

The Partnership of Leaders and Communicators

Involvement is Key

Communicators work best as strategists who are at the table from the beginning stages of a given project, crisis, etc., rather than as project coordinators who are brought in to perform a task after all the real conversation has happened. Include communicators in the initial planning and in any media-related situations so that their skills and expertise can be leveraged to the highest benefit.

Fostering Trust

Communicators often deal with sensitive information, thus trust is necessary between the staff and leadership. Be straightforward, open and totally candid with the communicator and expect the same from this professional. Treat the communicator as an ally and listen to her/his advice, recognizing her/his expertise and knowledge. Both the communicator and leader needs to be open to feedback and constructive criticism, possible through mutual respect and perceiving the other as partner.

Transparency and Openness

Understand and accept the importance of keeping channels of communication open at all times. Sharing strategic plans, upcoming dates of importance and a common mission on a frequent basis leads to informed and committed decisions on all levels, in both leadership and communications. Even perceived "negative" information should be shared with the communicator, so that proactive messages, responses and strategies can be developed.

Frequent Interaction

Timeliness is vital in order to best meet the immediacy of information. Communication should be a priority and include frequent contact with the congregational leaders. Give time to communications on monthly meeting agendas and make weekly time for two-way dialogue with the communicator. During meetings with other departments, consider if there are any items that the communicator needs to know. If so, share that content with the communications director as soon as possible so proactive communication action can be planned and implemented.

Integrity of the Message

Communicators should coordinate key messages that tell the story of the community. Think of them as the steward of the congregation's external image, working to share and to explain the history, charism, and mission. They are the bridge between the sisters and various audiences, working to educate, engage and expand the voice of the sisters. To do so, communicators must be aware of changing goals, plans and hopes within the community.

Creativity and Proactivity

Communicators can assist communities with everything from marketing and communication strategic plans to sophisticated press releases and targeted messages. Communicators can be your best resource, with capabilities to provide both tactical and strategic aspects. The biggest benefit comes from letting them work beyond departmental silos, working in collaboration with others, such as fundraising, vocations, social justice and additional ministries. Encourage your communicator to embrace and leverage new technologies, trusting in their guidance and acknowledge the good work they do.



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