School of Civil Initiative lectures for activists 2.1
Hnutí DUHA - Friends of the Earth Czech Republic
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Dear colleagues,

It is August, 2003 calm and ordinary late afternoon in a sleepy village in Eastern Bohemia.

On my way from the railway station I meet two young women whom I do not know. Not yet. In the course of the following ten days, however, they will play – together with several other people – a very important part in my life. As a young activist of a non-governmental organization NESEHNUTÍ (Independent Social Ecological Movement) based in Brno and of a local group of Amnesty International I enrolled in the summer School of Civil Initiative and the young women who greeted me were a coordinator of this unique programme organized by Friends of the Earth Czech Republic and a coordinator of volunteers from the same environmental organization.

Since that time I have heard from many people who actively engage themselves in the Czech non-profit sector that it was the School of Civil Initiative which boosted their interest in and commitment to civil activism. I get it, with me it was the same. Not only did we learn many practical skills (such as to plan campaigns and act in front of a camera) but, maybe most importantly, I met there a number of interesting people who gave me inspiration and literally infected me with their energy. Among my classmates were for instance Jaromír Němec (a future director of Friends of the Earth Czech Republic), Janek Rovenský (at that time a lecturer and an activist for Children of the Earth, now one of the most brilliant minds in the Czech Republic when it comes to campaigns) and Ivana Konigsmarková, who introduced us to the campaigns of childbirth assistants for the right to natural childbirth. I have also a nice memory of my classmate Aleš Chmelař, who was fifteen at that time and who became in 2017 the Government Secretary for European Affairs.

I am very happy that the project of the School of Civic Initiative continues, all the more that we currently find ourselves in an era in which to encourage people to become active in the civic society is, perhaps, even more important than before. Whether you have already attended the course or you are just now thinking about doing so, I hope you will find the course materials useful and that they will provide you with everything you need. Also, it would be great to meet you at the School or right during your or our activities.

Jiří Koželouh, Program Director of Friends of the Earth Czech Republic
**Vital functions of the non-profit sector**

Authors: Eva Navrátilová, Eliška Vozníková

Updated by: Gabriela Šťastná

This section explains why non-profit organizations exist and according to what principles they work. It is important to define their place within the scope of national economy. From the point of view of funding, the national economy is comprised of for-profit (market) sector and non-profit (non-market) sector, which can be further divided into public sector, private sector, and the sector of households.

Public sector is a part of non-profit sector which is run, administered, financed and controlled by public administration. This sector is often, in a simplified way, designated as “state”. Private sector is mostly financed by legal and natural persons. The sector of households also partakes in the circulation of money and participates in the market. It consists of individuals and groups of individuals who are both consumers and producers.

Victor Alexis Pestoff, a Swedish political scientist, described the ‘organism’ of society by means of the so-called welfare triangle (image no. 1: Pestoff’s welfare triangle). The upper part of the triangle belongs to the public sector, whereas the lower part to the private one. The right part of the diagram shows the for-profit sector and the left part represents the non-profit sector, which is further divided into several parts. The household sector, located in the left lower area, is characterized by its informality. It is composed of families, communities, and neighbourhoods, all that without a legislative framework. And, finally, in the centre, there is the private non-profit sector (the third sector, the sector of non-governmental non-profit organizations).

Image no. 1: Pestoff’s welfare triangle

The non-governmental non-profit sector is sometimes also called “civil sector” and non-governmental non-profit organizations (NGOs) can be also called “civil society organizations (CSOs). The non-profit (or non-for-profit) sector can be equally designated
as: philanthropic, private, voluntary, third, or independent sector.

1. The characteristics of non-profit sector

Not-for-profit. Non-profit organizations are not founded in order to raise profit. Whatever profit they make, whether it comes from their primary or supplementary activities, it must not be divided between the founders, between the members of the organization or its employees. It must be used for the further operation of the organization and for the fulfilment of its main mission.

Voluntariness. Organizations incorporate a substantial element of voluntary work; they collaborate with volunteers who participate in their activities with no claim to remuneration.

General welfare. Their purpose, aims and mission go greatly beyond private benefit of the members. They contribute to general welfare and they always bring benefit to a wider part of population, not to a single individual.

Formal establishment. They have a certain institutional structure, they are organized according to concrete principles and they are formally established.

Private (independent, autonomous) nature, independence of the government. They are, as institutions, independent of state, they do not form a part of public administration. Although they can be financially supported by state and its administrative bodies and state regulates their operation through legal norms, they are entirely autonomous organizations.

Self-government. Organizations have their own methods and infrastructures that enable them to manage and control their activities; they have their in-house rules and are not governed from the outside.

1. Theories of the origin of non-governmental non-profit organizations

Reasons for the birth of non-profit organizations can vary. There are several theories that strive to explain it.

The theory of market/government failure is the most mentioned one. According to this scheme neither state nor market is able to provide citizens with particular goods and/or services. Non-profit organizations are founded to secure these goods (both material goods and services). The theory of welfare state argues that the reason for the existence is that the functions of state are sub-developed and that non-profit organizations should gradually lose their role in the society while the functionality of state improves.

Non-governmental non-profit organizations cooperate with state and/or offer new or alternative services. Also, they often try to solve deficiencies caused by the failure of
public sector. In a number of third world countries they substitute or partially substitute for official state bodies. They provide citizens with basic social services, they run hospitals and schools, they handle the management of public matters etc. They also play an important role when it comes to creation and implementation of laws, international conventions, conventions related to the protection of human rights and needs and to the environmental protection etc.

1. Basic types of non-governmental non-profit organizations

There are several types of such organizations and multiple sorting criteria. From the point of view of their beneficial effect we distinguish between Mutual Benefit Organizations (MBOs) and Public Benefit Organizations (PBOs). MBOs provide services to their members and their main mission is to satisfy their own interests (most often these are professional associations, such as trade unions). PBOs provide services to the general public or to a particular group in a society; it can be for instance education or social services. With regard to the main type or area of their activity, it is possible to characterize them as Service NGOs, whose results are tangible and which provide services both to members and non-members, or Advocacy NGOs, whose results are not tangible and which devote themselves to the defence of their members’ interests – primarily to consultancy services.

Visions and strategic planning

Authors: Štefan Szabó, Silvia Szabó
Adapted and edited by: Eliška Vozníková a Lukáš Osvald

The birth of many organizations take place out of a great enthusiasm, lots of energy and eagerness to make a difference. However, it often happens that after some time, having reached the original aim, the energy fades away and the initiative crumbles. Frequently it is a “fight against something” that works as the initial motor of a movement, but once the “enemy” is gone, the initiative loses its drive and ends.

Why is this so? What the organizations, which make a fast start and then run out of breath and halt, lack? How is it possible to prevent it? How can we ensure that the functioning and efficiency of the organization will be stable in the long term (or else, increasing steadily)?

1. Vision?

The best way of ensuring a long-lasting and meaningful existence of an organization is to have a long-term, elaborate, strong and shared vision. Short-term aims are not enough.

Close your eyes and try to imagine you and your organization in ten or fifteen years; what would you like to have achieved by then? Where would you like to be? Imagine what it would be like and try to give this vision clear contours.
One of the main tasks of the leader of an organization is to set the direction for others to follow. All the more so if it is the founder of the organization. A further reason for the formulation of the vision is that we thus define for ourselves the long-term core of our activity. As a result, our decisions are going to be coherent and we will not lose sight of our primary objective.

Two examples of famous visions:

**Martin Luther King:** “I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”

The words you see above – and probably already know – are an extract from the most famous speech by Martin Luther King, widely known as *I Have a Dream Speech*. He delivered the speech on August 28, 1963, from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. and this finale of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom went down in history. Over 250,000 civil rights supporters applauded to his emotive message, a fifth of them estimated to be white.

**Jimmy Wales (Wikipedia pioneer):** “Imagine a world in which every single person on the planet is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge.”

A vision can be, of course, significantly more modest than that. In any case, the vision is, even for a small citizens association, vital to its long-term course, health and efficiency. As a Czech saying goes: “If you don't know where you're going, you might not get anywhere”.

### 1.1 What should the vision contain?

The organization’s vision is supposed to serve as a compass and give us motivation. It should take into account:

- The basic philosophy, crucial values and the characteristics of the organization.
- Its current objectives.
- Its basic strategy.
- And its ethical norms.

Vision is emotion. It is a magnet and the more charged it is the more it pulls you.

Vision is not born in the mind of a single person, although it can come into existence as a dream of an individual. It is a long journey from a dream to a vision. It is based primarily on a precise formulation of aims, an intense communication and on an understanding for
the needs of others. When you start working on a vision, you need therefore to surround yourself with a group of people who will help you to give your dream a form that will captivate other people.

1. **What the vision should be like?**

It should be inspiring, clear, and represent a certain challenge. It is good when it lives at least five or six years, but in any case it must be one for future. Also, we must not forget that visions exist to motivate people to make efforts in order to attain them. Therefore, it must be attractive and feasible. Good visions furthermore contain basic rules and orientation and build on the best the past has to offer.

1. **Vision is communication**

Once you’ve created a vision, you have to think about how you will communicate it to other people, to the members of the organization, to volunteers and to general public. This you can accomplish chiefly by a consistent and thorough communication.

One of the main traits of a vision is its attractiveness on the level of emotions. To excite emotions you need to communicate emotions, which means that nobody can do it for you; only the author of the vision can pass it further on. He or she must speak with people directly, describe his/her ideas, explain what he/she wants to achieve in the future and why. He/she can ask sympathizers about their opinion on the course of the organization but never about their opinion on the aim.

From time to time to you meet people who say: “What is this good for?” or “This is nothing new.” Give some thought to what they say: Isn’t there a grain of truth in what they say? Didn’t you, when working on the vision, forget about special interests of the given group? If not, you need people who will support your vision in public. The best people for this task are “natural leaders” – people whose opinion is taken seriously by others and can be decisive for their personal attitude. Take them on already when getting ready to formulate the vision for your organization; it will reduce the risk of your vision getting later rejected by the rest of the community.

1. **Vision is collective**

If you succeed, when communicating the vision, to catch your listeners’ attention, captivate them and make them invested in the issue, you win. We call it “sharing a dream” or “investment in making the collective vision come true”.

Imagine, that you share your dreams with someone; what happens? You gain their trust, since you get closer together than in a standard, everyday situation. You have common dreams. You fill them with enthusiasm, because if they themselves have not conceived a vision yet, they will welcome the opportunity – in the case they find it attractive – to participate.
in the vision of someone else. Enthusiasm is infectious; enthusiasts are eager to make a
difference and are relentless in promoting new ideas.

1.5 Vision is clear, strong and engaging

The vision must be brief. You must be able to explain it in less than five minutes. Imagine
you approach someone, start a conversation and after uttering a few words you can
already see sparkles in their eyes… The vision must also be positive – you want people to
bear it in their hearts, don’t you? Do not use negative wording, it is not a solid foundation
you want to build on. To state “we are not going to do this” is much less efficient then
“we are going to do it differently”. You do not want to direct your energy against
something, but to achieve something, for something.

1.6 Visions, missions and values

It is important to give your vision a smooth, refined and eloquent form. If you are able to
formulate clearly it means you have a clear idea about what you want to say and do.

The vision summarizes the mission of the organization and must contain values you want to
stay faithful to. Through the vision we state:

- Where we want to get.
- What we want to do.
- How we want to do it.
- How we want to be perceived by others.
- And in order to achieve it we will take the following steps…

Such scheme is very useful, as it represents an opportunity to find out, in every moment along
your journey, whether you are on the right path and whether you continue forward.

Getting more specific (and personal), the vision of Hnutí DUHA, Friends of the Earth Czech
Republic, for instance, is: “Hnutí DUHA strives to maintain and improve the present
democratic society, to create out of it a society that fight to ensure a clean and healthy
environment for everyday living, that respects ecological limits and protects nature”.

1. Strategic planning and strategic plan

Many non-profit organizations and their workers with a decision-making authority prefer to
leave out concepts such as performance/productivity, economy and strategy. They
consider them to belong solely to the market sphere. Particularly in the area of social care,
charity, and humanitarian services, managerial thinking often gets questioned as it
represents for non-profits things like profit maximization and efforts to increase the rate of return.

Nevertheless, old ways of thinking change and the management has already become an indispensable part of non-profit organizations.

2.1 What are strategic development plans good for?

A non-profit organization is a socio-technical system which pursues its aims, develops plans, makes decisions, monitors and controls, employs workers whom it has to motivate, manages its expenses, yields a revenue and tracks its results.

A non-profit organization is, in fact, unthinkable without the management. It is a goal-directed productive system whose optimal functioning and performance is made possible by fulfilling the needed tasks by means of an efficient management. The particular form of the managerial system is determined depending on external influences. A strong pressure from the outside means a strong pressure on the consistency and professionalization of the management.

The main factor is that a non-profit organization has, unlike a commercial one, a specific aim, which is not a traditional profit, but providing services to people and a positive change in their lives that is connected to it.

A non-profit organization does not have a „bottom line“, a limit above which it can be satisfied with its performance. Therefore, it needs to manage its activities very wisely. Its sources of both money and people are limited and it must achieve maximum efficiency. Moreover, when it comes to grants and donations, the competition is growing, which makes non-profit organizations to work more on their image and to be economical with resources. On the other hand, recently, many commercial organizations have equally started to engage themselves in activities that used to constitute the domain of non-profit organizations.

And so besides the competition that exists (and grows) within the non-profit sector, there is also newly a growing competition with other economic sectors. This evolution, however, also opens up new possibilities of cooperation and non-profit organizations must be ready for them.

Organizations must look for the funding options on their own and this is only possible if they work efficiently.

2.2 Professionalization as a must

Non-profit organizations are dependent on the support of others and their supporters want to be informed in detail on the way their donations were used. This still takes place by ordinary means (via printed annual reports, magazines, etc.), but increasingly by means of
online communication technologies (websites, newsletters, social networks, etc.). An organization must keep in pace with the evolution of informational technologies and learn to work with them.

The complicated human resources situation also highlights the importance of management. In non-profit organizations there is usually a shortage of professional workers and so they collaborate with volunteers. Usually, there is not a particular abundance of volunteers either and therefore there can be a competition between individual non-profits for active people.

A non-profit organization has, in contrast with a for-profit one, a more complex structure of clients – people (and organizations) who can accept, but also decline its services. There are two types of them: primary, who take advantage of its services, and supporting ones (volunteers, donors, members of community, members of the board of directors, and employees).

To manage such a complex structure of clients requires a professional approach.

2.3 Effectiveness

Non-profit organizations must assess and manage their efficiency. They are independent legal entities and they are, according to law, obliged to keep book records, manage bank accounts, make efficient use of their financial support etc. As a result, they need to search for good assessment methods and criteria to evaluate their efficiency, performance, and to control whether they are observed.

A good management is therefore vital for the organization.

2.4 Strategic Planning Procedure

The process of strategic planning can be divided into seven stages:

1. Preparation of the process.
2. Determining the vision, mission and values of the organization.
3. Analysis of the environment.
4. Creating and choosing a strategy.
5. Preparation and implementation of the strategic plan.
7. Double check.

Ad 1. Preparation of the process

It consists in the organization of the entire planning process. It should receive a due attention
so that the next steps are easily manageable.

The organization must:

- Decide whether/when it will undertake strategic planning, assess how much it is needed and consider prospective risks and advantages.
- Appraise whether they need any advisers. If they do not have sufficient experience, it is possible to consult the relevant literature, attend supporting seminars or turn to other organizations for help. An independent adviser will facilitate the preparation and management of the planning process. Moreover, they are independent and unbiased.
- Agree on the particulars of the planning process – when exactly it is going to take place, what methods are going to be used, with what results, who is going to be a part of the team, with what responsibilities, and where.
- Create a planning team – appoint members of the team and determine their number, tasks, and responsibilities. The team should not be too homogeneous so that its members represent multiple points of view and have diverse experiences to share.

**Ad 2. Determining the vision, mission and values of the organization**

If you read this manual page by page, you have probably already formulated your vision based on what you learned from the previous chapter. Standing side by side with the vision, equally important is an elaborate and precisely formulated mission of the organization. A non-profit organization must phrase its mission in such a way so that it unites the many opinions and ideas of people who work for it.

A unanimous attitude towards the organization’s mission, values and priorities, is essential. Any internal clashes and conflicts represent pose a threat to its integrity and to the fulfilment of its mission.

A well-formulated mission should be client-/customer-/target group-oriented, attainable, motivating and specific.

When determining the mission you need to answer the following questions:

- Who the organization is and to whom it serves?
- What is the purpose of its existence?
- What its activities should look like?

Values the organization adheres to are described as principles on which it acts when achieving its goals.

The point of this declaration is to communicate to employees, collaborators, clients, and, in general, to everybody interested in the course of the organization on what principles it is based. It is a condensed version of the philosophy of the organization designed so as to be
Ad 3. Analysis of the environment

Analysis of external environment: Factors of the external environment can be perceived either as opportunities which can be used for further development or as threats and perils which it will have to tackle in the future.

It can be divided into several categories:

- **Clients and customers:** Strategic planning represents a good opportunity for the organization to reflect upon whether it manages to satisfy its clients’ needs and whether its programmes are attractive for the targeted clients.

- **Competitors:** Competition takes place even within the third sector and the organization should take into account who its competitors are and for what it competes with them. It can be workers and volunteers who can devote their time and knowledge to its activities and causes, but also clients. Naturally, organizations compete also for grants.

- **Donors, sponsors, collaborators and other interest groups:** Attention should be paid to mapping the needs of current as well as prospective donors and sponsors. It is important to learn whether the organization’s programmes are still attractive and what new groups of donors and sponsors might be interested in its activities. There are, however, also other groups which definitely should not be omitted; for instance, you should verify whether the organization is surrounded by collaborators who help it carry out its plans and projects and who devote it a due amount of their time. Equally, it is good to find out if there are any other groups which would be interested in the organization and its activities.

- **Economic, social, political, cultural, demographic, legal and technological factors and factors related to environment:** These factors should be monitored, because they can significantly influence the operation of the organization. The information can be obtained from various sources, such as specialized information centres, internet, and public sector institutions. To map the above mentioned factors, we can also recommend STEEP analysis.

Analysis of the internal environment: Internal environment factors represent or point to strengths and weaknesses of the organization:

- **Strengths** are qualities such as skills and potential, which are going to enable the institution to grow, develop and to fulfil its mission.

- **Weaknesses** lower the quality of its work and hinder it from fulfilling its mission.

The terms “strength(s)” and “weakness(es)” are usually attributed to the particular parts of the organization: organization structure, marketing, staff, funds, economics, resources and capacities. It is the analysis of the amalgam formed by organization structure, employees,
quality of services, achievements and failures, technical and material support, current strategy, competition in the field etc. The result of the analytical process is a synthesis of a detailed analysis of the whole body of the non-profit organization.

The synthesis consists in comparing the external opportunities and threats with the internal strengths and weaknesses. The most common method is SWOT analysis. It is recommended to fill in multiple SWOT matrix templates, focused on the past, the present and the future. It is also possible and helpful to use STEEP analysis.

Ad 4. Creating and choosing a strategy

The creation of a strategy comprises of selecting the main methods to achieve the set goals. It is also an occasion to reflect on how to make a full and better use of the potential of the organization. There is a large number of methods which can be employed when creating a strategy.

We would recommend the following approaches:

- Creating a scenario
- Identifying critical moments
- Setting goals

By creating a scenario you in fact make an outline of several possible futures of the organization and after reassessing them you choose the best one.

Identification of critical moments is based on the analysis of environment. The team will consider and assess all the key points of the analysis, arrange them depending on their respective importance for the organization and will choose the most crucial ones, which will subsequently become cornerstones of the strategy.

The third option represents setting the main goals of the organization. These goals should:

- indicate the course of the organization and be clear, brief and unambiguous,
- represent a challenge, but be realistic and attainable at the same time,
- be outcome-oriented and quantifiable, and
- include a time frame for their fulfilment.

Examples of strategies used in the non-profit sector:

**Growth Strategy** represents a focus on the growth of the organization in size and of its influence.

**Strategy of Cooperation** is based on building common services and programs and on the creation of services that can be offered by multiple organizations.

**Downsizing strategy** means a reduction in the number of services offered by the organization in order to respond to financial or other cutbacks.

**Strategy of specialization and focus** equals a reduction in the variety of services while
keeping and further improving those where the organization scores above-average.

**Business strategy** consists in the development of business activities, which would enable the organization to continue the programs and services that fulfil its mission.

**Government Contract Strategy** means that the organization will provide services financed from the state budget.

**Strategy of professionalization** consists in developing the skills and knowledge of the workers.

**Strategy of reduction in professionalism** equals reducing the costs of providing professional services by engaging more volunteer workers and self-help teams.

**Termination of operation** is a possible strategy for cases where the organization is no longer able, for whatever reasons, to fulfil its mission, it has been already fulfilled or the reason for its operation no longer exists.

**Ad 5. Preparation and implementation of the strategic plan**

When preparing the strategic plan, it is very important to give it a written form, in spite of the fact that many managers of non-profit organizations claim that they do not need any such written document.

All the workers of the organization, its volunteers, managing board, donors, and possibly also the general public, should be familiar with the strategic plan.

The final form of the strategic plan is usually submitted to the highest executive body of the organization, most often to the board of directors, for approval.

The strategic plan is tightly connected to operation plans:

- **Main activity plan** should contain a summary of individual actions and events, their dates and workers who were in charge of them.
- **Staff and volunteers plan** describes the content of work, salary classification, workload, and types of training for both workers and volunteers.
- **Financial plan**: a yearly budget but also a budget for individual programmes.
- **Communication plan**: a plan featuring products, customers, use of marketing mix tools.
- **Investment plan**: Purchase and sale of the property of the organization and its use.
- **Other**: The strategic plan can also include a description of needs and problems, a plan related to equipment, a plan describing the operation of the board of directors or the details of membership, plan of the organization structure, suggestions for cooperation with other organizations etc.

**Ad 6. Implementation of the strategic plan**

Implementation of the strategic plan takes place step by step, through the realization of action plans. Individual action plans are assigned to particular people who are responsible for
their execution and have schedules and deadlines.

The implementation needs to be continuously monitored and it is good to evaluate the results of individual steps/tasks. If need be, you can make corrections in and update the strategic plan.

**Ad 7. Double check**

This step is often omitted. The excitement that followed the preparation of the strategy should not, however, fade away during the implementation phase and the final double-check. In this stage, what can come handy is the so-called protocol of measures which sums up the individual tasks with the relevant dates and deadlines.

Strategic control system provides information concerning whether/how the set goals are, by means of the chosen strategy, fulfilled. An effective control system enables us to react in time to changes in conditions and circumstances and avoid problems that have popped out.

**2.5 Strategic management**

A functioning strategic management and meaningful strategic planning of the organization are conditioned by the following aspects:

**The will to continue:** It is necessary to consider how much energy to invest in the strategic planning. If the non-profit organization decides to take the road of strategic management, it must give to strategic meetings the highest priority. Strategic management promotes a democratic environment within the organization and workers are more likely to perceive the organization as theirs. The condition of success is to keep written records of the outcomes of the meetings and to meet the listed objectives afterwards.

**Openness of communication:** What is most important during the conversations about the strategy of the organization is to be open. If the problems, which are already known to everybody but no one is willing to broach them, stay undebated, all the plans are useless. A critique should be regarded as a constructive effort to improve the quality of work and a demonstration of concern for the organization’s reputation, and not as a threat. Self-criticism and a commitment to evaluate the impact and efficiency of the activities of the organization represent a condition for its stability.

**Pragmatic planning outcomes:** A good discipline and a pragmatic approach are crucial elements in the functioning of the strategic plan. Non-profit organizations have usually a number of highly educated people, who nonetheless tend to adopt a very complex and broad approach to things, which is not in the case of strategic planning much practical. Strategic planning consists in dividing an abstract and seemingly ungraspable reality into smaller parts, which are then dealt with one at a time.

**Activities and measurable outcomes:** Sometimes, it can be a bit difficult to maintain a
context between individual strategic directions, but to plan pragmatically a set of activities that is the organization actually capable to carry out can be challenging. The key thing is to discuss thoroughly and choose a right direction of the organization. Within the set direction it is then necessary to identify several steps that are feasible and whose outcomes are measurable. It is crucial to keep detailed written records of each step of the execution of the strategic plan; realization of strategic plan often fails precisely due to poor-quality records, which nobody finds comprehensible or helpful. Without good written records it is virtually impossible to tell to what extent was the strategic plan fulfilled.

Next steps and their realization: A small organization should meet at least twice a year for an all-day meeting and discuss its future course and strategy (while taking notes of everything important) if it is to be successful.

The importance of individual steps, goals, and agreed rules: Goals should be reasonably planned. It must be possible to attain them in a convenient amount of time without stressing unduly about deadlines. Unrealistic expectations mean that barely anything will be realized at all and as a result it will seem that the strategic plan does not have to be actually realized and that the organization will continue regardless. Such organization, however, only survives from day to day. All the steps that are included in the strategic plan must be considered as binding until they are carried out or changed. If the person charged with their realization did not do so, he or she should be faced with sanctions.

Responsibility for the plan as a whole: There ought to be a particular individual in charge of the strategic plan and all its sub-parts and sub-directions who will be responsible for its realization. This person should focus on a long-term monitoring of the plan fulfilment and regularly consider the relevance of the steps included. He or she must know that the plan is good, that it is worth working on and achieving and that the strategic planning itself is meaningful. Without such a person the plan cannot survive more than six months.

2.6 Strategic plan

Strategic plan resembles a map that helps the organization to make a journey from one place to another. It is a written document that provides an analysis of the current situation and of future possibilities concerning the growth of the organization and features an outline of strategic decisions that will be necessary to make in the future in order to continue a meaningful existence and be able to fulfil its mission (including the methods employed and values of the organization).

The strategic plan is not going to provide solutions to all the problems the organization will meet along the way; it is a tool which will help you make decisions regarding your future course, everything else is up to the members.

Summary: Strategic planning in a nutshell
What are strategic development plans good for?

- You will map the current state.
- You will determine long-term goals.
- You will create a schedule for your actions.

**Where we are** (analytical part, description of the current situation, evaluation of the existing strategy).

**Where we want to get** (definition of strategic goals for the organization as a whole and for its individual areas – financial, human resources etc.)

**How are we going to get there?** (Action plan, yearly goals, deciding who will be in charge of particular areas etc.)

**Analytical part**

- Weighted SWOT analysis
- STEEP analysis
- Evaluation of existing strategy

**Structure and definition of strategic goals**

- Main goals and sub-goals – SMART criterion
- People who will be in charge / heads of teams
- Determination of indicators

**Continuous tasks**

- Reviewing
- Continuous evaluation

**Practical tips**

- A well-though-through process of strategic planning
- Time and place
- Good facilitator
- Participants (it is recommended to include all employees and long-term volunteers)
How to lead a campaign

Authors: Petr Machálek, Milan Štefanec

The majority of us usually participate in their free time in some public activity in order to protect the nature, to improve the living environment, to stop dangerous building projects or to support cultural life in a community. There will never be enough of such action. Therefore it is very important to deeply think through every activity we tent to do, so we will not waste the valuable time of ours or other people and we will not lose energy on ineffective projects.

The following chapter should help you to allocate your time and your effort in order to achieve your goals and to become satisfied.

It is important to point out that this text is based on personal experience of a limited group of people, therefore there is no purpose of generalization in the text.

1. What is a public campaign

A public campaign is a focused, planned and time-limited active effort aiming for an objective (or more objectives) that will solve an existing problem.

For you to understand the characteristics of a campaign, we can show some examples of what is not considered to be a public campaign.

First of all, a campaign is not when we print out some brochures describing a problem and offering a solution without making any other effort.

A campaign is not a short-term event that we organize because of some occasion. The reason is that a campaign must be long-term and constant.

If there is no clear objective set, it can easily happen that a campaign will lack of time limitation. We cannot lead a campaign for ever, because its efficiency would be lost and it will be more difficult to keep the attention of the media and public, which is a necessary condition for success.

We will deal with precise target setting later on. You will see that although it may seem easy, setting the target accurately and precisely is sometimes very difficult.

If we want to come up with an effective campaign, we have to add one more characteristics, namely “exemplarity”. An effective campaign should react and focus on those issues, which solution will raise the awareness of more layers of a problem.

An example: a campaign aiming for keeping the limits for coal mining led in consequence to prevent that the small czech town Horní Jiřetín would be demolished because of a future coal mining production. The campaign referred to a various problems, such as: similar danger in other towns (for example Litvínov), despicable energy concepts of the state, poor environmental quality in the region and economical potency of Ústecký region, which is not fully used because of the coal mining
1. Advantages and disadvantages of leading a campaign

To lead a public campaign with a target of changing something in your area or in the whole Czech Republic has many advantages. It is an effective way how to reach your goal. You will earn support from other people and other organisations. You will get the attention of media, you will become respected (or feared…) rival for those that make decisions (politicians, civil servants, etc.) and you will find new partners for your campaigns.

Leading a campaign has its own disadvantages as well. First of all you can create a conflict and therefore you have to count with rivals trying to compete against you. If you are trying to change the status quo or you want to regulate something, you have to count with the fact that the recent status is convenient for someone, he can profit from it, or that you restrain someone from pursuing his purpose. We will analyse this issue in the chapter dealing with target groups in campaigns.

It is also important to be aware of that some people just do not like the word “campaign” itself. A political, pre-election or a commercial campaign might not evoke positive connotations by some people. You might therefore use another word than “campaign” when talking about your activities in public. You can use for example the words “initiative” that maybe sound more positive. For our purpose we will still use the word “campaign” because it is the most suitable word.

1. Planning a public campaign

This chapter should help you with planning a campaign. We will try to give you some tips of what you must carefully think through before setting up a campaign in order to accurately set an objective, to choose the most effective way for your success and in order for you not to be unpleasantly surprised later on, but how to be well prepared.

1. Choosing a topic

It is important to understand that we cannot find solution or win everything. There are surely many problems going on around us, but we have to choose carefully on what we will work and what we will focus on. This is even more important in case if you work in an organization. You cannot catch the attention of public, media and politicians for several issues at the same time. You have to set some criteria of your selection and according to them you should choose the topics:

Is the topic/problem clear enough?

Is the problem significant enough?

Is the problem exemplary enough? (see previous chapter)
Is there a chance that we will succeed?

Will leading this campaign have a good or bad impact on the organization?

Are we able to find needed funding?

Of course, we do not want to discourage anyone from trying to win a “battle” that seems to be impossible to win (there is always a chance that you will win these battles). Yet it is important for you to be aware of what you really aim for.

1. Starting points

Before we will start with the planning of what we would like to change, we should know well the recent status. If we are sure about the topic (to improve the recycling services in a town, traffic situation in a region, situation of handicapped people in a town, problems of social disadvantaged people, energetic conceptions of a the state etc.), first we need to make a detailed analysis of the recent status of the issue of our interest. There we can find answers for following questions.

How significant is the problem that we want to solve?

What well-founded information we have?

What is the attitude of the public, the authorities and politicians towards this issue?

Is it possible to easily explain the problem to a bricklayer?

What existing solutions are there?

Why it has not happened yet?

What are the decision making procedures in the area that we want to change?

Who is able to change something?

Do we have enough know-how?

Where can we find more information?

Who is able to make a system change?

Does anyone else focus on such problem?

What is the capacity of our organization according to the human, experts or financial factor?
What impact the campaign will have on our organization?

Is it possible to assert a change?

What are the possibilities to cooperate with other organizations, experts, companies and politicians?

Very significant role plays an analysis of partners and rivals. And not only that! We need to know, how strong they are and what influence they have. For this purpose we will use the so called map of key players.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFLUENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+PARTNERS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Make this diagram using for example flipchart program in your computer and mark there your partners and rivals. The more closer your partners are near to the middle, the more neutral they are. In the horizontal perspective mark what influence they have- the higher it is, the more influence they have. During the campaign we aim that the neutral partners will be on our side and that some of the partners will have more significant influence.

This and sometimes even more is important to know and to graphically see before you start planning and leading a campaign.

1. Calendar of planned events

Think about and make a calendar of planned events, which will be organized regardless of your activities and which can eventually have some impact on your campaign. This can be events that seem neutral or as opportunities or threats. To be able to see it better, make a time axis. It can be for example an election (perfect time to add some things into a pre-election programs of the parties, time to meet some politicians, force of a public by the means of pre-election meetings etc.), international or other conferences (for example an international conference for a climate changes, that is the time when the topic is more discussed in the media etc.)

1. Targets

Appropriate target setting is a key point of a planning a campaign. Every target should fulfill following SMART criteria:

- Specific- it should be clear what it is about
- Measurable- we should be able to find out if we succeed
- Ambitious- do not lose time with trivials
- Relevant- do not lose time with unrealistic things
- Time-bound – set a deadline to each target

Targets can be also divided according to following criteria:

**Long-term targets**: they overlap the time frame of the campaign realization, they interfere into the broader context; successful campaign will get us closer to them

**Medium-term targets**: they are fulfilled at the end of the campaign

**Short-term targets (step-by-step)**: these targets must be achieved during the campaign realization, in order to fulfill the medium-term goals; we can also call them milestones

1. **Target groups**

Target groups are clearly defined groups, on which are the resources and activities of the campaign oriented on. A target group of a campaign cannot be the general public, but a specific segment of the general public, such as young families, students, retirees for example or a specific person. You are not able to affect a general public with your activities. A target group consists of people that can make a change or they can make someone to change something. Target groups (or their parts) will be detailed analyzed in following parts of planning a campaign. Do not forget that your approach will vary according to what target groups is the campaign oriented on (you will approach students in a different way than retirees for example).

1. **“Bull’s eye”**

In order to succeed with your campaign, you have to wisely choose the right object for your efforts. For example, if the goal is to enforce a change of rules that allow export of weapons to the countries where they are used against the human rights, it is necessarily important that the campaign will be focused on a specific person, which has the competency to change such rules. It will bring you no result if you will try to approach an institution as a whole (such as the government, the executive department or the parliament), because you will not create enough enforcement on one specific person and maybe you will not be even able to contact the responsible person. “A bull eye” of your activities must be a concrete person (for example a head of a department), whose primary responsibility of misuse of the weapons you will draw the attention to and from who you will require an appropriate change of the rules. You should always look for a person that is known by the general public and who is at the top of the hierarchy.

1. **Rivals and partners**

**Rivals**: You have to count on that your campaign will most likely raise some reaction from your rivals. We have already mentioned that. You already know some of your rivals and you should already have them written in your map of key players (for example, if you lead a campaign in order to ban growing genetically modified plants in Czech Republic, for sure, you will have a conflict with companies, that
profit from it), some rivals will appear later during the campaign (for example a group of scientists that receive a grant from multinational corporations dealing with growing genetically modified products). Your rival can also be a member of parliament or a civil servant that does not want to have any complications and does not want get into a conflict with politicians. During a campaign we monitor activities of our rivals and we react to them if needed. Do not let yourself get into needles conflicts, which will slow you down. Do not let your rivals to control the direction or progress of the campaign.

**Partners:** To have an overview of recent and potential partners should be a basic element of a good campaign. You should have the list of your partners marked in the map of the key players, including their attitude towards your objective and their influence on the whole issue. During the campaign, do not forget such activities, which will help you to enlarge your group of partners (and to eliminate your rivals of course). Your partners can support you with financial, material, professional or personal help. The partners can also protect your activities with their well-known names. Like with other parts of the campaign, you should be aware of the fact that you should choose your partners according to your goals, starting points of the campaigns or according to the ethical rules in your organization.

1. **Strategies**

A strategy is a way how to get from the starting point to the objective. It is a basic line of a structure, marking out the conception of the work and priorities in terms of the campaign. No matter how precise is the analysis of the situation or how high-minded is the objective, if we do not have a good strategy, we will get lost and we will not succeed.

In order to explain the meaning of a strategy in our case, we can consider it as a choosing a way how to get from a place A to a place B. We can either take the shortest route and go straight across the mountains or we can walk around.

The chosen strategy can therefore consist of spreading the awareness, providing education or influencing the general public (instant influencing some politicians which is connected to a general pressure that is put on them). A strategy can also consist of using a legal means (participation in a legal action, suing someone, etc.). A strategy can also mean to choose one part of a large problem and to focus on it.

Example: If we want to lead a campaign for decreasing the numbers of animals killed for their fur, our strategy can consist of spreading the awareness among the general public, above all among the purchasers of fur-coats. Other possibility would be to try to change the law, which would make the conditions for breeding such animals more restrictive or to even ban fur-animals farms. We could also choose one farm where it is obvious that the animals are brutally slaughtered and we can aim
for closing the farm.

Before we will decide what kind of strategy we will use, we have to consider following questions:

- how effective is the chosen strategy
- what benefits it will bring to our organization
- what is my experience with such issue
- what is the decision making mechanism
- what obstacles can occur on the way to the objective
- what is the attitude of the general public
- how much it will cost
- has anyone tried something similar

2.9. Tactics

Under the word tactics we understand concrete means, which we can and want to use in terms of chosen strategy in order to achieve our goal. There are lot of means and tactic ways. Using appropriate and well-considered tactics is a key for leading a successful campaign.

If your chosen strategy for example is to influence general public, you need to answer the question, who is the one that will be under the biggest pressure (who will be the target person), who will be the target of your lobbying- what political party, what politicians, what arguments you should use etc.

1. Means

- Professional research
- Lobbying
- Influencing the general public
- Creating coalition
- Participating in administrative procedures
- Organizing professional workshops and conferences
- Internships for target groups abroad (showing good examples)
- Bringing legal action
- Spreading awareness- issuing publications, organizing lectures, seminars etc.
- Media work
- Using social media (online social websites, blogs, videos,…) 
- Public events-happening, demonstrations, marches, cultural events
- Petitions
- Collaboration with general known personalities
While choosing particular tactic means you always have to consider following:

- Are the chosen means sufficient for our objectives?
- Are the chosen means related to rules and principles of our organization? (Is it a good idea for an organization which focuses on political lobbying or organizing professional workshops to organize a blockade?)
- How effective the means are? (Should you organize a festival or an event which will be financially demanding?)
- How well will the means hit the bull’s eye and other target groups?
- What impact will the means have for our partners- will it discourage or inspire them for closer cooperation?

1. **Time planning, tasks assigning and periodical evaluation and revision**

At the end of the planning, you should make a detailed plan of realization of the campaign. You can divide it into months or quarters and to each period write your plans and who from your team is responsible for it, what mid-term goals you want to achieve, what steps in terms of media you have planned etc. Plan, how often you want to do an evaluation and revision of the campaign- during the campaign you can change the strategy or tactics, but always after careful consideration. Remember, that in order to keep the potential of the campaign and in order to draw the attention of general public, a good campaign should not last longer than 2-3 years. There can of course be some exceptions.

1. **Factors of a successful campaign**

It is clear that it is not an easy task for anyone to plan and later on to lead a campaign successfully. During your first campaign, you will make for sure lot of mistakes, but it is always important to be able to find them, admit that you have done them and to learn from them. You should always have your eyes opened to be able to gain inspiration from other successful campaigns in home or abroad.

Here we list factors of a successful campaign according to participants of seminars “Škola občanské iniciativy” (School of civil initiative) from year 2002:

- significant problem (from general, ethical, and other point of view)
- appropriate targets
- enough information
- trustworthy campaign leaders
- appropriate and specific target group
- human resources- balanced number of volunteers and professionals
When working in NGOs, mainly during campaigns, we cannot get by without public relations. We explain our intentions to public, ask it to support us in form of a signature, by contacting politicians, volunteering, or providing money for our cause. Therefore it is important to build relationship with public, preferably positive. We all know the abbreviation: PR – public relations.

What exactly is PR for? Let us put it in another way. Ask yourself the question: “Does any media mention all the good we do in our organization?” And please answer honestly. From my practice I know, the answer is: “(Almost) none!” But how is that possible? We plant trees in the forest, we help to eliminate toxic pesticides in post-Eastern block states and we advise people… That is nice, but with the exception of the already involved people nobody cares. And probably nobody will. Why? Because they do not know about this. And that will not change until we accept it and start working to change it.

For example: Try to recall, which organizations help people in developing countries or in dangerous situations. Can you name some that are not well-known through the media?

For example, there is a Czech NGO Arnika that helps in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia or China. But because it did not present itself as such for a long time, it was not well-known for this. Efforts of people from Arnika started to pay off later. They tried to find promising topics and they presented the information in doses to carefully selected journalists. They also
prepared opportunities attractive for media, but also other target groups – videos, social networks, information booths, exhibitions or cooperation with other similar organizations.

Doing good is simply not enough. It is crucial to learn to sell it to the public – learn how to talk and write about what you do – present yourself. This chapter introduces basic procedures and tips how to ensure that the public learns about our activities. Public relations contain a wide spectrum of tools and procedures.

Whatever you do, it is necessary to find something attractive within the topic or your specific activities; something that has the potential to make people (often journalists) curious. It can be an unconventional point of view on a relatively common thing, an original way to solve something or coming up with a context or formulation that describes in an unexpected or funny way what you do.

For example: Once in a train, a passenger asked me what I do. I could have simply said that I am a spokesman for a NGO. Or that I help people get into the clouds (the first prize in the contest “Alley of the year 2013” was a balloon flight). The second option got me an article on toxic substances in a magazine of rather big high school.

PR only follows human psyche. If people receive information best through stories, PR should reflect it. PR should also firstly focus on those activities of the organization that have the most positive impact on public: what makes buying healthy food easier, saves family budget, ensures new jobs, helps expand national parks, etc.

**What is PR?**

To this day, there are hundreds of definitions of PR. The official one was approved in 1978 by the Institute for Public Relations and says: “PR is intentional, planned and long-term effort to create and support mutual understanding and compliance between organization and its public.”

Extended version, used by many professionals, says: “Public relations is a management function, which evaluates public opinions and aligns policies and procedures of individuals or organizations with public concern. It prepares and executes a program of actions to earn public understanding and acceptance.”

There are many views of what the means, the tools or the goals are and what concepts and models PR has. Let us focus on what is important for NGOs.

PR is a part of marketing mix of companies whose main goal is profit, but it is important to realize that NGOs do something very similar. Aside from selling, e.g., goods made by people with handicap or providing education to disadvantaged people, they also “sell” thoughts – that it is right to sort waste, that it is good to eat well and without food additives, or that taking care of seriously ill people is worth financial benefits. In other words – NGOs do marketing as well – social marketing. Just like in the commercial sector, a social marketer has to prepare
their non-commercial campaign and define changes they want to achieve in people's' thinking or behaviour. It can be signatures under a petition, public collection, or increased awareness of chosen topic. It is important to consider this when planning or revisiting a campaign plan.

To be precise: if we mention the public, we have in mind a group of people or organizations, which has potential interest in our activities (both positive and negative) or influence the NGO’s ability to achieve the goals of its campaign (see the map of key players). PR mean a set of programs and processes that promote the NGO, defend its image or the image of its campaigns (goals, ideas).

**What are (good) public relations for?**

An organization can be considered successful, if it has a positive image. But that does not mean that partial achievements are sufficient. Only a well-known subject can have an image. It is necessary that the public recognizes our achievements and spread the word further in a positive way.

If we are mentioned in positive connotations, both among people and in media, it will help us to work better and more effective in all our activities. We gain an intangible comparative advantage in comparison with other organizations and our next goals and opinions will be carried through more easily. It is a way of preparing the grounds for future activities, either the current ones expanded, or completely new ones. (I.e.: “They did really well last time. They have a new campaign now and I think they can be successful again.”)

You can object that this might be also achieved by advertisements. That is true, but only partially. Moreover, within NGOs paying for advertisements is usually completely off budget-wise. Advertisements and PR are parts of a complex of activities called communication or marketing mix. “The brain” of our marketing mix is PR and we’ll understand advertisements as a subset of it, a PR tool. Well done advertisements often have a positive effect, but what do we usually think of advertisements? They should convince, sell, show in better light, often exaggerate – simply, what we see, need not to be true.

PR uses other methods. Based on the chosen strategy, it can be a dialog (not a monologue as in case of advertisements); a typical example are comments on social networks, often our information goes through another filter that has to find in the mix of contradictory news the “truth” or at least some balance. Thus, information that gets to people through PR becomes automatically more trustworthy and have wider impact.

The purpose of PR is not only creating of a good image. Sometimes, someone comes up with a campaign against us. Depending on the intensity we could “just” explain, or try to keep a good reputation, or engage in crisis communication. The last one has its own specific rules
and covering it would require a new chapter or maybe a book. Let’s hope that we won’t need it and if it comes to it, despite all the good PR work, find advice in literature.

But beware, the goal of PR is not to control and manipulate the public. Do not mistake PR for propaganda. The function of PR is to help individuals and organizations communicate with the public so that they are perceived positively and their prestige grows. In case of many organizations the problem is that people disapprove with their goals in advance. And because these goals are good (definitely from our point of view), it is necessary to convince the others. We cannot rely on the saying that good “product” sells itself. It does not! We have to do it.

What will we get from PR?

- Public knowledge (of needed target groups) of our activities and achievements;
- Positive image (or improving damaged reputation) of our organization and activities;
- More willingness of the public to listen to our thoughts and to accept them;
- More willingness to join our activities;
- Increased probability of financial contributions from the public;
- Better chances with greater donors, funds, foundations…;
- Better chances with decision-making powers (usually politicians);
- Many more

Who is “public”?

The key term of a campaign and PR is the target group. It is a clearly defined group of individuals or organizations that we address. In other words, the target group “public” does not exist. The probability that anyone succeeds to efficiently present a piece of information to “the public in the Czech Republic” is close to zero.

The public is incredibly diverse, formed by people with very different needs and opinions. It is illusory to think that what is important for our NGO is equally important for others, even those with similar opinions. Young parents with university degree that wish for the healthiest environment for their children have a different attitude to phthalates in plastics than an older farmer, who has no interest in this issue.

So what is the target group? One of the definitions says that “it is a defined group of people that we try to target with our campaign. Target groups can be determined by geographic, demographic, psychographic or behavioural characteristics”.

Examples of target groups

Some typical examples:

- A 15+ – all people older than 15 years (All 15+)
• **HW 18–54** – Housewives 18 to 54 years
• **M 30–65 HS+** – men 30 to 65 years with high school or higher education

This is still a very coarse division. Amongst men with high school or higher education of the given age, their attitudes towards insulation will differ if they live in a high-rise apartment building in a bigger city, work in a big corporation and have an under-average income, or if they live in a family house in a smaller village, work as a self-employer in consulting and have an above-average income.

A well-defined target group contains people that have some common characteristics distinguishing them from the rest of the population. Thus, people in the target group are going to have some common opinions or needs that our PR can target. We are going to offer different arguments and goods at charity fair in an office centre than on a youth music festival.

There is a saying “he who wants everything, gets nothing”. It is not possible to effectively target everyone. Thus, it is necessary to define our target groups. It is also necessary to keep in mind that a campaign usually does not have only one target group. In one target group we may want to strengthen their slightly positive attitude towards the topic, in another disprove their counterarguments or get them on our side by making an appeal on an aspect that connects both groups in spite of all differences.

A map of allies and opponents can help us with that. It is useful to create this basic map for each campaign, but also define who exactly we need to reach for our goal. For example, to preserve alleys among roads it is necessary to work not only with supporters of all ages that will be willing to sign our petition and thus create pressure on politicians. We should also try to win road workers, officers or local representatives doing the decisions using targeted articles in professional magazines and websites, or conference contributions.

An entirely specific group are journalists. First, they are a completely separate group, second, they grant us access to our target groups (mothers read something different than teenagers). Because of this, we dedicate a whole chapter to journalists.

**When do we “do PR”?**

Simply said, it is any communication with any population group. For example, when gathering signatures on a festival, when giving a lecture to children in school, when writing a press release, when holding talks with politicians or officers. And do not forget that one important target group is ourselves inside our organization.

We build relationships with the public through different channels. Above all by working and building relationships with media. We call it Media Relations (see separate chapter). It includes press releases, invitations to events (an invitation for a journalist has different rules
than an invitation for any other target group), organizing press conferences or informal appointments with journalists, offering targeted articles or commentaries. PR also includes our own publishing, i.e., leaflets, annual reports, magazines, books, brochures, guides or studies.

The aforementioned should be properly presented on our website or on social networks, so that it is accessible to almost everyone. Remember that mainly in case of social networks it is a reciprocal communication that can turn against us quite fast. So it is necessary to pay enough attention to them.

Pictures we use have a great impact as well. Each one carries an emotional message in addition to its information value. We should learn how to work with that. The same picture of a wolf on a wildlife crossing (green overpass over a highway) carries a different message in connection with an article on overpriced highways and with an article on how big predators are coming back to our lands.

Also, when using certain words, the “impression” is important. People usually don’t like being advised, so a “new advisory centre” does not need to give advice, rather it should “offer help to those who are interested”, we don’t mind “tenders”, but we don’t want “mega-tenders for forest industry”, we support “smart recycling industry”, but we object “spending billions on controversial incineration plants”, etc. There are many similar examples.

Another communication channel are events: open days, exhibitions, happenings, demonstrations, flash mobs, parties for partners and donors, planting trees, etc. Through these we show our target groups what we consider important and thus we help the campaign goals, create content for social networks (virals), or get media attention. It is important that those who represent the organisation look representative. For example, a volunteer informing people on exhalation with a cigarette in their hand and dirty t-shirt does not make a good impression.

Fairs, conferences and public presentations are a perfect opportunity to introduce ourselves to people from the branch, present ourselves with experts and get new contacts.

**Having a Clear Identity**

Wherever and however we present ourselves, we should have a clear identity – act for our organization. Have a clear logo, use unified layout (font, font size, colours, page layout) in press release, website, publications and presentations.

**Food for thoughts**
Opinion polls are another unconventional, but interesting possibility. If the name of our organization is included in an opinion poll of a well-known agency, it might improve its status (“Look, they’ve put them here as well, that means they are also important in this topic…”) and help the organization title get to the media. We can also find out public opinion on a particular topic in our own poll and then present credible results.

A specific PR area is crisis communication. The primary role of PR is to avoid crisis communication. If it’s necessary, we have to follow its specific rules and procedures. For example, it is strictly forbidden to lie and it is not recommended to hedge. Simply put – if something went wrong, admit it.

People form their opinions on our organization based on our work, but also on whom we work with or who are our donors. In these areas, PR is interconnected with fundraising and our PR specialist should be in touch with those who are responsible for fundraising. Agreement within the organization on who we accept money from and under what conditions is very important and it is better to clearly publish this information on the internet.

Many companies are trying, according to their CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) activities, to cooperate with NGOs and thus “clear” their reputation. Which is in contrary with the understanding of social responsibility in the Western world. Each organization should consider if and how it is going to take part on this.

PR also does not face only outwards. Internal PR is also important, because a happy member or worker won’t paint a negative image of an organization. Thus, inside-facing activities should be carried out as well – informal meetings of members, workers and volunteers, internal magazine or website, trainings, etc.

We shouldn’t forget that we do PR also during appointments with representatives or members of Parliament. If we are able to responsibly hold talks with elected representatives and high officers, we improve our reputation, despite a number of corruption scandals in politics.

The organization’s reputation is also influenced by those who ask people in the streets for contribution, call current or potential donors, prepare and send fundraising letters or emails. In case this first contact fails, these contacted people won’t refer positively about us.

Who would not wish for pleasant neighbours that help when the need arise, but do not bother when time is not fit? Good relationships with organization’s neighbours send a message as well as appearance of its main office.

**An Example of Targeted PR before Introducing New Product**

Few years ago, beginning in autumn, media started to report that scientist agree on the numbers of ticks in the coming year. Due to weather conditions there ought to be really many of them. Then, reports from hygienist followed, saying that unusually high percentage of already overpopulated ticks might carry dangerous diseases. And then the doctors began to
recommend vaccination. Not coincidentally, new vaccine against tick-borne encephalitis was introduced to the market. Similar procedures usually precede introduction of new products – most commonly in case of pharmaceutical or beauty products.

**Ten Commandments of Good PR**

1. The needs and interests of target groups are the most important thing for PR. They influence the tone of the campaign and suitable communication channels. PR works with their emotions.
2. PR is not a one-man job. All the workers and volunteers of the organization participate on it.
3. PR never lies. That does not mean it has to say everything.
4. PR does not intrude. It knows its information and their value and offers them to the target groups. If done well, creatively and originally, people will notice.
5. If there is something worth a compliment, PR objectively compliments the organization. If the organization is criticised, PR accepts the truth and explains the facts.
6. PR works continuously. It does not try to appear only in times we need to “sell” something.
7. PR checks. The text cannot contain spelling mistakes or typos and the text has to make sense.
8. PR acts ecologically – recycles. Mainly significant parts of texts that are most important for the campaign and need to reach the target groups.
9. PR cooperates closely with the organizations’ executives to decide what, to whom and how will the organization communicate.
10. PR does not change its mind for no reason, keeps its word and does what was promised. PR should be devoted to the topic, fun and enthusiastic.
Working With “Traditional” Media

Author: Vratislav Vožník

1. What are the media good for?

The variety of reasons why we should learn to work with the media is extremely wide. Thanks to the media, we can spread information to people we would not be able to reach using only our own resources. The media offer a space to us where we can convince others by using arguments and earn their support for our goals, intentions or actions – signing a petition, participation during a demonstration or sending an e-mail. This is how we exert pressure on those who can decide about our cause. Did you manage to save an alley from being cut down? Tell people through the media.

People are often lethargic, but when they see a picture of their town’s square in the newspapers, it catches their attention – and it is very probable that whatever is written next to the picture catches their attention just as well – e.g. a few words about how sorting more waste leads to paying less for waste collection. Is there a better way to mobilise them so that they ask their elected deputies this question?

What do the politicians, public officials and big company directors have in common? They hold power, they want the media to write about them and their plans in a positive way and they often represent the target of our activities. If the media ask questions about our cause, it puts them under pressure and thanks to this pressure, it is more likely that they will decide in accordance with the aims of our campaign.

Sometimes it happens that false information about our organization and its activities appears on TV, on the web or on fliers. Thanks to the media, we can set things straight and we either renew or strengthen the good name and image of our organization.

Have you ever started to work with an organization you knew nothing about? Probably not. If there are articles about us and if we are known and respected, we have a better chance of getting new partners, volunteers and interns. Moreover, we will profit from a good PR, because they will not forget to mention their experience in their CV or among their friends.

Articles and reports can have significant influence on fundraising – both individual fundraising where people identify better with an organization thanks to mentions in the media corresponding to their opinions and also foundations and corporate giving. For example: Do you need paint, a compressor, volunteers and conveyance? These are all expenses. But if the
media write about this, some company might offer the paint as a donation in exchange for a mention in a newspaper article – that you used their paint because it is water-soluble and non-toxic.

1. **How to actively generate publicity?**

Firstly it is necessary to say that it is not an easy job. Let’s look at the conditions we are going to encounter, especially concerning bigger and more renowned media.

Try to identify with a journalist of a common, regional newspaper. At 9 am they have a quick meeting concerning the daily agenda and find out that at 10 am they are going to write about a change in the municipal zoning plan. At 1 pm they have to be an expert on health care and at 4 pm they love children because there is a party in the local elementary school. Furthermore, the financial resources of the media are drying up and most of these resources come from advertising and promotion. The numbers from the United States say that in the last few years, the gains from advertising have reduced by half. What are you going to do when you lose a half of your income? You start to economize. Media as private companies try to cut down on their expenses all the time, which takes its toll on quality and the amount of space that is given to individual journalists. As a consequence, journalists often do not understand topics they are supposed to write about, they cannot allow to pay a 100% attention to those topics and they do not have enough time, because they have to produce three or four articles a day. The conditions thus force them to be superficial. This is the reality and there is nothing we can do to change it now.

How to work in such an environment? Publicity can be generated in two ways:

- **in a targeted and controlled manner:** We start the initiative ourselves, create an event or an information which is subsequently written about. Moreover, to a certain extent we are in control of what the media write about and how. The communication is thus partially in our hands.

- **in a spontaneous, uncontrolled manner:** We are contacted by a journalist who says they have heard either something about us or our goals, or that they have found some of our (old) statements. In this case, we are not in control and the publicity can be either desirable, or quite the opposite.

You probably already know that media like confrontation of two sides, or any type of hot news (common news). The media also search for human interest stories (features). For example: They are not interested in the fact that the “household consumption has, according to statistics, decreased”, but the fact that “people buy less and less and one owner of a store says that they have run out of money”. This is how a personal story of an entrepreneur gets
involved. Newspapers are also interested in the political context: if a minister speaks about a completely unimportant topic, he is given space even if the topic has no relevance. On the other hand, boosting the visibility of complex social or environmental topics, old affairs, expert knowledge or alternative and unattractive solutions asks for more inventiveness.

The amount of space that journalists are allowed to use is always smaller than the number of important topics. Because there are some social and environmental topics that are often marginalized, we cannot count on the fact that we are going to get as much space as we need.

To catch the attention of journalists and subsequently the attention of readers, we have to offer something really interesting. Chance plays an important role: you can have a perfectly organized press conference, but if the government falls or someone famous dies on the same day, the news of is going to take up at least a half of the space in the media. It usually depends on the skillfulness with which we offer our topic to the media.

All in all, journalists are very much restricted and mostly do not understand the given topic. The more we accommodate and prepare a text in accordance with their needs (comprehensible and easily processable information, clear numbers, explanations, contact information), the less time they will have to dedicate to their article and the likelihood of its publication increases.

There are other small things to think about: avoid incomprehensible and technical terms. Even if we consider some expressions completely understandable, not everybody understands them. That is why we are not going to write about a “typical biotope of newts”, but about a “place where these rare animals live”. If some expressions cannot be avoided, we have to explain it in the footnotes. The topic should be presented in a brief and comprehensible manner.

Do not forget about the fact that journalists try to be neutral. Even if they sympathize with us, it should not affect the article. The other side of the problem will be given as much space as ours and if we think that the journalist was biased against us, our opponents probably think the same. Each side is going to interpret the text from a different (and biased) perspective and we have to be able to admit it.

--- rámeček ---

What can the media do?

• They can initiate and enforce collective behavior.
• They strengthen news: we create news by putting it on our website, but if someone else publishes it as well, its impact is strengthened.
• They can create a new reality and step into our campaigns – for example by exposing
corruption scandals which lead to a dissolution of the parliament we have worked with for the past three years.

- They can help to exert pressure.

--- konec rámečku ---

1. **What types of media are there for us?**

The media can be divided into these groups:

1. print media / the internet / television / radio
2. national / regional (even regional mutations of national media)
3. dailies / weeklies / monthlies
4. local journals
5. specialized according to topic

1. Print media need primarily textual information – sometimes a photo, but they usually send their own photographers. Internet media can use a little more space, so apart from texts, they make use of photos, infographics, short videos etc. In case of the television, one must think of the fact that it needs motion pictures, interviews on camera and quality sound. It is also good to have at hand a logo of an organization which we try to show on the screen. On the contrary, we avoid inappropriate and loud places. Concerning the radio, there is no need for a visual dimension, but the clearer the sound and the more comprehensible our expression ought to be.

2. All types of media covered in the first point have both national coverage and its regional variants. A special position is held by the Czech News Agency, a sort of a “journal for journalists”. Nationwide issues and broadcasting logically have the most recipients, but they refer to events which have an impact on the whole country, which is why the space for individual topics is very much restricted. But there is no way around those, if we want to exert pressure on central offices, the government or politicians based in Prague.

On the contrary, it would be meaningless if we wanted a medium with a nationwide coverage to print an article informing about a reconstruction of a day care center in a local village. This type of information should be covered by local media. All the big media have newsrooms in regional capitals and dailies have them in almost every district. We recommend to find out which local journals, especially weeklies, are published in particular places. Regional media differ in many aspects from the national media, but they can be significant for the work with
local population, officials, municipal politicians and other local representatives.

3. The most hectic environment is represented by daily newspapers. As Edward Abbey said, “Nothing could be older than the daily news, nothing deader than yesterday's newspaper.” All media in spite of space restrictions strive to be the first and they always search for their own topics. These papers have a deadline after which it is not possible to change the content for the next day’s issue. As a general rule, there is almost no chance to get something in the news after 4 pm of the preceding day. The same rule applies to television and radio as well.

Internet media are specific – every minute represents a deadline. That is why they are the fastest, most up to date and least accurate. In order to be quick, not enough time is dedicated to verification of information and you can hardly find an article which is not being continuously updated.

Weeklies have more space for individual topics, journalists delve deeper and more information and detail can be used. On the other hand, the higher the requirements for evidence and information span are. Most topics are general, some about politics, some about economics, some about culture. Newspaper supplements such as TV guides or supplements about housing also belong to this category.

Monthlies are usually more thematically focused – lifestyle, parenting, cars, fishing or travel magazines. To give you an idea: more than a thousand nationwide periodicals is published in the Czech Republic.

4. Are you dealing with a problem that is connected to your municipality and its immediate surroundings? Find a local journal and place your focus there. It is common that there are usually more, for example a municipal magazine and a local parish journal.

5. Those are mostly monthly newspapers that were mentioned above, but we should emphasize how important is the right targeting strategy. Travelers and movie fans are not interested in information about toxic substances in furniture, but it could be an interesting topic for the fans of housing magazines or lifestyle and parenting magazines in general. An article in those magazines can inform experts who work on a similar issue about our work and this might mean a new contact or a potential ally for us. Because these media are strongly specialized, their target group is very small. An incinerator project cannot be stopped by one article in a national newspaper, let alone by one mention in a specialized journal.
1. **How can we establish contact with the media?**

The first option is a press release. It is one of the most important means of working with the media. It is used to pass timely information about important events to the journalists, which should make sure for the information to be published. Most spokespersons wish for their whole press release to be published. This rarely happens, but a big part of newspaper content actually comes from press releases. If the media do not publish some of our press releases, let’s not be disappointed – continue informing the journalists about important events and let them know that things are still happening. They can use this information anytime in the future, even when we consider the release dead. Out of sight, out of mind is in case of journalists especially true, because they daily receive hundreds of spams.

It is important to convey information with a value. It has to be relevant, interesting and usable and it should stick to one topic only – do not mix two or more topics together. These are the basic requirements to to issue a press release.

We issue a press release when:

- We have brand new and important news: nobody will be surprised that environmentalists protect a rare species of plant in the mountains, but they will be interested in the fact that “While taking a walk in the mountains, you can come across a yellow violet that does not grow anywhere else on the planet.”
- We want to familiarize the journalists with concrete data or facts: lists of the biggest environmental polluters are issued every year, but each time they are different.
- We are preparing materials for a press conference or a public event: what are we doing and why.
- We need to comment on a current event: in this case we state in one sentence which event we are talking about and attach a quotation with the commentary.

1. **What does a press release look like?**

There exists a standard format for writing press releases. Imagine that you have an hour until the deadline and you have a space for two short press releases. You need to find the most important information quickly and at the right places – if you do, it will be easy to write the releases in a short time.

A press release cannot contain typos and grammatical mistakes and it is good if another person takes a look at it as well.

The header should always contain the information that the document is a press release, the
logo of the concerned organization, contact information and date. If there are more organizations involved, there should be logos of all of them and contact information is not necessary.

5.1 The headline

The headline is the most important element of the whole press release. Among the tens or even hundreds of spams which end up in the mail of a journalist, it is necessary to catch their attention to such a degree that our email does not end up in the Trash folder. The headline should be paid a special attention – it should contain about five words, it should be concise, clear, attractive or funny. The rules are as follows: a simple declarative sentence, no full stop at the end, no exclamation points. There are exceptional cases where these rules can be broken, but there must be a reason for it. We can use a very short quotation (in this case with no quotation marks), we can ask a question, we can leave out the verb, but there must always be a good reason for it. If the headline does not catch attention, the rest of the message might be lost forever. In press releases, the headline must be visually separated in a very distinct manner.

5.2 The Lead Paragraph

The first paragraph, also called the lead paragraph or simply the lead, usually begins with a reference to a place to which the press release is connected, e.g. the Czech Republic, Brno. If the place is really small, we are not afraid to specify the district.

The lead paragraph is written in the third person and should not be longer than five lines. It must answer at least three from the following questions: WHAT? (the message of the release), WHO? (participants of the event, whom the event concerns – suppose that the name of your organization will appear right here), WHEN? (ideally it should be “right now”, or in the future and exceptionally, the event should precede the conference by more than a few hours. There should be also indicated WHERE the event takes place. The place should be worked into a continuous text. A good headline and lead increase the chance that the journalist is going to read the details as well.

Why should the lead look exactly like this is implied in the concept of the so called inverted pyramid – the beginning should contain the most important and most attractive information. If there is no space on a newspaper page or no time for editing, journalists usually delete paragraphs from the end. It would be a shame if the lead would contain thanks to the donors
but the key information would be drowned in the last paragraph.

5.3 The body of a press release

The lead paragraph is followed by the body of the press release. The key part of the body is made up of quotations (see below). The body provides us with a space where we can explain the context and answer supplementary questions such as WHY?, HOW? and WITH WHOM?

The body is written in the third person as well. If the lead contains an information that this week (WHEN) a group of volunteers (WHO) is going to help nature (WHAT) at a certain place (WHERE), the body should explain the context: the volunteers will be planting beeches and fir trees (HOW) to help increase the biodiversity of forests and contribute to their stability (WHY) and they will be working together with people from Beskydy PLA (WITH WHOM).

Of course, it is possible to add many other details, for example the exact place, why they chose this place, their other plans for the day, what kinds of other species live there etc.

We should not forget that the release should be concise. Neither the lead paragraph nor the body should contain elements of evaluation, comments, the expressions “I”, “us”, “our organization”. We are making a concrete and neutral statement and it is up to the journalist and the reader to form an opinion. Try to notice how the media put controversial information. A source is always attached – a national park broke the law, say the environmentalists; according to artists, there not enough money is invested into culture etc. Use the same method in your press releases – you will have less work and you protect yourself at the same time. It is not that the journalists do not believe the information, but they are not judges and they have very limited time and sources of information. Even if we prepare a detailed analysis confirming our statement, it is still a one-sided statement. That is why the journalists have to write an article in such manner that a subject that might feel offended will not sue them.

5.4 Quotations

The only place for personal comments and expressive statements is in the quotations. It is also the only element of the text which does not have to be written in the third person. According to the recommendations of Czech News Agency, the first quotation should appear in the second paragraph, right after the lead. The second used format places quotations at the very end of a press release, but the chosen approach depends on the practices of different organizations. Journalists know that quotations are always there, so they look for them – which may be an advantage.

Why do they look for them? Because quotations evaluate the situation and so they do not have
to evaluate it themselves (and according to the common rules of reporting, they cannot do it anyway).

An example: Let’s imagine a situation that a large chemical plant wants to discharge toxic substances into a river for the next ten years. It applies for authorization by a competent authority, we criticize them and the plant’s representatives (in order to save face) state that they will respect the decision of the authority, whatever it may be. The authority decides against the application which means a problem for the chemical plant – either it will be necessary to invest a lot of finances to dispose of the toxic substances or the plant’s representatives demean themselves because they will not stick to their word and appeal against the decision. We will not miss the opportunity to criticize them via a press release. In the body of the release, the maximum we can do is to write that “according to the environmentalists, the chemical plant is unreliable, because it broke its word”. But in the quotation, we can afford to say much more: “This is an outrage and we wonder what else are the representatives of the plant lying about.” In each case, we are going to need evidence – we need to find the statement where the representative say that any decision will be respected.

If often happens that the only part of a press release that ends up in the final article is a part of the quotation. This is why it is important for each sentence to be clear, short, able to be used independently and to be written as if somebody really said it (written and spoken language is very different). What it means is, that there should be no statements such as: “as I already mentioned”, “it follows from the above that...” etc. Each sentence should be no more than two lines long, by which we protect both ourselves and the information we want to convey. Journalist are often not sufficiently informed about the topic and it could happen that they choose a sentence which is not at all relevant or changes meaning in a different context.

There are two things left to give the journalist everything necessary for the article. Firstly, they should be given contact information – usually the author of the press release or the spokesperson of the organization. If we quote other people in the text, it is appropriate to provide their contact information as well. The last thing is to provide notes for editors and appendices. If we state in the press release that the criminal rate in the surroundings of the Central Station has increased, we should provide the police report on which our statement is based. If we present a list of toys according to the amount of phthalates they contain, we should provide a report from the laboratory where those toys had been tested. If we refer to somebody else’s statement, we should copy the statement and provide an article or other source for it so that is clear that we provide correct information.
5.5 One more time: What kind of a press release has a chance of success?

- A short one, ideally one A4 format page. Notes and appendices do not count (but it is still true that the journalist will not have the time to go through a long text and they might be discouraged).
- One that facilitates the work of the journalist: clear information, comprehensible style and quotations.
- One that contains new and attractive information. Even a slightly older information can be made attractive and current if we bring it up in a new context, in an original manner or in connection with a human interest story.
- One that does not (if possible) contain technical terms. Let’s not forget that in each discipline has its unique jargon and commonly used expressions that we might not consider problematic, but the public (including journalists) does not know what they mean. These terms decrease the clarity of the release and its chance to be printed.
- One with short sentences in it. We try to avoid complex sentences – two commas are almost too much.
- One with sensibly long paragraphs (maximum of seven or eight lines). If the text cannot be shortened to fit one page, it is appropriate to use a crossheading or to divide the text in another manner (for example by inserting a link to a photo gallery).
- One where opinions are in the quotations and not in the body of the release.
- One with the most simple formatting and sent as a file that is easy to open and easy to copy. That means a MS Word document (*.doc). There is usually no place for alternatives or open source software.
- One that contains visual material, but the overall size cannot exceed 1 MB, because there are often data limitations. We can provide photos in HD resolution on request or send a link to a cloud storage (e.g. uschovna.cz, leteckaposta.cz and others)

5.6 When and how to send press releases

Journalists have to receive our press release in the right time. Ideally, the release is sent **before 9 am** because in the newsrooms, there are usually morning meetings which start either at 9 or 10 and the sooner we send the press release, the bigger chance we have. It is of course possible for them to use information that was published later (especially in online media), but we should not depend on it.

**During the year there are** times when journalists are **busy** and things happen and then there
is the **slow news season** (the latter half of summer and the time around Christmas) when journalists are thankful for each tip. The busy times usually come before elections, Christmas and at the beginning of the school year. We can thus adapt the topics we want to see printed according to how busy the media are at certain times of the year.

It is also important to plan when news are published **according to the days of the week**. If the Government meets on Wednesday and we want to notify the media about something which will be discussed, we should issue the press release on Monday or Tuesday.

Concerning local affairs, you find out when important meetings take place and when do important institutions organize their press conferences. Another aspect is that the selling rates of periodicals differ by days. The most read issues are those with a TV guide and in those issues, we will probably get noticed by the most people. On the other hand, these are the issues with the most competition.

Only those events that we organize during a weekend are worthy of publishing on Friday or during the weekend, when serious issues are not attractive. If you are inviting people to an event which takes place during the weekend, make sure that the invitation is sent on Thursday morning at the latest, because invitation section deadlines of the biggest daily newspapers are around 12 am.

If the event takes place **during the following week**, it is necessary to send the invitation on Friday morning at the latest, because the announcement and advertising database of Czech News Agency closes at 12 am.

**How to send press releases?** Via email, of course. Always take care not to reveal our media database. It is inappropriate and unprofessional if a journalist can read how many of his colleagues received the same email. Therefore we insert the email addresses using the BCC (Blind Carbon Copy), or we create special mailing lists.

It should be clear directly from the email what kind of information is the journalist going to find in the press release. We either contact a journalist, offer them a press release and copy at least the leading paragraph, or we paste the whole release into the email.

It is almost incomprehensible nowadays, but there are still problems with diacritics in email communication – it is thus better to send the text without it.

### 1. A Press Conference

According to some spokespersons and journalists, **press conferences** are something of anachronism. Despite these opinions, I am convinced that if there is something so serious
such as a groundbreaking verdict or launching of a campaign aiming for a fundamental modernization of the industry, a press conference is in place. Just as press releases, press conferences need to revolve around one central topic (which does not mean that journalists will not ask about other circumstances).

Press conferences are held only if there is a topic of such importance that its publishing through a press release would mean a reprehensible misuse of its potential. Materials of such kind will not be there forever and moreover, press conferences take time and money. That is why we organize them only if:

- We want to announce important information or statement.
- We are launching a new campaign.
- We have interesting photos/videos to show.
- We have interesting guests.

6.1 How to organize a press conference

**The place is important.** It needs to be in a good reach for journalists, or at a place which is closely ties to the topic of the conference (near the embassy of a country that violates human rights, near a forest that has been cut down, in a day care center which is about to be closed/was just opened).

There should always be a person welcoming the journalist, asking them for a signature on the attendance sheet and distributes a prepared press release (so that they can familiarize themselves with the topic and prepare questions) among them, or other material.

If there will be multiple speakers, we should think carefully about who is going to sit where, if they are going to sit (press conferences where speakers stand are modern and they look more lively – on the other hand, journalists need to have a place to sit) and also about the order in which they are going to speak. We should also think about a space for the journalists’ voice recorders.

**The speaker or host** of the press conference first has to welcome the journalists and familiarize them with the topic and course of the conference. They they introduce other participants and announce whether there will be a space for questions and individual interviews. The journalists should be entitled to both and the importance is even higher for the radio and TV. That is why we need to plan ahead for how long the participants are going to stay.
We also familiarize the journalists with the time schedule of the conference. It should be about half an hour long and both parts (announcements vs questions and individual interviews) should be equal in length.

We should also prepare answers for expected question. Those should be prepared before the conference starts.

**6.2 One conference = one message**

This is the basic rule of all press conferences. If the participants do not know this in advance and the speaker does not manage to stick to his role, it is very likely that something none of us wants to see published will be published.

An example: A press conference which announced the size, placement and appearance of forest areas that were cut down in Šumava during the summer blockade of 2011. The message of the conference as planned: 32 hectares of plains appeared in a valuable natural area and now it looks really bad. Some of the journalists asked whether the blockade will be renewed if they start cutting down the forest again. The answer was “of course it will” (participants were not instructed, the host did not manage the situation). Instead of getting across the planned message, an information that the blockade can start again at any time appeared in the media.

If there is a question we do not want to answer, it is completely legitimate to say that the question is not on the agenda (in the example above, the person asked about the blockade could answer that a decision would be made only if the feeling was renewed).

Immediately after the conference we should send accompanying press conference materials not only to every journalist on our mailing list, but also to each participant of the conference. This is done so that the journalists have a source to copy interesting passages from.

That is why an attendance sheet is important. Thanks to the sheet, we also obtain new contact information and there can even be a question in it whether they want to obtain our materials via email – we are expanding our media database. Furthermore, we can later look if anybody wrote anything about the topic and what was stated in the article. If they wrote something we did not want them to write, it was our mistake – we did not manage to convey the message attractively and comprehensively.

1. **What are the media interested in?**

What should our press releases and press conferences be about?

- Original, unique projects.
- Projects and activities which concern the target groups of individual periodicals.
- Interesting and attractive topic, preferably with a human story in it.
- Photogenic events (either beautiful/funny or shocking/dramatic ones)
- (info)graphics, map visualizations, comparisons (“using this amount of money, the city of Ostrava could run its public transport system for twenty years“, “that is an area as large as fifteen Wenceslas Squares” etc.)
- Events suitable for a captivating media coverage.
- Participation of celebrities (but beware – some are already being involved in certain topics)
- Scandals
- A partnership with someone powerful, influential and renowned (when Amnesty International issues an international report, we can join in with a similar topic)

Before a press conference or other event that is interesting for the journalists, it is necessary to send them an **invitation**. An invitation for journalists has different rules than an invitation for the public. It has to contain information about who is inviting them, what is the name of the event, when and where it takes place. If our target guests are journalists, we should hold the event in the morning (10-12 am). Moreover, the invitation must tell them what kind of information they are about to receive, who is going to speak to them and brief contextual information (only a paragraph long). If you think that the event will be interesting for photographers, say it in the invitation. Refreshments are considered a standard.

1. **Other options to be in the media**

**8.1 Sending letters**

Sometimes it happens that an article is published and it contains too many inaccuracies or someone directly attacks us. Then it is important to be able to react adequately. Issuing a press release is usually not the best idea (especially if the information is not spread to other media). In such a case, a short reaction should be written (not longer than a thousand words and it should only correct the inaccuracies of the article, or a provocative counterquestion.

Especially in case of regional journals, letters are a significant way of attracting their attention. Letters are published in the original wording (or shortened) so we have an opportunity to avoid inaccuracies and emphasize what we consider the most important. Most journals publish these letters even if they do not agree with the content.

Letters from readers also notify the journal that a certain issue is topical and readers are interested in it – it is also more likely that the journal will pay attention to it. The more people write these letters, the better – one person that sends an angry letter each week against the
construction of an incinerator in Klatovy is going to get a very bad nickname.

The letter should be brief (one or two longer or a few shorter paragraphs) and it should address one topic only. It should be obvious that the author has a clear and comprehensive opinion on the subject.

8.2 Commentaries

Commentaries are more interesting, but they require more work. Most dailies publish commentaries (opinions of journalists or publicly known people about various topics, mostly important social and political topics) on a regular basis. MF DNES, Lidové noviny and Právo dedicate to commentaries one or more pages a day, other dailies (regional) significantly less.

It is very difficult to have a commentary printed in a national daily. Regional topics have almost zero chance, e.g. the closure of a railway in Šumperk is a strong regional topics for regional dailies or weeklies, but not for a nation daily. A commentary should be concise, clear and enjoyable to read. In one article we always focus on one topic and we do not skip between various circumstances. There are the same rules for language and style as they were for a press release: short and simple sentences, brief, easy and enjoyable text, no jargon or technical and expressive terms. Be polite and calm, do not insult or attack anybody. Do not rely on the memory of readers, they might be completely oblivious to our cause. Only a person who has read a lot of commentaries can write a good one.

Finally, a commentary has to comment, not inform. Therefore it should contain primarily opinions and not information. There is no point in trying to use commentaries to push through our arguments, because this approach will not meet with success.

1. When journalists want to speak with us

There are numerous opportunities for us to speak to journalist, be it via telephone or in person – if they need additional information concerning a press release, during press conferences, during events to which they have access, while preparing a report or other longer articles. They will probably call from time to time, asking for a statement concerning an event or a piece of information they are currently writing about.

There should be only one person to speak with the media (this does not apply to press conferences where there is a planned ahead program). A group of more people tends to talk over one another, add unimportant details and produce chaos. The speaker should know the details and the topic well.

Similarly to a press release, we should be concise, understandable and we should avoid unnecessary details. We have to realize that the space is minimal and journalists will only
quote one or just a few sentences, or they will edit the sentences to fit this form. The more brief and clear our information will be, the more likely it is that the what we consider important appears in print and that the quotation will be in keeping with our opinions.

We do not avoid controversial and burning questions. We do not fall back under criticism, we are not politicians. However, if a journalist says things that are far from truth in order to simplify the problem, we should notify them and we might think together about a description which would be both concise and accurate. This is true especially when we give interviews on TV or on the radio. Only one sentence from our long speech is going to be broadcasted. The best strategy is to ask the reporter about the question they are going to ask us (they often tell) and think about a brief, clear and interesting answer. It is also important to ask where is the answer going to be used, with whom have they already spoken, who said what, whom are they going to talk to next and what supporting documents (studies, meeting minutes) we should prepare. All of this is going to help to get the right information in the right form into the statement (we are going to speak differently in different media).

If we are to participate in a discussion or a more elaborate interview, again we think about what we are going to say. We can also write down on paper the basic points we want to make. The best approach is to introduce a general statement in one sentence and then illustrate the statement by a concrete example. In this way we restrict ourselves to only a few basic points and we avoid complicated constructions and explaining of complex circumstances.

We try to speak calmly, fluently and comprehensively in a radio broadcast. On TV, the impression we make is also important – the way we speak, appearance (you do not have to wear a suit, but avoid being extravagant) or behavior in general. The overall impression is in this case more important than the content of your speech. Speak calmly and think things through. You are not being interrogated, you only talk to someone about a topic that you know more about than they do.

If you make a mistake and your are not on live TV, you can easily say that you want to re-shoot a bad sentence or answer. The recording will be editing in the studio. You can also think for a while after hearing a question. You must think about what you say and not say anything you are not certain about. It is also important to avoid statements which could be taken out of context and change meaning. In the eyes of the public (and the journalist as well), it is not an individual speaking, but the whole organization. Do not give way to emotions and be calm and stick to facts.

It happens only rarely that the journalist is biased against us and tries to do us harm, but it can happen. If we have a feeling that they want us to fall for something or they want to manipulate
us into a statement we do not agree with, we politely but uncompromisingly stand firm. It is better not to answer misleading questions and explain one’s position instead. If we are in the end ascribed words we certainly did not say, it is necessary to call the relevant person and politely but strongly object to it. If the case is really serious, we can demand a correction. Remember that it may not be a bad intention of the journalist, but only a mistake or negligence.

And one last well-meant piece of advice: Never say anything you would not want to see printed. Even when a discussion with a journalist is considered a private conversation. They can use anything they hear.

Rules of working with the media

- Be calm while communicating with journalists, do not let them provoke you.
- Do not lie, be objective.
- Have evidence and support for your argument.
- Be kind and open-minded.
- Keep track of journalists (databases etc.)
- Keep your neutrality towards journalists.

New Media

Authors: Vratislav Vozník, Martin Máša

Before we delve into the topic of new media, we should clarify what exactly we are going to discuss. Simply put, it can be said that in traditional media, pieces of information go through an (preferably professional) editing process. In case of new media, this process does not take place. New media are digital and enable our interactive input – writing a status or commenting on social networks (generating content), skipping parts of a video uploaded on a remote server and even simple entering of a web address falls into this category (because it is us who chooses the content we want to see).
1. The Internet in general

We use it everyday and for a great part of the population it is the main source of information, a shopping platform, a place to have fun and a place of self-realization which fulfills many other functions as well. Present-day society without the Internet is hardly imaginable but there are both advantages and disadvantages to it. It is absolutely essential for our work and campaigns and it is a place where we can spread information for a relatively low cost and where we can ask people to help us achieve our goals. But to create a website or a profile on social networks has its costs, so it is good to think about what the benefits for our work are going to be.

That is why you have to, when you are about to start with the Internet (be it the Web, Facebook, Twitter or anything else), answer a few key and at the same time basic questions for yourself:

- Why do we want to be on the Internet?
- Whom are we doing it for?
- What exactly do we want from people?

1.1 Why do we want to be on the Internet?

Forget about answers such as “because everybody else is” straight away. This answer is wrong and the time we invest into internet activities is being wasted. It is necessary to have a clear goal to be able to achieve it. Possible goals might be the following (depending on the needs of a particular organization):

- We want to inform. We have recently discovered a ruin of a castle, there is nothing about it online and because we think that people should learn about it, we create a website. The goal is to publish simple information.
- We want to improve the image of the organization. It might be necessary because people are not exactly sure what we do, or because false information or rumors are spreading about our organization. There are several ways to improve one’s image using PR and the Web plays a key role in the process.
- We want to raise money. It does not matter whether we need donations for one
particular activity (a purchase of a guide dog for a blind student), or regular donations (guide dog training).

- We want to make mailing contacts and engage people in our work. If there is something we are working on for a long period of time, it happens that one activity (signing a petition) is not enough and we need people to be more active, e.g. by sending letters to members of parliament. Having their email address means that we can call them by their first name, which works better than the impersonal “Dear Sir or Madam”.

- We want to support sales. For instance, we want to support the sales of products from our sheltered workshop and that is why we create a website which contains stories of the people who make them.

- We want to recruit volunteers. That is why we create a website by means of which we try to attract them, stay in their favor, offer information that is not accessible to other people.

- We want to stick to our commitment concerning our project. Almost each project contains a condition of a “mandatory project publicity or visibility” - the donor usually wants the public to know that they contributed to the activity, that studies have been conducted, fliers have been made and events organized to make himself visible. Sometimes a whole website is one of the outputs of a project. This website does not necessarily have to be the same through which we contact people (the donor probably would not want that).

It seems that the Internet is a place which takes enormous amounts of data and that one website can serve all the mentioned purposes. However, this is true only partially: It pays off to consider when it is useful to edit the current website and post new articles and when to create a new one, independent but still interconnected with the previous one.

1.2 Whom are we doing it for?

In the chapter about public relations, a part of the text is dedicated to the expression “target group”. The rules are the same for a website as they are for articles or press releases. If your target group is “everybody”, it will be very complicated to think about the character of the website – teenagers probably like something else than potential clients of a day care center. The more accurately we are able to define our target group, the better and more personalized
our communication with its members will be.

A great utility for creating a website are the so called “personas”. Those are fictional virtual characters that represent the user type which might profit from and use our website.

1.3 What exactly do we want from people?

We want them to view our website? That is not enough. Whether it is a status on Facebook, a webpage or an email that we write, it is always necessary to tell people what it is that we want from them. Be it only a simple invitation: “Read about the dramatic history of our castle ruins.” Even though it seems natural to us, it might not seem to them. If we want them to take action, it is essential to use the CTA – Call to Action strategy: that is why in infomercials they always repeat “call now and order” so many times. Do not be afraid of challenges such as:

- Share!
- Sign!
- Buy!
- Support!
- Come!
- Write them!

All of this can be achieved in numerous ways. According to the goals we have set for ourselves, we need to consider how we want to use the Internet. Some goals can be achieved easily via social network profiles, others may require a small, but independent website.

2. Social Networking

Everybody is online. Or least almost everybody: four in five inhabitants of the Czech Republic older than 10 years, spend 47 hours a month online. Why not try to address them with our campaign there? The easiest way to do so is to address them through social networks.

Social networking service is an internet service which enables registered users to create personal or communal profile, interact with other users, share information, pictures, videos, chat and do other activities. And why do we call them „social“? Because it is the users and not professional journalists who creates the content of these networks.
Social networks in numbers

Social networks are a strong communication channel. According to AMI Digital Index study, in the first three months of 2017 social networks were not used by only 7.6% of the internet population. Those who used them spent there 147 minutes a day on average and they did not spend their time on only one of them. The most common number of used social networks is three (26%) and but some use even four (21%) different social networks.

Why to use social networks

- Fee free channels used by a large portion of the population.
- It is a place where users exchange information.
- They enable us to communicate through multimedia content (pictures, videos, sounds), which is always more user friendly than a written text.
- Your thoughts and your ideas can be shared and spread very quickly.
- Social network is the ideal environment to create communities or interest groups.
- It is a place where new and close relationships can be built.
- Communication (not only marketing communication) is very personal there. Thanks to social networks, you can create your own network of loyal supporters and people who will spread your ideas.
- It is a place where people can join your cause, be it as employees, volunteers or supporters.
- You can easily find out whether there is someone else interested in the same topic as you. If that is the case, you can quickly form a partnership.
- The social network environment is the same for everybody. It does not matter whether you are a big company or an individual – the conditions are the same (although resources for advertising play a role here as much as anywhere else)
- Not using social networks effectively means giving a competitive advantage to your opponents.
- Social networks can make your brand visible (branding). A profile on a social network can be even stronger than a website.
- Social network activities have positive secondary impact in the online environment: thanks to these activities, the visit rate of your web may be increased and your website
may be more visible in search engines. Social networks are a part of the search engines’ algorithms. The stronger profiles on social networks you have, the more likely you website appears while searching.

### 2.1 (Net)workin’ it

Among Czech internet users, the most known and used sites are: YouTube (98 %), Facebook (97 %), G+ (91 %), Instagram (81 %) and Twitter (81 %). Czechs are also familiar with Instagram Stories (43 %) which started catching up with Snapchat (52 %) six months after its release. Other commonly used or known media are LinkedIn (49 %), Tumblr (26 %) and FourSquare (26 %).

- **Facebook**
  Facebook is one of the world’s most extensively used social network. Using Facebook, you can offer your content to other users – pictures, videos, panoramic pictures and videos, live streaming, interactive 3D pictures etc. This content will be displayed on the user’s timeline. All your content can receive immediate feedback via likes, comments or shares among other users. Thanks to these interactions and advertising, the reach of your communication can be rapidly widened.

- **YouTube**
  YouTube is the biggest internet server used to share video files. YouTube allows its users to upload videos, view them, rate them, share them and post comments. It is possible to access music videos, TV clips, movie trailers and other types of videos, such as vlogs, short authentic videos or educational videos.

- **Instagram**
  A picture is worth a thousand words and that is why Instagram makes it possible for its users to share pictures, videos or their daily stories made up of pictures and videos again. There are several filters which can be applied to those pictures. Users can sort their pictures using hashtags and send them, post comments or like them.

- **Twitter**
Twitter is a social site where its users tweet – post a text message of maximum 140 characters (it is possible to write longer posts, but that is outside of common practice), which subsequently appears on the profile of the author and those who follow him. Thanks to Twitter, we are familiar with the term “hashtag”, meaning a word beginning with the character “#” (e.g. a very common hashtag in March is #oscars), which sorts all posts with the same word in them. This system has been adopted by almost all other social networks.

2.2 Do’s and dont’s of social networks

Social networks are a good servant but a bad master. To get the maximum out of them, you should first know what your expectations are, with whom and how you want to communicate, if the communication will be long-term, or if it is only a temporary element of the campaign. Devise a plan. The following points are going to help you:

- What is the goal of communication?
  Set a clear goal of your communication. If you want to increase the reach of your website, share it via your own profile. If you want people to join your campaign, ask for it.

- How to approach this goal?
  Make a list of steps that will help you. Do not hurry, it will take a while before people start coming to you and only after they come you can ask for help or support. It should be possible to evaluate each step you make (e.g. “we have 100 followers already” or “the average reach of our posts is 1,000 users”).

- How long should communication last?
  Think of a time frame during which the individual steps should help you achieve your goal. If your expectations concerning the accomplishment of individual steps do not meet reality, you are either too optimistic, or this path probably does not lead anywhere.

- How to choose the right tone of communication?
  Communication, including its tone (the manner in which you will e speaking to
your audience), should stir emotions. Will you be funny, concise or persuasive? Does this tone of communication lead to your goal?

- What is going to be the medium of communication?

  On social networks, the lowest amount of people reacts to long written texts (even though there are exceptions). Use other multimedia and choose a social network or networks accordingly.

- What kinds of sources do we need?

  - Do we have enough content?
    
    Can you create engaging and original quality content to post on your profiles? Prepare the content you are going to post before you create a profile. Before you click on “post”, think about whether this post is relevant to your campaign.

  - Do you have enough time for administration?
    
    Everything needs its time. Before you create a profile, think twice about who is going to take care of it, how much time they can devote to its administration and whether those time possibilities will suffice. Posts and responses to comments are not going to write themselves.

  - What are your abilities?
    
    You can create your own videos? Choose YouTube or Facebook. Are you good at taking pictures? Great, you are free to join Instagram. Can you write clear and engaging texts? In this case try Twitter or Facebook. In short, your abilities should correspond with the network of your choice.

You are never going to make a mistake if your posts:

  - awaken curiosity;
  - captivate, bring out emotions;
  - contain a promise (of change);
  - ask questions;
  - provide answers;
  - call to action.
2.3 Facebook under scrutiny

Whether you decided to communicate with the public via texts, pictures or videos, it is best to start with Facebook. It is the most widespread social network with a dynamic development, it offers great targeting possibilities, it can take enormous amounts of multimedia content and it also offers great possibilities to measure your communication. That is why we are going to look deeper into how Facebook actually works.

2.3.1 How to get your content seen

There is no confirmed strategy which guarantees a high organic reach of you posts. Organic reach represents the goal in your communication on Facebook. The higher the reach of your posts is, the more people are going to see them in their news feed. It is not true that all of your posts are displayed to all your friends or fans. That is why pages on Facebook compete not only for the attention of users, but also for their posts to be displayed. It is definitely useful to know the algorithms which choose the most relevant posts for individual users so that they won’t get overwhelmed.

- **EdgeRank**
  
  An older algorithm which determines who sees posts from a certain page or a user on their news feed. According to some sources, it is still active. In 2010 it was characterized as a product of these factors:
  
  - User proximity
    
    The closer the fan’s relationship with a page is and the more they visit this page or like, comment or share its posts, the higher importance the page has for them.
  
  - Value and weight of posts
    
    The more interactions (likes or comments) a post has, the more valuable it is. A comment or a share are more valuable (and increase the reach of your post) than a simple like. It also depends on the type of post – video is more valuable than a picture, less valuable are links or simple texts.
  
  - Time passed since the last post
    
    A newer post is more likely to appear on users’ timelines than an old one.
For more information about EdgeRank, see https://paulramondo.com/facebook-edgerank.

Algorithms affecting the news feed
What are the factors that Facebook relies on when displaying your content on the news feeds of your fans or friends? The basic factors are:

- who publishes the posts
- what is the relationship between you and this page or person
- type of content
- previous reactions to posts of this type
- the number of reactions that the post already has

Each factor has a few subfactors that you should take into account:

- posting frequency of the page or person that publishes posts;
- average time spent on the content;
- negative feedback on the author of a post;
- tagging friends in a post;
- a new comment by your friend;
- time of posting;
- how much information is on the profile of the author;
- if the post is published by a friend you have a close relationship with (you give them likes, you use messenger together etc.);
- information value of the post (likely interactions with the post, likely amount of time you spend reading it, the likelihood of the post’s containing brand new information).

Find more information here: https://paulramondo.com/facebook-algorithm.

2.3.2 What to create

- Create meaningful and informative content.

Facebook evaluates news feed according to the number of personal and universal signals. That is why you should focus on knowing your audience well and knowing what they find meaningful. The expression “informative” has many meanings in different situations, but one meaning is always there – content has to be new, interesting and contain enough information. (Source:
Create unique content.
Use clear, tabloid-unlike headlines, evade spreading false information, cite sources and always add something of your own but with regard to provable information, because otherwise you will be penalized by Facebook.

Be polite and create a safe space.
Respect the law and the rules of Facebook. Otherwise your account might be blocked by Facebook. Create a safe space where users will not have to be afraid of violation of their privacy.

Create a community.
The possibility to create communities is a strong point of Facebook. Involve your fans in your cause. Ask for help with sharing and offer them quality content and solutions in exchange. Make your page a place where people go simply for fun, beauty, investigation or information. A community is created gradually so be ready to exchange a few words with each of your fans.

Bring visitors from another page.
Find partners from other channels and remind them that you are on Facebook. As a facebook page you can also comment or make yourself seen anywhere on Facebook.

Cooperate with influencers.
Address and involve those who are followed by crowds. Celebrities or people who are active in the online space and have enough followers (even on local terms) are an ideal choice. Ask them for help with sharing or for joining your community in a private message. Most influencers are willing to support only what they themselves believe in and what they are interested in.

Find out when is the time that users read your posts and thus the ideal time to publish them. Some surveys point out the following results (these are not dogmatic and you can test them):

- The best posting frequency is once a day.
- The most recommended day for posting is Thursday.
- The most active time of the day is at 13:00 on Thursday.
- The best time for posting is between Wednesday and Sunday.
- The safest day for posting is virtually any day between 9:00 and 15:00.
- The least recommended time for posting is early morning and late night.

  (Source: newsfeed.cz)

- Plan and create content which sticks to the topic.
  If your goal is to build relationships, offer your friends and followers a stable content - this content is why they follow you. Also, use the same tone while communicating with them.

- Do not rely on organic reach.
  From time to time, especially at the beginning before you build up a fanbase of your community, invest into advertising. Not a lot of money, a wisely chosen target group and one good post is enough to make your topic resonate.

- Test.
  Learn from your mistakes. Make a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the interest in your posts.

- Use Facebook Livestream.
  Use the opportunity to create a live video. How to go about it? There is a manual in the article “3 tricks to make a more professional Facebook Livestream” (newsfeed.cz). Thanks to Livestream, you can create interactive polls where users vote via emoticons. Beware of sad and angry emoticons. You can search this option on YouTube for inspiration.

- Watch the trends.
  Find a source which keeps you updated. There are only a few in this chapter, but there are great amounts of information online (newsfeed.cz, tyinternety.cz etc.)

2.3.4 What not to do

- Do not argue.
  Even when talking to a hater, don’t argue and be patient while explaining. You may feel like you are going in circles, but it pays off.

- Do not ban people.
  Under no circumstance should you ban people from your page only because they have a different opinion. This behavior does not give away a good
impression and it often causes more harm than good. Talk and explain things even to your opponents – if you are successful, your followers will help you.

- Do not ask for likes or sharing.

From 2017 on, Facebook penalizes posts asking for likes or sharing and that is why you should avoid it.

2.3.4 The latest trends
Facebook is changing all the time. For example, shortly before the deadline for this manual, the Facebook Newsroom issued an article which reflects a post of Mark Zuckerberg on the fact that Facebook’s priority for 2018 will be making even closer connections between people. The news feeds of individuals will prioritize posts coming from their close friends or family. This content should primarily catch the attention of users and make them react. In brief, instead of irrelevant content there will be more meaningful social interactions. However, administrators of various Facebook pages were not exactly happy about this plan.

How to react:
- If you as a user want to see the posts of a page you like, turn on the See First function which you can find below its cover photo. If you are an administrator of a page or a community, ask your subscribers to activate this function.
- Expect a decline in the organic reach of your page.
- Draw your fans into action.
- Watch out for news or advice in the communities of followers – either directly from Facebook (https://newsroom.fb.com) or from the earlier mentioned blogs.

3. Websites

While creating a website, we have to determine its purpose. Primarily, we should proceed from where we want to lead our visitors. If we want them to send an e-mail or sign a petition, we have to lead them to a page which enables them to do so. All other web pages should aim for this page as well. The notional path beginning at the landing page of your web site (meaning a page to which a user is transferred by a search engine or a social network) is
called a user path and it is important and quite desirable to define this path for all our landing
pages.

There is no need to think of something complicated. If we have determined the basic function,
it remains to think of what else we can do for the user to actually send the email we want
them to send. Overly colorful animations, flash apps, rotating cogwheels and a virtual
conveyor belt which slowly moves an envelope from the computer to the mailbox most
probably will not do the trick. It is confusing, it wastes time and therefore it is redundant and
moreover, it certainly would not be inexpensive.

When there is a clear vision of what we want from a user and what kind of functionality we
are going to use, it is time to think of the structure of the website – how to organize individual
pages into categories and subcategories which all lead to the goal we have set. To invent a
good structure is one of the most complicated phases, but it definitely pays off.

A simple email form will probably not be enough for our users to make them send the email.
Only confident people with enough information are going to do that. But we want tens (of
thousands) of other users who still do not know what it is all about. That is why we should be
there to provide them with a manual and tell them what to do and why they should do it. This
manual can be made up of written information, charts, pictures or videos. But what is
important: people usually do not read web pages, then scan them. This fact implies that we
have minutes at best, but most likely tens of seconds to lead them to the email form. That is
why the rule that less is more applies here more than anywhere else. We should offer only
such information and arguments that are absolutely necessary. It is always possible to refer
those who want to know more to another source and it is only up to the user whether they
want to know more or not. The ideal option would be that from pages with detailed
information, our user would be transferred back to the email form.

Simply put, the visitor should have the option of clicking on the email form directly from the
homepage containing only the most basic information. In each case, visitors should be the
maximum of three clicks from “action”. For inspiration, see an example of such website:

If we are talking only about a simple website informing its visitors about the history of a ruin
we mentioned above, it can be presumed that the visitors of this website are people with an
interest in history, in the location or that they simply have enough time at the given moment –
there is no need to convince them within seconds. The structure of such website can be much
more complex, containing sections such as “Construction Development”, “Owners and inhabitants”, “Old traditions”, “Found artifacts” etc. These sections could lead as far as to an article about the chemical composition of the stone on which the foundations of the castle were laid. In short, different projects need different websites.

We should not forget that in each case the website is a product of a certain grouping that wants to be seen and wants to communicate. That is why we should think of sections such as News (these should be real news, for example a notice about a volunteer weekend event to help the ruin), Media Room and About. These sections should inform visitors about who is behind the initiative, provide contact information or logos for download and press releases. There should always be names of real people (or at least one representative) in these sections – contacts such as “info@iniciativa.cz” are not enough, because people want to know who is behind the project.

The section News should not be used for unedited press releases, because they are written in the third person. We should edit those releases and insert links to other sections of the website, or to an external website. Press releases belong to the Media Room section.

3.1 Website wireframes

Website wireframes help us clear up many aspects of our website, mainly the basic graphic design – what we want and where we want it on the website, according to its future use and interconnection of its individual sections. It is definitely not advisable to start with the homepage and work to the email form. The problem with this approach is that we would strive to create a mental image of the whole website and we would get stuck on things that are not sufficiently clear. That is too complicated and unnecessary, because the easier way is to start from the form and work up to the homepage.

As it often happens, it is very probable that somebody has already thought of something that we need right now. In this case, a little investigation into whether there is something we could get a little inspiration from usually pays off. If the system works somewhere else and it has a similar target group, there is no reason why it should not work out for us.
There are multiple ways to make a wireframe, the easiest and the most handy is to take a pen and a piece of paper (the larger the better). The possibility to erase and draw over a ruined wireframe and its flexibility make it an ideal choice. On the other hand, there are other options – for example Google Docs or the website https://gomockingbird.com.

3.2 Content management system

There is no way around having a content management system. After experimenting for a while, we find out what each function does and how to slowly create a website with their help. A website can be created for free thanks to various web services, or we can install some content management system on the server. It is always a question of time, energy and finances.

Some examples of web services are: http://www.webnode.cz, https://sites.google.com, http://www.estranky.cz, http://wordpress.com. These are free services so we have to adapt to what they offer, which might mean several restrictions. On the other hand, almost anyone is capable of creating their own website in a moment with the help of these services. Moreover, if it is not one’s aim to have an original design or special functions built into the website, this is a good choice for a functional website for a small non-profit organization.

3.3 Graphic design

If we don’t have means or volunteers to have a bespoke graphic design, the easiest ways to proceed would be to use one of the ready-made templates. Templates are often for free and easy to find (type e.g. “top free wordpress templates” into a search engine).

3.4 Photos

Be it only illustration images or photos from our events, it is good for our website to have them. If we are not good at taking pictures (or we don’t know anybody who is), there are many photobanks at our service. A part of their offer is usually for free (for example http://smashinghub.com/best-royalty-free-stock-photo.htm). It is also common practice to use pictures from this website:
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page, but it is necessary to abide by the terms of service (frequently it is required to state the name of the author which might not be convenient for the design of the header or the website’s title; on the other hand this is not a problem with an article). This license is called Creative Commons and you can find its thorough description here: http://creativecommons.org. Paid photobanks are for example www.shutterstock.com or www.pixmac.cz.

Warning: Google can search according to pictures. It is enough to upload a picture from a drive or provide a direct link from our website and it can find a variety of websites where this picture is used. If it is a case of a CC license (mentioned above), it should not be a problem (provided that the terms of use are followed). Violation of copyright is very easy to discover, unnecessary and definitely not good for our PR.

3.5 Content

Content should be the be-all and end-all of our website. If the content is well-structured, well-targeted and of quality, the likelihood of users behaving exactly how we want is significantly increased. How to create a quality content? There is no guaranteed recipe, but we recommend to read the website ottocopy.cz:

- http://ottocopy.cz/jak-psat-direct-e-mail
- http://ottocopy.cz/zkouska-rozhlasu

There are similar rules for the content of a website as there are rules for writing press releases: we should avoid words that are common usage within our organization or within the field of expertise, but most people from outside are not familiar with them. This rule applies to the website sections as well. If we operate with words such as “Cases”, “Topics” and “Causes” simultaneously, few people will understand where to find what. Similar problem is posed by the words “Articles”, “Texts” and “Documents”.

It is good to attract common users with a brief text – even at the cost of oversimplification. However, users must be immediately given an opportunity to read a complete and unsimplified version. Finally, a piece of advice: emotions and animals work every single time.

3.6 Fundraising tips

One of the aims of a website can be fundraising. However, we still often do not know how to ask for money. For non-profit organizations, this is a vital element of their existence to learn. But how? There are again multiple options:

- Firstly, we have to actually ask for the money, or else we do not get it.
- For the visitor to have a motivation to send us something, we have to explain how we are going to use their money and offer examples of what can be bought for a certain amount of finances. As a potential donor, I would like to know if the one hundred that I am going to donate actually helps.
- Donations can be collected for a particular thing. Example: Help us raise money to file a lawsuit. We need 3,500 CZK and we already have 2,500 CZK. (It is necessary to find a formulation that will be in order concerning both legal and accounting matters.)
- Offer a reciprocal service to your potential donors – the more money they give, the better service they receive. Their motivation to give a bigger donation might be increased in order to reach a better reward. Moreover, it is a great PR option.

What is there to offer:

- a postcard signed by a celebrity;
- a picture of the donor on the website;
- the name of the donor on the website;
- an invitation to an event;
- a breakfast for a few chosen donors (also an interesting opportunity to receive feedback, tips for other activities, or tips for their improvement);
- or anything else, the sky is the limit.

One of the tools that is used by many successful organizations in the Czech Republic is an app darujme.cz. You can go to people from the Via Foundation for advice on the terms of use of this service, installation and most effective usage.
A method already quite established in the Czech Republic, crowdfunding, represents a quite new way how to obtain money directly from people via the internet. If your project does not quite fit into a grant application, do not worry. What counts is a good idea and an attractive description of this idea. Crowdfunding as a method of raising money seems to be cut out for people like this.

Czech crowdfunding options:

- [https://www.hithit.com](https://www.hithit.com) (considered to be the most successful)
- [https://www.nakopni.me](https://www.nakopni.me)
- [https://www.startovac.cz](https://www.startovac.cz)

It is also possible to get inspiration from abroad where this idea originated:

- [http://www.kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com)
- [http://www.indiegogo.com](http://www.indiegogo.com)
- [http://crowdfunding.com](http://crowdfunding.com)
- [http://www.crowdfundingguides.com](http://www.crowdfundingguides.com)

Moreover, the Scott Steiberg’s book *The Crowdfunding Bible* functions as something similar to a crowdfunding success manual.

### 3.7 Newsletters

If there is on the website an option of subscribing to a newsletter, a confirmation email must be sent to those who sign up for it. Newsletters are to be sent to signed up users only, because we do not want to be accused of spamming. If the subscription process does not work, it is our fault. Moreover, each email must contain information on how to unsubscribe (and preferably a link).

Should this step constitute unnecessary extra effort or if we do not feel like implementing this
function as our own, there is a service called MailChimp (http://mailchimp.com) which provides newsletter services up to 2,000 contacts and 12,000 emails a month for free (it has been used by Hnutí DUHA and Ratolest). If we have slightly megalomaniac intentions, the email campaign of Barrack Obama (13 million subscribers) could serve as an inspiration (www.lupa.cz/clanky/e-mail-v-kampani-v-cem-se-cesti-kandidati-mohli-poucit-od-baracka-obamy).

3.8 Tools for online cooperation and activism

New media can be also used internally for team cooperation. If we need to work with more colleagues in real time on the same document or we are tired of making sure which version of the document is the last one, there is a quick fix – using sharing tools. One of those – frequently used and appreciated by non-profit organizations – is Google Docs. And let’s not work only with word documents or tables, but try and create a form.

More tips:

● Free hosting of online petitions: www.petice24.com
● A platform for communicating with politicians: http://napistejim.cz
Working with Volunteers

Authors: Jana Tomečková, Eliška Vozníková

This chapter includes also experience and knowledge of lecturers from Czech-Slovak School of Civic Initiative, mainly Štefan Szabó and Silvia Szabóová from citizens’ association SOSNA.

This chapter won’t bring you a recipe for working with volunteers. But it will lead you through basic topics that should be considered, if you intend to start working with volunteers or improve your cooperation with them.

If you want to get more out of this chapter, you can. Try to not just read passively, but ask yourself throughout the chapters, how is it working in your organization and why your cooperation with volunteers works or not. Your ideas, answers and new questions are the key to understanding it.

Warm-up questions:

What do you think, when you hear the words: “workers, co-workers, volunteers”?
Do you feel any difference that should be reflected in the attitude towards these people?
What are the main goals your organization wants to fulfil and what kind of work needs to be done?
What kind of qualification does that require and how much time will it take?
What is your material and financial background?
Do you need people for your activities? How many? Where? What kind of people?
Do you need volunteers?
Is your organization open to the outside world and different opinions or not?
Is your organization democratically led or not?
What are the relationships and mood within your organization, how is the communication and how does it come across to the outside world?
Why did you and your colleagues come to the organization and why are you staying?
Who do you think is a volunteer? frequently

1. Volunteer – work saved or extra work?

A volunteer is neither a serf nor an employee. They are working from their own will and with no claims on wage to help things that exceed their private interest, mostly in public benefit.

Do volunteers bring work savings or do they mean more workload in the end? Often probably both. Usually in the reversed order. We need volunteers to save our workload. But we need to
understand that mainly in the beginnings they will mean bigger workload. When successfully working with volunteers, we need to reach the point when a volunteer is more of a help than a burden and when a volunteer feels that they are not only giving, but also getting something out of it. And it is this synchronization of needs that takes us some time and that requires some energy from both sides. Thus, there is no immediate relief from our workload, but more work to do. But if we take this phase seriously – make an effort to attract suitable people and support their integration and growth, it is most likely that instead of absence of volunteers or their unbearable circulation, a real reward will come with time.

1. Preparation

Before you start developing an organization structure for volunteers and distributing recruitment posters, answer following questions:

Do we really need volunteers? Do we have work for them? How much time will this work take? What kind of volunteers do we need? What kind of qualification, abilities, skills or knowledge should they have? Is their gender or age important? How do we find the right people? Do we want to keep them for longer time? How do we do that? Who will explain to them what to do? Who will introduce them into our organization, tell them who will answer their questions or give feedback? Do we want them to participate on our informal events? What kind of conditions for working can we provide for them? Will they have a place to sit, to work, to wash their hands or make a tea? In case we have employees, won’t they be bothered by them in some way? Do our employees also want us to be open to volunteers? Has anyone been speaking with them about it? Should the volunteers participate on running the organization and planning? Will they have also some rights along the duties?

Preparation for the cooperation should include:

- informing about the intention to work with volunteers, present the point of having volunteers in our organization, motivate the workers to accept this plan – try to support helpfulness towards volunteers (in case of organizations where the workers are not entirely open to work with volunteers);
- defining together the volunteers’ role, the areas of their responsibilities and tasks in the organization, clarification of competences and duties of the organization’s members in relation to the new volunteers, work division (naming the volunteers’ coordinator, a person to assign tasks, trainer, supervisor etc. according to your current needs), or, if needed, training the workers for working with volunteers;
- preparing mid- and long-term strategy towards working with volunteers (finding them, keeping them and their growth within the organization);
- preparing the recruitment according to the organization’s needs (defining whom, for what work and for how long we need);
• preparing training for the volunteers;
• considering a system of encouragement for keeping the volunteers (discuss the possibilities of motivational events, reward system, consider the possibility of increasing qualification for quality volunteers etc.).

Recruitment of Volunteers
What kind of people do we need? What can we offer? Why should people be interested in joining our organization? How can we get their attention? How can we keep them? Only after we clearly answer these questions, we can address the others and ask them for something.

3.1 Target Group
If we are to be successful in getting new people, we should determine the target group we would like to address. Do we want to involve young people or older and qualified? Will we activate people affected by local or personal problem? And so on.

According to our target group we choose the recruitment campaign. The goal of the recruitment partially affects the language and style of addressing people and the way of getting them in our organization (e.g. promotion on a garden colony meeting).

3.2 What Can We Offer to Volunteers
Most people want or need to help a good cause, do something meaningful, meet interesting people, get new experience and learn something new. Often they seek answers to basic human questions: who am I, where do I belong and where am I heading. We may be able to fulfil some of these needs and answer some of these questions in our organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What can we offer to people</th>
<th>With what shall we provide the volunteer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact with interesting people, with different reality, the possibility to get a new perspective (on the world, on people, on themselves…).</td>
<td>Suitable activity that they should do (interesting and meaningful, volunteers can also do unattractive activities, but their meaning and connection to a specific goal should be clear).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active and attractive way of spending free time, sometimes entertainment and a way to relax.</td>
<td>Volunteers’ coordinator or a contact person in the organization (someone who explains the tasks and helps with problem solving).</td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>New friends and team.</td>
<td>Material facilities (material needed to do the task; a space where the job can be done; a place to put their stuff etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing common values, feeling meaningful.</td>
<td>Providing feedback to the volunteer and getting some from them – thus, we ensure motivation and possibility for growth. It is good to determine your own strategy to motivate volunteers (e.g. regular meetings and possibility to share on decision-making of the organization, planning activities, passing on the experience…).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant environment.</td>
<td>Individually, according to the type and focus of your organization, initial or continuous training might be suitable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New information, experience, knowledge and skills that might come in handy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education possibilities.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Possibilities for feedback for personal growth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-fulfilment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibility to implement own ideas and visions.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Possibility to achieve something (organizing, creating, helping).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to make themselves visible.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good feeling of a job well done.</td>
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</table>
If we go item by item, we can start working not only on giving as many positive encouragements to our volunteers as possible, but also on presenting our attractive offer to volunteers during recruitment. The shape of the recruitment can vary a lot.

### 3.3 Forms of Volunteers’ Recruitment

If we are clear about the target group, we can use different ways to approach them. Not every way is suitable for every group and it needs to be considered. We offer several examples and experience, how and where to get new people.

**Recruitment of volunteers can be done:**

- At once (at one-time events, at first recruitment of volunteers, when we are in urgent need of more volunteers or before a training of a group of volunteers).
- Continuously (recruit volunteers as you go, especially if you don’t need more at once or initial training).

**The ways of recruitment**

One of the most effective ways is when every member of the organization brings one more person. The advantage is that we know the new person a little bit and he also knows a little about us.

A tool for getting new volunteers might also be regular newsletters about our activities and achievements.

Effective are also posters inviting to our events, or posters looking for volunteers – we recommend putting them on busy places such as libraries, schools, clubs, waiting rooms, public transport, old peoples’ homes or employment offices according to our target group.
Public events are another good opportunity: lectures, school programmes, travelling exhibitions, information booths on music festivals, planting trees or other voluntary work, educational weekends, courses or petitions. If we organize such events, it is good to take a sheet of paper for applicants to sign up. Don’t forget to bring some resource materials.

Media (magazines, newspapers, radio, television, internet etc.) help not only publicize the problems we are dealing with, but also our organization, which may be very helpful for getting new co-workers in both direct and indirect way.

A call for new volunteers on the organization’s web page is a must. Your contact information should not be missing in your local directory of NGOs.

Nowadays it is best to use social networks. Almost everyone uses them and they are basically for free (if you not consider your work).

**Meeting the Volunteer**

Meeting the volunteer for the first time can vary; it depends on your needs and possibilities. Anyhow, you should try so that your first encounter with a perspective volunteer is not the last.

**The goals of the first meeting are:**

- Provide information about the organization.
- Get information about the volunteer, assess their suitability.
- Get clear on the requirements, expectations and conditions of both parties.
- Agree on dates of beginning the activities, training etc.
- Sometimes it is best to start the training.
- It is good to get feedback of our work, if the volunteer knows about it.

**Directions and conditions of the first meeting:**

- Invest enough time in the applicant.
- Thank them for their interest; you may prepare a motivational reward.
- Ask why did the applicant come, where did they learn about your organization and what do they know about it.
- Ask what kind of experience they offer and what kind of activities would they like to be involved in.
- In case you agree on a task, be specific about the work and result that you expect.
- Explain broader context and the meaning of the task.

During the interview and further cooperation it is necessary to speak to the volunteer so that they understand us and take them as a partner. It is better when the volunteer feels that they have space for independent and creative work and at the same time the possibility to approach us anytime they need.
Questions during the first meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions for a member</th>
<th>Questions for a volunteer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you know anything about the organization – what are our goals and values?</td>
<td>What can I do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What kind of work would you like to do? What would you like to help with?</td>
<td>What exactly will I do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you expect from working in our organization?</td>
<td>How much time do you need me to work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever worked as a volunteer? How did you like it? Why don’t you work there anymore?</td>
<td>Is there anyone I could address in case of questions or problems?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much time can you dedicate to volunteer work?</td>
<td>Will there be any training?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you see any obstacles for your full involvement into work?</td>
<td>Can I learn something new here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you willing to attend training?</td>
<td>Will I have my own responsibilities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your interests and hobbies?</td>
<td>Can I meet any other volunteers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have any skills or experience that will help you with this work?</td>
<td>What will happen, if I struggle? Will there be anyone to help me?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Introducing the Organization

When a new person comes, it should be natural to walk them through the organization, introduce them to colleagues and the work they will be doing. We have to expect that the newcomer is willing to help, but rarely is an expert with an insight into the problematic and knows exactly what to do. Here come the necessary investments in the volunteer we mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. Just put yourself in their shoes – meeting bunch of strangers that are dived into something they might encounter for the first time.

We should pick skilful people right from the beginning and invest in them and maybe
someone from the organization should take charge of them. If this person is also able to give them quality feedback and more and more responsibilities (and trust), is this volunteer on the best way to become the dreamed-of independent activist.

Important is to motivate the volunteer through their first tasks to do the hardest ones we want to give them later. Or to stick with the boring tasks and understand their purpose.

**How to Keep Your Volunteers**

Our experience is that it is much harder to keep a volunteer than to get one.

Investment and Satisfaction

Have you ever thought about, what are the volunteer’s costs of the work in your organization? The volunteer’s investments into volunteering:

- Time, energy and in some cases money (fares etc.).
- The necessity to learn and deal with new situations, tasks, relationships…
- Patience, ability to listen and tolerate others (opinions, stances, habits, people etc.).
- Willingness to communicate with different people and institutions.
- Willingness to cope with misunderstanding or disagreement of their close ones.
- Danger of losing their ideals and change in their lives (on the basis of new knowledge and experience).
- Coping with frustration arising from the nature of volunteering (confrontation with human suffering, powerlessness, lack of interest…).
- Willingness to tolerate discomfort, time pressure, stress…

(Čechová, 2001)

Of course, it is not possible to go through something like that and not having strong belief or positive feedback – something that justifies or compensates the hard work, losses and discomfort.

**6.2 How Can New People Become a Part of the Organization and Why Do They Want to Stay**

<p>| Find out what are they interested in and what do they want to do for | Ensure them from the beginning that their work or help is important for us. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Encouragement/Instructive Message</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find out their abilities and skills (don’t give them tasks that are</td>
<td>Create good conditions for their work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>too hard or not fitting that will discourage them).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Answer their questions; compare their ideas with our activities.</td>
<td>Do not dictate how to do things, give them free space limited with their own responsibility.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assign someone (or more people) to help new volunteers (e.g. to walk</td>
<td>Do not criticize them for their mistakes, but help them improve themselves. Explain them how to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>them through the organization).</td>
<td>do things or do it with them first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize meetings for newcomers; tell them what are you already doing</td>
<td>Trust new people that they will fit well in our group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>and what are your plans.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tell them from the beginning who is responsible for what.</td>
<td>If someone does something, appreciate their work and point out the importance of their work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>towards the main goal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Give them a specific task that they will be able and willing to do.</td>
<td>Work in a team.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involve them personally in your work.</td>
<td>Share your experience and give each other feedback.</td>
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*(Zamkovský, 1993)*

**Basic Motivational Factors that We Can Work With**

**Workplace Quality:**

- Enough information on the mission, goals and plans of the organization.
- Quality relationships in the workplace (with employees, volunteers, clients or customers).
- Clear rights, duties and competences.
- Provide materially for their work.
- Pleasant working environment.

**Education**

- Preparing the volunteer before they start working.
- Continuous education to improve and make their activities easier.
- Superstructure education (may be a part of rewards or benefits).

**Rewarding:**

- Giving positive feedback. Thanking them. Appreciate them. Regularly, in different ways.
- Interview with the volunteer in media (increasing their social reputation).
- Attending the organization’s parties (anniversaries, the employees’ parties and other occasions).
- Best wishes to their personal anniversaries.
- Pay special attention to the results the volunteer values the most.
- Making them an expert, pay attention to their feedback.
- Ask the volunteer to manage an event, project, organization…
- Experienced volunteers can become tutors of the new.
- Offering membership in the organization or in its body.
- Offer certificates of volunteering or completed trainings, letters of recommendation.
A thank you letter to a volunteer, their parents or superiors.
Sometimes it is good to create pecking order between volunteers (consider pros and cons).
Participation on activities and events they did not help to prepare.
Events and activities especially for volunteers (parties, happenings).
One-time rewards or gifts.

How to Motivate Volunteers without Paying Them

- Organize regular meetings, at least twice a year, where their troubles and progress can be addressed.
- Prepare tasks from the same field for both volunteers and employees so that they can work together and cooperate to solve the problems.
- Share with volunteers joyful and responsible tasks and advise them how to achieve their goals.
- Make sure your organization is a pleasant place both to look at and to work in. If not, change it.
- Before you make final decision, ask volunteers and employees what they think. Engage them into the decision-making process.
- Inform the volunteers regularly about key achievements, getting grants and other news.
- Suggest work rotation. The volunteers can rotate positions or in projects.
- Publish a newsletter that includes story on achievements of particular volunteers or employees, compliments from the organization’s board, certificates for exceptional performance or letters from satisfied clients etc.
- Support volunteers in education.
- Send volunteers to conferences or meetings to represent you.

(Public Management Institute)

Parting with Problematic Volunteers

One of the unpleasant situations is the necessity to part with those people that are for you more of a burden. That means to gather necessary arguments, make the final decision and do the final interview.

Of course it is a sensitive situation. Nevertheless, as a volunteer has the right to part with you, you have the right as well. In case there is something wrong with a volunteer, it is useful to
find out their opinion to following or similar questions:

- Are they feeling good in their position or would they like to change something?
- Do they understand their work?
- Does volunteering take more of their time than they expected?
- Are they dealing with personal problems that are influencing their work?

If the volunteer does not fulfil the agreements we made, the coordinator should point out the consequences and describe the lines that cannot be overcome. If the situation does not change after the notification, you should part with the volunteer.

**Conclusion**

What is necessary for successful work with volunteers? Briefly: understanding the needs of both the organization and the volunteer and their synchronization towards mutual benefit. No need to remind that it is a process that usually takes some time and in fact it never ends.

Experience shows that a volunteer is a sensitive test of the functionality and meaningfulness of the organization. If there is a feeling of cliché and pointlessness, when people cannot communicate, when there is chaos or directive approach, then a volunteer won’t stay long. On the contrary, a well-functioning organization can not only keep people, but can also get a lot of them.

If you want to know more about new trends in volunteering, we recommend Harihe Han’s book *How Organizations Develop Activists: Civic Associations and Leadership in the 21st Century.*