



**THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS
L'ASSOCIATION PROFESSIONNELLE
DES AGENTS DU SERVICE EXTÉRIEUR**

Communications Plan Workbook

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Building the plan

- 1. Establish our goals**
- 2. Identify our audiences**
- 3. Build segments and create profiles for our audiences**
- 4. Create messages for each of our audience segments**
- 5. Identify and select our communications channels**
- 6. Select activities to pursue and materials to produce**
- 7. Establish symbiotic partnerships**
- 8. Implement the plan**
- 9. Evaluate and course-correct**

1. Establish our goals

Any effective communications effort begins with an assessment of the organizational goals determined as a result of the strategic review.

Who are we?

What is our mission?

PAFSO exists to further the interests of its members, to protect the status and standards of their profession, to maintain and promote the effective functioning of the Foreign Service of Canada, to act as the bargaining agent on behalf of its regular members, and to formulate and express the collective view of the members on matters affecting them.

What is our vision?

PAFSO is a well governed, highly trusted, effective and modern organization with strong relationships with members, staff and stakeholders. Through our investments in advocacy, outreach and engagement, PAFSO has grown and strengthened the Foreign Service.

What are our values?

PAFSO does this in a way which reflects Canadian values of:

- Equality;
- Diversity;
- Fairness;
- Respect;
- Professionalism;
- Transparency; and
- Good governance.

What is at stake?

What issue is most important to PAFSO right now?

Based on the 2019 Strategic Review, the most important issue concerning the association at the moment has been identified as reversing the erosion of the Foreign Service.

Over the course of several years, it seems that the perceived value of a professional foreign service has been on the decline. Spotty recruiting practices, political appointments, and a series of cuts under the auspices of the Deficit Reduction Action Plan have taken their toll. All of PAFSO's strategic communications initiative will have as their ultimate goal the reversal of these perceptions and practices.

Who are the main players?

Who is most affected by the issue stated above?

The first immediate victims of the erosion of the Foreign Service is the FS group itself. As such, it is important that our messaging attempts to unify, energize and mobilize the group across streams and departments. All of our communications efforts must strive to build a common identity and esprit de corps among the FS community. To achieve our goal, we need an engaged and vocal group that is not afraid to stand up for their profession.

Another group who stands to benefit positively from the strengthening of the Foreign Service is Canadians in general. The general public will benefit from better services abroad. Businesses will benefit from more favourable trade and political climates around the world. And Canadian society will benefit at home from an improved immigration service. Part of our communications efforts needs to highlight the impacts that achieving the above stated goal will have on these specific groups.

Who makes decisions about the issue?

The primary decision makers in this issue are the Treasury Board Secretariat and the departments that constitute the Employer: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, and Global Affairs Canada. The decisions are made by Deputy Ministers, Assistant Deputy Ministers and Directors General. However, the guiding principles are handed down from the Ministerial levels and above.

In a similar manner, decisions made by provincial and municipal governments affect our members. Issues such as Ontario rental legislation, Ottawa bylaws and provincial health and safety regulations all affect the lot of foreign service officers. Building a strong positive impression of a professional foreign service among this audience is key to reaching our ultimate goal.

These are stakeholders who are traditionally difficult to reach on a direct level. More realistically, they are more likely to be moved to act via the pressures of public opinion and media exposure. Much of our communications intended to influence them will need to be indirect and make use of any and every news media connections we can leverage. A separate advocacy strategy should be developed for a more direct approach to reaching these influencers.

As of 2019, PAFSO finds itself in an advantageous position relative to this situation. We now have a full-time paid president who has an explicit responsibility to be the lead advocate for the association. At the November 2018 retreat, the top identified threat was the limited public visibility and low political recognition PAFSO had. However, now with the president “serving as PAFSO’s chief national and international representative, and spokesperson to the media and the public,” as well as “representing PAFSO to Parliamentary and Legislative Committees, monitoring and/or participating in Government and Employer initiatives,” the association has the opportunity to put a name to quotes and a face in front of cameras to solve its visibility issue and begin the shift in public opinion.

What does success look like?

What do we want to achieve?

Externally, we want to achieve a state where the Foreign Service is held in high regard by the general public, shown the respect it warrants by politicians, and treated with fairness by the Employer. Internally, we are looking for a more unified, active and engaged membership.

What changes should we be able to observe?

From the point of view of public opinion, there needs to be a shift of perception from the stereotype of diplomats as entitled elitists who attend galas and cocktail parties. The general public needs to have a greater awareness of the specific value of the work of a professional Foreign Service, and of the impact it has on the Canadian economy and on their daily lives.

In the eyes of the media, the association's president is seen as the principal representative of the professional Foreign Service. Reporters, both national and international, should look to PAFSO for comment and reaction to news stories that touch on foreign affairs.

The Employer should work more closely with the association in an effort to improve working conditions for FS. This is to include better cross-Canada recruitment into all streams, a reduction of the number of FS positions filled by non-FS employees, and continued improvements in collective agreements.

What should we see, hear, or have that will let us know we are making progress toward the goal?

Increased member participation in Association business

Increased member attendance at the AGM

All ExCom and committee positions are filled

Member uptake of HQ campaign initiatives

Increased social media metrics (likes, follows, retweets, etc.)

Increased registration and participation in MyPAFSO

Increased open and click rates in email campaigns

Increased visibility of PAFSO/President in media stories concerning Foreign Affairs

Better conditions enshrined in future collective agreements

Regular cross-Canada recruitment

Overall FS numbers match operational needs

Less than 5% non-FS in FS jobs

Less than 5% non-FS as HOMs

More favourable results for PAFSO members in FSDs and other NJC negotiations

2. Identify our audiences

Identifying our audiences will allow us to better target each one, and the particular segments within each, with our communications efforts.

Internal audiences

PAFSO members
PAFSO staff
Spouses/dependents

External audiences

Employer stakeholders
Politicians
Other PS unions
International FS associations/unions
Other NGOs
Universities
Media
The general public

Primary audience

A primary audience is usually defined as the group whose knowledge, ideas, attitudes and behaviours must be changed—and whose engagement must be maintained—in order for our goals to be met.

In our case, though, the landscape is not quite so clear. Ultimately, it is the Employer whose ideas and behaviours we want to change in order to strengthen the professional Foreign Service. But, as we have touched upon, those attitudes and behaviours are influenced and even directed from the political strata above them. This group is, in turn, motivated by the pressures of public opinion and the media.

In order to move our ultimate audience to act, we need to a strong, energized and vocal community of FS who have the attention of the media. For this reason, our communication efforts should be such that their primary focus is spread across two groups: our members and the media, especially those whose views are influential among our ultimate audience.

Our initiatives need to build esprit de corps, unity and pride among our membership while informing the media of the value and importance of a professional Foreign Service. There are three main approaches through which this double objective can be achieved: a community-building effort that touches on newsworthy topics; an issue-based initiative which calls upon members to demonstrate support; and a general awareness effort that asks for members' participation.

A good example of the first approach would be if our LGBT campaign from June 2019 had had the dual focus of Canadian missions participating in Pride festivities or flying the Pride flag in countries with a difficult relationship with those communities. On the one hand, this effort builds solidarity among the FS community. On the other, it brings to light either what the Canadian Foreign Service is doing to improve conditions for LGBT around the world, or even, just the dangers and difficulties for Canadian LGBT FS working in those places. This second facet is what will attract the media's attention.

An example of the second approach might be initiatives around the detention of Michael Kovrig. The idea is to leverage an issue of newsworthy importance to engage the membership. This could be as simple as a social media campaign that, along with likes and shares, has a call to a petition or a letter-writing campaign. In this way, PAFSO is in the news, and the members are engaged and united in support.

The third approach would resemble our #FSatWork campaign of 2018 but more tailored toward the general public: profiles of various FS, what they do, why they do it, and most importantly what it means to the average Canadian. It's a basic "who we are" campaign, but through the added testimonials of real FS, it brings the membership on board to help broadcast our message.

Using combinations of these three approaches, our messaging is sure to reach both facets of our dual primary audience. A strong, energized and vocal FS community will help amplify those messages we manage to get into the public discourse, and ultimately change perceptions, attitudes and behaviours.

Secondary audience

Other audiences that will benefit from our efforts include foreign policy think tanks, universities, academia, students, future FS recruits and FS spouses. Reversing the erosion of the professional Foreign Service is a mutual interest. We can count on them to support and help distribute our message.

Tertiary audiences

Assistance in influencing our primary audiences can come from other international Foreign Service unions or associations. In elevating the profession in the eyes of the Employer and the Canadian public, we are elevating the profession in general—a mutual goal of Foreign Service unions of the US, UK, Australia, etc. Specific initiatives can be designed to include these groups, for example under the auspices of Diplomacy Week.

Another tertiary audience to consider are other unions of the core public administration. As well, these groups are likely candidates with whom to build symbiotic alliances and partnerships (see section 7).

3. Build segments and create profiles

Primary audiences

PAFSO members: New recruits
 Members abroad
 Retired members
 Members of specific streams
 Engaged members (Wardens, ExComm members)

Media: Ottawa bubble: Hill Times
 Citizen
 Rest of Canada: Globe and Mail
 Toronto Star
 OpenCanada
 CBC Power and Politics
 CTV PowerPlay
 Les coulisses du pouvoir
 Le Devoir

Secondary audiences

Universities: Ottawa U/Carleton
 York/Royal Roads/St-Mary's/SFU/UVic/Dal/Windsor

Think tanks: Broadbent Institute
 Business Council of Canada
 Canadian International Council
 Centre for Foreign Policy Studies
 International Development Research Centre
 Lieu Centre (SFU)
 Centre for international Governance Innovation
 RHOMA

Tertiary audiences

Other PS unions: PSAC/CAPE/PIPSC
 Smaller unions, ACFO, AJC, etc.

International FS
associations/unions: AFSA Other international FS unions
 Public Service International

For each identified audience of importance, we need to establish two factors.

How do they fit in to establishing our goals?

What do we know about this audience's knowledge, ideas, attitudes and behaviors as relates to the issue identified in part 1?

What are the barriers to this audience's full support or participation in reaching our goal?

How can they benefit if they do?

What specifically characterizes them?

How do they spend their time?

What media do they consume?

Where can they be reached online?

What is their gender, ethnicity and income level?

How have they been educated?

What are the language considerations?

What or who are they influenced by?

What makes new information credible for them?

What or who could motivate them to change their minds or to take action?

PRIMARY AUDIENCES / PAFSO Members

New Recruits

This segment fits into establishing our goals as they are the literal future of the foreign service.

The majority are most likely idealistic and still a little naive. They are energetic, enthusiastic and proud to be FS. It is also likely that they have little to no experience in working in a unionized workplace.

There are some among this group who view their time as FS from a short- to medium-term lens. For them it is an opportunity to gain overseas experience and language training to use in a career path other than the foreign service.

A barrier to their participation might be their need to dedicate themselves to their new career. It might also include a reluctance to confront management on various issues at such an early point in their careers. Being active within their union/association may be too much on their plate. We need to provide low-level, non-controversial engagement options to this audience.

As a segment, those looking to pursue a future in the foreign service will benefit by securing a more fulfilling and rewarding career—better working conditions, from safety to salary, higher regard for their careers in the public eye.

Characteristics:

- Mostly younger
- Live online: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- Gender mix is close to 50/50.
- Ethnicity mix does not quite mirror national landscape.
- Income level is high. Education is high. Language is 80%+ English.
- Influencers include: Peers, Mentors
- Information is credible if supported by peers and major news sources.
- Could be motivated by mentors, previous cohort, managers.

Members Serving Abroad

This segment fits into establishing our goals as they are carrying out the most visible portion of FS work—serving Canada abroad.

They are possibly the segment most actively concerned about issues like safety, security, spousal employment, financial costs, FSDs, and other factors at play when abroad.

The barriers to this group's participation include being out of the country, possibly limited internet, time differences with the National Capital Region, workloads, limited contact with members outside their missions. These factors of relative isolation may make it difficult to connect with this audience and to instill within them the sense of being part of a team. On the other hand, the desire to feel connected might play in our favour. We need to recognize this segment's sacrifices as well as to offer them the opportunity to feel part of the larger FS family.

As a segment, they stand to benefit from PAFSO making real gains in those areas that shape the experience of serving abroad.

Characteristics:

- Busy and value connections to home
- May live online: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, but internet may be highly unreliable for many. Many may rely more on email than on social media.
- Same general gender and ethnic mix, income, education and language considerations.
- Influencers include: colleagues, veteran FS.
- Information is made credible if supported by peers and major news sources.
- Could be motivated if threats/improvements to FSDs, mission safety/security, spousal employment, etc. were on the horizon.

Retired Members

One interesting way in which engaging the segment of our members who are retired helps us in achieving our goals is the fact that, as they are no longer working for the various departments, they are not constrained in what they say. They find themselves with a greater freedom to speak out against the government's approach of the foreign service.

This group represents a wealth of experience and are the living memory of the profession. They can speak to what they have seen as the deterioration of the professional foreign service through the historical lens of their careers.

Of interest to this group is to maintain the importance and prestige of the foreign service. They are very proud of their own careers, and many of them have children who are now in the foreign service. They will benefit by having the foreign service in high esteem of the public.

A small portion of this segment may be less inclined to participate as they may have lost interest in maintaining a connection to the profession. Others may simply prefer to enjoy the benefits of their retirement.

Characteristics:

- Those who are still active may have more free time.
- They live less online and prefer traditional television, print media and letters to websites and email.
- Gender may skew more male, ethnicity may be less diverse, income and education are the same.
- Perhaps lower percentage of francophones although the one organized discussion group of former FS is in French.
- They are influenced by peers, national media, think tanks.
- Motivated by Peers and direct appeals for help from PAFSO.

Members by Stream

The FS group is divided into five streams, each of which lives a slightly different experience. Not all streams share GAC as an employer. Some streams have a higher percentage of members serving abroad than others. And each stream has its own particular culture. All of these factors should come into considerations when communicating with these groups.

Our communications efforts are likely to gain more traction if we stay at a higher level when tackling issues such as assignments, etc., as opposed to getting into the granularities of one stream may alienate others. Also, rivalries between streams have at times devolved into spaces which would be counterproductive to our efforts. Other than a few particular considerations, our communications should be to the FS group as a whole in order to engender a sense of esprit de corps.

Considerations:

- FPDS has historically been seen as the dominant stream.
- TD has a high visibility through strong campaign efforts by the department.
- IM often feels overlooked and may be less engaged as a result.
- MCO have only joined the FS family in 2016, and do not feel they are seen as real FS. May not see the benefits of PAFSO membership.
- FSIA are the newest stream and are looking to fit in while being weary of established cliques. Have high expectations of membership in PAFSO.

Engaged Members

As with any organization, some members have shown a greater interest in participating. These are the engaged members—members who are or have been active with the Executive Committee, who have served as Wardens, who have participated in various discussions about the future of the organization (in person, on the phone, or on MyPAFSO). They do not have to be convinced of the value or potential of belonging to the organization. They have already climbed up a few rungs of the ladder of engagement.

This is the segment with which we can test out our higher bar asks. While we will have low-engagement asks in order to connect with the wider membership, we need to have a sense of what we can ask of members at different levels of engagement.

PRIMARY AUDIENCES / Media

Hill Times

Print and Online–Heavy Paywall
English language

This publication is very influential on Parliament Hill and has a high impact among politicians and senior bureaucrats, particularly at GAC.

The Hill Times focuses on Public Service news, Union stories and Phoenix, for example.

Their reporters include Mike Lapointe, Emily Haws and Samantha Wright Allen.

It features three columns which are of interest to our goals: Civil Circles, Diplomatic Circles and Policy.

From an editorial standpoint, it seems more interested in stories with general political impacts, Hill life and a strong Ottawa slant.

Our relationship to the Hill Times is good and can be strengthened by being more in contact–by accepting more interview requests, contacting them directly with our releases rather than relying on press release services, etc. Our goal is to be seen as an important source of information/reaction for stories tied to foreign policy and public service unions.

Ottawa Citizen

Print and Online

English

The Citizen is a very important publication in the NCR. Being a Postmedia property gives the publication a potential national reach. The downside to this is that it tends to have a more conservative slant (Endorsed Harper in 2015).

Its areas of interest that intersect with ours include Public Service news, Phoenix stories, National politics and International Affairs.

Citizen reporters include Elizabeth Payne, Taylor Blewett, Christina Spencer, Jacquie Miller and Kelly Egan

The Citizen has demonstrated an interest in stories that showcase Canada in good light. They have been interested in stories that have challenged the Trudeau government.

Demonstrating a greater availability for interviews and establishing more direct contact with reporters will strengthen our relationship with the Citizen. If we can establish a greater prominence in the Hill Times might help this too.

Our goal is to be seen as an important source of information and reaction for stories tied to foreign policy.

OpenCanada.org

Online
English

OpenCanada.org is an online publication of the Canadian International Council.

Its areas of interest include International Affairs and Canada's role on the world stage.

Catherine Tsilakis is the reporter with whom PAFSO has had a relationship.

OpenCanada has shown an interest in governance, the future of the foreign service, gender and other equity issues. Catherine Tsilakis wrote a piece on the Full-Time Presidency in February 2019.

PAFSO has a good relationship with the CIC, but due to funding cuts, OpenCanada has not had the budget for reporters to travel for stories. We can try to reestablish the relationship by connecting remotely and on outreach visits.

The Globe and Mail

Print and Online—Heavy Paywall
English

The Globe and Mail is the undisputed heavyweight on national stage.

Its interests span federal politics, Canada and international politics.

Doug Saunders is a reporter who has most recently reported on Havana Syndrome and the situation in Cuba.

Currently we have no contacts and no established relationship to the publication.

The Toronto Star

Print and Online

English

The Toronto Star is another heavyweight on national stage.

Its interests also span federal politics, Canada and international politics.

In June of 2018, reporter Bruce Campion-Smith has reached out for comment on the situation in Cuba. In February 2019 he contacted PAFSO for our reaction to the lawsuit brought against the government by Canadian diplomats in Cuba.

CBC Power+Politics/The Current/News

TV, Radio and Online–No Paywall

English

CBC represents a truly national reach.

The broadcaster's interests include safety and security issues, federal politics and Canada on the world stage.

Reporters/Producers: Julie Crysler, David McKie, Willow Smith, Chris Hall, Alexandra Semard and Murray Brewster (with whom the President has a personal relationship.)

Recently, the CBC has shown a high interest in stories such as the lawsuit, Cuba, political appointments, salaries and the overlap between foreign policy and defence issues, including conditions of service for FS vs CAF.

We declined to appear every time Power and Politics has reached out to us. The relationship with that particular program may be difficult to rekindle.

CTV PowerPlay with Don Martin

TV and Clips online

English

Broadcaster has a national reach. CTV seems to lean more to the conservative side.

Interests of the program include federal politics and hill life.

It is produced by Michael D'Alimonte, who has contacted PAFSO for stories related to Cuba and the lawsuit, as well as the recent Auditor General's report which highlighted issues with staff quarters and missions abroad.

PAFSO has declined a request to appear on the programme once, when the subject was hardship levels and New Delhi. We agreed to appear on another occasion, however, the segment was pre-empted, and the interview never happened.

Other than a few email exchanges, PAFSO has yet to establish a solid relationship with CTV's PowerPlay.

Les Coulisses du pouvoir (Daniel Thibeault)

TV with Episodes Available Online

French

Les Coulisses du Pouvoir is an important political program in Quebec. Its interests span both Quebec and Canadian politics. The program is produced by Nancy Labonté and Mathieu Gohier.

We do not have a relationship with this program at this point. PAFSO should also look into finding a spokesperson for appearances in French media.

Le Devoir

Print and Online—Medium paywall

Le Devoir has a deep reach within Quebec and tends to the left. Its interests include both politics in Quebec and at the Federal level. Its Ottawa bureau reporters are Hélène Buzetti and Leïla Jolin-Daniel.

PAFSO does not yet have a relationship with this publication.

SECONDARY AUDIENCES / Universities

A number of Canadian universities with influential public service and foreign affairs schools and programs form part of our secondary audience. Forging stronger connections with them, both with faculty and with the student body, should form part of our communications plan.

The approach to this will rest more on tactics than on messaging.

For example, establishing social media connections with these institutions and their influential professors will allow our messages to be shared with their expansive networks. Or PAFSO could look to engaging with the universities of the National Capital Region in future professional conferences, either as invitees or as speakers.

A stronger relationship with the student body—future FS recruits—would also be a strategic asset. Students from Carleton and uOttawa could be invited to a special edition of the PAFSO Breakfast series, which could serve as an introduction to the professional foreign service. FS at Regional Offices or on outreach in Canada could engage with students during visits to post-secondary institutions to provide an introduction to life in the foreign service and answer questions from prospective recruits – a role that has largely gone unfilled by GAC or IRCC. Students could also be invited to submit articles related to the Canadian Foreign Service to *bout de papier*, and circulation of the publication made available to relevant university departments across the country.

Another way to connect with this audience could be to bring back the PAFSO scholarships. We could also consider sponsoring an essay contest through *bout de papier* or research prize for work on foreign service issues.

SECONDARY AUDIENCES / Think Tanks

Much like with Universities, PAFSO needs to cultivate connections with influential, like-minded think tanks. Again, this will require more of a tactical approach.

We need to connect with them on social media. When we see that they have released studies or white papers that promote ideas or values that align with ours, we need to share them with our networks or cite them in our own materials. And, as with universities, many of these think tanks should be considered for participation in future professional conferences.

TERTIARY AUDIENCES / Other Public Service Unions

PAFSO and the other unions of the Core Public Service have many shared values and goals. Through alliances with those other unions, we can gain assistance in influencing our primary audiences, in particular the media.

Through tactical approaches of connecting and cooperating via social media, and participating in joint initiatives, PAFSO can leverage their prominence to improve our own visibility in the eyes of the media and the general public.

Participating in such events as Public Service Week or anti-Phoenix campaigns and the like could serve to rebuild a relationship that perhaps has become strained over the course of the past year.

TERTIARY AUDIENCES / International Foreign Service Unions

International Foreign Service unions were also identified as part of our tertiary audience. Sharing knowledge and best practices with these other unions can be instrumental in achieving our goals. Alliances can be formed with these associations—from the Anglosphere (Canada, US, UK, Australia, New Zealand), for example—in order to collaborate on specific communications campaigns and initiatives to further our shared goal of promoting a professional foreign service.

Diplomats in the US are represented by the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA). PAFSO already has a relationship with the AFSA and has floated the idea of joint initiatives earlier in 2019.

In the United Kingdom, employees of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are represented by the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS).

The Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) represents employees of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

New Zealand's Public Service Association (PSA) is the union that represents the employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

4. Create messages for each segment

The messages we develop need to be closely tied to our goals and objectives. They must deliver important information about the issue and compel the targeted audience to think, feel, or act.

Our messages should:

- show the importance, urgency, or magnitude of the issue;
- show the relevance of the issue;
- humanize the issue;
- connect with specific audience values, beliefs, or interests;
- reflect an understanding of what would motivate the audience to think, feel, or act;
- be culturally relevant and sensitive; and, most importantly
- be memorable.

The messages we develop are essentially a set of statements that we agree upon as conveying the key information for our initiative. They will be broad, and not necessarily include all the detail, supporting ideas and data that we may use in printed materials, on our website or in other long-read forms of communication.

The messages we develop will become the underlying themes for any and all of our communications materials and activities. Campaigns will be based on what we develop. Media talking points, presentations, articles, fact sheets, white papers, etc, will all take their cues from the messaging developed at this stage.

Considerations

Message design is influenced by the channel and the purpose for the particular communication. The how and why of our communication will dictate the information we choose to communicate. We can choose to inform, to convince, to change behaviours, to invite to participate or to move to action.

Often, these purposes overlap. Often, they build on each other. That is, for persuasion to work, the public must first receive information, then understand it, believe it, agree with it, and then act upon it. Regardless of the purpose, messages must be developed with consideration of the desired outcome.

Factors to keep in mind include:

Clarity

- Messages must clearly convey information to assure the audiences understanding and, conversely, to limit the chances of a misunderstanding or of an inappropriate action to be taken.
- Clear messages will contain as few technical or bureaucratic terms as possible, and eliminate information that the audience does not need in order to make necessary decisions (i.e. unnecessarily detailed explanations).

Consistency

- Unfortunately, consistency is sometimes elusive. New data can always be interpreted differently, making consensus among government, industry, and public interest groups difficult. This underlines the importance of our being as consistent as possible in the presentation of our own arguments.

Main points

- The main points should be stressed, repeated, and never hidden within less strategically important information.

Tone and appeal

- A message should be reassuring, alarming, challenging, or straightforward, depending upon the desired impact and the target audience.
- Messages should also be truthful, honest and as complete as possible.

Credibility

- PAFSO, our spokespeople and the information sources which support our messages must be believable and trustworthy.

Public need

- To break through information clutter, our messages should be based on what each target audience perceives as most important to them. We need to focus on what they want to know, and not on what is most important or most interesting to PAFSO.

Prior to final production or distribution, our messages should be pretested with the specific target audiences to assure that the desired edification and other intended responses are achieved.

Crafting messages

To develop messaging for each specific audience we need to understand the following.

What are the barriers and benefits to our audience's thinking, feeling, or taking action on our issue?

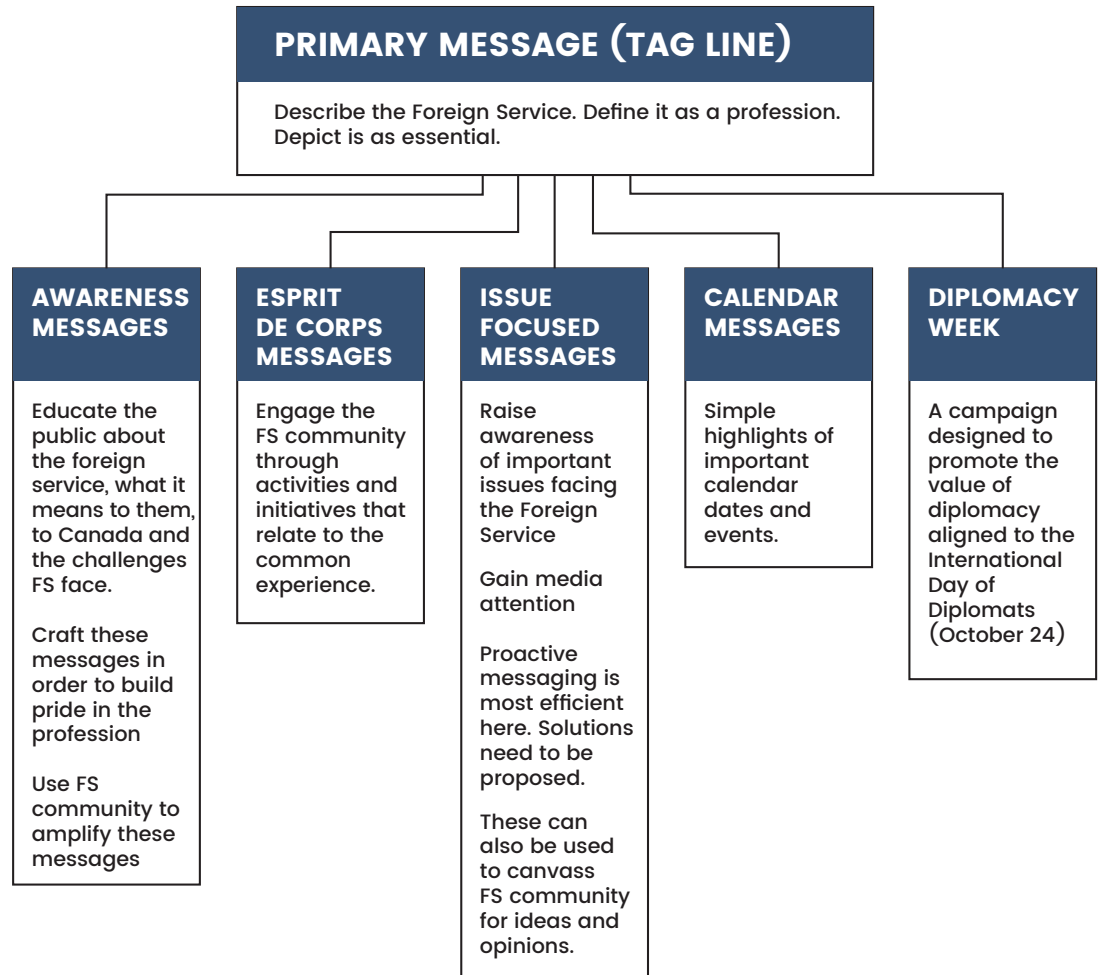
What change in attitude do we want to initiate in our audience in order to meet our goal?

What change in behavior of our audience do we wish to see?

Based on what we know about our audience, what do they need to hear in order to think, feel or act the way we want them to?

What are the three most compelling sentences or ideas we could use to motivate the audience?

Hierarchy of messaging



Primary message (tag line)

The work of the professional Foreign Service is varied compared to other professions. Its impacts are wide-ranging and span several different aspects of the lives of ordinary Canadians. In order to (1) highlight its value, (2) capture its many facets, (3) and to reflect it back to the general public, PAFSO's primary messaging needs to be both broad and flexible.

Whether concerned with trade, politics, immigration, foreign aid, or services to traveling Canadians, the professional Foreign Service adds value to Canadians and to Canada.

In order to accomplish this in an efficient and memorable fashion, PAFSO's tagline is built upon the following formula:

**In the service of {SPECIFIC ISSUE}.
In the service of Canada.**

Below are specific examples of how this formulation unfolds when talking about a particular aspect of the work of the Foreign Service:

- Canada's professional Foreign Service.
In the service of human rights. In the service of Canada.
- Canada's professional Foreign Service.
In the service of business. In the service of Canada.
- Canada's professional Foreign Service.
In the service of good governance. In the service of Canada.making the world a better place.

For use in a more generic context, the following short form is used:

- Canada's professional Foreign Service. In the service of Canada.

Awareness messages

- Profiles by stream (HOTCS, FSatWork)
- “That’s the professional Foreign Service” (highlight examples of FS value to Canada and Canadians)
- Promoting academic papers
- “Humanizing” the Foreign Service (e.g. families, pets, etc.)

Esprit de corps messages

- Posting season engagement (gravy boat photos?)
- Various surveys/polls
- FS Awards
- Professional Conference
- Photo Contest

Issue-focused messages

- Phoenix
- Spousal employment
- Safety and security at mission
- Hardship posting awareness (i.e. air quality)
- Non-FS in FS jobs
- HR issues

Possible calendar messages

Jan	1 New Year's Orth. Christmas
Feb	Black History Month Tet Phoenix Anniversary
Mar	8 International Women's Day (Week) Nowruz Spring
Apr	Easter / Orth. Ramadan Earth Day 28 Workers' Memorial Day
May	3 World Press Freedom Day
Jun	Pride Month 20 World Refugee Day 21 National Indigenous Peoples Day
Jul	1 Canada Day (Week)
Aug	Posting Season (?)
Sep	Labour Day Rosh Hashanah
Oct	24 International Day of Diplomats (Week) Yom Kippur
Nov	11 Remembrance Day (Week)
Dec	Hanukkah 25 Christmas

Diplomacy week

- Feature various important diplomats from the pages of Canada's history
- Highlight important moments in history where diplomacy saved the day
- Use stories to build links between diplomacy of the past and today's professional Foreign Service
- Focus on number of diplomats in the world

5. Identify and select communications channels

Communications channels carry our messages to our target audiences. There are now more channels than ever, each with its strengths and pitfalls. Answering the following five key questions will identify the most effective channels for reaching each of our audiences.

1. Which audience are we targeting?
2. As identified in the profiling from section 3, where and from whom do they get their information?
3. Who do they find credible?
4. Where does this audience spend most of its time online?
5. On which internet platforms, through which publications, radio or television networks are they most likely to give us their attention?

6. Activities and materials to support our communications

What activities, events, or materials can we use—via our selected channels—that will most effectively carry our message to our target audiences?

These can include press releases, news conferences, web postings, social media posts, social media campaigns, letters to politicians, opinion editorials, open letters, letters to the editor, mail campaigns, one-on-one meetings with stakeholders, conferences, internet video campaigns, pamphlets, etc.

In selecting which activities to pursue and what materials to produce, the following should be taken into consideration:

- appropriateness to audience, goal, and message;
- relevance to desired outcomes;
- timing (what else is happening in the same time-frame?);
- costs and resources intensity;
- climate of community/membership toward the issue or activity;
- cultural appropriateness (including language); and
- geographic considerations.

PAFSO should also make greater use of *bout de papier* as a tool for engagement, particularly with external audiences. *bout* has traditionally been circulated to select decision-makers and influencers (parliamentarians, journalists, etc.), but there is an opportunity to expand the reach of the publication to raise awareness of PAFSO and the issues facing the Foreign Service. The production of *bout* has been suspended temporarily to allow for a re-evaluation of the needs, focus, and mandate of the publication. A revitalized *bout* can and should play a greater role in PAFSO's outreach efforts. This could potentially include measures such as:

- reorienting *bout* to serve primarily as an external-facing publication, with internal news and updates to members shifting to digital channels.
- setting aside space in *bout* for external contributors (opinion pieces, papers from academics/students, etc.) on topics relevant to the foreign service.
- positioning *bout* as a valuable historical record and increasing accessibility by digitizing back issues and making available online.
- increasing distribution to reach a broader audience.

- ensuring regular and timely production of issues, including by building up a store of non-time sensitive materials to avoid content-related delays.
- properly resourcing *bout* with the human and financial activities needed to carry out these functions.

7. Establish symbiotic partnerships

What groups, organizations, or institutions exist that would aid us in reaching our goal by providing funds, expertise, credibility or other resources toward our communications?

Whose audience can we leverage in order to expand the reach of our message?

Whose authority or position can we make use of in order to amplify our message?

8. Implement the plan

1. List all activities
2. For each activity, outline each of the steps involved from inception to completion
3. If required, assign a budget estimate (time/money) to each step identified
4. Estimate the resources each step requires
5. Work backwards from the activity completion point, assign a date for each constituent step.

Activity dates can be plotted on calendar pages, or Gantt charts can be used to ensure that activities and events will not overlap and negatively impact one another. It is also important to have a consistent communications schedule that, while reflecting the realities of the calendar (vacations, parliamentary sessions, posting season, etc.), keeps our messages on our key audiences' radars.

9. Evaluate and course-correct

Stock should be taken of the progress of the communications plan on a regular basis—monthly or quarterly depending on the intensity of the various activities or campaigns.

At these review points, any available metrics should be reviewed in order to:

- determine the strengths and weaknesses of the plan as they appear;
- identify any obstacles that may have arisen;
- explore potential workarounds and alternate approaches for success;
- make adjustments to future initiatives based on lessons learned;
- adjust expectations, tactics and time-lines based on new, measured realities.