



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

FOR EFFECTIVE ONLINE COMMUNICATION

Often times the first step to improving your online communication is starting an internal conversation.

This self-evaluation “report card” is a simple way to spark some discussion about your current online communication efforts. Share it with colleagues, compare notes, and then share it with us. We’ll give you a second opinion from a team of experts.

How effective is your online communication? Using Silas Partners’ <i>Guiding Principles for Effective Online Communication</i> , grade your organization’s current online strategies using a A-F scale.	Grade (A-F)
<p>1: Clearly State your Mission and Vision Does your branding flow into your online communications? Think beyond just name and logo. Is it easy for a prospective constituent to understand who you are and what you do ... and how they can get involved? Is this true for website, emails, blogs, podcasts, etc.?</p>	
<p>2: Create a Meaningful User Experience Design deals with much more than just look and feel. Does the page or email visually guide the user to the desired action? Do you have specific user goals for each page they visit or email they receive? Is it easy to navigate your website and easily find information?</p>	
<p>3: Generate Content Based on User Needs Is your content web friendly ... easy to scan, helpful formatting to guide the user? Is your content regularly updated or refreshed? Is there more than one form of content available (pictures, video, audio, etc.) to tell your story? Does it engage the user, provide value?</p>	
<p>4: Drive Traffic by Extending Your Reach Do you use multiple channels (emails, search engines, blogs, news feeds, etc.) to communicate reach new constituents? Do you equip donors to share information with others? Do your offline efforts (mail, printed materials, etc.) promote online activity?</p>	
<p>5: Engage Constituents with Intentional Communications Are your online strategies coordinated with offline efforts? Are your emails segmented or personalized, as opposed to mass email blasts? Do your online communications help connect your organization to a constituent’s interests? Do you test emails before sending?</p>	
<p>6: Align Technology and Processes Behind Business Goals Does your online technology infrastructure support your required functionality? Does a visitor to your website have a seamless experience across all functions? Do you have processes in place to synchronize data between online and backend systems?</p>	
<p>7: Grow Your Expertise Are you investing in staff training? Does someone on staff “own” the website ... does that person regularly coordinate work with the team who “owns” your donor relationships? Are you using outsourcing strategies to supplement limited staff capacity or expertise?</p>	
<p>8: Continually Fine-tune Approach Based on Rigorous Analysis Generating reports is different from analysis ... are online decisions based on statistical analysis from website and email tracking? Do you know how much you have spent – hardware, software, labor, services – on online communication? Do you know your ROI?</p>	

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