



Washington Women  
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# Take Stock: A Nonprofit Communications Audit

## COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT TOOLKIT

### WWPR Nonprofit Communications Toolkit

*This resource is part of the **WWPR Nonprofit Communications Toolkit**, a year-long series of practical guides designed specifically for small to mid-sized nonprofits working with limited staff and budgets. Each quarter focuses on a different theme, and each resource is designed to be immediately implementable without prior communications experience or expensive tools.*

Explore more resources at: [wwwpr.org/nonprofit-toolkit](https://wwwpr.org/nonprofit-toolkit). Questions or feedback? [probono@wwpr.org](mailto:probono@wwpr.org)

# Overview

## Why Bother With an Audit?

Most small organizations communicate on instinct. You post when you have news, send an email when you remember, and update the website when something changes. That's not a criticism—it's just reality when you're a small team wearing a lot of hats.

The problem is that over time, without stepping back to look at the full picture, things get patchy. Your Instagram is active, but your website is two years out of date. You have an email list you haven't touched in six months. You're putting energy into channels that might not be reaching the people you actually need to reach.

A communications audit doesn't have to be a big project. It just means taking an honest look at what you're doing, how it's working, and where your time would be better spent.

### After completing this checklist, you'll have:

- ✓ A clear snapshot of what you're doing well and what's slipping
- ✓ A score that tells you honestly where you stand: Foundation, Building, or Strong
- ✓ Specific actions to focus on first, so you're not trying to fix everything at once
- ✓ A baseline you can come back to in 90 days to track your progress

## How to Use This Checklist

1	<b>Set aside 30 minutes</b>	That's genuinely all this takes. Put your phone down, open your website, social accounts, and email platform, and work through each section with them in front of you.
2	<b>Answer honestly</b>	Check the box only if you can say yes right now, not 'we used to' or 'we're planning to.' The value is in the honest picture, not a flattering one.
3	<b>Read each tip</b>	Each section has a tip for how to actually gather the information. These make it real.
4	<b>Tally and act</b>	Count your checkmarks, find your score, and use the action priorities to decide what to tackle first. Pick one thing. Write it down. Do it.

### A Note Before You Start

*No small organization has all 20 boxes checked. The point isn't perfection, it's clarity. Even if you finish this and realize you're starting from scratch in two of the four areas, that's useful. You now know where to focus.*

# Self-Assessment Checklist

What are you actually doing right now? Work through each section honestly. No judgment, just a clear picture.

## Website

**Can someone find your mission or ‘what you do’ in under 10 seconds, without clicking anything?**

*Try it right now. Open your homepage and time yourself.*

- Is your contact information easy to find from any page?**
- Does your site clearly show who you serve and why they should care?**
- Is there a way for visitors to take the next step? (donate, sign up, get in touch)**
- Has your site been updated in the last 3 months?**

### TIP

*Hand your phone to someone who has never seen your site. Ask them to find: (1) what you do, (2) who you serve, (3) how to contact you, (4) your most recent news, and (5) how to support you. Don't help them. Just watch and take notes.*

## Social Media

**Do you know which platform actually reaches your audience? (Not which one you prefer)**

**Do your last 5 posts reflect what you want to be known for?**

*Read them as if you're a stranger. What impression do you get?*

**Do you know who is actually engaging with you?**

*Check your followers/insights—age, location, what they respond to.*

- Are you posting at least twice a week on your primary channel?**
- Do you have a consistent visual look—colors, fonts, or photo style?**

### TIP

*Go to your most active social account and click ‘Insights’ or ‘Analytics.’ Look at who engages with you. Is that your actual audience? If not, your content may be reaching the wrong people.*

## Email

- Do you have an email list of people who want to hear from you?
- Do you know how many people are on it and how it's organized?
- Have you sent an email to your list in the last 60 days? *If it's been longer, people may have forgotten who you are.*
- Do your emails have a clear purpose and a single call to action?
- Do you track open rates or click rates, even roughly?

### TIP

*Pull up your last email. Read the subject line. Would you open it? Now check the open rate. A typical small org average is 25–30%. Below 20% usually means the subject line or send frequency needs work.*

## Media & PR

- Have you had a media mention (article, interview, podcast) in the last 6 months?
- Do you have at least 2–3 journalists or producers you could contact directly?
- Do you have a current one-paragraph description of your org ready to send? *Often called a 'boilerplate', can you paste it right now without writing it fresh?*
- Do you have a spokesperson who is comfortable and prepared to talk to the media?
- Do you have a story to tell right now—something timely, local, or human?

### TIP

*Google your organization's name right now. What comes up? Are the results current? Do they say what you want them to say? This is roughly what a journalist sees when deciding whether to cover you.*

## How to Score

Count your checkmarks across all four sections (20 total possible).

**0–8 ✓**  
**FOUNDATION**

You have the basics in some areas, but key gaps across the board. That's normal—most organizations start here. Focus on one channel at a time rather than trying to fix everything at once.

**9–15 ✓**  
**BUILDING**

You have a real presence and some systems working. The goal now is consistency and connecting the dots between your channels so they reinforce each other.

**16–20 ✓**  
**STRONG**

Your communications infrastructure is solid. Focus on refining, measuring, and going deeper—not adding more channels for the sake of it.

# What to Fix First (When You Can't Fix Everything)

You don't need to be everywhere and do everything well at once. Use your score to decide where to focus your limited time and energy.

## Action Priorities by Score

<b>FOUNDATION</b> 0–8	Start with your website. Make sure your mission is visible on the homepage, and your contact info is easy to find. Pick ONE social platform and commit to showing up there twice a week. Don't try to be everywhere. If you have any email list at all, send one email this month. Even a short one. Silence costs you more than imperfection. Hold off on media outreach until the basics are in place.
<b>BUILDING</b> 9–15	Audit your social content: do your last 10 posts tell a coherent story? Write down 3 messages you want to be known for and test them. Clean and organize your email list—even a simple split (e.g., donors vs. volunteers) will improve your results. Identify one journalist or local media outlet to build a real relationship with. Send them something useful, not a press release. Check that all your channels say the same thing about who you are.
<b>STRONG</b> 16–20	Start measuring. Pick 2–3 metrics that matter to your goals and track them monthly. Build a simple editorial calendar—even a one-page spreadsheet. Planning ahead beats reactive posting. Develop a media list and a pitch strategy. You have the foundation to get coverage now—go after it. Think about what's next: a newsletter upgrade, a new audience segment, a campaign.

### The One Rule

Do fewer things better. A single well-maintained channel that actually reaches your audience is worth more than five inconsistent ones. Pick your strongest channel, make it excellent, and only add more when you can sustain what you already have.

## Quick Reference: What Each Channel is For

Channel	Best for	Weakest at	One thing to check
Website	Building credibility, being found via search, and housing your full story	Real-time updates, conversation	Can a stranger find your mission in 10 seconds?
Social Media	Visibility, community, reaching new audiences	Control—algorithms decide your reach	Do your last 5 posts reflect what you want to be known for?
Email	Staying top-of-mind with people who already know you, driving action	Finding new audiences	When did you last email your list?
Media / PR	Credibility, reaching audiences you can't reach yourself	Speed and control	Do you have one real relationship with a journalist right now?

## Your Next Three Steps

1. Write down your score and the section where you had the fewest checkmarks.
2. Choose ONE action from the priorities table. Just one. Put it on your calendar this week.
3. Come back to this checklist in 90 days and compare your scores.

**About the author:** [Kimaya Dixit](#) is a strategy and communications executive who helps organizations align purpose with business strategy and execution. She has led high-impact work across global health, Fortune 50 companies, and major nonprofits — building brands, shaping narratives, and driving decisions when the stakes are high.