

FACTSHEET – CREATING A SIMPLE MARKETING PLAN

A clear, intentional marketing plan helps charities communicate their purpose, strengthen their reputation, reach the right audiences, and build long-term support. Organisations don't need large budgets or specialist teams to be effective. However, having a clear, organisation-wide plan helps ensure their work reflects their values, capacity, and long-term goals

This guide provides a practical framework to help medium and larger VCSE organisations plan and deliver impactful marketing activity.

Clarify Your Identity and Core Purpose

A strong marketing plan starts with a shared understanding of who you are and why you exist.

When an organisation has multiple services, teams, or locations, this clarity becomes even more important. A clear identity helps everyone: staff, volunteers, partners, and online channels to communicate consistently.

Consider defining:

- Your mission and long-term vision
- The specific needs or inequalities you address
- The outcomes and impact you aim to achieve
- Your organisational values and tone of voice
- What differentiates your organisation from others in the sector

Examples:

- Creating a unified organisational narrative for all teams to use
- Developing a brand or messaging guide for staff and partners
- Running internal workshops to align teams around shared purpose

Map Your Community

Medium and larger charities typically work with a wide range of audiences, from service users to commissioners, funders, partners, volunteers, and local or national influencers.

Understanding these groups helps you tailor your messages and choose the right communication channels.

Think about:

- Who your key audiences are and what they need from you
- How each group prefers to receive information
- What motivates them to engage, support, or collaborate
- Where there are gaps in your reach or relationships

Examples:



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- Creating audience personas for funders, commissioners, volunteers, and service users
- Mapping partner organisations and identifying shared communication opportunities
- Reviewing who engages with your current channels and who is missing

Select Your Communication Tools Wisely

Larger organisations often have more channels available, but more channels don't always mean better communication. A strong strategy focuses on the tools that genuinely reach your audiences and can be maintained consistently.

Potential channels include:

- Website and blog content
- Email newsletters and automated updates
- Social media platforms (e.g., LinkedIn for partners/funders, Facebook for community reach)
- Printed materials, posters, and leaflets
- Press releases and local media relationships
- Events, outreach, and partnership networks

Examples:

- Using LinkedIn to strengthen relationships with partners and funders
- Creating a monthly email newsletter for your audience (volunteers, service users, partners)
- Streamlining social media to 1 or 2 platforms you can manage well

Develop Meaningful Content That Reflects Your Work

Your content should demonstrate your impact, tell your story, and show the real-world difference your organisation makes. Larger charities often have rich stories and data, the challenge is presenting them clearly and consistently.

Content types might include:

- Impact stories and case studies
- Project updates and milestones
- Volunteer and staff profiles
- Infographics or simple data summaries
- Service information and guidance
- Campaign messages and calls to action

Examples:

- Publishing monthly impact snapshots using simple visuals
- Sharing case studies that highlight outcomes, not just activity
- Creating a content calendar to coordinate messaging across teams

Monitor Your Progress and Learn as You Go



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Marketing should evolve as your organisation grows. Medium and larger charities benefit from regular review cycles and simple measurement tools that help track progress and inform decisions.

You don't need complex analytics, just consistent reflection.

Useful things to monitor:

- Website traffic and most-visited pages
- Social media engagement and reach
- Email open and click-through rates
- Event attendance or service uptake
- Feedback from partners, funders, and service users

Examples:

- Quarterly marketing review meetings with key staff
- Using simple dashboards to track digital engagement
- Adjusting your content plan based on what audiences respond to

Useful Websites and Resources

These sites offer practical tools, guides, and templates for charities and community organisations:

Marketing & Communications

- [NCVO](#) – Communications and marketing resources
- [CharityComms](#) – Best practice, guides, and sector insights
- [Charity Digital](#) – Digital marketing tips and how-to guides
- [Media Trust](#) – Training and resources for charity communications

Branding & Messaging

- [Charity Excellence Framework](#) – Free tools for brand and communication planning

Digital Tools & Social Media

- [Canva for Nonprofits](#) – Free Canva Pro for eligible charities
- [Google for Nonprofits](#) – Free tools including Google Workspace and Ad Grants
- [Meta for Nonprofits](#) – Social media guidance for Facebook and Instagram

Impact & Storytelling

- [NPC \(New Philanthropy Capital\)](#) – Guidance on impact reporting



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