

Communicating with Stakeholders

What do we mean about communication?

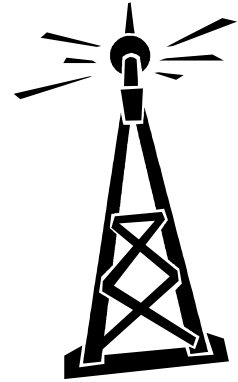
- Communication
 - Communicating **who you are**, what you **need**, what your **mission** is, **who you serve**, **why** you serve
- Education
 - Helping others **learn about you and hunger**
- Understanding
 - Help others understand what they can **do to help** you and **why their help is important**
- Brand Recognition
 - **No question in people minds** about who you are, what you need, what your mission is, who you serve and why you serve
- Tell **YOUR** Story
 - Really tell others who you are, why you are different, why you are important, why the services you provide are crucial to neighbors and the community
- Create Ambassadors
 - Your goal should be to make everyone involved with the food shelf (stakeholders) your ambassadors

Who are stakeholders?

- Clients
- Community
- Volunteers
- Staff
- Donors
- Other partners – SNAP, MN Extension, Civic Groups, others seeking to end hunger in your community



How can you communicate with stakeholders?



- Your stakeholders! Don't ever forget how important word of mouth can be!
 - Internal communications
- Media – newspapers, radio, cable TV, public service announcements
- Advertising – paid and unpaid
- Speaking engagements
- Networking opportunities
- Partnerships – SHH, civic groups, etc.



What do others want to know?

- Clients want your respect
- Volunteers/staff/donors want to feel valued
- Donors want to know their donations are used wisely and honestly
- Your story
- Client stories
- Volunteer stories
- Statistics – how many people are you serving, how many pounds do you distribute, number of children, etc.
- Need – what is the need in your community?
- Stakeholders want to know you are successful

Telling the Story

- Stories move others to action
 - Action is prompted by emotion
 - Feelings help us relate to others
 - True stories put a face on hunger and hunger relief
 - Means more than pleas for help or statistics alone



Getting the Story

- Engage clients
 - Build relationships and trust
 - In doing that, you'll learn their stories
 - Why is their story important?
 - Ask permission to share their stories after establishing trust
 - Use initials or other means to keep clients' anonymous if they choose
 - Client satisfaction/feedback surveys are a best practice



Getting the Story

- Engage volunteers/staff
 - Build relationships and trust with staff/volunteers
 - Encourage a culture of respect and dignity
 - Ask them for their stories – why do they volunteer/work for food shelf?
 - Tell them why their stories are important
 - Ask them to share their personal stories
 - At meetings get volunteers/staff to share a story – collect them



Ways to communicate

- Press releases
 - Free press
 - Don't always have to ask for something
 - Newsworthy items – anything and everything
 - May or may not be picked up
 - Include pictures
 - Doesn't need to be long
 - Get a volunteer to do this for you
 - Never stop telling your story
 - Be creative – think about what will catch people's eye, pull at heartstrings, motivate them to action
 - Follow up with phone call/emails
 - Develop relationship with media sources



Ways to communicate

- Advertisements
 - Thanking volunteers or donors
 - Hours, location, etc. – don't take for granted that everyone knows about you
 - Events – produce drops, open house, appreciation events
 - Public service announcements
 - If paid, work with media to get reduce rates – always ask for a deal or ways to reduce costs
 - Use informational ads to spread awareness and your name
 - Classified ads (cheap!)
 - Church bulletins



Ways to communicate

- Networking

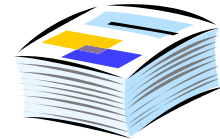
- Get out in your community
- Encourage your board, staff and volunteers to be active in the community
- Partner with your school
 - Service hours & Service groups
 - Connect with advisors, leaders
- Speak at chamber, Rotary, schools, service groups, senior center, churches
- Join civic, business or other service groups
 - Take advantage of activities these groups provide
 - Take advantage of advertising/communications opportunities these groups provide
- Use networking activities to recruit new volunteers and board members with skills needed by food shelf
- Elevator speech –always be prepared
- When seeking partnerships with businesses – what’s in it for them?



Ways to communicate

- Printed materials

- Usually cost effective – can print yourself or possibly get donated/reduce cost from printer
- Pamphlets and posters display around town
- Newsletters – mail to stakeholders, community members
- Client packets – what do you want to communicate to clients, refer to your mission/vision
- Donor packets – give them the facts and options for how they can help you
- Mailers for donations requests
- March campaign, Hunger Action Month, etc. – utilize materials provided
- Have donation request lists handy



Ways to communicate



- Email, text and Website
 - Use free comms to your advantage
 - Email newsletter, news, donation requests to stakeholders (means you need to create an email list)
 - Be respectful – no spam, don't overload/abuse
 - Try to get website design/webmaster donated
 - Keep site updated!!!
 - Recruit a volunteer or board member to manage
 - Think about ways to reach and communicate with clients using technology




Ways to communicate

- Social Media

- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Others
- What is right for you?
- Be consistent and professional - ALWAYS
- Consider getting volunteer to manage - youth
- Way to connect with stakeholders
- It's free

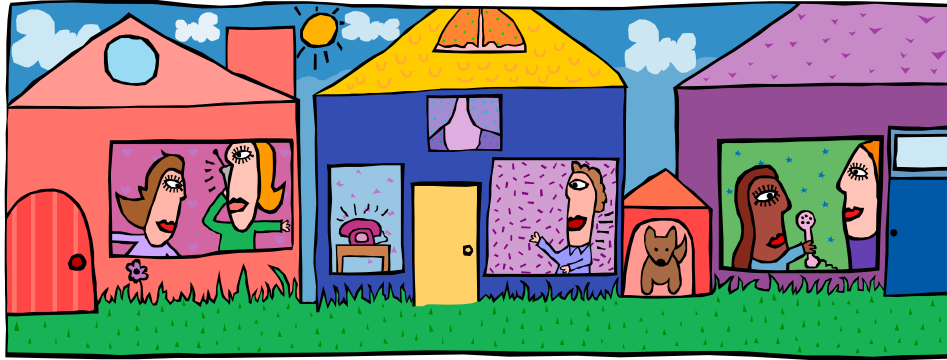


Ways to communicate

- Basic communications
 - Don't assume people know about the food shelf
 - Think about someone new to community or someone who has never needed the food shelf before
 - Anyone you meet could be a potential donor or volunteer or client!
 - Always say thank you – to all your stakeholders verbally, in writing, and publicly 
 - Small actions could have large consequences
 - Don't create negative ripple effect

Other Suggestions for Building Awareness in the Community

- Ask Agency Relations for help!
- Use March Campaign, Hunger Action Month, etc. to raise awareness in community, use materials, get ideas
- Write a column for local paper
- Teach a community ed class
- Host nutrition, food preservation classes
- Partner with others to start a community garden
- Partner with other groups interested in hunger relief/nutrition/improving health
- Sit on boards of other non-profits



Agency Relations is available to help!
Call 651-209-7990 or email
orders@2harvest.org
for more information!