**Mentored Fundraising Assignment 9 Homework Instructions**

6-Month Mentored Nonprofit Fundraising Certificate Program

Center for Sustainable Development. <https://nonprofit.csd-i.org/nonprofit-fundraising-training-certificate/>

**This week’s resources:**

Class Home Page for Mentored Fundraising

Fundraising Assignment 9 Homework Instructions

[Download the PDF Version of this Assignment](https://nonprofit.csd-i.org/wp-content/uploads/MentoredProgram/Fundraising-Assignment-Nine-Homework-Instructions.pdf)

**Assignment 9: Calendar: Develop an achievable communications calendar.** How to become really efficient at writing.

Developing a communications calendar. Uggh. This sounds like a lot of work doesn’t it? But it isn’t really. All you need is an initial idea.

In the attached document on writing we look at having a multipurpose subject. This is efficient in two ways. You come up with one idea for the year. You can write one piece a month. And at the end of the year you can accumulate the 12 pieces into an annual report—and portions can be used for an end-of-the-year annual appeal.

This is nice because after writing one piece, you will have the opportunity to use each piece five or six other times in the course of the year—essentially quintupling the usefulness of each piece you wrote.

Here is a preview of Assignment Ten. We will be going over this writing guide greater detail in Assignment Ten—but it might be useful to skim it now to help you with developing your communications calendar.

Download the [PDF of the full four page Writing Guide](https://nonprofit.csd-i.org/wp-content/uploads/MentoredProgram/Fundraising-Assignment-Ten-Writing-Guide.pdf)—it’s full of great tips and techniques. Just paste this into your browser:

The other interesting thing is that by having this sort of "umbrella" idea for the year you don’t have to sit down each month and think about what to write. Each month’s assignment had been predetermined in a simple fashion at the beginning of the year. This is a pretty simple way to put together a communications calendar.

Your communications calendar is simply an idea developed at the beginning of the year. As you move into the end of this 12 month cycle, you can use the communications calendar as a template for the next year’s communications calendar. So it keeps getting easier and easier!

If you’re just getting started and/or you are one-person communications shop I would highly recommend keeping this first draft of a communications calendar very simple.

There are two ways you can do this. One is to get started by focusing on only one channel, say your newsletter. The other way to do it, which we discuss in the writing guide, is to make each thing that you write into replicable templates that can be used in multiple channels.

So for example, your newsletter has a specific template that you use each month. That template can be copied and pasted into your blog.

You then have a social media template which is comprised of a few main components from your newsletter/blog. Again, you will develop a copy paste situation so that you’re not spending a lot of time reformatting things. Perhaps your newsletter’s headline and opening paragraph could be written each month to be just the right size for your Facebook page or LinkedIn groups.

The idea here is to write once and copy paste several times without having to reformat and rewrite.

So your communications calendar is going to have three main components that you can decide on quickly.

1. What is your 12 month ‘umbrella’ idea?

2. Where are you going to publish each monthly installment? You may have completely different communication channels than my example does: Share them!

3. What is the frequency for your publications: weekly, or monthly?

**KISS.** Again, if this is your first communications calendar, keep it simple. The last thing in the world which you need is to show up at the office on Monday morning with a daunting communications project waiting for you.

Perhaps in the first year you should focus on a monthly publication. You can also focus on developing and fine-tuning your monthly templates. And you can focus on a newsletter, a copycat blog reflecting the newsletter, and a monthly Facebook post. If you complete the end of the year with templates for each of these three things—that will make the following year unbelievably easier. Maybe then, you could even go for fortnightly publications.

A year goes by pretty quickly and to have 12 published pieces at the end of your first year is pretty valuable.

In the A 10 Writing Guide we talk about writing a monthly piece about a person in your food bank organization. You could alternate between a client, a volunteer, and a staff person. We also looked at the idea of using these monthly pieces for a newsletter, for a blog, for social media—and as the beginnings of a volunteer handbook. And then, these human interest stories could be gathered into both an end of the year fundraising campaign and in an annual report.

Writing one piece of month is approachable and achievable—especially if it fulfills six other things that you need to accomplish that year as well. So consequently, your communications calendar will also be approachable and achievable—and can be a single page Word document.

Open up the [Magee Example Assignment 9](https://nonprofit.csd-i.org/wp-content/uploads/MentoredProgram/Magee-Example-Project-Fundraising-Assignment-9.docx) to see what this could look like.

**The homework to hand in:**

1. Download the Magee Example Assignment 9 communications calendar.

2. Change the file name and title to your name.

3. Think of a 12 month "umbrella" idea for the year and then 12 simple newsletter ideas that fit the idea.

4. Edit (right over the top of my example) the communications calendar to best suit your organizational needs.

5. Send your completed communications calendar to me as an attachment.

That’s it! Get going!

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