media policy applies to within your policy and this can be achieved by translating some of the organization's values to different social media guidelines, as in the example below.

How the values apply to Social Media?

Value	How will this translate into social media guidelines in order to ensure your posts fit with your core values?
ex. Responsiveness	We will focus on listening to what others are saying in our community and make it a priority to respond in a quick and informative manner.

Source: Nonprofit Social Media Policy Workbook

What to Include in a Social Media Policy

There are a lot of great social media policies for organizations, but a policy should be unique for an organization. However, some components are universal and should also include some prohibitions against:

- Discrimination
- Fake news
- Violation of human rights
- Violation of privacy
- Copyright infringement

Some "housekeeping" items for a social media policy for an non-profit organization could be:

- **Transparency** – this means to be honest with your target group and other stakeholders.
- **Dialogue** – meaning that it facilitates communication within the organization and stakeholders, encourages communication and sharing ideas and feedback.
- **Respect** – for values such as integrity, tolerance, diversity, equal opportunities of chances and non-discrimination
- **Responsibility** – to assume the actions, mistakes and the consequences in any situation.

Steps to create a Social Media Policy

You can create a Social Media Policy for your organization using the following steps:

1. Identifying the suitable social media instruments - The main social media instruments are:

- Websites / Blogs
- Wikipedia
- Social networking platforms: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter etc.
- Video sharing sites such as YouTube or Vimeo
- Photo sharing sites such as Flickr, Instagram and Pinterest
- Forums and discussion groups such as Google+
- Any websites which allow comment such as news sites

2. Create a content strategy – The type of content an organization promotes on social media channel is very important because depending on that, you can get your message across or not.

You can choose for a variety of content, such as:

- Articles
- Pictures
- Videos
- Infographics
- Storytelling
- Surveys etc.

WHY IS VISUAL CONTENT IMPORTANT?

40% of people will respond better to visual information than plain text.

90% of information transmitted to the brain is visual. Visuals are processed 60,000x faster in the brain than text.

94% more page visits are received by social posts with images than those without.

60% of consumers are more likely to click on a business whose images appear in search results.

12% average growth in traffic for businesses who market with infographics.

93% of the most engaging posts on Facebook include images as opposed to status updates, links, video

Source: 7 Powerful visual content that will increase social shares

3. Set a schedule - Creating a <u>social media content calendar</u> will help you to plan and schedule social media posts activity.

Social Media Activity Template

No.	Campaign/ Project name	What to Share / Type of content	Channel	#Tags	Period	Posting Frequency	Responsible person	Measure/ Review/ Feedback	Future strategies
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									

4. Determine who is responsible - Determining who's in charge of social media activities is essential to assigning responsibility and accountability throughout the organization for the channels you use. Defining clear roles can improve the strategy and the implementation of the social media campaign.

5. Establish when to use social media - Because you can use social media tools to:

- Take advantage of the large audiences already using social media networks
- Reach new audiences
- Demonstrate an open culture and provide a personal face to the organisation online
- Communicate faster and be more flexible

- Use the power of video and images to tell stories about the issues we are involved in
- Make our key messages visible in existing social networks
- Get feedback, opinions and ideas from a different segment of our community,

is important to ask ourselves *What channel is the best for my message?, What do we want to achieve?, What do we want to say /share / inform? , Can this target the audience group for this programme /project?, Do we respect the principles of our social media policy (Ex: transparency, dialogue, respect, responsibility)?etc.*

6. Choose the right Social Media platform for your organization's message - depending on what you want to share (photos, articles, videos, posts etc), you need to choose the best channel in order to maximize the benefits of social media. Some examples:

- **LinkedIn** - suitable to connect with professionals from your field and allied interests; this channel allows you to share specific information with targeted audience.
- **Twitter -** is used mainly to share news, links, images and videos, without being too verbose about it. The platform is an effective tool for keeping up-to-date on news from around the world.
- **Facebook -** if you want to interact more closely with your audience - the visitors can share your news and updates within their social / personal circles, turning the platform into a digital 'word of mouth' funnel.

Social Media Audit for NGOs

In order to have a clear plan for an organization in using different social media channels and to maximize the results, could be useful to do a social media audit.

A social media audit is a process of reviewing what is working, what is failing and what can be improved upon across your social media channels.

Some directions in a social media audit are to:

•   **Identify Top Performing Social Media Posts -** This step helps you to identify which posts had the biggest impact and to improve the social media content strategy.

•   **Identify Your Site's Most Shared Content** – This helps you to know which posts are getting the most social shares, and break it down per network.

- **Check your brand / identity** - Your brand should be immediately recognizable across all of your social media profiles. When there is a disconnection between Facebook, Twitter and Instagram profiles, it's difficult for the public and followers to determine which profiles are official, or if they're even following the right organization.

Social Media Audit Questionnaire for NGOs

The questionnaire is meant to show the level of presence and engagement of your organization in social media channels. Depending on the answers given, we can have an open discussion about what measures and tools would be appropriate for the presence in social media to promote your organization's values, recognition and initiatives.

Please choose the answer that best characterizes the present situation of the organization you represent. Time: 10 minutes

1. **We use the following educational content in our marketing (Check all that apply):**

❏ Blog
❏ E-books
❏ Workshops
❏ Testimonials
❏ Case Studies
❏ Video
❏ Podcast
❏ E-mail Newsletter

2. **The digital reputation of your organization includes (Check all that apply):**

❏ Website
❏ Blog
❏ Facebook page
❏ Twitter profile
❏ LinkedIn profile
❏ Instagram
❏ Social Advertising
❏ Landing pages
❏ YouTube Channel
❏ Google My Business page
❏ E-mail newsletter
❏ Pay per click advertising
❏ Analytics
❏ Reputation management
❏ Customer forum

3. **Do you have and use a written social media strategy plan?**

❏ Yes
❏ No
❏ Sort of

4. **Do you have a dedicated social media manager on staff?**

❏ Yes, always
❏ No
❏ Sometimes

5. **Did you use Google Adwords to promote your organization?**

❏ Yes, few times in the past
❏ Yes, on a monthly basis

❏ No for the moment

6. What types of measurement tools for social media engagement do you use in the organization?

❏ Google Analytics
❏ Facebook Reports
❏ Others (please specify): ……

7. What type of engagement do you get mostly from social media channels of your organization?

❏ **Acknowledgement** (meaning reaction to your content: likes, appreciation etc
❏ **Association** (meaning users are interacting with your content - reply, comment, mention, follow etc)
❏ **Amplification** (spreading the content – retweet, share, reblog etc)
❏ **Action** (reading a blog post, signing up for a newsletter, downloading an e-book, using form contact to get in touch with the organization etc)

Thank you! :)

Based on the discussions with the organizations' representatives, you can discuss the diagram below, along with some possible ways for improving the presence and results in social media.

The correlation between social media integration and the results of a NGO

	High	
Degree of social media integration into organization activities	**Inadequate resources allocation** You invest in social media, but the strategy does not bring you the expected results	**Proportionate efforts with the results** The organization's efforts are proportionate to the results
	Proportionate efforts with the results Your organization presence in social media is low and have troubles to achieve your expected goals	**Good resources allocation** Your organization is capable to use the minimum of resources in social media and achieve the maximum of results
Low		High

Results of organization activities

34

Possible ways to improve social media strategy for NGOs

High

Degree of social media integration into organization activities

Pink quadrant	Blue quadrant
- Review your resources allocation (ex: target group, Google Analytics, Facebook Reports) **- Check if there are other factors that affect the results** (ex: implementation issues, communication problems between members of the organization)	**- Improve your resources allocation for less effort** (ex: use tools for posting in the same time on different social media channels - HootSuite). **- See how you can engage easily followers/volunteers on social media channels** (ex: competitions, active involvement)
- Improve your online presence (ex: blog, interactions on social media, relevant posts, engage the followers, challenges). **- Use Google Adwords for NGOs and other results tracking tools** (ex: Google Analytics)	**- Engage your followers and volunteers to strengthen your position in the community** (ex: promote your values and results through social media and social actions) **- Convince others to promote your organization**

Low   High

Results of organization activities

References:

- [10 Key components of a winning digital marketing plan](#)
- [6 Components of a Successful Online Marketing Strategy](#)
- [12 Components of a Digital Marketing Strategy](#)
- [2017 Social Media Marketing Industry Report - How Marketers Are Using Social Media to Grow Their Businesses, by Social Media Examiner](#)
- [Digital Marketing and Measurement Model](#)
- [Social Networks Management Policies Ebook by GEYC](#)
- [Social Media Management Policy by Hamilton City Hall](#)
- [Social Media Audit by SproutSocial](#)
- [A STRATEGIC GUIDE TO Social Media for Nonprofits by Sprout Social](#)
- [Nonprofit Social Media Policy Workbook](#)
- [Social Media Policies EBook by Dave Fleet](#)
- [The Best Social Media Practices for Nonprofits by SocialReport.com](#)
- [Social Media Policy Template by TechDonut](#)
- [Social media strategy for non-profits by Trail of Papercuts](#)
- [Digital trends 2017: 106 pages of internet, mobile and social media stats](#)
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