

# Writing a winning communications strategy

How to set your focus and make sure you get there

Natasha Roe, Red Pencil

# Why do you need a communications strategy?



# Why do you need a communications strategy?

- Everyone thinks everything is 'communications'
- No-one understands what communications is!
- Everything goes across the comms desk – how do we know what's most important?
- Yet, you need a communications strategy to help deliver your charity's objectives.
- And the most successful charities don't just communicate the changes they make – they communicate to make change happen.

# Strategy process

## Audit and analyse

- Your comms
- Peer charities' review
- PEST analysis
- SWOT analysis
- Stakeholder consultation

## Set direction

- Vision, mission, values
- Outcomes
- Agree objectives
- Audiences
- Key messages
- Stories / voices

## Plan out activities

- 12-18 month implementation plan
- Resources needed

## Monitoring and evaluation

- Outputs
- Targets
- Measure what works – and what doesn't

# Audit: Your own communications

- What are you doing now? – lay print and media cuttings out.
- Take the baseline numbers of your social channels and website analytics.
- Look at your photo and video libraries.
- Set out your case studies.
- What's working well?
- What's not working well?
- Why? Get your colleagues and volunteers involved!

# Audit: Other people's communications

- Complementary / competitor organisations analysis – from websites, social media, e-newsletters, sign-up for print.
- Top line messages (vision, mission, values, strapline, elevator pitches, case studies, etc.)
- What do they do better?
- Is there anything you could learn?
- Examples of great fundraising, service delivery or impact?
- Ask colleagues and volunteers to look out for examples of great charity comms!

# Analyse: PEST analysis

<b>Political</b>	<b>Economic</b>
<b>Social</b>	<b>Technical</b>

# Analyse: SWOT analysis

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Opportunities	Threats



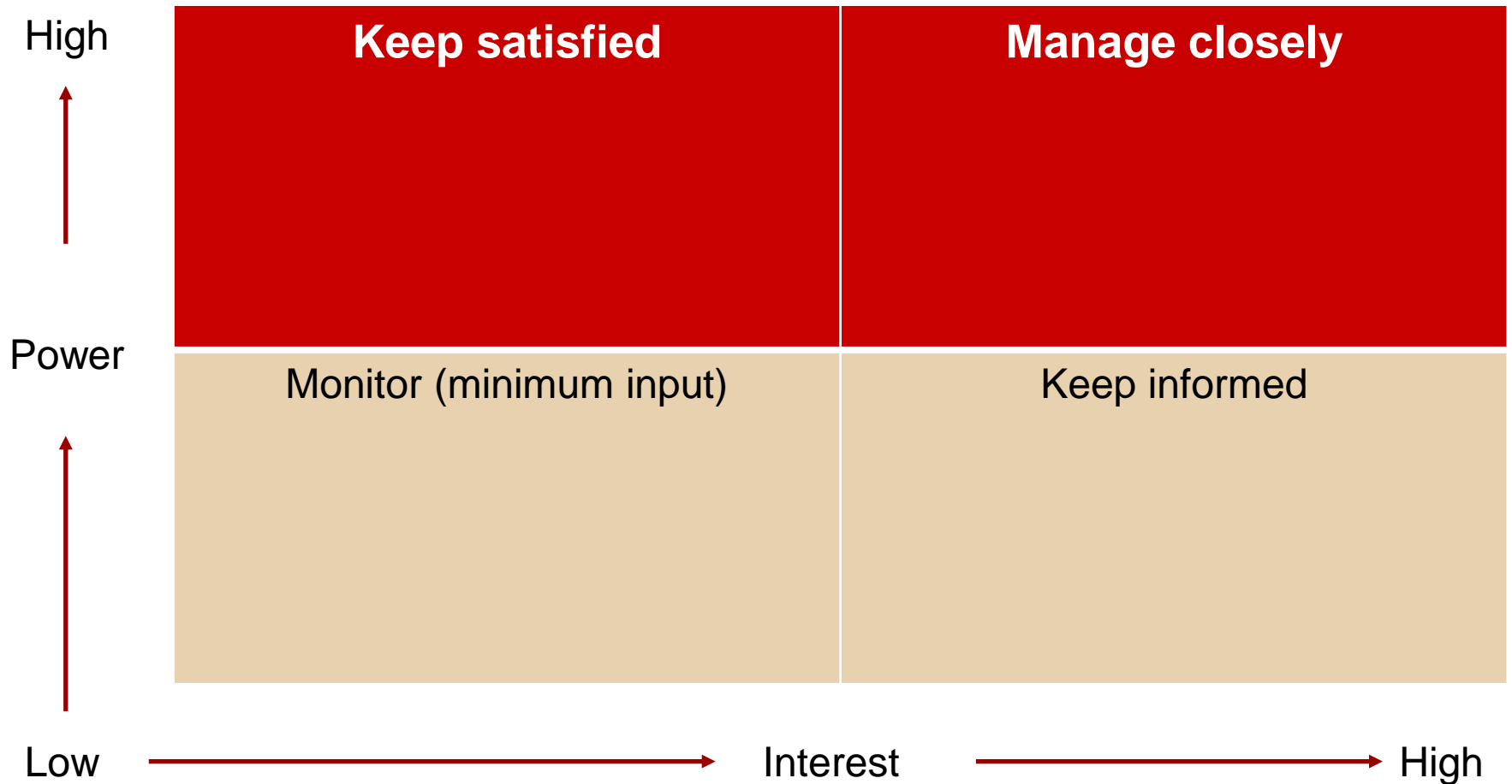
# Ask people what they think

- Build the case for a communications strategy among beneficiaries, supporters and other influencers:
  - Social media
  - Newsletter
  - Survey Monkey
  - Focus groups
  - Workshops
  - Semi-structured interviews (phone, Skype, face-to-face)

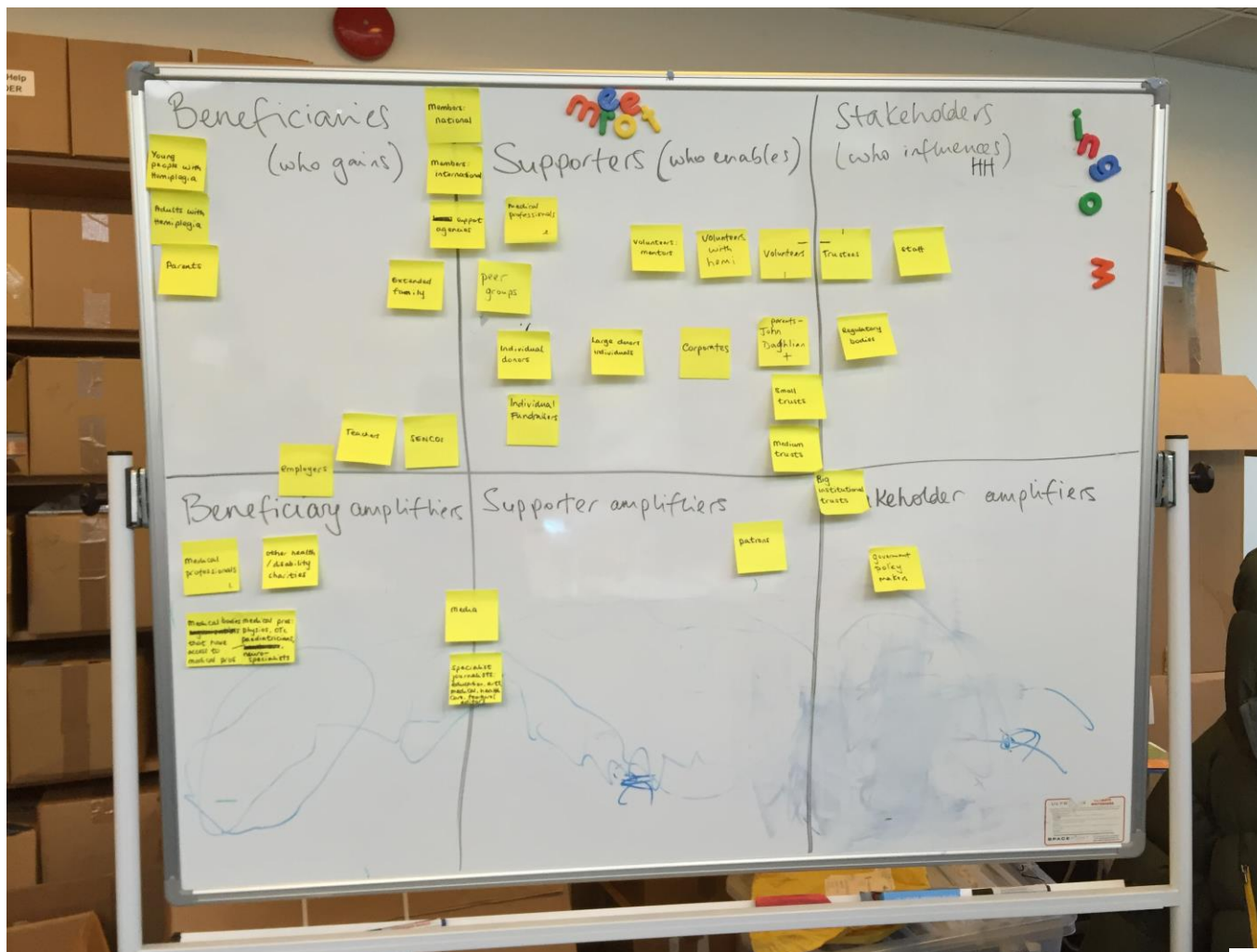
# Who do you need to talk to?

<b>Beneficiaries (who gains)</b>	<b>Supporters (who helps)</b>	<b>Stakeholders (who has influence)</b>
Who can help you reach them? (Amplifiers)	Who can help you reach them? (Amplifiers)	Who can help you reach them? (Amplifiers)

# How often do need to talk to them?



# HemiHelp – audience map



# Where to start?

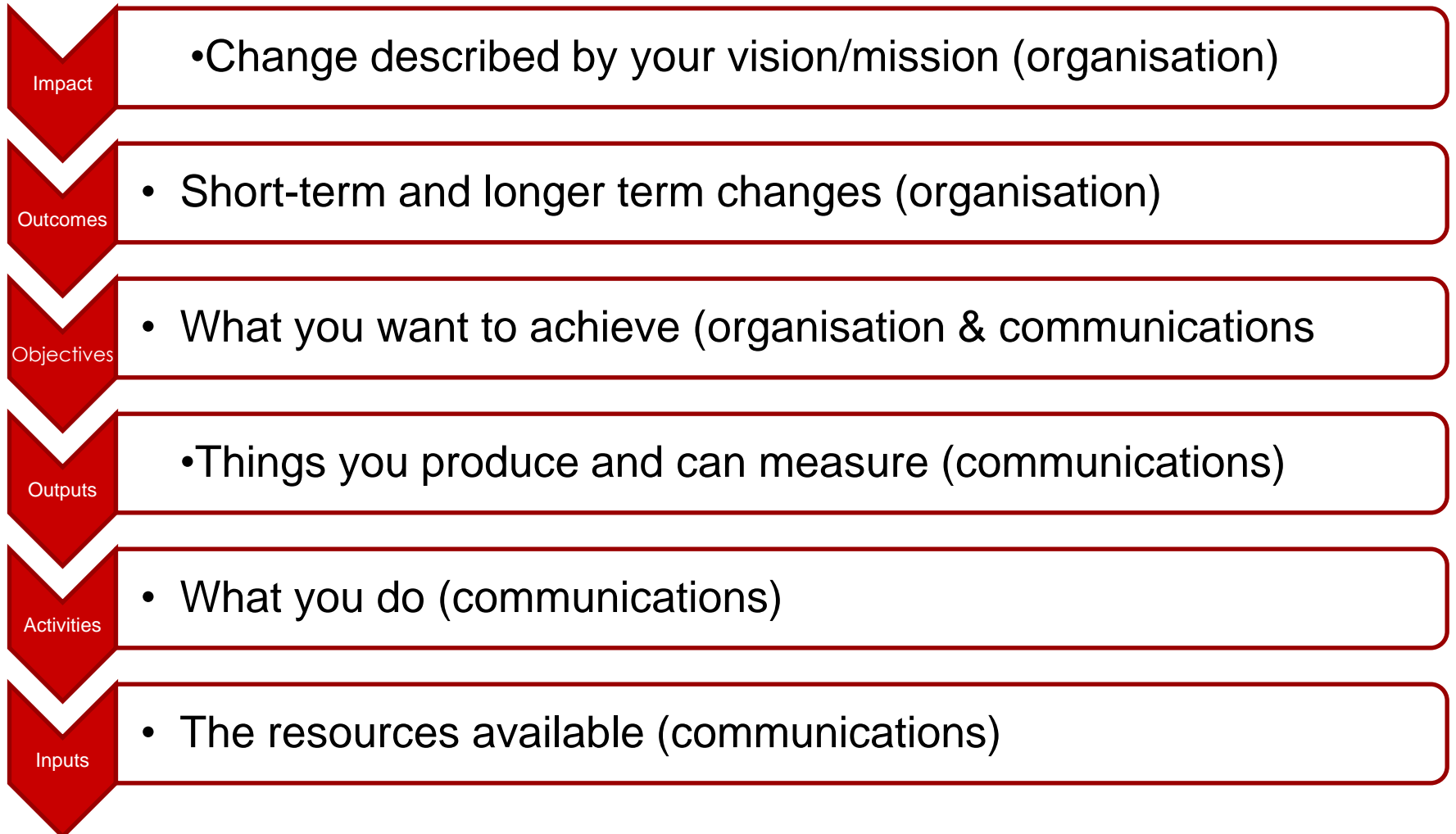
*“We keep bumping against the chicken and egg dilemma; we don’t know what comes first. Everything is so inter-related and complex that is very difficult to visualise a clear pathway.*

## The vision for communications

*“HemiHelp’s communication activity is developed around segmented audiences and ‘business’ objectives based on an annual strategic framework; and all our actions work in unison across all aspects of our communication activity, rather than in isolation.*

Amy Couture, HemiHelp

# Setting your direction



# Vision, mission, values – the foundations

## ■ Vision

- BHAG change you want to make in the world.
- Ambitious and future looking.

## ■ Mission

- Contribution your charity makes to vision.
- How you make that contribution.

## ■ Values

- Guiding principles to support decision-making and behaviours.

# HemiHelp – vision, mission, values

**Our vision** is of a world in which hemiplegia is understood by all and where everybody who is affected and their families have access to appropriate support to enable children and young people to reach their full potential.

**Our mission** is to use our specialist knowledge and mutually supportive networks of families and professionals to create awareness and understanding, in order to empower children and young people affected by hemiplegia across the UK to reach their full potential.

**Values –:**

**Empowering, Inclusive, User-led, Ambitious, Proactive**



# HemiHelp now

**Our vision** is for everyone with hemiplegia to live the life they choose.

**Our mission** is to support people with hemiplegia and their families at every stage of their lives.

**Values:**

Empowering, Expert, Responsive

# The three Os - Outcomes, Objectives & Outputs

## ■ Outcomes

- Long and shorter-term **changes** that support vision.
- Typically covering – knowledge > attitude > behaviours.

## ■ Objectives

- What you want to achieve.
- SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound).

## ■ Outputs

- What you produce that can be counted.
- Communications outputs are typically combination of products, services and ideas.

# HemiHelp outcomes & objectives

Everyone with hemiplegia can live the life they choose

Long-term  
outcomes

People with hemiplegia and families have confidence to make informed choices

People with hemiplegia and families get the support they need

Shorter-term  
outcomes

People with hemiplegia & families/carers feel emotionally supported

People with hemiplegia & families/ carers feel less isolated

Education professionals are more confident to support students with hemiplegia

Health professionals know best practice in managing effects of hemiplegia

People with hemiplegia and families know more about HH's services and local services

People with hemiplegia and families know where to go for information particularly at transition points

People with hemiplegia and families more confident talking about hemiplegia affects

Education professionals better understand hemiplegia and its effects

Strategic  
objective

Ensure opportunities for people with hemiplegia and families to connect with each other

Ensure specialist information and support services available to people with hemiplegia and families

Ensure professionals engaged with people with hemiplegia know about HH and have access to specialist information.

# HemiHelp outputs and activities

## Comms outputs

# of transition support cases  
# of calls, visits, emails by Family Back Up  
# mentors matched  
# People feel emotionally supported (annual survey)

Produce 4 x magazine (feedback)  
Produce # newsletters (metrics)  
Run FB page (analytics)  
# My HemiHelp views

# Education packs sold  
# of people at events  
# My Moves DVDs sold

# Professionals referring to HH  
# Professional members  
# Professionals attending events  
Level of support from education pack

## Comms activities

Promote Awareness Week

Publish quarterly magazine

Launch and promote new 1:1 support

Review key messages and language guidelines

Promote mentoring scheme

Get magazine case studies

Attend external events

Promote professional conference

Review mentors' materials

Promote My HemiHelp

Promote schools visits service

Distribute professional newsletter

Promote events & conferences

Promote info resources

Review training package

Run targeted membership campaigns

Gather case studies from previous events

Promote Facebook page

Review schools training packs

Promote membership

Develop plan for e-news

Review membership packs

Redevelop website and launch new site, including brand refresh to make more impact online

# Plan your activities

- 12 to 18 months
- Start from top down – what changes are you trying to make (outcomes)?
- What is needed to achieve those changes (objectives)?
- Do you have the right communications products, services and ideas (outputs) to achieve your objectives?
- What activities are needed to deliver your communications outputs?
- Put into a planning tool – or spreadsheet.
- Make sure your wider team know about it and have access.

# Do you have the resources

- What do you need to deliver your plan?
- Time, people, money.
- Be realistic!
- Better to do less and do it well.

# Content planning to support delivery

- Key message about your charity
- Key message about your main areas of work
- Case studies – written, spoken, visual, video
- Your charity's story
- Tone of voice guidelines
- Style and language guidelines

# Main messages

## Who you are

Mission

Values

What you do and who does it benefit

The context / evidence base

Your approach

Your supporters and partners

Three main issues you address



# Services / campaign messages

Proposition	Proof points	Personal stories
What's the issue?		
Why does it matter now?		
What are we doing about it?		
What do we want you to do about it?		

# HemiHelp – message development

offer	SURVEYS, FB GROUP, EVENTS, EVALUATION. (DIFF TOUCH POINTS) proof points (SOME PEOPLE INVITIBLE)	personal stories <b>PARENTS</b>
what problem do your services solve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- isolation *</li> <li>- not knowing where to turn</li> <li>- scared</li> <li>- empowered</li> <li>- no where else to get info from</li> <li>- info not easily accessible at diagnosis</li> <li>- confidence building</li> <li>- enabling people to advocate for</li> <li>- their child's needs / employment</li> <li>- enable people to ask</li> </ul>	(grounded in where you are now) * thank you letter from Billy's mum. Home writer called Amanda. ANNUAL REVIEW
How does it help?		HEAR IT FROM A PARENT AT AN EARLY YEARS CONFERENCE PEERS
Who cares?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- parents</li> <li>- professionals</li> <li>- other people as evidenced by visits to website, over no. of people with hemi.</li> <li>- people with other forms of cerebral palsy etc</li> <li>- not supported by other orgs</li> </ul>	
how can people access it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- website (google)</li> <li>- word</li> <li>- call the helpline</li> <li>- face book group (1st p.o.c)</li> </ul>	} what's next? signposting membership/capturing into <u>advice and guidance</u>
only (uk) <sup>specialist</sup> charity (supporting) <sup>us</sup> that has information for parents from	diagnosis onwards, as long as needed. (relevant to stage/ transition: early years secondary school)	

# Tone of voice and guidelines

- **Tone of voice**
  - Based on values
  - Convey your personality as a charity
- **Tone of voice guidelines**
- **Style and language guidelines**

# HemiHelp - tone of voice extracts

## ■ Empowering

- All our communications should be direct and positive. This means using active verbs and avoiding passive sentence constructions.

## ■ Expert

- All our communications should be factual and knowledgeable, and clear about the action we want people to take as a result of reading what we have written.

## ■ Responsive

- Service users have always been at the heart of our organisation. We express this in our communications by putting their stories and voices at the heart of everything we write and say, whenever it is practical to do so.

# Put messages & channels together

Audience	Channel	Message	What want them to do	How can they do it?

# Tell your stories

## ■ Case studies

- Don't just think written.
- Capture images.
- Capture people's voices.
- Capture video.

## ■ Turn everyone into a storyteller

- Smaller charities closer to stories – turn that into an advantage.
- Share stories at team meetings.
- Support non-comms colleagues to gather stories.

## ■ Make sure people know where to find stories

## ■ Don't forget your charity story

# A HemiHelp story

*“Two year-old Kathryn, a cheeky and determined girl, is the youngest of three siblings. She was formally diagnosed with left-sided hemiplegia when she was seven months old. Kathryn had a skull fracture at birth which resulted in hydrocephalus requiring surgery. Later she had another surgery to repair the fracture. Like many stories parents tell us, the point of diagnosis isn’t a single appointment; it’s a long and difficult process.”*

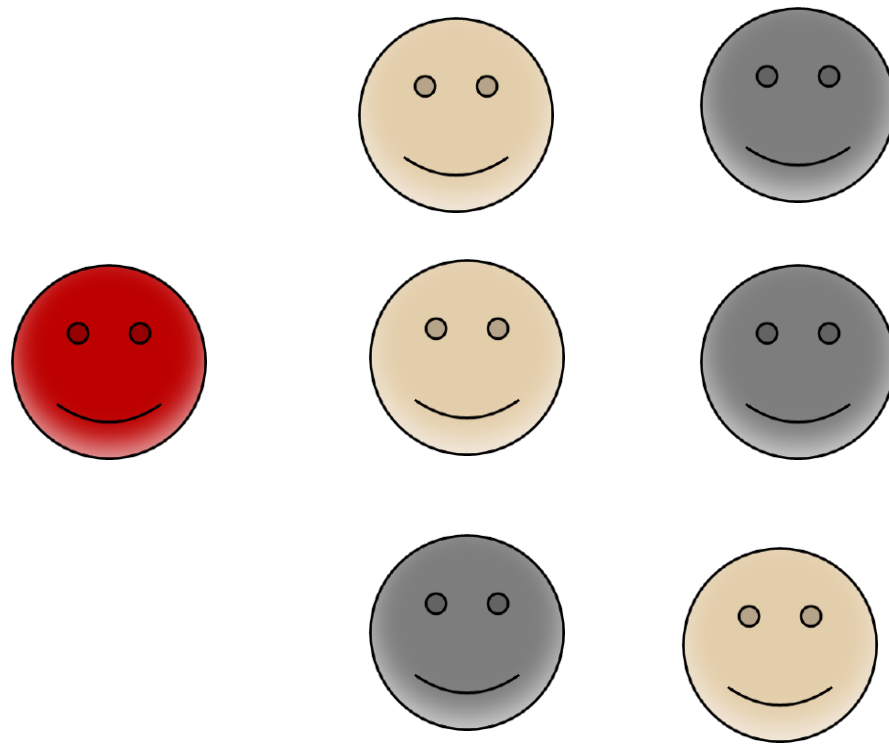


# Remember to measure

- Check what's working – and what's not.
- If something is not helping deliver your goals and achieve your vision – stop doing it!
- Find out what's working by counting numbers and asking questions to test people's knowledge, attitudes and behaviours.
- More information at evaluation workshop this afternoon.



# Communications should be a team sport



# Who can help?

- CharityComms, Media Trust, Small Charities Coalition, NCVO Knowhow Nonprofit
- Third Sector PR and Comms Network Facebook page
- LinkedIn groups
- Charity Communications people's blogs and social media -  
@JudeHabib @GoreckiDawn @JCCharityWriter @madlinsudn  
@magnetoGaby @GemmaPettmanPR @LondonKirsty  
@Luciditysays
- Network events – Institute of Fundraising regional and SIG meetings, CIM charity events, #CharityMeetup, #NFPTweetup, etc.

# To sum up...

1. Planning, planning, planning (audit > analysis > consult)
2. Start from vision
3. Break changes into one, three, five years (outcomes)
4. Set goals (objectives)
5. Agree comms products, services & ideas (outputs) to deliver goals
6. Plan activities and check resources
7. Content delivery (key messages > case studies > charity story > tone of voice > guidelines)
8. Match messages with channels
9. Tell your stories!
10. Remember to measure

# Question time



# Staying in touch

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