CREATING EFFECTIVE PARTY-BASED COMMUNICATION

A Guideline for Preparing a Communication Strategy for Political Parties

CMD
KENYA

CONTENTS

Vision

The vision of CMD-Kenya is to promote the institutionalization of vibrant and democratic political parties capable of enhancing and perpetuating multiparty democracy in Kenya.

Foreword

The general election is approaching in Kenya at a time, when the country has promulgated a new Constitution and embarked on wide-spread reforms.

Specifically, the Constitution secures social, economic and political rights besides creating a facilitative legal framework that makes it possible for all citizens to access and participate in all governance structures. Additionally, reforms including Political Parties' Act 2011 and Elections Act 2011 have drastically changed the formation and management of political parties and their relationship with the voter.

Consequently, these reforms mean that success of political parties is heavily dependent on their ability to clearly communicate the policies they consider important and would like to pursue if voted into power. A good communication strategy is instrumental in achieving this goal as it permits the political party to frame issues in a perspective that is clearer and appealing to the voters.

This Guideline for Preparing a Communication Strategy for Political Parties is part of the work under a project aimed at enhancing the capacity of political parties to communicate more effectively with the voters through development and implementation of communication strategies. The project is a partnership between CMD-Kenya and Danish Liberal Democracy Programme (DLDP). It is funded by the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD).

The development of the guideline was a consultative process, which took account of prior experience and lessons learnt during various communication training workshops conducted from October 2011 to January 2012 with the 27 CMD-Kenya member Political Parties. The parties undertook a communications needs assessment and identified challenges, needs and priorities for their communication.

The essential role of professional communication in the functioning of political parties especially in emerging democracies such as Kenya cannot be gainsaid. More so; communication between leaders and the led never just happens; it must be deliberately organized, developed and built. Voters need to be informed about political programs, policy issues and political alternatives presented by the candidates and political parties. On the other hand, political representatives need to know the concerns and information channels of those whom they are supposed to serve.

Thus, this guideline is part of the broader thinking about strong party-based communication strategies being vital avenues for meaningful public participation in political processes, informing citizens' electoral choices and connecting voters and elected officials around common programs.

Hon. J. B. Muturi
Chairperson, CMD-Kenya

Mission Statement

The mission of CMD-Kenya is to facilitate the growth of and perpetuate multiparty democracy through the capacity building of political member parties in Kenya.

Acknowledgment

Introduction

Rationale for a Communication Strategy

The development of this guideline has been done with a clear understanding that political parties in Kenya in general have not evolved internal and external communication policies. It is also apparent that they do not have effective modalities for interacting with the citizenry. The resultant communication difficulties faced by political parties are clearly captured in both the Communication Needs Assessment carried out in October 2011 and the Political Parties of Kenya Communication and Media Audit prepared in 2005 by CMD-Kenya.

While there is some commendable improvement from 2005- when the audit revealed that 90 % of political parties did not have websites- we now observe that individual politicians are investing heavily in New Media. However, this is not reflected in their political parties. The political parties still rely on traditional media as the channel of communication with 66 % of the parties stating their best means of communication is through radio and newspapers.

The 2011 Communication Needs Assessment further confirmed the findings of the 2005 Audit that a majority of political parties lack the requisite professional communication capacity within their structures. Particularly during electioneering period, individual politicians (mostly at presidential level) ensure necessary professional capacity for communication in their campaign teams and tend to 'ignore' their parties.

Consequently, the parties face major challenges in communicating with the public on their policies, agendas or ideologies. Hence, this guideline is aiming to be practical and instructive in providing an overview of a step by step process on how to prepare and implement a communication strategy. Having a communication strategy will go a long way in helping political parties to have sustainable communication and information framework that engages the public and keeps them informed about the parties' policies, agendas or ideologies.

The importance of communication as a management tool cannot be gainsaid. Indeed, success of any political party can be highly enhanced through a clear communication structure that is well known and understood. On their own, brilliant policies and visions cannot guarantee success for a party. They must be supported by purposeful, structured and targeted communication. A party needs effective communication to successfully build party membership and convince voters. Through effective communication, political party stakeholders have a way to interact, seek useful answers to their questions, and voice opinions on the party's position on major issues.

It is advisable to place communication function strategically in the party organization structure. Once well placed, this function can be used to facilitate an open horizontal and vertical communication in the party. In other words, members should be able to communicate with party leaders, local branches should be able to share information, groups and committees should be able to reach out to the National Executive Committee/ Council (NEC) and vice versa.

Introduction

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                        NATIONAL
                    GOVERNING COUNCIL
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                  NATIONAL EXECUTIVE
                  COMMITTEE/COUNCIL
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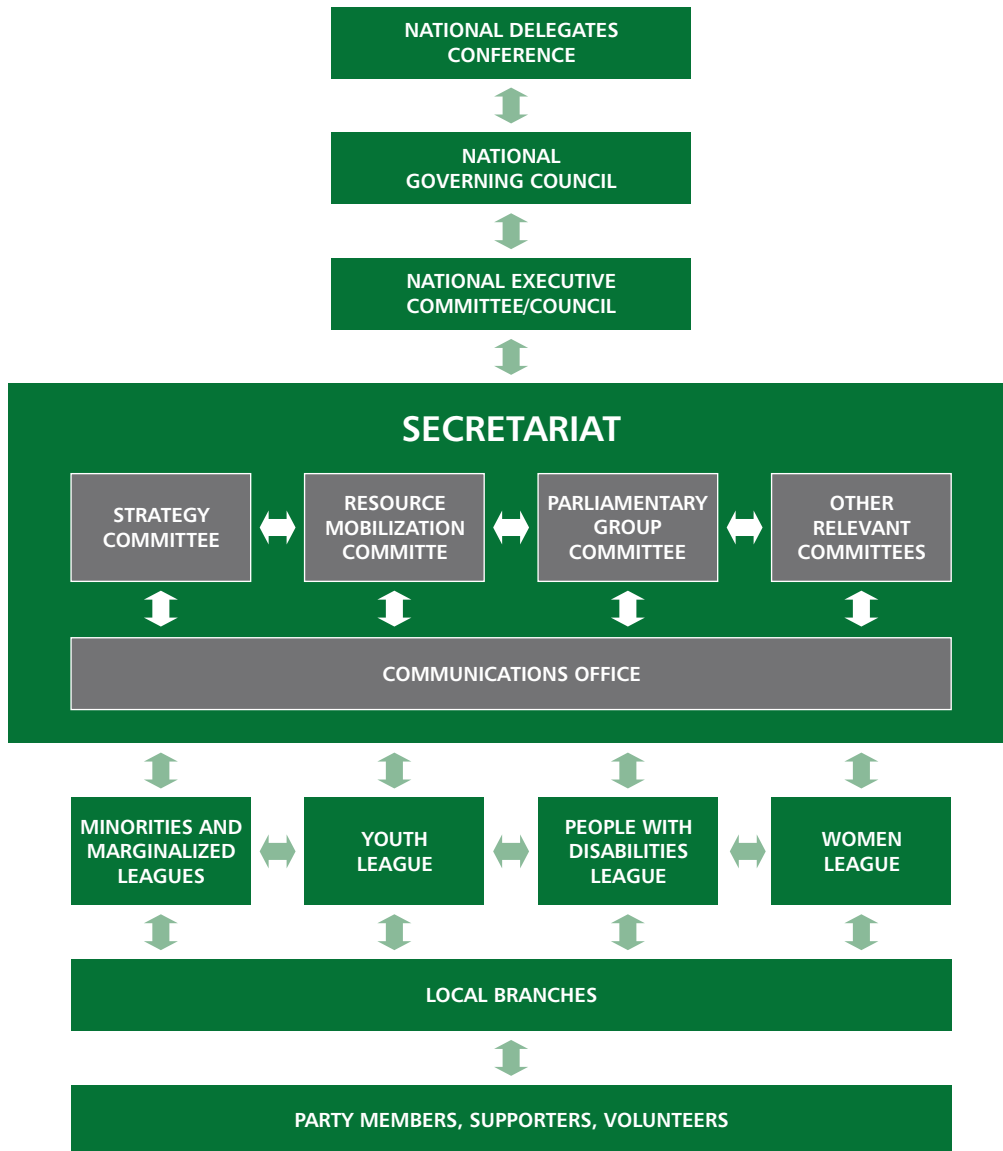
Introduction

Using the Guideline

Various communication capacity building workshops preceded the development of this guideline. In particular, the communication strategy building workshops during which each of the CMD-Kenya member political party worked through the most important elements of a communication strategy proved exceptionally useful. It is expected that with this guideline, political parties will be able to achieve their individual communication strategies.

The guideline provides the user with essential steps in preparing a communication strategy. The first step is to determine who to involve and how to create

ownership of the process and the final product. The second step is undertaking a background analysis to understand the context of the political party. The third step involves creating a linkage between the Party Manifesto and the objectives of the Communication Strategy, after which the target group is determined, the appropriate message developed and channels selected to deliver the message. The other steps are planning implementation, feedback mechanism and monitoring and evaluation. These are the basic elements of any communication strategy. The actions and activities of each step are seen in table one below.

TABLE 1: Steps in Preparing a Communication Strategy

STEP	ACTION	ACTIVITIES
ONE	Getting Started	• Who to involve • How to ensure ownership
TWO	Background Analysis	• Conducting PESTEL analysis • Conducting a SWOT analysis
THREE	Linking the Manifesto and a Communication Strategy	• Identify central elements of the manifesto for a communication strategy • Branding and visibility
FOUR	Target Audience	• Identifying audiences and their characteristics
FIVE	Message Development	• Preparing SMART messages
SIX	Vehicles	• Matching communication methods with audiences and messages
SEVEN	Planning Implementation	• Budgeting for implementation • Planning the timing • Organizing implementation
EIGHT	Feedback Mechanism	• Assessing impact • Identifying new action to support
NINE	Evaluation	• Collecting data • Assessing impact

STEP ONE
Getting Started

In preparing a communication strategy, a political party can choose between different approaches. Every approach has distinct advantages and disadvantages. This guideline emphasizes on approaches which ensure involvement and integration of ideas from a majority of party stakeholders thus enhancing collaboration and high motivation among party stakeholders.

A broad ownership of the process, decisions and final product is important. Therefore, different roles and functions within the political party, e.g. party members, Members of Parliament, NEC members, leaders, communication professionals must not only have a say in the process but must also be heard.

Explaining Bottom-up Participatory Approach

1. Set up a small technical team comprising of representatives from various organs of the party including individuals responsible for communications functions.
2. The mandate of the team is to identify human and financial resources, set realistic timeline and milestones for the preparation process, engage stakeholders on the needs of a strategy and ensure ownership to the strategy in the party.
3. Invite/facilitate a range of stakeholder meetings to discuss the main components in the strategy (could be ordinary members, youth and women representatives, NEC, MPs etc.).
4. The technical team will collect all input and draft a communication strategy.
5. The draft strategy should be submitted to various party stakeholders and partners for review and further comments.
6. Optionally, seek expert review of the communication strategy.

STEP TWO
Background Analysis

The second step is to understand the context of the political party. Key analytical tools to apply here are PESTEL and SWOT analyses. PESTEL consists of six key dimensions i.e. Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal dimensions. These are used to assess external conditions. SWOT refers to the internal Strengths and Weaknesses and the external Opportunities and Threats of the party.

Conducting PESTEL Analysis
The purpose of conducting PESTEL analysis is to assess the general macro environment in which the party operates. A political environment is usually complex and constantly changing. Therefore, the six dimensions of PESTEL are critical variables to assess and understand in order to see the opportunities of the party in campaigning. It is advisable to assign a

team which ensures involvement in the analysis by different stakeholders within the party and hence acceptance of conclusions. To maintain its usefulness, PESTEL analysis should be updated and reviewed regularly.

Conducting SWOT Analysis
The overall purpose of a SWOT is to conduct an analysis of an organization and its ability to reach an objective. It highlights the internal Strengths, Weaknesses and external Opportunities and Threats of a party at a specific point in time. Once PESTEL analysis has been conducted, SWOT will provide a framework to introduce, discuss and analyze the impact of the context to the party. It is advisable to involve a cross section of stakeholders of party members to achieve a comprehensive analysis.

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[1] Bradford, R., Duncan, P. (1999) **Simplified Strategic Planning: The No Nonsense Guide for Busy People Who Want Results Fast**, Chandler House Press

STEP TWO
Background Analysis

TABLE 2: PESTEL Dimensions and Related Questions

DIMENSION	QUESTION
Political: Interests, actions, laws or regulations of interest groups whose actions can impact the operations of the party.	• Who are the influential political actors at the National and County levels? • What are the key issues affecting society?
Economic: Prevailing economic conditions which affect the society. This includes among others income per capita, credit accessibility, unemployment rates, interest rates, inflation, economic recession and growth.	• What are the general economics to be cognizant of? • Which specific aspects of the economy will impact the society? How will they change in the future?
Social: Pertains to demographic factors such as size, population, age and ethnic mix besides income distribution.	• What are the characteristics of the target audience in terms of age, income, education and ethnicity? • What are their concerns/challenges/interests?
Technological: Pace of technological development and its effects on society and economy?	• What are the technology trends? • How are target audiences changing in ways that affect us?
Environmental: Status on environment and facts on impact of climate change.	• What are the environmental challenges to focus on?
Legal: Type of litigation that may affect the society.	• What kind of legal precautions should be taken?

STEP TWO
Background Analysis

SWOT Analysis Step by Step

1. Put together a team of preferably 20-25 people representing party stakeholders with various interests and concerns.
2. Have a facilitator to inform the team about the overall purpose of the SWOT.
3. As part of the overall purpose, the facilitator should present the PESTEL results and lead discussions on them.
4. Divide the participants into at least four teams and assign tasks. The assignment may be specified by each group handling one dimension of the SWOT or generalized by all groups discussing all the four dimensions.
5. Create a chart with the acronym with a square for each of the letters S, W, O and T.
6. Have a plenary discussion where all the four teams will present allowing further additions and comments.

DIAGRAM 2: Example of a SWOT Analysis for Mende Political Party
(Objective: Strengthening the campaign for the upcoming elections)

Strengths (Internal)
- Charismatic leader; able to communicate well internally and externally
- Well prepared manifesto
- Human resources with different communication skills in different functions and locations in the party

Weaknesses (Internal)
- Lack of human capital in the party to coordinate communication functions
- Lack of funds to set up party secretariat with office equipments as appropriate

Opportunities (External)
- Identify not used channels, easily available including communication tools free of costs

Threats (External)
- Low public trust and credibility of political parties

STEP THREE
Linking the Manifesto and the Communication Strategy

As earlier stated in the introduction, some central elements of a manifesto are the vision, mission, themes and policy issues.

A good communication strategy is able to distill the Manifesto content into simple straightforward campaigning messages based on the discussions of priorities for a specific communication strategy or campaign.

To establish a clear linkage between the Manifesto and a communication strategy, this guideline first sets out by describing each of the central elements. Further, the guideline also presents ways to enhance the vision and mission of the party.

Vision
The vision is understood as a statement outlining how a political party wants the world in which it operates to be. It is a long-term view and it can be emotive and a source of inspiration[2]. Some tips to help ensuring this are:

- The vision covers the party's future idea for the whole country.
- The vision should be clearly "articulated" for people to accept, own it and adopt it as a shared common point of view.
- The vision should be manifested in the policies throughout the manifesto.

Example of a vision of a political party
The vision of MENDE Party of Kenya is to achieve "A green, just and prosperous Kenya for all".

Mission
The mission defines the fundamental purpose of a political party, succinctly describing why it exists and what it does to achieve its vision[3]. Some tips are:

- The mission is the overall objective of the political party.
- It should answer the question "What are we here to do?"
- Consider formulating it actively by using a verb.

Example of a Mission
Using the vision of Mende Party of Kenya: "A green, just and prosperous Kenya for all" The mission statement may be somewhat like: "To build a prosperous Kenya based on green values and a fair and just society".

Themes
Themes are key priority issues that a political party must use for profiling purposes during the campaign. They mainly highlight broad areas such as public service improvement (e.g. good governance), promotion of national development (e.g. infrastructure development) and addressing of public concerns

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[2] Armstrong, J. Scott and Reibstein, David J. (1985), **Evidence on the Value of Strategic Planning in Marketing: How Much Planning Should a Marketing Planner Plan?,** in H. Thomas and D. Gardner (eds.) **Strategic Marketing and Management,** John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, pp. 73–87
Also available at http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1031&context=marketing_papers

[3] Armstrong, J. Scott and Reibstein, David J. (1985), op.cit.

STEP THREE
Linking the Manifesto and the Communication Strategy

(e.g. improving security, reducing unemployment)[4].

For campaigning purpose, the party will choose three to four themes, which it considers most relevant, convincing and reflective of it. Establishing the relevance of the themes is a prerequisite to proper message development and selecting the target audience as will be discussed later in this guide.

Check list for Themes:

- Should be clearly articulated and have an apparent linkage to the vision and mission.
- Could be linked to a simple slogan like 'We Hear You, We Will Change and Improve Your Lives.'
- Aim to develop three to four strong and interesting themes supported by well prepared policy issues.

Example of Themes for the Hawkers National Alliance (HNA) Party
HNA Party is campaigning in the middle of a security crisis as a result of increasing incidents of Al Shabaab retaliation attacks on Kenyan soil. Thousands of workers are demanding salary increments due to high inflation rates and sky-rocketing cost of living. The government is beset with a poor image locally and abroad as a result of graft scandals, slackness in implementation of the Constitution and a lack of political good will to decisively handle the 2007/2008 post election violence cases.

Based on this context, HNA Party's themes shall be: Security, Economy, Good Governance and Foreign Policy. HNA Party will seek to propose policy interventions to improve security of Kenyans, put in place measures to re-invigorate the economy and tame inflation rates, commit to widespread reforms through full implementation of the Constitution that will also ensure good governance hence tackling issues such as corruption. Finally, a good image locally and abroad will be facilitated by the satisfaction in handling the four themes.

Policy Issues
Simply put, policy issues are the specific actions a party undertakes in its pursuit for its vision and in order to achieve its mission.

While political parties are under pressure, and therefore, tempted to propose exaggerated promises in order not to appear blunt, un-ambitious, and uninteresting to voters, it's important to keep policy issues simple and realistic in order to enhance credibility. In the long run, a politician and/or a party will gain immensely if they minded their credibility. One of the tools of achieving this is ensuring that the policy issues are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound). They must

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[4] Kwaka, Joseph and Mumbo, Hazel, (2011), **Political Leadership and Governance**, in Joseph Kwaka et. al. (eds.) with an introduction by Henry Indangasi Challenging the Rulers; **A Leadership Model for Good Governance**, East African Educational Publishers Ltd., pp. 53-75.: Njeri Kabeberi (2011), **Political Parties and the Quest for Good Leadership,** in Joseph Kwaka et. al. (eds.) Ibid., pp. 117-136: Joseph Kwaka, (2011) **Political Leadership and Economic Development,** Joseph Kwaka et. al. (eds.) Ibid., pp. 137-160.

therefore demonstrate clear funding strategies for the policy issues as a matter of necessity.

Objectives of Communication

Having described the central elements in a manifesto, it is now opportune to create the linkage to the communication strategy through defining objectives of a specific communication strategy. However, it is important to clearly understand the difference between party vision, party mission and objectives of a specific communication. Remember that a communication strategy is supporting the present campaign, while the vision and mission are long term aspects of the party.

Communication objectives serve as benchmarks in planning and decision making. Good objectives should be measurable. To translate vision and mission into communication objectives, the SWOT and communication needs assessment tools cited earlier provide some valuable information for identifying the target audience, preparing the message and its convincing attributes to the targeted audience.

Examples of Objectives of a Communication Strategy for Dot Com Party of Kenya
- To increase the percentage of voters in a specific election.
- To increase influence in specific issues in a specific campaign.
- To increase the percentage of registered voters who associate some benefit or advantage with the Dot Com party.

- To encourage Dot Com supporters to engage in party activities more frequently.

The Importance of Branding

A brand of a political party is the voters' bonding with the party through presence and performance. The presence is in recognition of the party's name, logo, slogan or appearances in the media that sends a message about the political party. The performance is based on credibility and is compared to the other offers, e.g. competitive political parties.

A good brand is one that is widely known and recognized. Political parties must distinguish their mission and most important activities from other political parties. The party requires to be branded so well so that a mention of its name will resonate with memories, positive feelings, create and foster a distinct image in the public's mind.

A brand is created over time and therefore the party should stick to its overall vision, mission and messages besides developing a design that it easily recognizable in terms of colors, logos and symbols.

Strategy Process Flow

To arrange a communication strategy in a way that will better allow users to easily understand the process, this guideline suggests the following structure as illustrated in diagram three. The structure is attributed to President Barack Obama's 2008 campaign team[5].
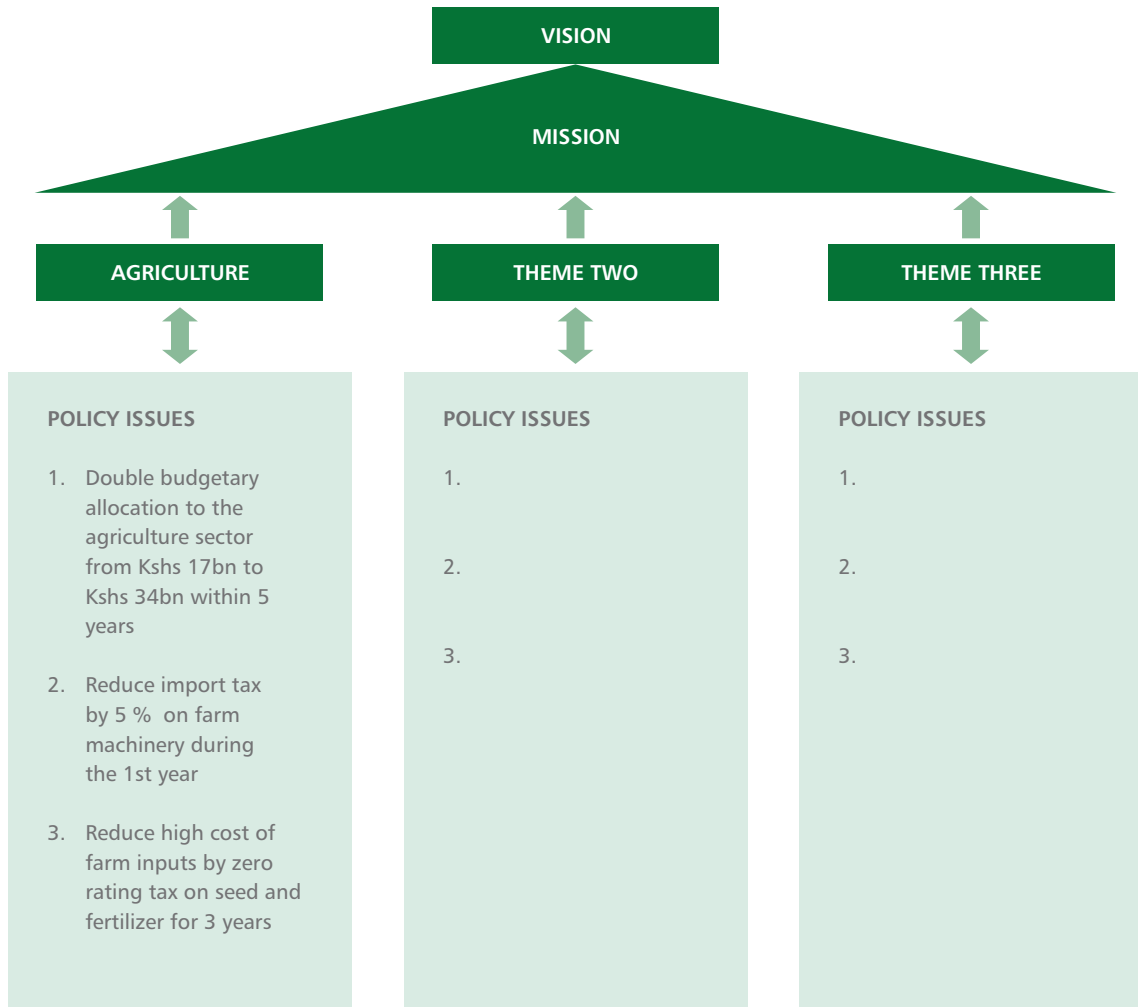
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[5] This structure was presented by Mr. Soren Toft during a Communication Training for Political Parties Workshop in November 2011 at Utalii Hotel, Nairobi - Kenya.

STEP THREE
Linking the Manifesto and the Communication Strategy

DIAGRAM 3: Explaining the Obama Campaign Message Structure

VISION

MISSION

AGRICULTURE

THEME TWO

THEME THREE

POLICY ISSUES

1. Double budgetary allocation to the agriculture sector from Kshs 17bn to Kshs 34bn within 5 years

2. Reduce import tax by 5 % on farm machinery during the 1st year

3. Reduce high cost of farm inputs by zero rating tax on seed and fertilizer for 3 years

POLICY ISSUES

1.

2.

3.

POLICY ISSUES

1.

2.

3.

STEP FOUR
The Target Audience

After defining objectives of the communication strategy, the next step is to determine the party's target audience. Consider their characteristics, knowledge, attitude and own understanding of their needs. This information will provide most of the inputs needed for creating targeted messages. Further, it will help in understanding the tools of communication and in making appropriate choices of communication channels / tools. In order to reach some level of understanding of the target audience, it is crucial to meet, know, listen to them to gain specific knowledge of their awareness levels, knowledge and attitude. This will in turn help in the preparation of a strategy based on facts and knowledge rather than assumptions/presumptions. Consider table three below, on what data to gather on specific target audiences.

During meetings with the target audience, information can be gathered both systematically and informally. Systematically, the party can prepare data collection sheets, e.g. in order to know income, age, family status and other facts. During informal meetings, the party can get immediate reactions to ideas or polices besides taking note of the audiences own suggestion for polices targeting their needs.

TABLE 3: Example of Data on Specific Target Audiences of Mende Party

TARGET AUDIENCE	Youth / Students - 18-25
CHARACTE-RISTICS	Students in higher learning and tertiary institutions
CONCERNS, INTERESTS	Future relevant job opportunities, access to credit facilities, political stability, healthcare
KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE	Literate, have capacity to analyze content, high political interest
KNOWLEDGE ABOUT POLITICAL PARTY ISSUES / CANDIDATE	Dependent on both the individual, environment and location
HOW / WHERE DO THEY GET INFORMATION?	Social media, face-to-face, television, radio, newspapers, mobile phones

STEP FOUR
The Target Audience

With proper profiling, it is unlikely that a party will arrive at 'too generalized' target audience such as women or youth. Such groups are not sufficiently specialized and will prove difficult to target as they have highly varied characteristics such as geographical location, educational level, religion and social economic status besides a multitude of other interests influenced by a variety of characteristics

Generally, a party can make two/three categories of audience. First, the usual support base comprising of groups or people who have supported the party in the past and are evidently unwavering. Secondly, the new voters who may be young people who are voting for the first time, small scale farmers in specific sectors and or regions or casual laborers who are no longer satisfied and loyal to their old party and are craving for change. The third group consists of mediators. These are groups such as teachers and religious leaders. The mediators have an influential role in society as communicators, opinion shapers and mentors. More so, they enjoy the credibility in society and have the character of medium to reach other target audience. The media has mediator characteristics, but it is advisable to consider it more of a tool to convey messages to the true final audience than a target audience.

STEP FIVE
Message Development

Overall, a good message explains the value and positive impacts of particular policy proposals. It is considered successful, when other people repeat it. Tangible facts and logical arguments support the message.

Essentially, the message is the compelling reason why people should vote for a party or elect a candidate. The development of a message is based on the result of the analysis of the target audience. It is also derived from the policy issues as prepared in the manifesto and discussed under step three.

People receive messages every day from various sources. Usually, the messages are in a high competition for the attention of the audience. Ensuring effective communication, the communication strategy must strive for clear, compelling and distinct message. .

The choice of tools/channels is guided by preferences and characteristics of the target audience and the intended action being sought. Consider delivering messages several times using a mix of tools/channels in order to reinforce it.

Pre-testing Messages
It is worth emphasizing that a message is only effective, if the target audience can understand the action needed and act accordingly. One effective way

TABLE 4: Describing a Procedural Approach to Message Development

STAGE	DESCRIPTION
1. Content	• Ensure that message is a part of the overall policies (vision, mission, themes), emphasize main point to communicate to the audience • State a single idea for the audience to take from message
2. Language	• Ensure the choice of words is clear and unambiguous as various audiences may interpret them differently • Ensure the language is appropriate for the target audience
3. Messenger or source (the person who will deliver the message)	• Ensure the messenger is credible to the target audience • If possible involve mediator target audiences as described under step five
4. Vehicle	• Communication tools and channels used for message delivery • Choose most compelling medium to reach target audience
5. Timing	• What special event to utilize to make target audience more receptive and draw their attention to the message

to ensure that the audience understands the message is by pre-testing it. Pre-testing messages can be done through Focus Group Discussions, where people representing various interests, concerns and demographics discuss the proposed messages and respond. Their reactions help to determine issues that need to be clarified or reframed.

More importantly, they help the campaign to be comfortable with the message. There are four primary stages of the Focus Group Discussion; the topic guide should follow this basic flow shown below.

However, it is also possible to test messages without requiring formal Focus Group Discussions. Using the messages in informal conversations, social / professional settings etc., can give valuable feedback. After successfully preparing the appropriate message, the next step is to determine how to effectively deliver that message to the determined target audience.

Conducting a Focus Group Discussion

1. Introduction by a moderator who provides an overview of the goals of the discussion.
2. Share the messages.
3. Encourage in-depth discussion; encouraging a conversation that reveals participants feelings and thoughts.
4. Closure; the moderator summarizes the impressions or conclusions gathered and participants clarify, confirm or elaborate on the information.

STEP SIX
The Vehicle

The vehicle is the channel or tool used to deliver a message. The tool can be electronic, digital, print or face to face. Within each tool, choices on channels must be made. For instance, the channel within electronic tool can be radio or television. It is easier to make the right choice of vehicle to reach each of the target audience after successfully going through the steps to determine objectives of communication, target audience analysis and message development.

Different tools and channels have varying strengths, weaknesses, drawbacks, advantages and costs. It is advisable to use a mix of at least two or three different types, but the choice and format depends on:

1. The target audience
2. Budget
3. How long the communication intervention will continue
4. How critical it is to encourage genuine participation for the deserved change

The diagram below describes a range of tools and channels commonly used, their advantages and disadvantages.

The list is not meant to be exhaustive, but when selecting tools and channels, it is advisable to consider those that are most credible and cost-effective. Also, include considerations led by the intentions (one way or two way communication) and number of people (large or small group) and take into account the availability of financial resources and professional capacity within the party. For instance, it may be costly to purchase airtime on a popular TV station prime time, but cost effective to post a video clip on social media. While effectiveness may vary with the target audience, face-face is generally accepted as the most credible tool.

New Media

Fundamentally, new media is becoming more broad-based and a key pillar in political positioning, branding and messaging. The extent to which new media is used varies across the country and target audience. Social media, mainly Facebook and Twitter, email, SMS and websites, is considered in this guideline. A number of them work conjunctively. For instance, there is an application that ties the social media accounts to mobile telephony so that once the social media accounts are updated; the same message goes out as text messages to mobile phone of subscribed supporters. In similar terms, Facebook and Twitter accounts can be merged so that once a tweet is posted online, it is automatically posted on the Facebook page as an update. As a profound part of a communication packaging, messaging and mainstreaming ICT in political productivity is a matter of political survival, inclusivity and influence. It thus calls for serious investment.

Facebook and Twitter are examples of the social media, in which users have an opportunity to be participants. It combines text, images and video with web-links, creative participation of contributors, interactive feedback of users and formation of a participant community of editors and donors for the benefit of non-community readers[6].

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[6] Bailey Socha, Barbara Eber-Schmid, (nd.), **What is New Media; Defining New Media isn't Easy,** New Media Institute
http://www.newmedia.org/what-is-new-media.html

STEP SIX
The Vehicle

TABLE 5: Describing selection of tools and channels, their advantages and disadvantages

TOOL	Electronic
CHANNEL	Radio
TARGET AUDIENCE	Specific target audiences
ADVANTAGES	1. Good for simple messages and slogans 2. Can help to generate interest, awareness and excitement 3. Allows greater room for feedback, questioning and input
DISADVANTAGES	1. Audio only, no visual communication 2. Programs not always at convenient time
TOOL	Electronic
CHANNEL	Television
TARGET AUDIENCE	General public, can be tailor-made to specific audiences
ADVANTAGES	1. Audio and visual 2. Good for simple messages and slogans
DISADVANTAGES	1. No room for interaction unless linked to a call-in-show 2. Expensive 3. Programs not always on at convenient times
TOOL	Print
CHANNEL	Newspaper
TARGET AUDIENCE	Literate public
ADVANTAGES	Can review and re-read as needed
DISADVANTAGES	1. Requires literacy 2. Not as deep reach as TV and Radio 3. Final story depends on the editors
TOOL	Print
CHANNEL	Posters, brochures, leaflets
TARGET AUDIENCE	General and specific target audiences
ADVANTAGES	1. Can deliver simple messages and slogans 2. Not necessarily expensive and can often be produced in-house
DISADVANTAGES	1. Requires visual and written literacy 2. Generally better for simple messages andslogans 3. Limited to specific distributions

STEP SIX
The Vehicle

TOOL	Print
CHANNEL	Promotional items such as T-shirts, mugs, aprons, caps, lesos, carrier bags
TARGET AUDIENCE	General and specific target audience
ADVANTAGES	1. Moderatelyinexpensive 2. Make a visible statement in the market popular
DISADVANTAGES	Can be costly to produce, although can be done in partnership with small enterprises
TOOL	Digital
CHANNEL	Websites / internet, blogs, youtube, facebook, twitter, email
TARGET AUDIENCE	1. Full presentation of the party including candidates, policies and activities 2. Literate public 3. Can address specific audiences
ADVANTAGES	1. Youth becoming computer savvy 2. List-serves can be quite inexpensive
DISADVANTAGES	1. Computers needed and may not be widespread 2. Listserves and websites require someone to manage content as well as technical assistance 3. Social media requires someone to manage and promote interactions
TOOL	Digital
CHANNEL	Mobile phone and SMS
TARGET AUDIENCE	Specific target audience, Youth in particular
ADVANTAGES	1. Growing reach, especially in rural areas 2. Low cost for text messages
DISADVANTAGES	1. Text messages must be short 2. Best if linked or tied to other communication efforts 3. Can be regarded as spam

STEP SIX
The Vehicle

Facebook and Twitter provide instant feedback and commentary from the targeted audiences. Political parties and candidates must have well designed, regularly updated and highly interactive Facebook page and Twitter account as continuous information maintain their interested.

Understanding Twitter[7]
- **Tweet:** A 140-character message.
- **Retweet:** Take a twitter message from someone else and rebroadcast that same message to your followers. Gives credit to original posters and helps generate an engaged follower.
- **Direct Message:** Direct messages services within Twitter allow you to send those that you follow personal messages that are 140-characters.
- **Feed:** The stream of tweets you see on your homepage. It includes updates from users you follow.
- **Handle:** Your username.
- **Hashtag:** A way to denote a topic of conversation or participate in a larger linked discussion (e.g: #Mende-Nominations). A hashtag helps others to discover your Tweets and aggregates all Tweets that include that hashtag.

Twitter Tips[8]
- Develop a tone/voice: Give your account a personality! Make it fun, engaging, and relevant to your audience. Remember that you are tweeting on behalf of the Party.
- Twitter can be a two-way conversation tool: You can take its functionality beyond simply sending out messages. It gives you the ability to respond to others or Retweet their messages.
- Do not spam! Determine a reasonable number of Tweets. Too many messages can become an annoyance and people will stop following your page.

Tips to Creating Facebook Page
- Have a team to maintain the page. Maintaining the page includes tasks such as adding a unique cover photo and showcasing the most important news on the page timeline, highlighting what matters so people notice what's important.
- Manage everything in one place- See and respond to recent activity and private messages right from the top of the Page.
- Have insights and understanding of the fans in order to perform more targeted postings and create a tone that will be welcoming and resonate with the audience.
- Have an active presence through a constant stream of content and responding to those that interact on the page.

Handling Social Media Content
In handling social media, it is advisable to underscore the fact that it provides the opportunity to be

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[7] Pace University 2011, **Twitter Guide, Marketing and Communications**
http://www.pace.edu/marketing-communications/twitter-guide

[8] Pace University 2011, **Twitter Guide, Marketing and Communications**
http://www.pace.edu/marketing-communications/twitter-guide

proactive in addressing the negative comments that may arise in regard to the party. Hence, it may not be wise to erase a comment or post simply because it is negative as this may create an impression that people active on the social media do not have a voice. On the other hand, carefully thinking through and addressing the comment has a better outcome than simply deleting it or ignoring it. However, if a comment is inappropriate by way of threats, obscenity, a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, or otherwise injurious or illegal it should be deleted. Prior to deleting we suggest capturing a screen image of the post for records and then deleting it.[9]

Managing negative posts on Twitter can be a little more challenging than on Facebook because on Twitter all posts can be seen by the public and they cannot be deleted. This calls for a higher proactive and careful manner of handling Tweets because potentially the negative Tweets may multiply. Since the nature of Twitter makes it difficult to see the true personal identity of an account, it may be difficult to simply send the person who tweeted an email. When receiving a negative message, consider sending the sender a polite and friendly direct mail. In that Direct Message ask them to provide an email address where further communication with them can continue.

Short Messages (SMS)

SMS Communication provides a direct means of reach to even those who are not accessible via internet. For instance, mediator target audiences can be send updates and alerts and encouraged to forward them. It is also cost effective.

SMS communication is also handy for purposes such as conducting surveys, petitions and mobilization. Information from mobile phone surveys can improve understanding needs and hopes of the target audience. It is also possible to set up petitions that can be signed by text message. The message is then converted to an email and integrated to an existing online petition as additional signature. Finally, a party can utilize SMS strategy to rally up support, to remind subscribers what the party stands for and to informing them on what turning out to vote would mean for the leadership and to them.

Finding and engaging audiences through SMS may be challenging. This guideline proposes various ways to surmount this challenge including taking advantage of the member's database. All registered political parties in Kenya provided a list of not less than 24,000 members, which included their phone contacts. This is the easier option since the members presumably identify themselves with the party. It is, however, prudent to find a way of seeking consent first before sending the text.

Secondly, opinion polling and voting by the wider public or from sections of the public is a good way of getting quick reactions and developing a database. Polling will involve a system where the user sends in a given keyword selected from a list of possible answers offered in response to a question. Ensure intentions of the polls are clear, accompanied by clear-cut question and the possible answers.

Consider the frequency of polling to keep people engaged, but avoid spam. This will vary during a

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[9] Pace University 2011, **Twitter Guide, Marketing and Communications**
     http://www.pace.edu/marketing-communications/twitter-guide

campaign period with more polls as the campaigns progresses.

Website development and maintenance
The political party's website should be ably designed with essential features. This includes a custom template design, the ability to update pages with ease, creating a poll, integrating forms and creating blog posts.

Additionally, the website design should allow the party administrator to add event forms, expand the site with more pages, create a multi-level site menu, along with the ability to add multiple user accounts to allow and restrict site access to different users depending on the needs of the party. It is important to have a technically competent and oriented person who understands the elements, development and maintenance of a good website. The person should understand well issues of web hosting (space, bandwidth), domain name (get a URL that people can find, how to buy a domain name with network solutions, how to register a web site domain - video, the cost implications), planning the website (navigation, content).

Promoting the Website
The easiest way to promote a website is through Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Build Web content so that it ranks well in search engines. Other ways to promote include: word of mouth, email, and advertising and placing URL on all professional correspondence.

STEP SEVEN
Planning for Implementation

Budgeting for implementation

Each political party will have its own way of developing a budget. The key advice is to develop a budget as an essential first step i.e. it is part of the mandate of the technical team discussed under step one. Budget planning should also be guided with the understanding that a communication strategy needs to deliver cost-effective communication with matching impact. Keep the available budget in mind throughout planning process and propose activities accordingly.

Planning the timing

Timeliness is a crucial factor which determines whether communication aspirations or desired great impact shall be met. Given a budget, there is need to wisely craft and plan the tools and channels within a certain timeline. For instance, organizing an outdoor public meeting in the rainy season might be disastrous. On the contrary, distributing fliers on soft loans at a University graduation ceremony will no doubt reach the students targeted.

Organizing implementation

Implementing a communication strategy requires effective systems to steer communications activities at different levels. Developing an implementation plan table will help create clear guidelines for those involved. One of the responsibilities of the communication team is to ensure information to persons responsible for specific communications activities. Further the communication team has to collect response and feedback during and after implementation. A standard implementation table will have outlined and captured clearly what is expected to be done to accomplish the task within realistic timelines and the responsible person(s). The remarks column is for recording observations and making recommendations as activities are undertaken.

TABLE 6: Developing an implementation plan table

TASK DESCRIPTION	OBJECTIVES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	TIMELINE	REMARKS

STEP EIGHT
Feedback Mechanism

The purpose of feedback is to ensure that the communication strategy is on track and fulfilling its objectives. In addition, the information from the feedback is valuable in order to adjust or completely change the strategy as it can document strategy's shortcoming and success, strengths and need for improvement. Feedback is, therefore, a continuous exercise throughout the implementation of the strategy. Feedback will also constitute a valuable tool during the evaluation of the impact of the strategy.

Feedback can be done in various ways. The common methods employed are questionnaire, qualitative interviews, surveys and focus group discussions. For instance, random telephone survey can be done at a time of message delivery. Focus groups are necessary in understanding the receiver's response or reaction to the message. The focus group discussions provide an opportunity for feedback through asking questions, helping determine how the message will be interpreted and how it can be improved. Questionnaire interviews may be applied to get feedback from a wider audience on specific issues such as perception of party policies, preferences in regard to tools and channels, timing of message delivery and priorities of the electorate at a given time in campaigning.

Finally, New Media i.e. Facebook, Twitter, SMS, Website can also be used to get feedback.

A few examples of how to use New Media include:
- Monitoring number of hits on the website and noting the kind of information attracting the public.
- Polling on the website: This may be to gauge popularity and perception on the party policy issues.
- Number of comments and/or likes on Facebook page.
- Number and/or regularity of tweets.

Tip:
Guard against approaches and reasons that make people close up when gathering information. For instance, the use of words like "I," "me," "my," personalize the problem and may make the respondent automatically assume that if they tell anything negative, it will be taken personally as the ideas are personal.

STEP NINE
Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) are crucial when preparing a communication strategy and especially during its implementation. M & E is not just something that happens at the end of an event/activity or a process, but rather an exercise that should take place constantly in cycle of formulating and implementing a communication strategy/campaign.

M & E also help us learn from past successes and challenges and inform decision making so that current and future initiatives are better.

The basic question in evaluating effectiveness and impact of communication is: Are we providing the right communication means and products to the right people through the right channel at the right moment? If the answer is yes to all of these questions, it is likely that there is an impact in terms of communication.

Some of the typical mistakes to avoid when handling M & E include collecting too much irrelevant information and not measuring potential effect of the strategy, but of external factors.

Consider using a questionnaire to capture the important data. Make sure the questionnaire responses capture information related where information was heard, when it was received, whether it was understood, if it changes the attitude of the recipient toward the party and result to voting for it.

To ensure that the above highlighted pitfalls are overcome, consider collecting the following information throughout the implementation:
- Keep track of participants' lists and contacts (including journalists).
- Prepare a questionnaire for feedback or conduct a brief online survey after an event.
- Monitor website hits and social media activities in connection with certain events e.g. after having sent out a press release.
- Keep track of who received publications (distribution lists) and the number of publications disseminated.

TABLE 7: Evaluation table using three levels (satisfactory, room for improvement, unsatisfactory)

TOOL	CHANNEL	NUMBER OF BITS AND REGULARITY OF ACTIVITIES	NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS	NUMBER OF MINUTES/PAGES
Digital	Website			
	Facebook			
Print	Newspaper			
	Posters			
Electronic	Radio			
	TV			

Summary

A solid communications strategy is critical to political parties, as it serves as the framework that helps in thinking through a whole range of challenges. Whether it is:

- Engaging new people to join the party;
- Building awareness;
- Increasing the percentage of registered voters who associate some benefit or advantage with the party, increasing the number of target audience, who prefer the party over competitors; and:
- Encouraging supporters to more frequently engage in party activities or engaging new voters on party policies over competitors.

Important questions to respond to when developing a communication strategy

- What is the issue/problem/action about which the party needs to communicate?
- What do you want to achieve with the communication strategy?
- What are the difficulties you face in implementing the campaigning/party strengthening?
- What are the concerns of various party stakeholders about this issue/problem/action?
- What can be done to remove or reduce these concerns?
- What information needs to be gathered?
- What is the clearest, most effective way to phrase what you want to say?
- What questions are you likely to receive if you say what you plan to say?
- What communication methods will most effectively reach the target audience(s) that you want to reach and achieve your communication objective?
- How much money do you have to implement the strategy?
- How will you spend it?
- What other resources are available?
- Do some communication activities need to happen before others?
- Do you need to tie your communication to other activities?

Appendices

Appendix one: Tips on Media Relations
- Build trust and protect your reputation with media personalities.
- Be quick (not foolhardy) – return call policy.
- Know each media house – each one is different.
- Know the individual journalists. They are all different.
- Do media coaching of candidates, both for written and electronic media.
- Correct every mistake in the press.
- Never speak off the record.
- Get the journalists agreement on/for review of quotes, before publication.
- Prepare 80 percent of the story – before the pitch.
- Win agenda by referring to existing discussions and hot political/current affairs issues.
- Provide facts and documentation for your message.
- Provide a concrete solution to a specific problem and issue that their readers are concerned with.

Appendix two: List of references

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8. Pace University 2011, Best Practices, Marketing and Communications,   http://www.pace.edu/marketing-communications/best-practices

Notes

CMD - KENYA MEMBERS

1. Agano Party of Kenya (Agano)

2. Democratic Party of Kenya (DP)

3. Forum for Restoration of Democracy - Asili (FORD-Asili)

4. Forum for the Restoration of Democracy-Kenya (FORD-Kenya)

5. Kenya African National Union (KANU)

6. Kenya National Democratic Alliance (KENDA)

7. Kenya National Congress (KNC)

8. National Labour Party (NLP)

9. National Rainbow Coalition (NARC)

10. National Rainbow Coalition - Kenya (NARC-Kenya)

11. New Forum for the Restoration of Democracy - Kenya (New FORD-Kenya)

12. Orange Democratic Movement (ODM)

13. Party of National Unity(PNU)

14. Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)

15. People's Party of Kenya (PPK)

16. Safina Party (SAFINA)

17. Shirikisho Party of Kenya (Shirikisho)

18. Sisi Kwa Sisi Party of Kenya (Sisi Kwa Sisi)

19. Social Democratic Party (SDP)

20. The Independent Party (TIP)

21. United Democratic Movement (UDM)

22. Wiper Democratic Movement - Kenya (WIPER)

23. Forum for Non-Parliamentary Political Parties (FORUM)

Centre for Multiparty Democracy - Kenya
6th Floor, International House
PO Box 9903-00100 GPO Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 (0)20 2215731, 2215782, 2216118
Fax: +254 (0)20 2216119
Email: info@cmd-kenya.org
URL: www.cmd-kenya.org