

Introduction

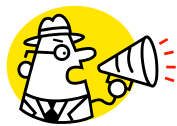
Strategic Recruiting: Using Creative Communication Principles to Find the People You Need is based on the half-day workshop delivered to participants at the Community Literacy of Ontario Annual General Meeting and Conference in October 2000.

The workshop - and this resource - approach the topic of recruiting from a cyclical communications model. Through the progressive series of exercises, we hope that you will be able to clearly identify who it is you are trying to recruit and then use that information to structure your recruitment messages accordingly. More specifically, we expect that by the time you have completed the 12 exercises, you will have:

- identified your organization's specific recruiting needs
- understood and applied the basic principles of persuasive communication
- identified different cost-effective recruitment techniques and resources
- developed a simple and practical recruitment action plan
- developed simple evaluation tools that you can use to help you measure the effectiveness of your recruitment strategy.

This resource is based on the participant booklet that was developed for and used during the workshop. In an effort to make this booklet valuable and practical beyond the workshop, we have elaborated upon each of the five sections in this booklet.

In each section you will find one or more exercises on the right hand page. On the left-hand page, you will find text arranged hierarchically according to the following icons:



Important: Information contained here includes instructions for completing the exercises.



Valuable: This section provides additional information that you may or may not need to help you complete the exercises.

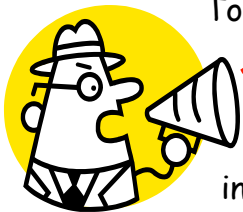


Ideas and Suggestions: Where appropriate, we have included examples and suggestions that you may want to use for your own organization's needs.

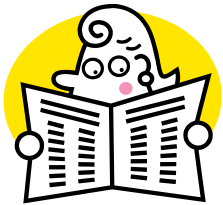


Other Sources: Also where appropriate, we have included other sources of information on this particular topic, including book titles and Internet addresses.

My Organization's Recruitment Needs



To begin the recruitment strategy, you will need your organization's most recent **strategic, operational or business plan**. Depending on your organization, you should have at least one of these documents to refer to for information about the organization's direction for the next one to five years.



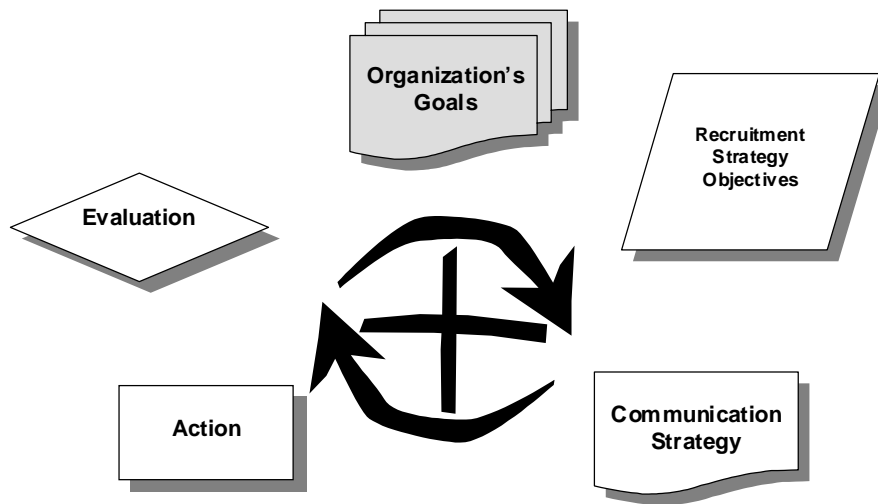
Although every organization needs to recruit new people (e.g., learners, volunteers, members, participants or employees), each agency or company has specific, individual recruitment needs. These needs often stem from the goal-setting process where leaders identify the organization's goals for a specified period of time.

The strategic goals serve both as a base for building a recruitment strategy and for evaluating its success. At the end of the goal setting, the outcomes provide objective and accountable measurements that can be used to help assess the objectives and to plan new ones. The diagram on the opposite page visually represents this cyclical process.



If your organization has not yet begun developing a business or strategic plan and you are not sure how or where to begin, here are a few sources you may want to check out.

- Peter Schwartz, [The Art of the Long View: Planning for the Future in an Uncertain World](#)
- John Bryson, [Strategic Planning for Public and Non-profit Organizations](#)
- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, How to Prepare a Business Plan, <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca>



Exercise #1 - Where did I put that thing?

Do I have our organization's...

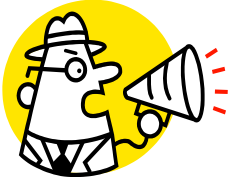
Business Plan Yes No → Who can help me get this? _____

Strategic Plan Yes No → Who can help me get this? _____

Operational Plan Yes No → Who can help me get this? _____

Notes...

Recruitment Strategy Objectives



Using the information from your planning document(s), you now want to identify specific recruitment objectives. As part of this stage, some of the key questions to ask are:

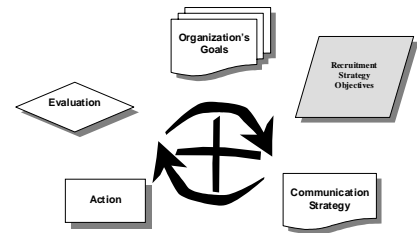
- *Who do we need?*
- *Why do we need them?*
- *What will they be doing?*
- *How will they contribute to the organization?*
- *How will our organization benefit them?*
- *How many do we need?*
- *When do we need them?*



Objectives flow from goals and provide a more detailed direction than goals. A strategic objective can be defined as "a specific statement of quality, quantity and time values."



To identify specific recruitment objectives, try to ensure that they are both realistic and measurable. For example, instead of saying "We need to attract more learners to our programs," use words that quantify your task: "Between January 1, 2001, and March 31, 2000, we should have attracted 25 new learners to our programs."



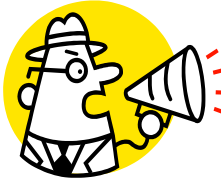
Exercise #2 - Let's Recruit!

Using the box below, identify your organization's specific recruitment objectives.

Some of our Recruitment Objectives are:

-
-
-
-
-

Recruitment Strategy Objectives

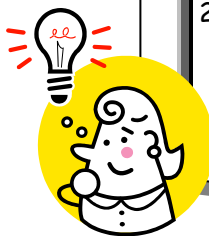


Now that you have identified some of the specific recruitment objectives, it is time to look more closely at who you need and what their roles will be.

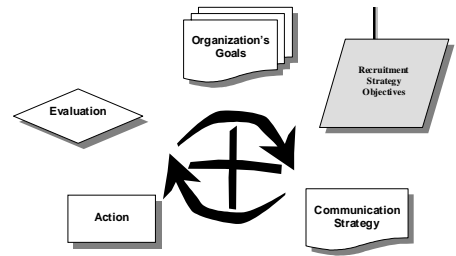
1. Using the box on the opposite page, identify who it is you need to recruit and how many (e.g., 5 volunteers).
2. In the next column, indicate - as specifically as possible - what those particular recruits will be doing (e.g., assisting with administrative duties for 15 hours per week).
3. Finally, indicate the priority for each of the different types of recruits you have selected.



From a strategic communication perspective, this is the first and arguably most critical step in the recruitment process. It is from here that you will begin to identify both the specific message(s) that you want to deliver and the intended audience(s).



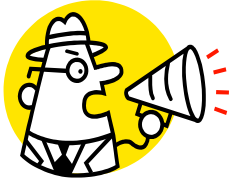
We need...	who will be...	Priority
5 volunteers	Providing administrative support for 15 hours per week (answering phones, filing, photocopying)	1
2 board members	Assisting with planning and decision-making; meeting once a month; assisting with committee work for 10 hours per month	3



Exercise #3 - Who Do We Need and What Will They be Doing?

We need...	who will be...	Priority
_____volunteers		
_____volunteer tutors		
_____board members		
_____learners		
_____community partners		
_____funders		
_____other		

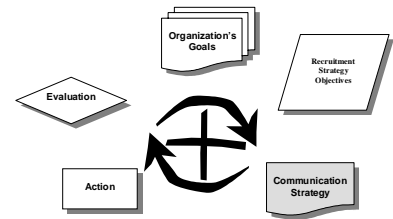
Communication Strategy



1. Using the information from the table on the previous page, identify your top recruiting priority and some of the characteristics of the ideal recruit (e.g., motivated, team player, access to transportation, computer skills, woman/man, etc.).
2. Now, write down that information in the bubble on the following page. Use whatever writing style you prefer - bullets, sentences, cluster diagram, etc.
3. Once you have completed this, go back over your list and attach priority rankings to the various characteristics. In short, you now want to determine what is essential, what is important and what would be nice.
4. Then use that priority assessment to write down a profile of each of the recruit types (i.e., volunteers, learners, board members, etc.). You may want to write this profile as if you were writing a job advertisement (e.g., for a volunteer tutor you may decide "The ideal recruit should be a man between 25 and 45 years of age with good computer skills, a basic understanding of literacy issues, some teaching experience and excellent interpersonal skills").

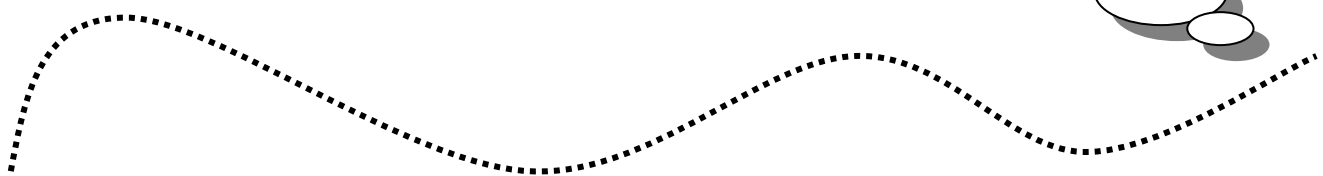
This first communication strategy exercise is designed to start you thinking about who your ideal target audience is and where you might find them. At this stage, you should not worry about whom you think you can get but, rather, whom you would like to get. By doing this Christmas wish list exercise, you will be further identifying the characteristics, skills and knowledge that are important to your organization.





Exercise #4 - Our Ideal Recruit

My ideal recruit would...



The profile of our ideal _____ (recruit type) is...

Communication Strategy



You should now have a mental image of whom you want. It's time to reverse the roles and think about life from their perspectives.

Using the table on the next page, try to identify what would be important to your audience. As much as possible, you want to identify common elements of the target audience. However, it is also important to remember that the profile you develop will not apply to everyone, so you may have to repeat this step for different groups.



To ensure that your recruitment strategy is targeted (at the right people) and meaningful (to them), it is important to answer two fundamental questions:

1. *Who is our **Target** audience?*
2. *What are our desired **Outcomes** for this communication piece?*

The answers to these two questions are critical in all written documents, especially when you, as the writer, are trying to persuade someone to do or believe something. This exercise allows you to start matching your priorities with what you think will be your audience's priorities.



For more information about developing a communication strategy, consider:

- Janel M. Radtke, Strategic Communications for Nonprofit Organizations

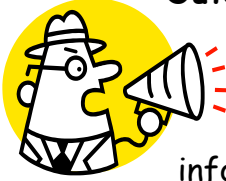
Exercise #5 - A little Target Practice

My Target Audience for this recruitment document is _____

	I know this about the reader's...	I think this about the reader's...	I need to find out more about the reader's...
Needs			
Values			
Expectations			
Knowledge of the organization			
Technical knowledge			
Fears			
Background (e.g., age, sex, occupation, marital status)			

Communication Strategy

Outcomes

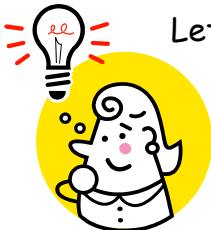


At this time you may have a very good idea of who will be your audience. The next step is to clearly identify your intended goals of the communication piece. Using the information you have collected on your strategic objectives and your intended audience(s), write down what you think are one to three possible - and realistic - outcomes. Examples of outcomes you might consider include:

- *Do you want the readers to learn more about your organization?*
- *Do you want to convince them of a need (learner, financial, volunteer)?*
- *Do you want them to fill out a form and send it back?*



Whenever possible, you should adhere to the *one message, one document* principle. Simply, this means that each letter, memo or advertisement should be designed to accomplish one objective or outcome.

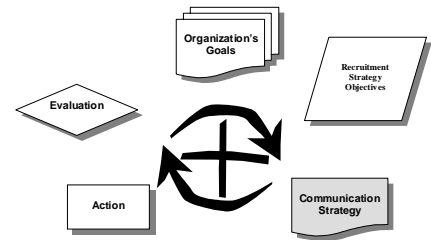


Let's assume you have identified the need to recruit more learners. Furthermore, through your research, you have learned that new learners have historically been referred by other service providers in the community. Consequently, you have decided that you want to create a document that will inform your referral sources about the programs and services you provide.

So now you know:

Target audience: primary referral sources

Primary outcome for document: to increase awareness among referral sources about the programs, services, hours of operation and location of centre.



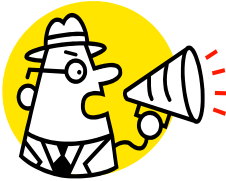
Exercise #6 - The Write Outcomes

Outcomes for this recruitment document are:

Primary Outcome:

Secondary Outcome(s):

Communication Strategy

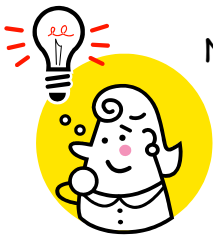


You have now identified whom you want to target and what you hope to achieve with your document(s). Using the space on the opposite page, begin framing your message.



You can use an outline, a cluster diagram or whatever method you like to help you draft your message. Remember, this is just a draft and not the final product, so do not worry about exact wording, grammar or structure.

If you don't feel ready to start crafting a message, you can proceed to the next step, which is to start thinking about the presentation format or formats that you could use, and then come back to this exercise.



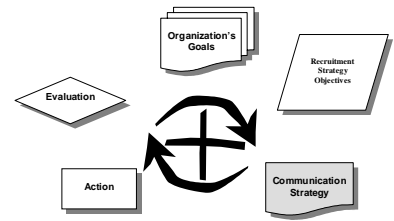
Not sure what to write? Try some theme words to get the creative juices flowing. Let's say you want to recruit board directors. Start with a list or cluster of words that you think will be meaningful to them and a list or cluster of words that are meaningful to you.

Board Members

- *Valuable experience*
- *Minimal commitment*
- *Helping others*
- *Important community programs*

Us

- *Connections in community*
- *Broad mix of skills*
- *Ideas & task people*
- *Fundraisers*
- *Commitment to literacy*

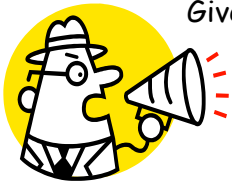


Exercise #7 - Target + Outcomes = Message

A large, empty rectangular box with a thick grey border, intended for a student to write their response to the exercise.

Communication Strategy

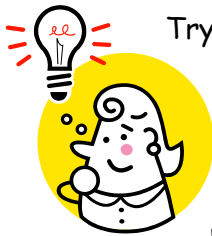
Presentation Possibilities



Given what you know about your audience, try to brainstorm possible ways of reaching your audience. At this time, don't worry about budget or time constraints. Think only about different methods, materials and media that you could use.

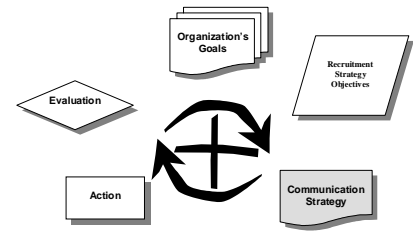


The cluster diagram or mind map exercise on the opposite page is a great way to begin the creative thinking process and to visually see the relationship between different ideas. Try not to evaluate your ideas or worry about where your ideas may be leading you. During this exercise, you should write quickly but naturally, letting your mind establish the associations.

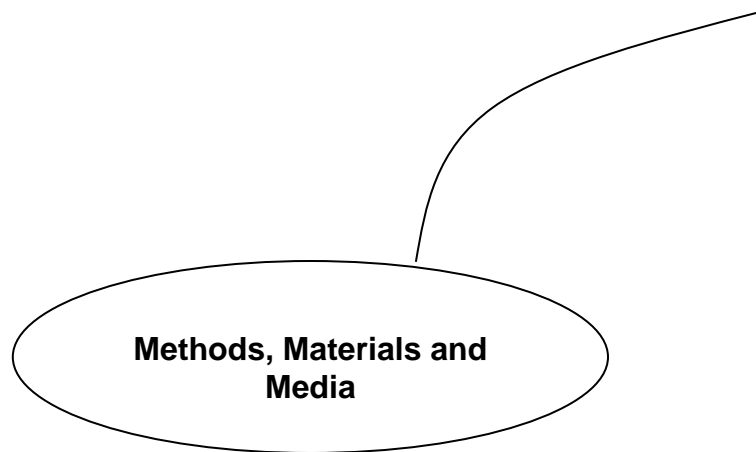


Try to think of at least two sources and/or methods that you have not used or even considered in the past. For example, perhaps you have identified that you might be able to attract new learners through your current learners. Therefore, you could create a referral card that your current learners could hand out to potential learners.

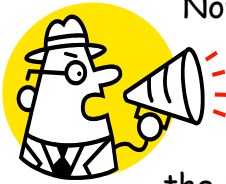
Another variation on this exercise is to brainstorm at least five ideas that will not cost more than \$50. The purpose is not to restrict your budget to this amount, but to identify creative and inexpensive alternatives. You can even use the research into your target audience to assist you. For example, perhaps you have identified through your research that 20% of the population does 80% of the volunteer work in your community, and of that 20%, most attend some kind of religious service every week. Therefore, you could produce a flyer to distribute to local churches, synagogues and/or temples in your area.



Exercise #8 - How can I Present the Message?



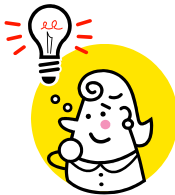
Communication Strategy



Now that you have identified possible presentation formats for recruiting, it's time to prioritize them. Given what you know and think would be most effective with your target audience and your expected outcomes, review your list above and rank the ideas in order of priority on the opposite page.

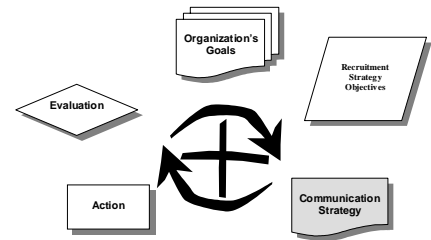


At this time, you may also want to review your budget and compare it with your recruitment priorities. It is important, however, to not limit your thinking too early because of perceived budgetary constraints.



Some of the budgetary questions that will have to be answered include:

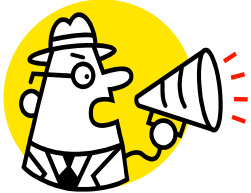
- *Do we have the staffing and/or consulting resources to complete this job?*
- *What are the administrative expenses (including printing, graphic design, postage, telephone charges, room rentals, refreshments, etc.)?*
- *How much will the administrative expenses be? Do they fit within our accepted range of administrative costs?*



Exercise #9 - And the Winners are...

My preferred presentation methods, materials and media are:

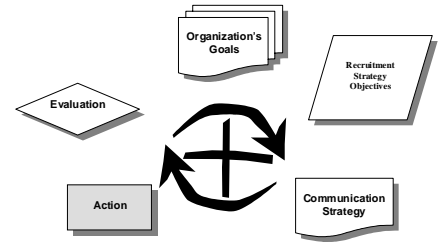
Action



You can use the review checklist on the opposite page to review your progress to date and to identify areas that still need work.



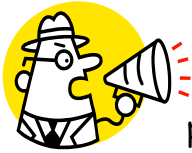
Additionally, if you have completed the exercises in this booklet once, you may find it more practical and efficient to simply photocopy the review checklist and the action plan worksheet on page 24 and work from them.



Exercise #10 - What a Review!

TASK I have...	Additional information I need	Who can help me with this?	Complete (U)
1. <i>Reviewed strategic plan</i>			
2. <i>Identified who we need to recruit</i>			
3. <i>What the recruits will be doing</i>			
4. <i>Developed profile(s) of the target audience</i>			
5. <i>Identified my organization's expected outcomes for the communication piece(s)</i>			
6. <i>Identified preferred ways of reaching the target audience</i>			

Action



Using the first box on the worksheet on the opposite page, transfer the information that you have completed in the previous 10 exercises so that you have a summary of the

- strategic objective (Exercise #1)
- target audience (Exercise #5)
- expected outcomes (Exercise #6)
- message details and presentation methods (Exercises #8 and #9)
- estimated costs.

With this information as your guide, you can use the second table to develop a more detailed action plan for reaching the strategic objective.



If you identified more than one target recruitment group (e.g., volunteers and learners), you should use separate worksheets for each group.



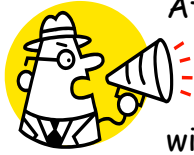
For each presentation format, try to identify at least one indicator of success. These indicators will be your way of evaluating your recruitment strategy. Apart from an increase in the number of recruits, several examples of success indicators include:

- Amount and value of media coverage
- Number of follow-up phone calls
- Percentage of increase in referrals attributable to recruitment strategy
- Positive informal and formal feedback about the communication piece.

Strategic Objective:	_____
Target Audience:	_____
Expected Outcome(s):	_____
Message Details:	_____
Costs:	_____

Presentation format(s)	Task(s)	By Whom	By When	Indicator(s) of Success	Complete (U)

Evaluation



At the end of your recruitment strategy, you will probably want to know how successful you have been. By preparing in advance *what, how* and *when* you are going to evaluate, you will be helping to ensure that you obtain valuable and meaningful information for your organization.

1. Using the table on the opposite page, indicate why you are conducting an evaluation on the communication strategy and what information you hope to obtain.
2. Once you have identified the information that will be important, try to identify three ways you could measure your success.
3. Indicate when would be the best time(s) to conduct the evaluation.
4. Finally, if you have not yet determined indicators of success for your action plan, you can take the information from Exercise #12 and add it to your action plan on page 24.



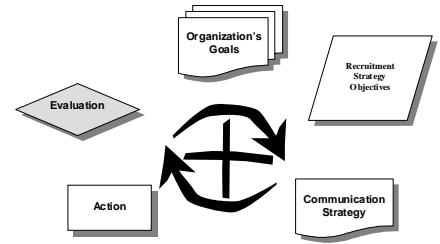
In addition to providing feedback about a project, an evaluation is often conducted so that funders can ensure their money is being well spent. Other organizations require it as part of their policies and procedures. In these cases, the reason for an evaluation is *justification*.

Another very good, but sometimes overlooked, reason to evaluate is for *planning*. The information collected from an evaluation - even a simple one - can provide important data that can be incorporated into the next planning process.



In addition to an actual count of new recruits, several examples of simple and effective evaluation methods include:

- ◆ tracking telephone inquiries
- ◆ monitoring media exposure and using a simple formula to calculate the monetary value of this exposure
- ◆ hosting focus groups with new recruits to find out what worked and why.



Exercise #12 - How did We do?

Our reason for this evaluation is:

What do we want to know?	Ways to measure success?	When	What would be an indicator of success?
	1. 2. 3.		
	1. 2. 3.		
	1. 2. 3.		