DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS ESSENTIALS

for small charities and community groups

superhighways

harnessing **technology** for **community** benefit

What we'll cover today

- ✓ Goals
- ✓ Who to reach
- ✓ What you want them to know
- ✓ Useful tools including Canva Ai
- ✓ Next steps

What we won't do

- ✓ Be perfect
- ✓ Explore all individual channels e.g. social media

Introduce yourself in chat and pick a number
What's your communications role?

Enter the number in chat.

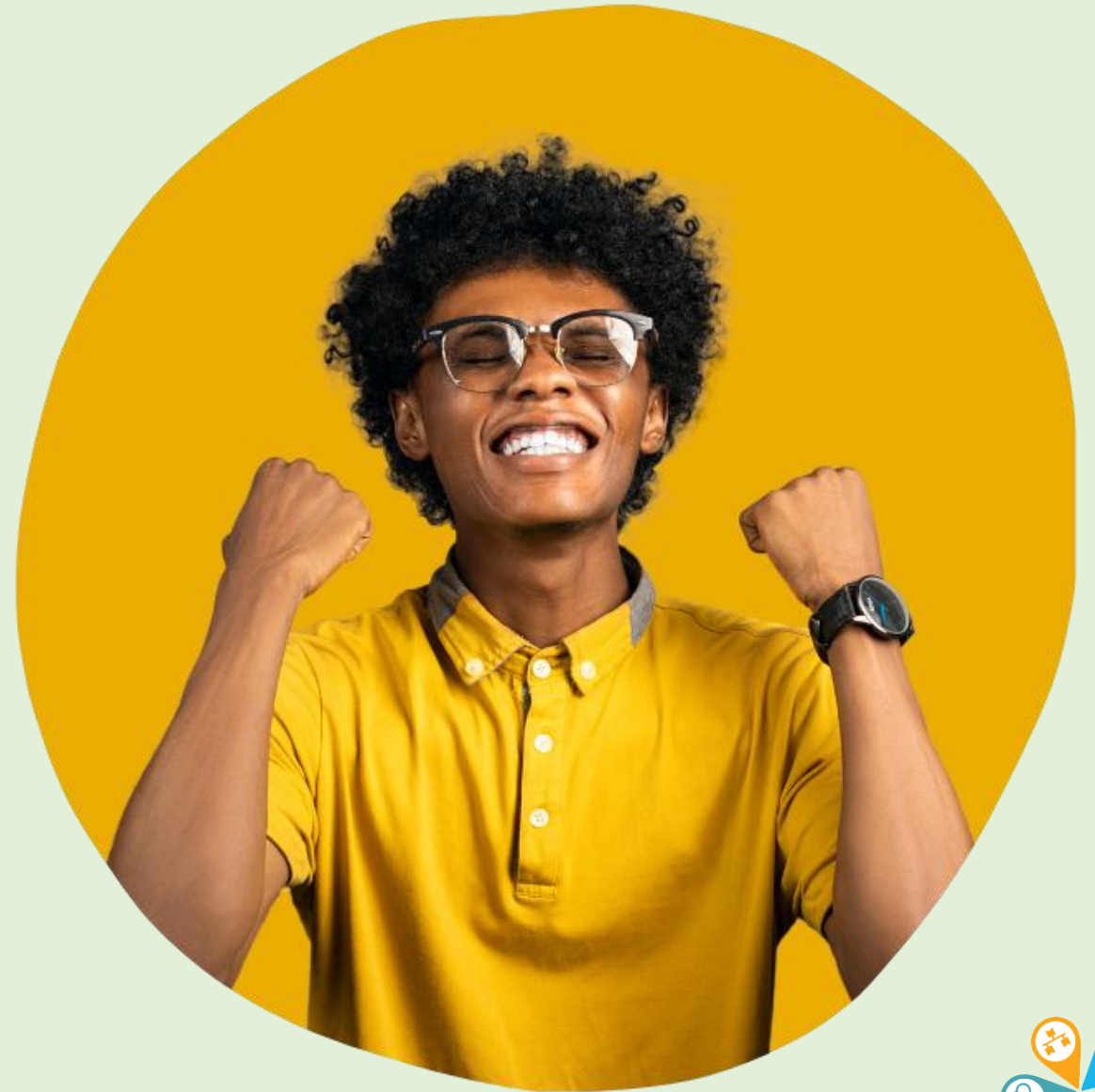|		
1. Full time	2. Part time	3. No time!
4. It's someone else's role	5. Share with other people	6. Only for my project
	7. Something else (write in chat)	

How we'll do it

- ✓ Answers in chat
- ✓ Complete your template / Canva doc
- ✓ 5-minute exercises
- ✓ 2 breakouts for peer sharing
- ✓ Thinking time for you
- ✓ Break!

What's one thing that's working well for you now?

Answers in chat

Team comms SWOT analysis?

Opportunities

Group 1 Yellow

Making more use of staff as communicators.

Identify key people in the borough to talk to

Part of a project called Strengthening Voices, Realising Rights - which consists of seven DDPOs working together to improve practice

Increase comms medium

Twitter account - opportunity to network with members, other DDPOs, council, etc.

Wide audience in London....good relationships with similar organisations

Link into trends in the borough, issues with homelessness

Microsoft Teams has all sorts of tools which we are not utilising

Work closely with other organisations in our borough.....learn from them possibly?

Tap into hobbies & skills of members e.g. creative or specific issues e.g. access

Growing membership

Two Facebook pages - one private, one public - former recently established

Members communicating on behalf of the org - skilling up opportunities - digital & non digital

Strategy is the big picture

Where you want to be
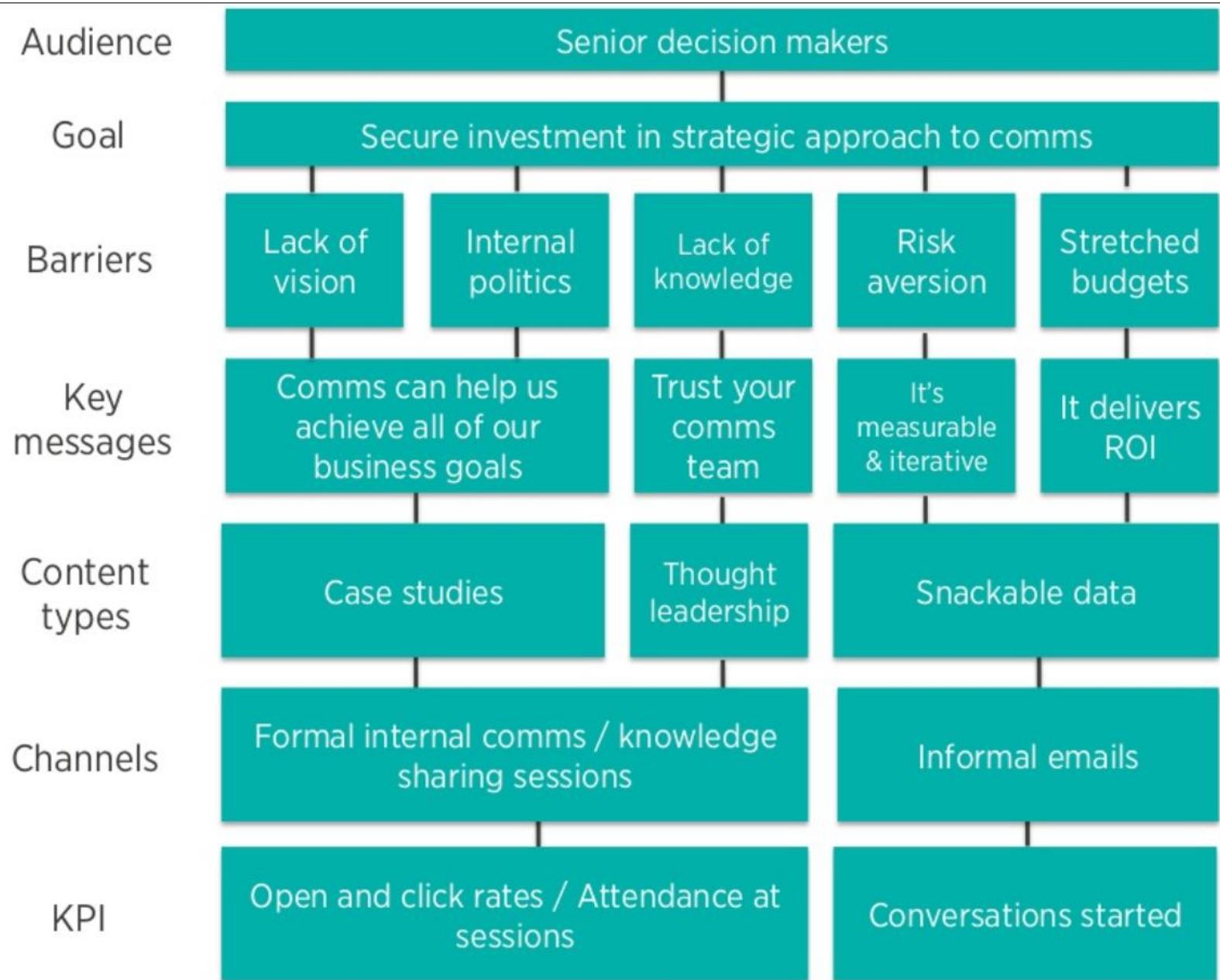
Where you are now

And what you leave out

You can have a plan without a strategy but not a strategy without a plan.

An example of strategic communications planning

What does success look like?

Audience	Senior decision makers				
Goal	Secure investment in strategic approach to comms				
Barriers	Lack of vision	Internal politics	Lack of knowledge	Risk aversion	Stretched budgets
Key messages	Comms can help us achieve all of our business goals		Trust your comms team	It's measurable & iterative	It delivers ROI
Content types	Case studies		Thought leadership	Snackable data	
Channels	Formal internal comms / knowledge sharing sessions			Informal emails	
KPI	Open and click rates / Attendance at sessions			Conversations started	

Charity Comms event: value of comms

No one size fits all

Image by Robert Owen-Wahl from Pixabay

Choosing a comms goal

What's your focus?
Enter the number in chat.

1. Specific Business plan or project goal	**2. Help meet an outcome**	**3. Strength or weakness (e.g. from SWOT)**
4. Build communities	**5. Raise awareness**	**6. Events**
7. Campaign	**8. Increase funding**	**9. Something else (write in chat)**

SMART objectives

S   M   A   R   T

Specific **M**easurable **A**chievable **R**elevant **T**imely

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S   M   A   R   T

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Awareness: Increase LinkedIn page followers by 10% by the end of first quarter 2025

Recruitment: Identify 3 x potential corporate/agency volunteers from LinkedIn by June 2025

What's your goal / SMART objective?

Complete your template

Be on the right platform
with the right message
for the right audience

Media Trust

Warm up

- Using your object from home, describe your organisation
- In pairs
- 1 minute each!
- There's no right or wrong
- Quick reflections when you get back

Warm up

At an online event

Sharing the 'why' of my organisation

To connect with other like-minded organisations

There are lots of spider catcher models but here's mine online (show in pic above)

Example

CoppaFeel!
breast cancer awareness

Goal:

Raise awareness that cancer affects young people not only older people

Audience:

18 to 24 year-olds, young women, young men and trans/non binary

Message/s:

Anyone of any age or gender can get cancer

You need to check your chest – early intervention can save your life

Platform/s:

✓TikTok
✓Instagram

Shareable content

Define your audiences

What does this mean and why should we do it?
It's no good having powerful, or potentially even life-changing messages if you are unclear on who to share them with! So it's important to think about this.

How to do it
Make a list of everyone you want to reach. Think about what you want to achieve and who you need to reach in order to achieve your goals.

We've made a start with some suggestions below. Tick the ones that are relevent to your organisation, especially those from your local region and/or the topics you work on, and **use the blank space to add your own.**

☐ Local Authority
☐ Donors
☐ Local commissioners
☐ MP
☐ Police
☐ Policymakers
☐ Potential donors
☐ Service users
☐ Service users' family and/or friends
☐ Trustees
☐ Central government
☐ NHS

Bright Futures

Define your audiences for your goal

[Communications, press and influencing- a guide](#)
Lloyds Bank Foundation

List some specific people and places

Example Groups	Specific Details
Funders	London wide – Trust for London, City Bridge Trust National Lottery – London regional team? Small local funders – borough specific e.g. Richmond Parish Lands, Cripplegate Foundation, Local Giving schemes – Sutton Giving, Love Kingston etc
VCS	Small organisations under £100k income (registered charities, CICs, community groups)
Intermediaries	CVSs – small group workers, development workers, communication leads Small Charities Coalition

When you're tight on time...

Must do

Could do

Should do

It doesn't mean an audience doesn't matter to us because it's not a priority right now.

Audiences

Complete your template

1. List your audiences (2 minutes)
2. Choose one or two that can help you achieve your goal /objective

Imagining who we are talking to.

- What needs do they have?
- What interests them?
- What stuff do they read, listen to, watch?
- Worries them?
- What goals do they have?

In chat, write the audience and one thing you think you know about them
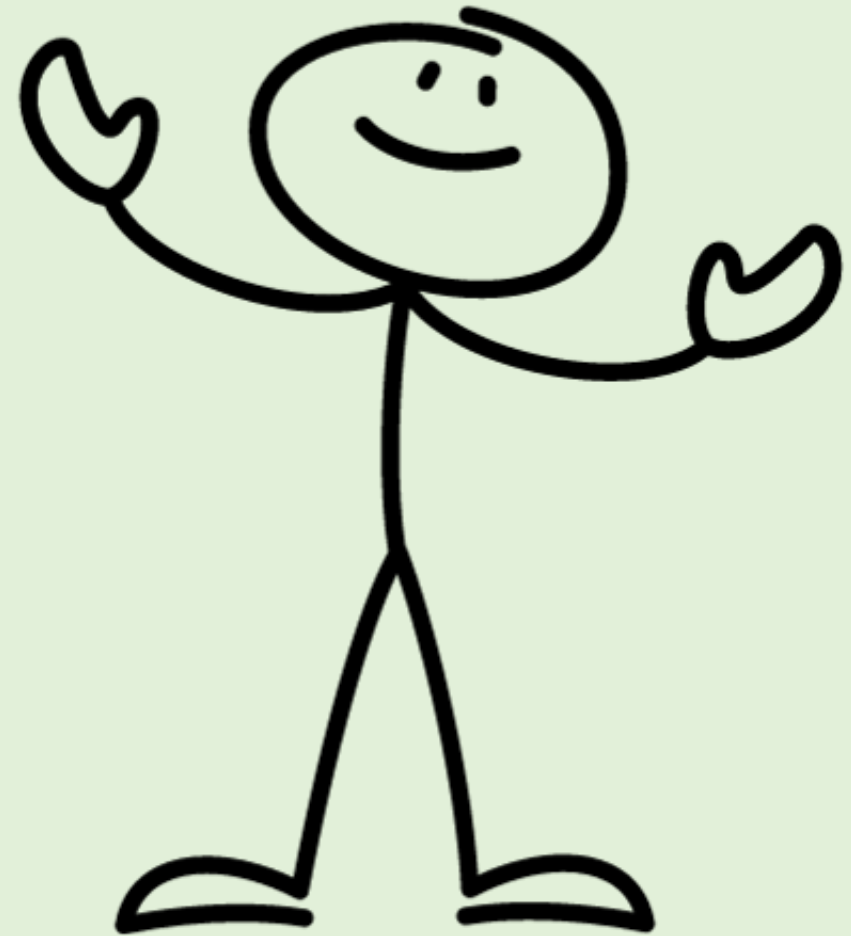
Take it a step further: creating detailed personas

MediaTrust

PERSONA CANVAS
FOR CHARITIES

Media Trust's Digital Marketing Toolkit has been designed specifically for small charities to develop an impactful and effective digital communications strategy. Each template represents a different stage of developing a digital marketing strategy and can be used individually or as a whole.

NAME
Give your persona a first name. This will help you personalise the character and make it easier to refer to them in the future.

ROLE
The persona may have different personal and professional roles, but this is the opportunity to capture the specific role they play for your charity.

FACTS
List some basic demographic information.

Age

Gender

Location

RELATIONSHIPS
Who does this persona have in their lives? Think about family, friends and professional connections.

ACTIVITIES
What do they do on a day-to-day basis? This could include work, hobbies and habits.

DIGITAL BEHAVIOUR
Where can you find them online? List their preferred social media channels, news and shopping websites.

WIDER WORLD
What trends in society affect and/or preoccupy them? These can be positive, negative, or a mixture of both.

FEELINGS
How do they feel at this point in time?

Finding out more about them

✓Ask them!

✓Ask others that know your audience for insights

✓Analyse your existing information e.g. social media (Facebook Page Insights, Instagram Insights, LinkedIn Analytics)

✓Have a look at similar organisations or people on social media or newsletters – what's their tone & messaging?

Think   **Feel**   **Do**

Call to
Action

Think, Feel, Do is a planning tool to
help you plan your messages

It can be a before and after tool too: Let's imagine you run fitness activities...

Think

I've put on a bit of weight over winter. It's harder to get fitter in my 40s

Feel

Sluggish and a bit down. Bit overwhelmed by choices.

Do

Work long remote hours. Like to run a bit.

An example of Think, Feel, Do

We want our target audience to think: 'I know one in five care leavers experience homelessness within two years of leaving care.

And feel: "I'm confident that this charity ensures care leavers have the early stage support they need to stop situations escalating that far".

Lloyds Foundation guide

- ✓ Donate / Fund us
- ✓ Sign a petition
- ✓ Contact an MP

Key messaging makes you memorable

Define your messages

What does this mean and why should we do it?

"Messaging" is how a charity talks about itself, including its purpose, goals, services and so on. Your messages will shape all the communications you put out, so it's important that you spend a bit of time getting them right.

How to do it

Your charity's key message(s) should express the main idea(s) you want people to understand and remember. Bear in mind that lots of other messages are competing for their attention, so make sure yours stands out and is easy to digest.

Start by thinking about:

- what you stand for
- why you are different
- what value you offer
- what problems you solve
- what makes your charity different
- your vision for your local community, your service users and wider society

Use this information to decide what key messages you should be promoting. Very simply put, this should be the key things you want people to know.

Top tip: it's personal

Different messages are likely suitable for other audiences. Communication is all about sharing information — you'll probably want to share different information with local commissioners and your service users, for example.

Have a go at using some of the following sentence starters to plot your messages...

As a charity, we believe in _____

_____

We wish our service users knew that _____

_____

Our MP needs to understand the importance of _____

_____

If we were Editors-in-Chief of the local newspaper tomorrow, our front-page headline would be _____

_____

We'd like our donors to be aware that _____

_____

If we could tell the general public one thing, it would be _____

_____

Our service users' family and/or friends need to understand that _____

You can either write a key message for each of your audiences that you can use all the time.

Or be specific to your goal.

Creating messages

Complete your template.
Write one message for your
audience and goal

Break
10/15 minutes

Welcome back
Who has used Ai tools in their work?

Enter the number in chat.

1. Chat GPT	2. Canva	3. Copilot
5. Claude	6. Gemini	7. Stable Diffusion
4 ! Charity Exellence Framework	8 Something else	None

Creating messages

If you haven't already log in
to Canva for the next task

Shelter tone of voice in messaging

Be proactive

Write with energy, authority and power. Write to get stuff done.

We are: fearless, decisive, active
We're not: cautious, neutral, passive

Do say:

✓ **Let's ride**
Saddle up for the ultimate cycling challenge. Fight with us to end the housing emergency.
Get involved >

Don't say:

✓ **Cycle to end homelessness**
Please join us on our annual fundraising bike ride to raise vital funds for Shelter.
Find out more >

Demo + Do

[Headlining Mental Health Writing Your Communications Strategy](#)
Media Trust

Example key messages

- Suicide within a year of giving birth is the leading cause of pregnancy-related death among UK women.
- Mum Health provides crucial mental health support for pregnant women and mothers in Manchester.
- Our expertise is recognised by the NHS and we help to ease pressure on its local services.
- More women than ever are struggling with their mental health whilst pregnant, and need Mum Health's support.

✓ Duplicate your key message

✓ Click on Magic re-write

✓ Write a prompt to turn your message into a specific post or other marketing

What platforms or channels are you using and why?

- ✓ Breakouts
- ✓ Small groups
- ✓ 10 mins

Platform and digital tools swap – what are we using?

Write as many as you can in chat in 1 minute!

Use of Media in the UK

% of adult internet users

YouTube	80
WhatsApp	79
Facebook	77
Instagram	57
TikTok	42
Snapchat	34
FaceTime	34
Twitter	33

Use of online communications platforms

% of 16-24 internet users

YouTube	93
Instagram	91
Snapchat	88
TikTok	85
WhatsApp	80
Facebook	69
FaceTime	54
Twitter	48

What people do
Ofcom Online Nation 2023 Report

Most popular social networks
YouGov quarterly ratings

What people say
Ofcom Adults' media use and attitudes 2023

We Are Social & Meltwater: Digital 2024 in the United Kingdom

Some other useful digital tools

EmailOctopus

[There are other bulk email senders](#)

copy.ai

Linktree

Bluesky

voice online communities

[Social media platform checklist](#)
Charity Comms, October 2024

It's not always the obvious choice

Content planning toolbox

What resources do you have or need?

When and who?

Microsoft Planner example

Plan content & schedule posts with Canva Pro

Canva Pro is free for charities and CICs with charitable purposes with Canva for Nonprofits

Social/digital scheduling tools
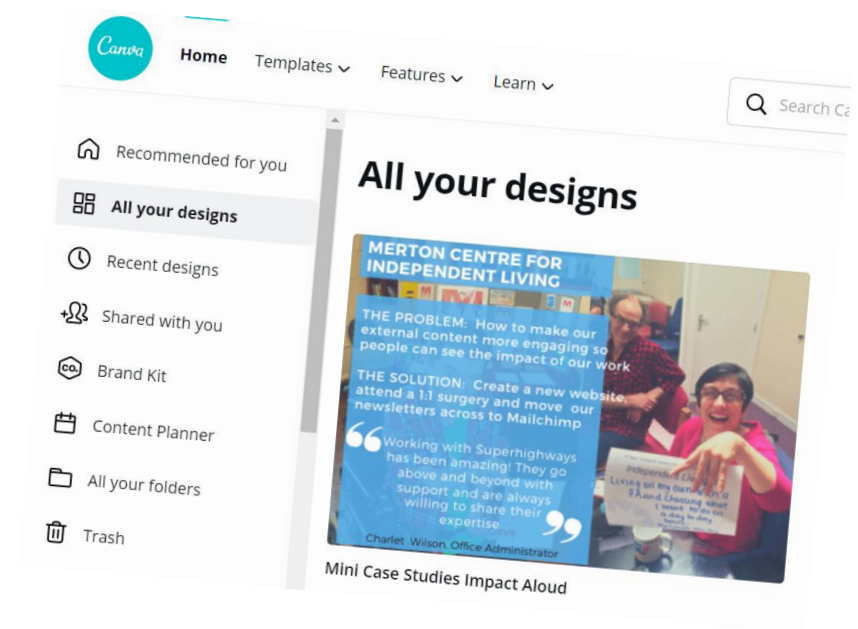

The 7 Best Free Social Media Management Tools in 2022

Digital Communications Planner Helpful Digital's Excel sheet

A few content creation ideas...

Canva for graphics , social media, flyers, posters and more
Adobe Express for creating designs
Free photo websites you can use, credit where needed

What will you measure?

Enter the number in chat.

1. Newsletter opens/clicks

2. Content shares and engagement

3. Number of new email enquiries
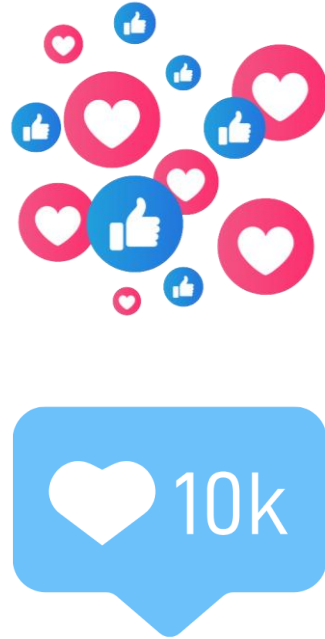
4. New followers

5. Petition sign ups

6. Event attendance

7. Media coverage

8. Something else (write in chat)

"I didn't know that"

10k

✓ Be realistic
✓ No vanity metrics!
✓ Real engagement
✓ Meaningful to your goal

What platform will you use & what does 'good' look like to you and why?

Complete your template

What does Superhighways do?

Superhighways helps small charities and community groups gain essential digital and data skills backed by the right tech to achieve their goals.

Related training & extra resources

✓ [Digital Marketing Strategy Webinar series](), Media Trust

✓ [Look at our current training offer]()

✓ [Sign up to our monthly eNews]() – for updates from us on all things charity sector and digital/data, plus future training and support offers

✓ Email me if you need some help [sorrelparsons@superhighways.org.uk]()

Complete your plan or try this with your 'team'

[1 hour Communications Strategy Planning tool](#)

1 hr Comm's Plan

10 Minutes	15 Minutes
• Why do we communicate? • Why do we want or need to communicate? • How does it contribute to our organisation objectives?	• Who are our key audiences and what do we know about them? • Why do we want them to think, feel, do?

10 Minutes	10 Minutes
• What are the key messages we want to get across in our communications?	• Which methods will we use and what is the main purpose of each one?

5 Minutes	10 Minutes
• What are the key dates or timeframes that impact on our communications?	• How will we measure/evaluate the effective4ness of communications? How will we know its working?

(created by www.browningyork.com)