

Getting the Word Out

Objectives:

TIME: 90 MINS

- Strengthen our communications within the neighbourhood.
- Discuss how our neighbours like to receive information.
- Attract different people to come out to neighbourhood activities or events or to help with planning of activities and events.

When to use it:

For this workshop to be successful, the group must have already decided on what it is that they want to get the word out about. What they want to communicate out to their neighbours can be part of an existing action plan or a new community initiative. Examples of what that might be are:

- Invite neighbours to an event.
- Recruit volunteers to help organize an event.
- Ask neighbours to join a group or committee.

Preparation and Set Up:

We recommend doing the workshop *Engaging Residents in Our Neighbourhood* (p. 43 in *Creating The Change We Want*) as an introductory exploration of ways to build on peoples's skills in our neighbourhood and to get people involved in neighbourhood activities.

Materials:

- Piece of paper (or several taped together) 3-4 feet long
- Construction paper
- 3-4 people cut-outs to represent individuals we want to get the word out to (template provided in Annexe 1)
- Birds in flight cut-outs (template provided in Annexe 2)
- Large post-it notes to represent message for birds to carry
- Round cut-outs to represent seeds to feed the birds
- Colour markers, scissors and masking tape
- Flip chart easel with markers and paper

Handouts:

- Getting the Word Out: Top Tips (Annexe 3)
- Participant Evaluation Form (Appendix C in the Guide)
- Optional: List of neighbourhood resources in your neighbourhood or community

CO-FACILITATION WORKSHEET: GETTING THE WORD OUT

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITY	MATERIALS	ROLES
Why we are here 10 min	Activity 1: Welcome – Participant introductions – Introduce workshop objectives and agenda	– Large piece of paper posted on wall – Flip chart paper & markers	
Identify what we want to achieve 5 min	Activity 2: What do we want to get the word out about? – Identify one activity or goal to spread the word about – Write across the top of large paper	– Handout: The group's action plan if available	
Identify target groups 15 min	Activity 3: Who needs to receive the word? – Brainstorm who we want to reach – Select 2 or 3 target groups – Write target on paper person & post on right side of large paper	– People cut-outs – Markers and masking tape	
Brainstorm: Communication Methods 10 min Small group work Part 1 & 2 20 min In Plenary 10 min TOTAL: 40 min	Activity 4: How do we reach them? – Residents identify all the ways they currently receive information Break into groups – PART 1 : For each target group, write on birds the best way to reach them – PART 2 – The Why : “What’s in it for me? Write what key message on sticky notes In large group: – Small group reps share findings and put birds and key messages on flight path	– Flipchart paper – Bird cut-outs – Markers – Masking tape – Large sticky notes – Handout: <i>Getting the Word Out Tip Sheet</i>	
Identify resources needed 10 min	Activity 5: Who can help us? – On flip chart, Identify existing resources in the neighbourhood – Write on seeds and paste on the bottom of the flight path	– Flip Chart – Cut-outs of seeds (circles)	
Get people’s commitment to Action 5 min	Activity 6: Moving to action – Identify next steps to put plan in motion – Participants write one action they are willing to take	– Flip Chart – Extra bird cut outs or sticky notes	
Evaluate the session 5 min	Activity 7: Evaluation – Distribute <i>Participant Evaluation Form</i> , Appendix C	– Document: <i>Participant Evaluation Form</i>	

ACTIVITY 1: Welcome and Workshop Introduction – 10 Min

OBJECTIVE: Welcome everyone and introduce workshop theme.

HOW:

- Introduce facilitation team and invite people to introduce themselves.
- Review objectives:
 - Strengthen our communications within the neighbourhood.
 - Discuss how our neighbours like to receive information.
 - Attract different people to participate in community events or activities.

Explain the visual that we will use: birds carrying messages to the people we are trying to reach.

ACTIVITY 2: What do we want to Get The Word Out About? – 5 Min

OBJECTIVE: Be clear about your objective before the workshop: start with a pre-identified community initiative that would benefit from spreading the word about. *For example: planning for a community garden, a summer BBQ, seeking members to join a resident circle or association etc.*

HOW:

- Using a piece of paper at least 3-4 feet long write “we are here” at the far left. Write the activity or topic that we want to get the word out about at the top of the piece of paper.
- Confirm what change we hope will happen in the community as a result of getting the word out. Ask the group what is the desired outcome? Write response below the topic heading.



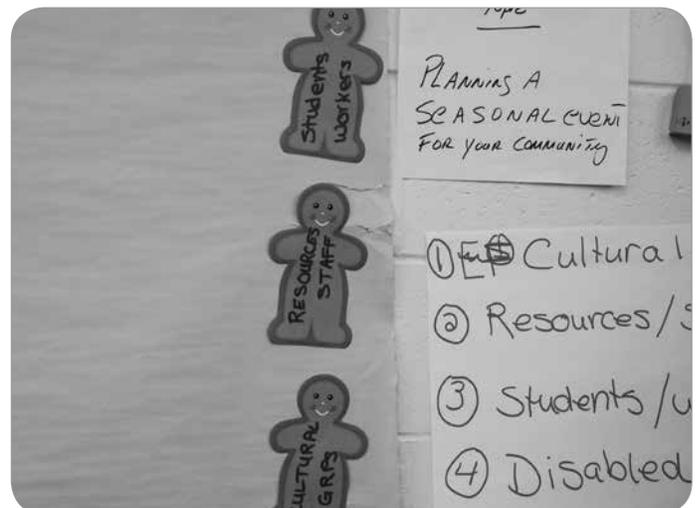
ACTIVITY 3: Who needs to receive the word? – 15 Min

OBJECTIVE: Identify who we need to reach to achieve our goal.

HOW:

Who Do We Need To Get The Word Out To?

- Reflect on the following questions: Who lives in our community? Who usually participates in community events?
- List on flip chart the groups of people that we are trying to reach. *For example, we are planning a BBQ and we want youth and newcomers to come.*
- Check-in: Are these community members reflected in the room? Is there anyone who should be present?
- Let participants know that although we want to be inclusive of all community members, for the purpose of this exercise, we want to focus on specific groups that are often more difficult to reach.
- From the flip chart list, ask participants to select 3 specific target groups that they really want to, and need to, engage. If you have a long list of target groups, participants can be asked to vote in order to select key target groups – see *dotmocracy exercise p.116*.
- Ask for volunteers to write on paper people cut-outs the name of each target group we want to get the word out to. *For example: one cut-out to represent newcomers and one cut-out to represent youth.*
- Ask the volunteer participants to place the person cut-outs(target audiences) on the right side of paper.



ACTIVITY 4: How Do We Reach Them? – 40 Min

OBJECTIVE: Identify how to reach the targeted groups (10 Min).

HOW:

- On flip-chart, brainstorm how participants like to receive information. Residents identify all the ways they currently receive information about neighbourhood activities, for example: *word-of-mouth, email, posters, Facebook, etc.* Ask specific questions, like “how did you hear about the most recent community meeting?” and “*how do you send and receive information with other residents in this community?*”
- Write each communication method on the flip chart, ensuring that everyone can see.

Break into small groups – as many groups as target audiences.

GROUP ACTIVITY 1 – Identify best communication method for target group **(10 Min)**.

HOW:

- Looking at the flipchart that lists communication methods, each group discusses which methods are best to reach their specific target group. *For example, if we’re trying to reach youth, consider methods such as text messaging, Instagram or different apps. Are there youth that we can ask? Can we connect to people who are involved or work with youth?*
- Narrow down what methods are practical for the neighbourhood and the people we are trying to get the word out to.
- For each target group we are trying to reach, write on birds the top 1 or 2 chosen ways to reach them.

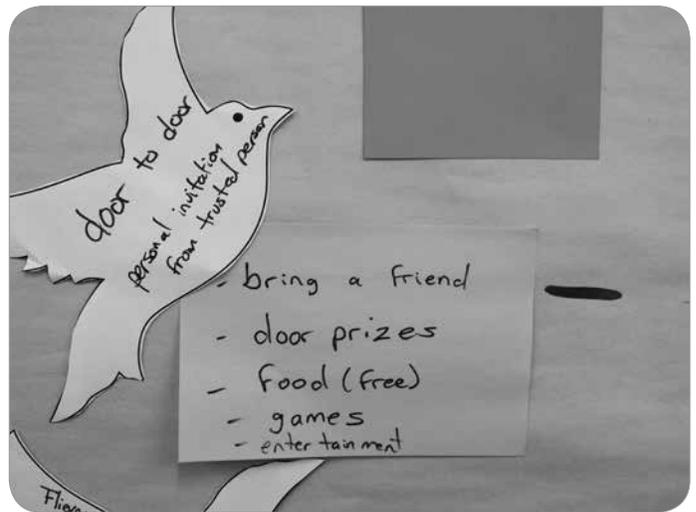
GROUP ACTIVITY 2 – Identify key messages – What will attract people to get involved? **(10 Min)**

HOW:

- In same small groups, consider the reasons why people from a specific target group should get involved. Why is it important? How will the individuals from that target group benefit? What is in it for them? The answers will become your key messages.
- On a large sticky note, write 1 or 2 key messages that you want your target audience to hear. An example of a key message for youth might be: Meet other youth in your neighbourhood.

In large group – Connect the communication methods to the targets **(10 Min)**.

- One participant from each group comes to the front to share their best communication methods and key points to reach their target audience.
- Post the bird on the left side of the paper with the sticky note in the beak of the bird.
- Draw a flight path from the bird on the left side of the paper to the paper person/target group we are trying to reach.
- Distribute *Getting the Word Out: Tip Sheet*.



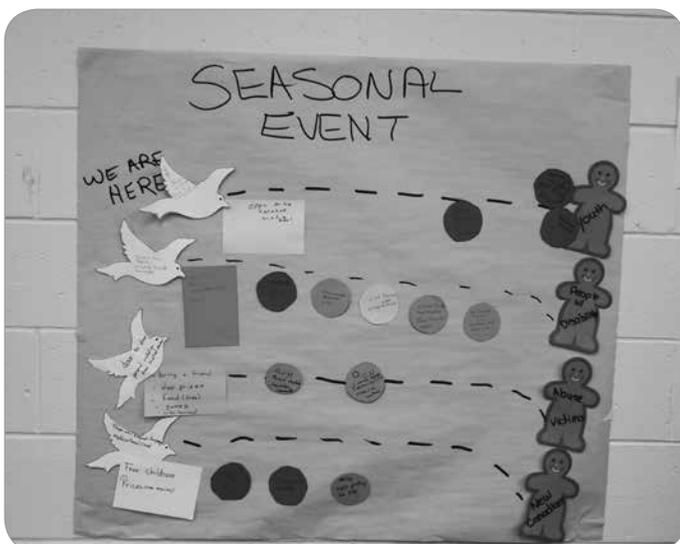
ACTIVITY 5: Who can help us? – 10 Min

OBJECTIVE: Identify with whom we can work to move this action forward.

HOW:

In large group, identify resources in the neighbourhood and write on flip-chart.

- Ask: “What is needed to make this bird fly?” Point out that unless we want to carry it, it will need food. Ask what the food would be and write that on “seeds” (volunteers, in-kind contributions, money etc.).
- Ask: “Which of these resources already exist in the community?”
- Brainstorm what additional resources are required for the different communication methods. Write on a flipchart.
- Distribute seed cutouts (a simple circle) and ask each participant to write one resource on a “seed” to feed the birds. Invite participants to place all the seeds on the ground along the flightpath.



ACTIVITY 6: Moving to Action – 5 Min

OBJECTIVE: What needs to happen now to put this communication strategy in motion?

HOW:

- Reflecting on the completed visual, discuss what needs to happen next.
- Ask participants to reflect on the individual roles that they are willing to take in order to “Get the word out”. Distribute extra bird cut-outs or sticky notes and ask participant to write one personal action they will take and bring home as a reminder.
- If time allows, you can also discuss the outcomes: How will we know if the birds have reached their destination? Point out that we can see some of the ways that our activities are having an impact in the neighbourhood. There will be signs that the communication works. For example, more people come to events or more volunteers are engaging.

ACTIVITY 7: Evaluation – 5 Min

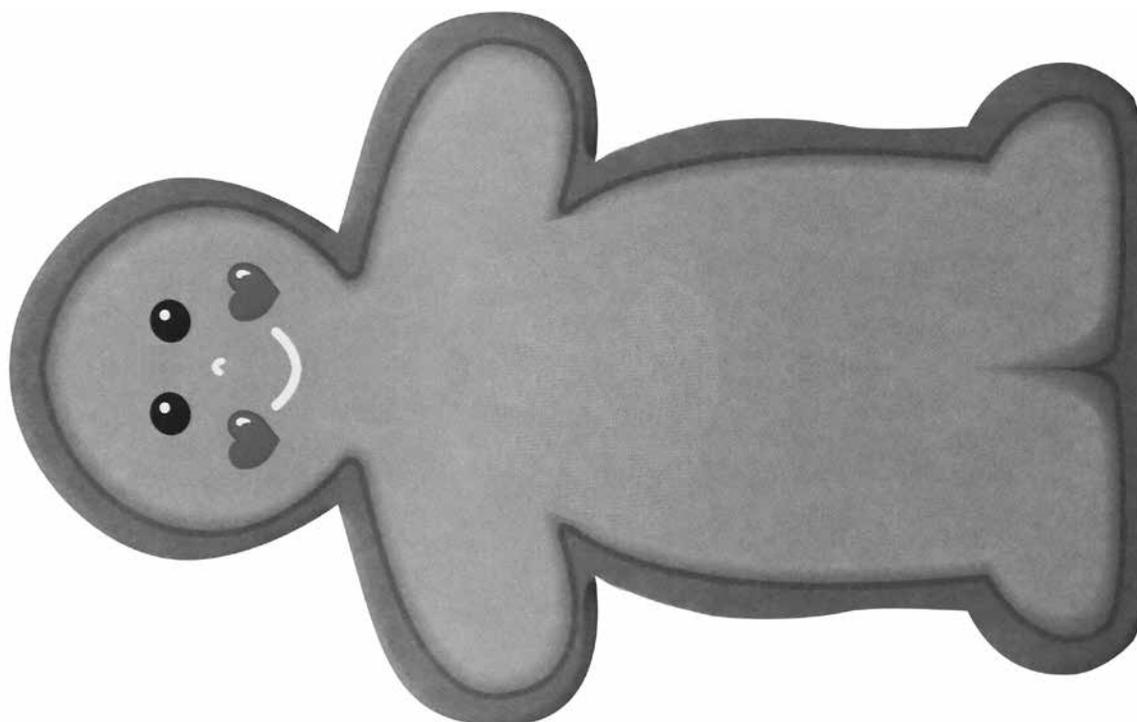
OBJECTIVE: Evaluate the session.

HOW:

- Distribute *Participant Evaluation Form*, Appendix C, and ask to complete.

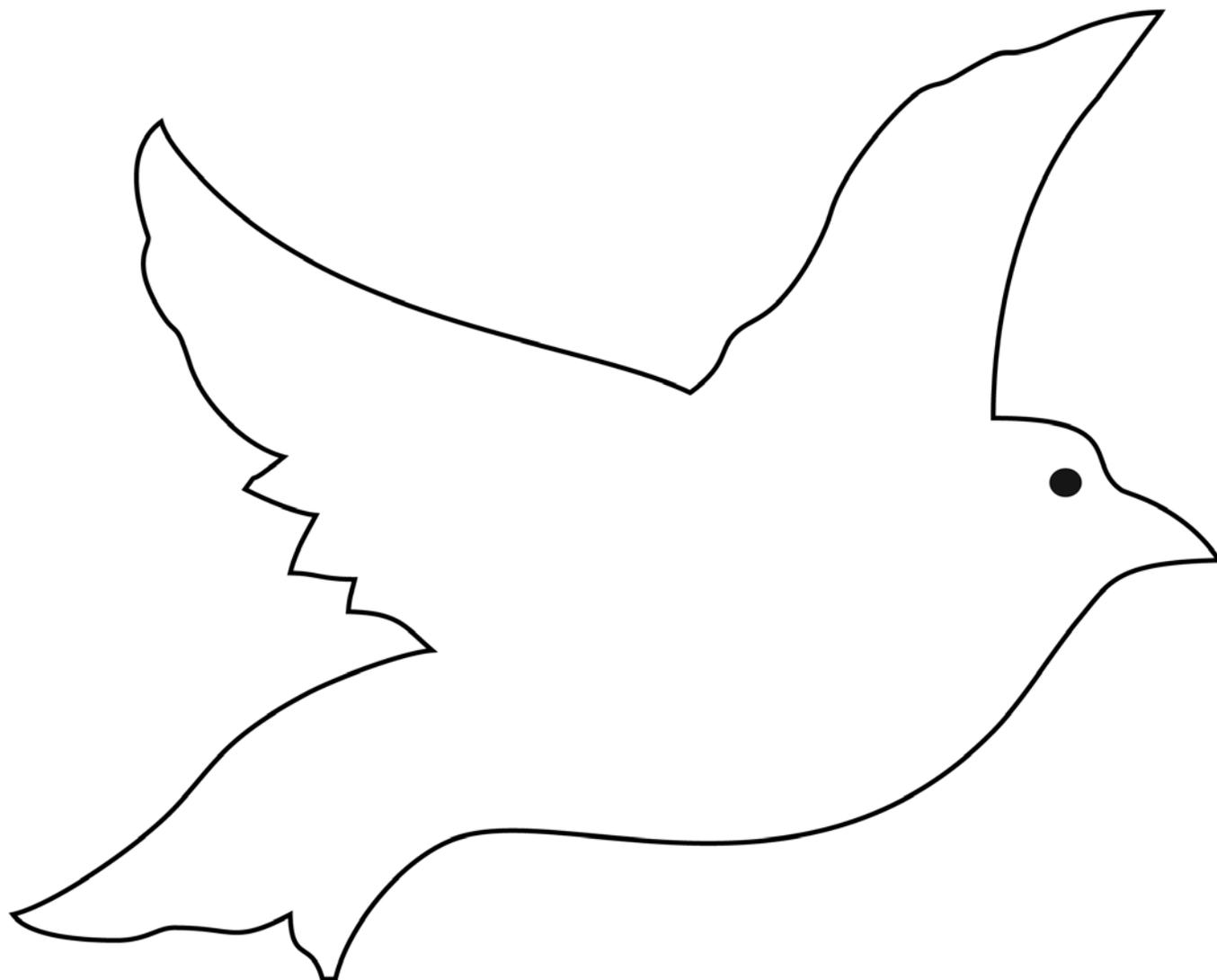
Annexe 1

People cut-out



Annexe 2

Bird in flight cut-out



Annexe 3

Getting The Word Out: Top Tips

Anytime you are trying to get the word out, think about the people you are trying to reach. How can you make your message interesting to them? How can you explain your event or project in a way that makes other people want to participate?

POSTER

- A good poster has a simple, uncluttered design and has text big enough to be read from more than 5 feet away.
- Make sure that the poster tells people what, who and where, plus how to get more information (for example, a website or a phone number to call).
- Use no more than three font types, sizes and colours on a poster. If there are too many different font styles, people don't know where to look.
- Hang posters where people are most likely to see them. Get permission first if you need to.
- Posters can also do double duty as flyers that you can hand out and leave in mailboxes.

FACEBOOK

Successful posts are:

- Short: Posts between 100 and 250 characters get about 60% more likes, comments and shares.
- Visual: Pictures and videos get more engagement.
- Providing information that your followers want.
- Posted on weekdays between 1 – 4 p.m.

TWITTER

- A tweet is a message of up to 140 characters, includes spaces and links.
- Twitter will automatically shorten any web link to 22 characters.
- Twitter is busiest on weekdays from 1 – 3 p.m., so tweet during those times.
- Mention people and organizations using their “handle” (with the @ symbol) in tweets to get their attention.

MEDIA

- Journalists welcome calls and emails with stories ideas.
- Journalists are more likely to cover stories that are:
 - Local
 - Unique
 - Big vs. small, e.g. big business vs. individual person
 - About an impending deadline
 - Linked to current trend, event or issue
- Most of the time, journalists are assigned stories at the start of the day, so get in touch by 9 a.m.
- To prepare to contact a journalist, write down your “pitch” (20 seconds or less), then call a media outlet and ask for the newsroom, or look up the media outlet's email address on their website.