



COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

Created by Maria Wilson 2016

SPDCCW Summer Workshop
August 12, 2023



TOPICS

Tips for Effective Communications

Communications Toolkit

What's Next?

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Know Your Audience

- Members have different needs and preferences, and varying levels of comfort with technology
- Not all members attend meetings regularly
- Consider internal and external audiences

Have a Plan

- Agree on Objectives
- Use multiple channels of communication
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities

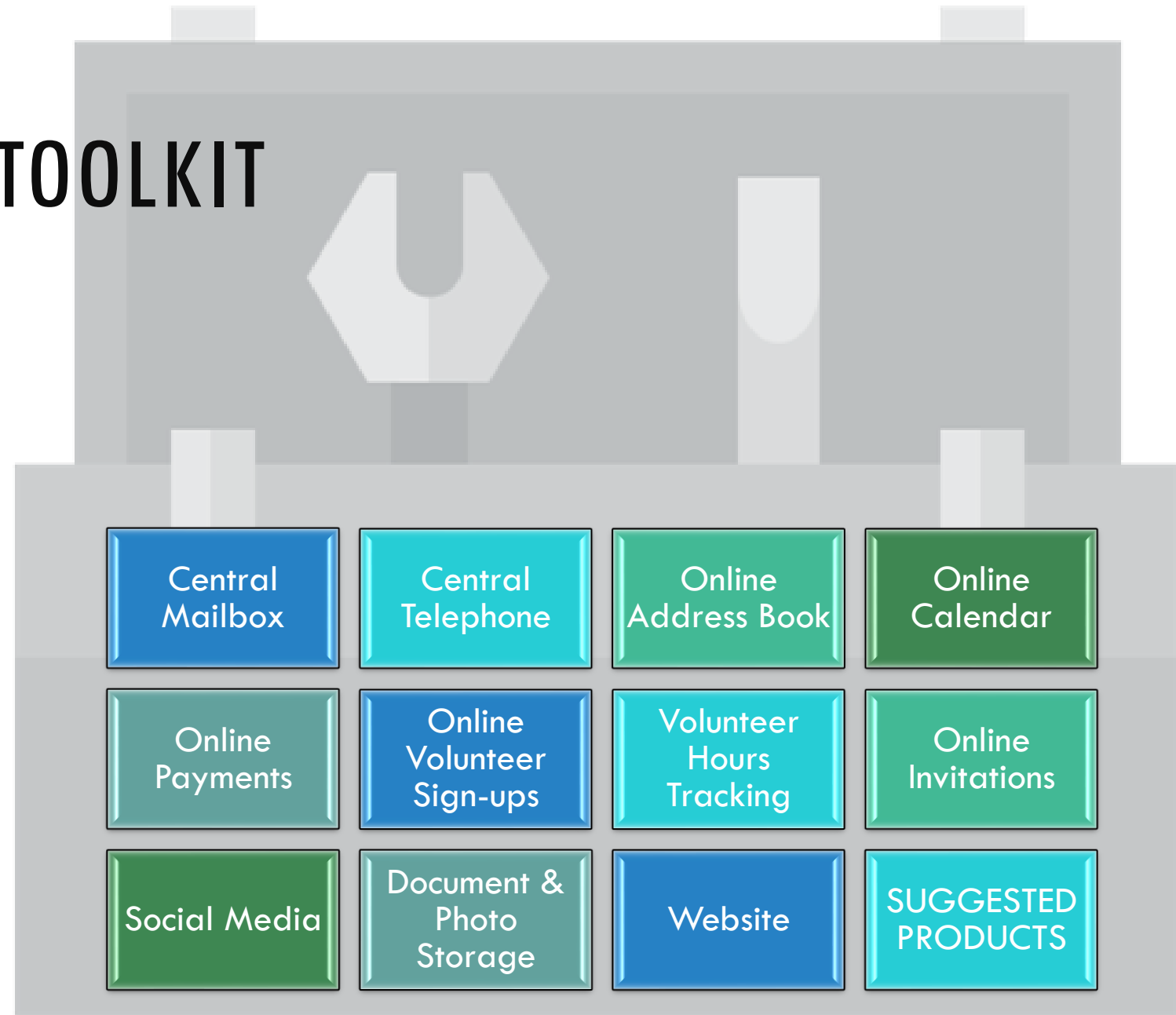
[View Sample Plan](#)

Leverage Technology

- Many free tools are available, for desktops and mobile devices
- Reach more people faster and boost productivity
- Improve communications with existing members and attract more new members

COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

CLICK on a tool
to learn more about it



WHAT'S NEXT?

1. Gather feedback from your members and other stakeholders
2. Confirm your communications objectives
3. Create or update your communications plan
4. Identify needs for new or improved communications
5. Explore the Toolkit
6. Contact us – we are here to help you!

CONTACT US

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APPENDIX

SAMPLE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

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Type of Communication	CCW Members with Email	CCW Members without Email	“Followers” and Prospective Members	Non-Members in Parish and/or Community
Meeting reminders and agendas	President sends email from central mailbox	1st Vice President telephones	N/A	N/A
Meeting minutes	Secretary sends email from central mailbox	1 st Vice President prints minutes and mails	N/A	N/A
Conference and Workshop Invitations	President sends email from central mailbox	1 st Vice President telephones	N/A	N/A
Special Event invitations	Event chair sends paper invitation and eVite; plus email with link to online volunteer sign-up	Event chair sends paper invitation and has paper sign-up at monthly meeting	Public Relations chair posts on Facebook page and website	(if open event) Public Relations chair posts in bulletin, parish website, parish email blast
Fundraiser Announcements	Event chair sends email from central mailbox, with link to online volunteer sign-up	Event chair distributes printed flyer and has paper sign-up at monthly meeting	Public Relations chair posts on Facebook page and website	Public Relations chair posts in bulletin, parish website, parish email blast, local newspapers

CENTRAL MAILBOX

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Challenges

- Snail mail is slow and time consuming; postage costs add up quickly
- Contact info changes when new officers take over
- Personal email address is listed publicly
- Responses may be delayed when officer is busy or on vacation

Benefits

- Email address remains the same every year and can be shared publicly
- Multiple officers can share responsibility for handling email
- Emails sent from mailbox are automatically archived

Solution

- Set up an email account specifically for your affiliate's CCW (we recommend Gmail, which is free)
- Import your CCW roster and set up group distribution lists
- Designate at least two officers to send out emails and respond to incoming requests

Best Practices

- Choose an email address that is recognizable and easy to remember
- When sending email to a large group, use blind copy (bcc)
- Indicate clearly at the start of each email, to whom it is being sent

CENTRAL TELEPHONE

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Challenges

- Telephone calls are time consuming
- Contact info changes when new officers take over
- Personal telephone number is listed publicly
- Responses may be delayed when officer is busy or on vacation

Benefits

- Telephone number remains the same every year and can be shared publicly
- Incoming calls can be routed straight to voice mail – no calls are missed
- Voice mails are automatically transcribed and emailed to central mailbox, with link to audio file

Solution

- Set up a telephone number specifically for your affiliate's CCW (we recommend Google Voice, which is free)
- Record a personalized greeting
- Designate at least two officers to manage voice mail (can be same as for email, if you are using Gmail)

Best Practices

- Choose a central telephone number with local area code
- Forward incoming calls to the appropriate officer during the week before an event
- Try using the text messaging feature

ONLINE ADDRESS BOOK

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Challenges

- Contact lists in Word or Excel become out of date quickly
- Directories are useful but take time and effort to produce
- Printing directories incurs extra cost

Benefits

- Using group lists for sending emails ensures recipient list is always up to date
- Contacts can be exported to Excel, and then a directory can be generated automatically using Catalog Merge

Solution

- Use the Contact List in your central mailbox as your address book (we recommend Gmail's Contacts, which is free)
- Upload member information from your roster
- Update Contacts and group lists throughout the year as members join, leave, change addresses, etc.

Best Practices

- Allow time for following up on invalid email addresses
- Add a signature with useful information
- If posting directory online for all members to see, use appropriate security

ONLINE CALENDAR

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Challenges

- Calendars distributed via paper or email attachment quickly become out of date

Benefits

- Changes to meeting logistics can be seen by all members

Solution

- Set up an online Calendar for your affiliate's CCW (we recommend Google Calendar, which is free)

Best Practices

- Use calendar appointment to invite members to meetings – they can automatically add appointments to their online calendars
- Embed the calendar in your website

ONLINE PAYMENTS

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Challenges

- Members pay dues or conference fees late, or not at all
- Treasurers must handle cash and checks
- Treasurers must keep records of payments

Benefits

- Faster, easier payments, resulting in higher percentage of payments received on time
- Automatic audit trail of all payments
- Can also be used for group gifts, ticketed events, fundraisers, etc.

Solution

- Use an online payment app
- Members can pay dues online using bank account (usually free) or credit card (fees apply)
- Can scan checks using smartphone
- Collected funds are easily transferred to CCW checking account

Best Practices

- Create central account so it can be used every year
- Take advantage of reduced fees available for non-profit organizations

ONLINE VOLUNTEER SIGN-UPS

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Challenges

- The same small group tends to volunteer repeatedly – we need to persuade more members to volunteer
- Members may not be aware of the need for volunteers
- Members may not know their availability until just before event

Benefits

- Members not attending meetings can still sign up
- Members can see when their friends are signed up
- Members who are signed up will receive automatic email reminders
- Event coordinator can print out a sign-in sheet with volunteer contact info

Solution

- Use a volunteer management site (most are free)
- After creating a sign-up, send the link to members via email and invite them to volunteer

Best Practices

- Create an account on sign-up site using central email address – this allows multiple officers to create/edit sign-ups

VOLUNTEER HOURS TRACKING

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Challenges

- Recording volunteer hours on paper logs is time consuming
- Collecting the paper logs and computing the total hours is time consuming

Benefits

- Members can log their volunteer hours using their mobile devices
- Members can see their earlier time entries
- Reports are easy to generate

Solution

- Use a volunteer management site to record and report volunteer hours

Best Practices

- Send a reminder email periodically to all members, and include link and instructions

ONLINE INVITATIONS

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Challenges

- Paper invitations are nice, but costly if guest list is large
- Many guests do not RSVP
- Some guests won't attend until they learn who else will be there

Benefits

- Many artistic templates to choose from
- Guests can see who is coming
- Guests can post questions and comments
- Can re-use invitations from previous years
- Can sell tickets for an event and collect payment online

Solution

- Send invitations online
- Export guest list from address book and import to online invitation site

Best Practices

- Create account on invitation site using central ID and email address so that multiple officers can send invitations
- Have guests RSVP to central email address or telephone number

SOCIAL MEDIA

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Challenges

- As women become increasingly busy, they attend fewer CCW meetings and events
- It's difficult to stay connected with members who cannot attend meetings regularly
- Meetings offer limited time to socialize

Benefits

- Many members are already using social media
- Can publicize the CCW's contribution to parish and community
- Can educate others about the CCW without their having to attend a meeting or other event

Solution

- Use social media to build a sense of community
- Appoint at least two officers or members to be administrators

Best Practices

- Link with parish, district and diocese pages and accounts
- Consult pastor/spiritual advisor if there is any doubt about suitability of content

DOCUMENT AND PHOTO STORAGE

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Challenges

- Printing and archiving all CCW documents is time consuming and takes up space
- Fewer people are making paper scrapbooks nowadays; digital photos are the norm
- Information may be lost during transition to new officers

Benefits

- Easier transition from old officers to new
- Provides version control
- Avoids issues with loss of data when an individual has computer problems

Solution

- Store all documents and photos in the cloud, and provide access to officers and members as appropriate

Best Practices

- Email a link to meeting minutes instead of attaching minutes to the email
- Invite all members to upload their photos to same location
- Create scrapbooks and photo albums using online photo management site

WEBSITE

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Challenges

- It can be difficult for people to find information about the affiliate's CCW
- Parish websites may not provide sufficient space for CCW info
- Some documents (e.g. Bylaws) should be available to the public

Benefits

- Easier for interested individuals to get information about your CCW affiliate
- Can make Bylaws and other public documents visible to all who visit the site
- Can monitor website traffic

Solution

- Create a website for your affiliate's CCW – several free tools are available

Best Practices

- Keep things simple so that specialized skills are not needed to maintain the site

SUGGESTED PRODUCTS

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Tool	Products	Cost
Central Mailbox	Google Mail	Free
Central Telephone Number	Google Voice	Free
Online Address Book	Google Mail Contacts	Free
Online Calendar	Google Calendar	Free
Online Payments	Google Wallet, PayPal, Apple Pay, EventBrite	Free or with Fees
Online Volunteer Sign-ups	Signup Genius, VolunteerSpot	Free (with ads)
Volunteer Hours Tracking	Track It Forward, Signup Genius, VolunteerSpot	\$ Fee
Online Invitations	Evite, Pings, Punchbowl, Facebook Events	Free (up to guest limit)
Social Media	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter	Free
Document & Photo Storage	Google Drive, Facebook Albums	Free (up to 15 GB)
Website	Google Sites, WordPress	Free (no custom domain)