CENSUS COMMUNICATION PLANNING

Strategies for public awareness and persuasion
Building Blocks of a Media Relations Campaign

Goals
The first step of any communications campaign is goal setting. While we are collectively working on getting all New Yorkers counted, it is important to set a specific goal for your group. Find out how your constituents responded to the last Census in 2010 - was your area undercounted or was the response rate good? Then set realistic goals for the upcoming Census in 2020. This could range from making sure more seniors respond in your geographic area to assuaging fears in an immigrant community or ensuring that everyone who was counted in 2010 participates in the Census in 2020.

The messaging is modular: it starts with a universal main message that can be customized for your audience and is supplemented with subject-matter messages to fit your community’s needs.

Messaging
To advance any cause, you first need to develop a narrative. Clear and effective messaging is the foundation of a successful communications campaign. We have developed a messaging framework to guide and unify all communications. We will focus on getting out the count, emphasizing the importance of the Census, and making a specific case for your constituents.

Audiences
To achieve your communications goals, you must be clear on who you need to reach and engage. While we are looking to get all New Yorkers counted, not everyone needs to speak to all New Yorkers. The key is to speak to your audience, your community, and your constituency in your own voice, and through your channels and platforms.
Building Blocks of a Media Relations Campaign

Media Audit
The first step of a proactive media campaign is to inventory your media relationships to determine which you can advance, and where you can build new ones. You should begin reaching out to those you know, and schedule a time to meet. Not all of these conversations will result in coverage, and that is okay. Your goal will be to introduce the Census work and share your vision. Then, when the time is right, you can go back to these reporters with story ideas. They will also be more likely to come to you for a quote or your perspective on future relevant stories.

Expert Commentary & Opportunistic Moments
A key component of proactive media strategies is reacting quickly and effectively to breaking and larger-than-you news where you can add your hyperlocal perspective. This could include everything from adding anecdotal evidence from your community, to reports on state-wide Census response, numbers to speaking on behalf of a community, and addressing their concerns around news of a pending undercount.
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Op-Eds & Bylined Articles
Bylined opinion pieces demonstrating your leadership are a good way to generate content independently from reporters. These articles can be submitted to media outlets, published on self-publishing platforms, or posted online and sent to your constituents by email or through letters and flyers. Our team will work with you to shape these essays and editorials and develop persuasive arguments that can be tweaked to incorporate breaking news.

News & Feature Stories
Hyperlocal news is relevant to your audiences. We will work with you to identify and highlight your work and organization in a variety of local, Census-related news stories. Please update us with your news and the developments you are seeing in your work, and we can incorporate them into larger trend stories.
Building Blocks of a Digital Campaign

**Digital Strategy**

Building on the insights and approaches of the media relations program outlined above, it is important to think about how to reach your audiences and achieve your goals. When it comes to digital media, the maxim “strategy is what you don’t do” should be our north star. Better to do a few things well than attempt to do everything without the proper resources in place to be effective. We will work with you to craft custom approaches to get out the count that lean into your strengths, account for your challenges, and drive measurable results, along with the data you need to refine along the way.

**Websites, Microsites & Landing Pages**

For many advocates and community-based organizations, your website is the ultimate destination for up to date information. In other words, your website will be the very center of your “digital ecosystem.” We will work with you to ensure that the most important content is easy to find, share, and use. We will provide recommendations on how to improve online forms, optimize email collection, design landing pages that convert, and track it all to make sure it’s working.

**Owned Social Media**

We call social media channels that you own and broadcast on, such as your organization’s Instagram profile or Twitter handle, “owned social media.” We will work with you to ensure your social profiles are maximized. We will share best practices in community management, including how and when to create an Instagram story, and will familiarize you with the unique culture and communities of each social network to help you reach New Yorkers and drive participation in the 2020 Census.
Building Blocks of a Digital Campaign

Earned Social Media & Influencer Engagement

When someone else talks about you or your organization on social media using their own handles or channels (i.e. not yours), we call this “earned social media.” Having tools in place to monitor mentions of your organization, its leadership, and events is helpful in answering questions, as well as identifying new audiences on their chosen social platforms for possible relationship building or message amplification (i.e. “influencer engagement”).

Email Campaigns

We love email. The people on your list are by definition your biggest supporters. You can reach them for free, and they are likely to spread the message on your behalf if you ask them. We will make sure you are in the best position to use email effectively to get out timely information, drive event participation, source volunteers, and drive up participation in your community.

Digital Advertising & Audience Targeting

One of the biggest advantages to digital media is the ability to target audiences with high-precision and with end-to-end measurability. To do this, however, requires the use of advertising. The good news is that there are many low-cost ways to ensure your messages make it to the people who would most benefit from hearing them. We will provide recommendations on how to make the best use of paid media budgets of any size.
Building Blocks of a Digital Campaign

Design & Production of Creative Assets

Whether you are communicating through your website, via email, on social media or simply texting to private groups, it is important to creatively express those ideas using more than just the written word. Our team of producers, designers and strategists will consult with you on how to design high-impact videos, memes, gifs, social-share graphics, and native content that will break through the clutter and grab attention.

Measurement
Data & Analytics

We will help you parse the data to help you make these decisions as quickly as possible. This allows you to learn quickly, test ideas, pivot to stronger strategies, and scale up the things that are working. We will help you parse the data to help you make these decisions as quickly as possible.