



# MasterClass 1: Practical Parts + Project Planning

Presented by  
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**Fifty Acres**



# About Fifty Acres

**Fifty Acres was established in 2010 by Chief Executive Jo Scard. We're an award-winning communications and engagement agency with a team of passionate strategists and creatives who believe in doing great work, for good.**

We work with NGOs and not-for-profits, industry associations, local councils, government departments and national organisations providing strategic communications, issue and crisis management counsel, media and public relations, marketing, content, advocacy and government and stakeholder relations services.



# MasterClass series

- MasterClass 1: Practical Parts + Planning
- MasterClass 2: Messaging + Voice
- MasterClass 3: Engagement + Audiences
- MasterClass 4: Channels + Momentum



# What we'll cover today

- Key elements of successful NFP communications outcomes.
- The essentials of not-for-profit communications planning.
- Break down the practical parts of NFP project planning—resourcing, time management, scope and preparation.
- Provide you with some tools and worksheets to take away and deploy.



# 1 - Structural essentials

# How to look at communications

- It will mean different things to each of you.
- **Not-for-profit communications is the practice of creating and sustaining mindshare and engagement that advances the mission.**
- It's all in service of advancing the mission of what you do and your organisation. It's intrinsic to everything you do.
- In this difficult time what can a successful communications practice achieve?
- What can you expect of your team?
- And what does that really mean people should do? What's the bare minimum that is acceptable?



# Key outcomes

1. Engagement—the right people know, remember and connect with your organisation and work, then take meaningful action on its behalf.
2. Clear voice—your organisation's voice is clear, credible, compelling and consistent at all points of contact.
3. Sustainable momentum—your organisation's communications are not dependent on an individual.



# Practical elements to power outcomes

The six elements that power successful communications outcomes:

- strategy
- tools
- processes
- reflection
- culture
- team





# Strategy

Our organisation is clear who its target audiences are, has a strategy to reach and engage them, and has solid plans to implement that strategy. The strategy should outline:

- Goals—the big picture statements of what you are striving to achieve.
- Objectives—the measurable outcomes that indicate you've achieved your goals.
- Strategies—the specific approaches that guide your actions and decisions.
- Tactics—the action steps you take to enact your strategies.



# Communications self-assessment

This self-assessment will help you benchmark your organisation's communications capacity and prioritize your efforts to optimize it. Consider asking others on your team to complete this self-assessment, too, and discuss how your results align or deviate.

**Scale:**

2 = Very Satisfied      1 = Satisfied      0 = Unsure      -1 = Dissatisfied      -2 = Dissatisfied

**Rating your current outcomes**

**Score**

**Engagement:** The right people know, remember, and connect with us, taking meaningful action that helps advance our mission.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Clear Voice:** Our organization's voice is clear, credible, compelling, and consistent at each point of contact.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Sustainable momentum:** Our organization's communications function has sustainable momentum that's not dependent on an individual.

\_\_\_\_\_

How satisfied are you with the outcomes your organization's current communications function is achieving?

**Tally your scores from the three questions above:**  
(Maximum achievable score: 6 points)

\_\_\_\_\_

Which outcomes does your team produce most effectively?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Which outcome(s) could be improved?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**Scale:**

2 = Very Satisfied      1 = Satisfied      0 = Unsure      -1 = Dissatisfied      -2 = Dissatisfied

**Identifying where your communications effort needs work**

**Score**

**Strategy:** Our organisation is clear who its target audiences are, has a strategy to reach and engage them, and has solid plans to implement that strategy.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Team:** We have the right people directing, managing, and implementing our organisation's communications. The structure of their role works well for the organisation.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Culture:** Our organisation's expectations for staff collaboration and behaviour encourage healthy internal and external communications.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Tools:** We have the people, brand elements, content, media, campaigns, software, and other resources our organisation needs to communicate effectively.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Processes:** Our communications team has useful written workflows to achieve outcomes predictably without relying on memory.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Reflection:** Our organisation consistently gathers data and uses insights to get smarter and to communicate more effectively.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Tally your scores from the three questions above:**  
(Maximum achievable score: 12 points)

\_\_\_\_\_

Which of these six areas are you most satisfied with?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Which of these six areas are you least satisfied with?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Tools

- We have the people, brand elements, content, media, campaigns, software and other resources our organisation needs to communicate effectively.
- There are a lot of pieces or elements that the communicator has to work with and a lot of organisations get really slowed down by not having the right tools.
- It's not about spending a lot of money for these things, but it is about making sure you've got elements that help you work as a team in a more professional way.



# Processes

- Our communications team has useful written workflows to achieve outcomes predictably without relying on memory.
- Processes become increasingly important as your organisation grows and scales to make sure that you can do more and more in consistent and effective ways.



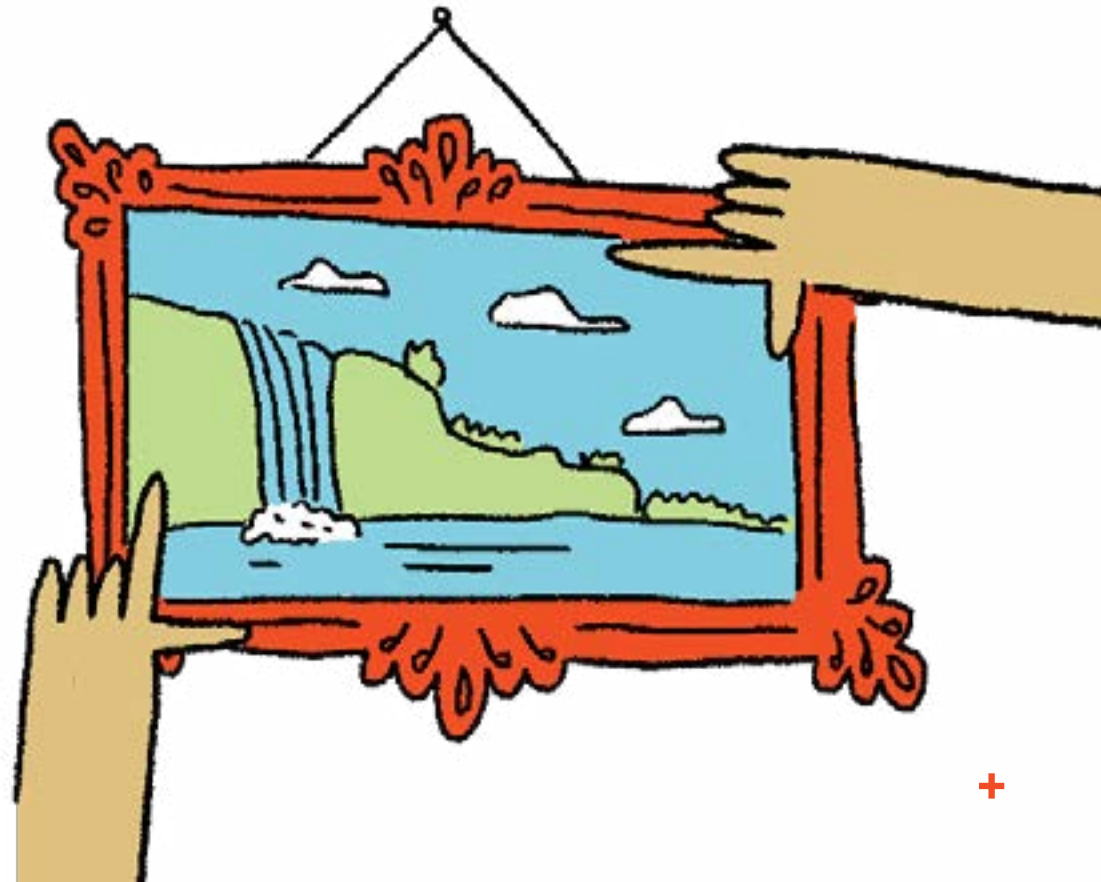
# Reflection

- Our organisation consistently gathers data and uses insights to get smarter and to communicate more effectively.
- You want to be a learning organisation, not one that does something and forgets about it and has to reinvent it next time.
- Building in some practices of reflection to learn and grow is critical to the success of your not-for-profit communications engine.



# Culture

- Our organisation's expectations for staff collaboration and behavior encourage healthy internal and external communications.
- In other words, are people doing a good job working with each other and giving the communicators what they need to do their job well?
- And do the communicators do what they need to do to help others do their job well?



# Team

- We have the right people directing, managing and implementing our organisations communications. The structure of their role works well for the organisation.
- This is going to be really important for people to look at right now, through the lens of the pandemic.





# Your team

- Structuring your communications for success—having the right skills in-house, supplemented by any external resources you need.
- Your in-house resources—strong project managers, great collaborators and team players, empowered to move things forward and make decisions, measuring their results.
- Your external resources—might include strategy, accessing networks, writing, design, video, other creative skills.



# 2 - Resourcing

# Responding to COVID-19 crisis? The now team.

Consider what's happening in the short term and work in weekly iterations. You should be focused on crisis-related goals but not lose sight of the bigger picture.

Meet weekly to plan:

- What happened last week?
- What's happening this week?
- What does our team need to do this week?





# The tomorrow team

Consider the future and the work that can be done today to make you strong as the crisis comes to an end.

Meet less frequently to plan:

- One year from now, where should we be?
- What projects or initiatives should we shift?
- What should stay the same?
- What can we work on today that will make us stronger tomorrow?



# 3 - Best practice project management

# Staying on track

- Running a not-for-profit campaign requires lots of multitasking.
- As the project or campaign grows, so does your list of to-do's and priorities. Juggling these projects and priorities can be overwhelming.
- Using a project management tool should be a must have. It organises all your projects in one place and saves you time by keeping you on track and making collaboration with teammates easy.
- Options to consider are Basecamp, Asana, Trello, Manday or 10K. A free alternative is a spreadsheet.



# Essential communications planning

Plans define what we do and what we hope to achieve.

Effective not-for-profit communicators walk a delicate line between proactively planning and leaving room to react to shifting external and internal forces.

They set communications goals and objectives that support the organisations vision, mission and goals.

# Key planning tools

There are four essential planning tools for not-for-profits:

- developing a mission statement—this helps ensure that staff are spending their time working on the right things
- an annual plan—this sets annual goals and objectives informed by operational goals
- an external communications calendar—mapping out the email, campaigns, external communications
- project briefs—capturing the goals, objectives, strategy, tactics and assets





# Mission statement

- The mission statement expresses the desired outcomes of engagement and communicating with a clear organisational voice.
- It articulates what communications exist to do.
- It can serve as a useful guide when limited resources have to be allocated and decisions made.

# How are you creating a better world?

If you think of your vision statement as describing the big picture of your work, the mission statement defines your slice of it, your organisation's actual purpose. It explains what your organisation does and why it exists. With your vision in mind, use the questions below to articulate your organisation's role in achieving its vision - and explaining what you do.

In one-two sentences, explain what your organisation does.

How does your organisation do it? What's your approach?

Why does the work you're doing matter?

To whom does your work matter the most?

# Annual planning

Annual plans help ensure communications is effectively working toward the right goals and objectives. It's important to ask the following questions:

- what can communications do to support the organisations strategic goals? Do we have the capacity to achieve them? If not how can we improve our capacity?
- are we well informed about who our audiences are, how they perceive our organisation and how they experience engaging with us? How do we grow mindshare and engagement with them?
- how do we ensure we are speaking with a clear and powerful voice?
- what are the most important things to achieve given constraints?



# Strategy Worksheet

Use this worksheet to map out a strategic plan of action.

**Problem:**

## Goal

A big-picture statement of what you are striving to achieve

## Objective

A measurable outcome that indicates you've achieved your goal

## Strategy

A specific approach that guides your actions and decisions in the service of your goal

## Tactic

An action step you take to carry out your strategy

# Communications calendars

Communications calendars are specific and tactical, they outline external plans for email, mail and other owned media.

Often developed in spreadsheet format, they map which channels and themes will be used to communicate—detailing events, holidays/ annual days.

A communications calendar usually identifies:

- key events or initiatives to promote that will generate mindshare and inspire action
- campaigns and themes that tell a cohesive story across all channels and reinforce the organisation's voice
- tactics used to communicate and their frequency
- outcomes needed for the team to reach their objectives

# Project briefs

One of the simplest and most effective ways to build a strategy into any campaign or project is to draft a project brief.

- a useful brief articulates a project's goals, objectives, strategies and assets, capturing details necessary to ensure that the team doesn't lose sight of what it's trying to achieve. This may be short one or two paragraphs
- a project brief also provides a tangible way for communications staff to collaborate with their peers to advance programs and advocacy
- it keeps everyone aligned by providing a document that can be revisited.

# Keep going and good luck

Don't give up, that will achieve zilch.



# Let's recap...

What did we cover:

- define your vision and let it drive everything you do
- examine resources and be realistic or modify them
- deploy really effective planning to ensure you can deliver on your vision
- use all the tools but keep it simple—mission statement, annual plan, calendars and briefs.





# Questions?

Did anything I say raise any questions for you or is there something you were keen to learn about?



# Upcoming webinars

- 15 July: [Crisis Leadership – How your NFP can navigate uncertainty, establish new ways of working and reduce risk through a diversified income stream](#)
- 16 July: [2020 Government Engagement - Responding to COVID-19](#)
- 30 July: Pro Bono Australia Webinar
- 30 July: [Masterclass 2 – Messaging + Voice](#)
- 27 August: [Masterclass 3 – Engagement + Audiences](#)
- 24 September: [Masterclass 4 – Channels + Momentum](#)

For more information, visit Fifty Acres Academy  
[www.fiftyacres.com.au/academy](http://www.fiftyacres.com.au/academy)





# Thank you!

If you would like any more information or further assistance about this process or a hand with any future projects, let's chat. We're here to help!

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