



MasterClass 2: Messaging + Voice

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 (August 27)
- MasterClass 4: Channels + Momentum (September 24)



What we'll cover today

1. Quick recap on MasterClass 1: Practical Parts + Planning
2. Where do you start?
3. Mindshare and understanding its importance
4. The primary outcomes of successful communications
5. Understanding voice
6. The key elements to establish and maintain your organisation's voice
7. How to rethink messaging
8. Message + voice = narrative



1 - Recap on MasterClass 1: Practical Parts + Planning

Quick recap...

What we covered:

- 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
- slidepack and course materials from MasterClass 1 will be emailed to you along with today's slidepack and materials.



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?

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?



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

Any action step you take to carry out your strategy

2 - Where do we start?



Starting point!

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.

Understand what makes you different.

Begin with a brand strategy anchored in your strategic plan.



3 - Mindshare and its importance

What is mindshare?

- **Mindshare is the level of awareness and understanding that a program or organisation has in people's minds.**
- Not-for-profits strive to build mindshare so they are top-of-mind when the people who will benefit from their mission or want to support it are ready to take action.
- Not-for-profit communications is the practice of creating and sustaining mindshare and engagement that advances the mission and vision.



Why is it important?

- Gaining that mindshare advances the mission of what you do and what your organisation can achieve.
- It's intrinsic to everything you and your organisation does.
- It is critical to your organisation's success.





Voice + mindshare

- If we have mindshare people hear our voice.
- When they listen people act. Your organisation then achieves what it set out to do.
- Before we can understand voice we need to understand why we are speaking—what motivates us?
- What is our vision?



4 - The outcomes and objectives of successful communications

Outcomes that advance mission

- **Engagement:** the right people know, remember, and connect with your organisation and work, then take meaningful action on its behalf
- **Clear voice:** your organisations voice is clear, credible, compelling, and consistent at all points of contact
- **Sustainable momentum:** your organisations communications are diversified and not reliant on an individual



Objectives that advance vision

- What can communications do to support the organisations goals and objectives?
- Do we have the capacity we need to achieve those objectives?
- Are we well informed about our audiences and what they think of us, and what they need from us in order to engage effectively?
- How will we grow mindshare with them?
- How will we ensure that our organisation speaks with a clear and powerful voice?



5 - Understanding voice

What is a clear voice?

- An organisation whose voice is clear, credible, compelling and consistent at all points of contact takes its audiences down a more clearly illuminated, direct path towards engagement.
- Communicating with a clear, consistent voice helps build mindshare by ensuring the organisation's messages and visuals support and reinforce each other.



Having a successful voice

- Founders or leaders are typically effective communicators who are able to write and speak about the organisation powerfully and consistently because they are expressing their own vision.
- As an organisation grows and more people start writing, speaking, and producing materials independently, it becomes more challenging to express a vision clearly and consistently.



6 - The key elements to establish and maintain your organisation's voice

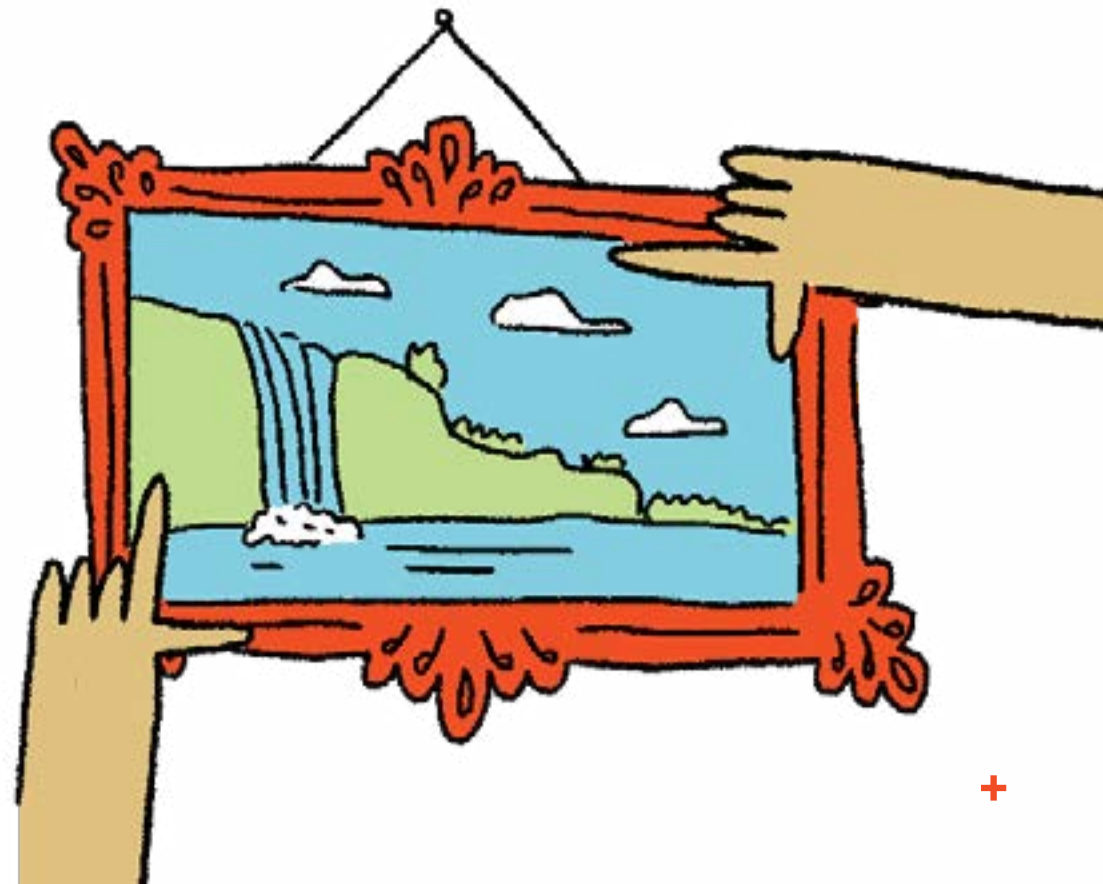
Clear and consistent

- When communications functions are decentralised and dispersed—or worse, not considered as essential—then the organisation's voice lacks an internal champion responsible for expressing it clearly across the organisation.
- Without a clear voice, building mindshare and engagement is harder, staff and board members begin to feel frustrated that the website and other external communications don't feel consistent, connected, or clear.
- External audiences see the organisation in a more siloed way. Donors or activists may get multiple emails and communications asking them to do different things.
- It's often at this stage that staff feel the organisation isn't speaking with one voice and look to engage internal or external communications specialists.



Resourcing

- The desire to communicate with a clearer voice and increase output leads to a dedicated communications function of some sort—organisations recognise it's essential to the success of their programs.
- The first dedicated communications person in an organisation is often tasked with creating materials for external outreach, fundraising, event promotion and more.
- The communicators day fills up with the mechanics of maintaining social media, sending out emails and newsletters, and updating the website. As budget allows, some organisations expand the team to supplement this persons capacity.
- Sometimes the big picture is lost as people get absorbed in detail. It's important to be able to resource and adapt to your communications needs.



Structure to maximise voice

- In smaller organisations staff are expected to be content creators and engagement managers.
- Generalists able to effectively manage multiple projects, collaborate, produce materials and be highly independent.
- In larger organisations these roles are more likely to be separated and subject matter experts are often engaged.
- **We need to balance:**
content + engagement v's planning + reflection



Your team + voice

- If your communications team exists predominantly to build mindshare and engagement with donors and prospects, consider integrating it into strategic development.
- If the communications team exists to expand client outreach and recruitment consider integrating it into programs.

Teams needs to have 5 elements to deliver effective voice:

- expertise
- clear focus on limited priorities
- strong internal communications
- creative experimentation
- supportive leadership



Skills that help deliver voice.

- Someone who has worked in a successful communications role has relevant experience in building mindshare and engagement.
- They arrive with useful digital, print, media and other skills. They've ideally worked in an organisation with a clear voice and understand how that's achieved, and explore why that's an important communications strategy.
- They understand what building sustainable momentum within an organisation is and often with limited budgets.



Voice toolkit

- Communications leaders need a toolkit that contains brand assets that combine to create a compelling story—via print and digital content—about the organisation and its work.
- That content, disseminated through the right channels to reach the right audiences, builds mindshare and engagement, communicates in a clear voice, and creates sustainable momentum.



7 - Effective messaging

Making messaging useful

- While only a handful of staff within a not-for-profit will design materials, just about everyone will write and speak on behalf of the organisation at some point.
- Giving them clear messaging will help ensure that your organisation's voice is clear and consistent.
- Messaging is an overused word that means many things—but put simply **it's words that convey meaning and prompt action.**
- Messaging should be scaled appropriately for our organisations capacity and fully integrated into your team's workflow so they routinely write and speak from the script.



Persuasive messaging

There is a difference between persuasive v's comprehensive messaging.

Persuasive messaging is designed to help an important and specific audience such as donors, clients, policy makers or other stakeholders.



Your messaging assets

Your not-for-profit's messaging assets should include:

- a **tagline** that works well with your organisation's name
- compelling **vision, mission and values statements**
- **comprehensive messaging**—boilerplate language and an elevator pitch that provides a high-level overview
- **persuasive messaging** targeting specific audiences—donors, clients, members, advocates
- **fundraising case for support**
- a **stirring manifesto** that can be used as a general rallying cry



Making brand assets work

- Along with visual assets, compiling messaging elements into a branding guide that you can use as a training tool and an ongoing reference manual.
- Review your organisations brand assets including brand startegy, visuals and messaging after any significant shift in organisation strategy or leadership to ensure they are still relevant.



Baking in your messaging + brand

- Make sure your brand assets are clear as part of staff onboarding and HR practices.
- Bake your brand assets into your HR guidelines so new staff are trained to use them from the start.
- By training all new staff and coaching existing employees to write, design and speak on brand, you'll turn everyone into an ambassador for your organisation, which amplifies your voice and helps create sustainable momentum.



8 - Creating a compelling narrative

Message + voice = narrative

Not-for-profits increasingly rely on content—the story of the organisation’s mission, the people and causes it benefits, its work locally or globally—to build mindshare..

- Content is a broad term used to describe the expression of ideas across various channels.
- It is expressed and shared in many ways: long-form, editorial narratives, short social media messages, digital newsletters and printed brochures.
- Contents help staff celebrate wins, shows funders what their investors achieve, helps clients understand why they avail themselves of an organisations services.
- Content needs to establish narrative and is, at its essence, a combination of message and voice.



Translating assets into content

An effective brand strategy defines what an organisation wants to be known for and how it will express its voice:

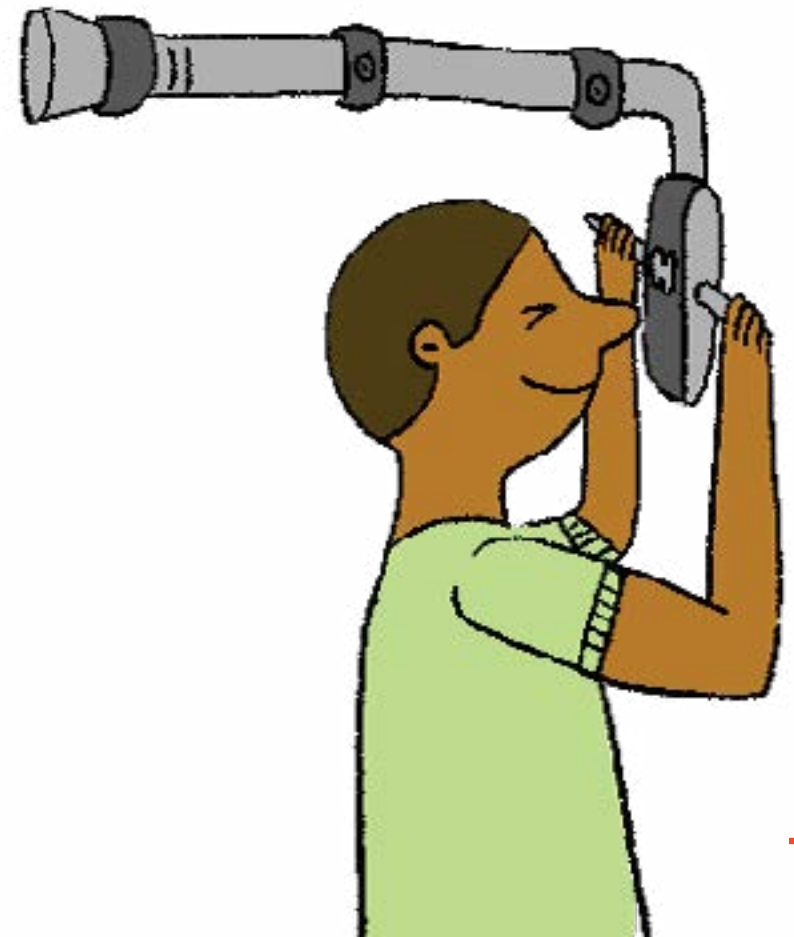
- Ask questions like 'Does this piece of content reinforce what we want to be known for?' or 'Does it support our positioning?'
- These questions help determine what content to prioritise and provides a strategic way to reject something that's out of alignment with the organisation's voice.



Narrative pipeline

Communicators project manage to produce quality, consistent, on-brand content that builds mindshare and action.

- Some organisations struggle to resource this pipeline and their ideas come to a grinding halt.
- Organisations that commit deeply to sharing their thought leadership as a key content strategy have dedicated content creators that consistently write, edit, shoot, design, and post.
- Smaller, less resourced organisations focus on producing content for fewer channels sustainably, often created by peers or in the news etc.



Just keep swimming

Whatever you do, don't give up and keep going—good luck!



Upcoming webinars

- 10 August: [2020 Government Engagement - Responding to COVID-19](#)
- 13 August: [Crisis Leadership – How your NFP can navigate uncertainty, establish new ways of working and reduce risk through a diversified income stream](#)
- 27 August: [Masterclass 3 – Engagement + Audiences](#)
- 24 September: [Masterclass 4 – Channels + Momentum](#)

For more information, visit Fifty Acres Academy
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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