



Communications Strategy
2020

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Executive Summary

The Centre for Social Innovation (CSI) was opened in Toronto in June 2004 as one of the first coworking spaces in the world. As an organization operating in the social mission sector, we provide resources and supports over a thousand social innovation organizations.

By the end of 2020, we aim to increase our memberships and community partnerships, as well as increase the connectivity between social innovation organizations. We also aim to increase knowledge of our membership benefits and the services we offer to our target audience by the end of 2020. We aim to increase the attendance of our networking events as well.

The CSI's target audience primarily includes young adults aged 21-35, but also adults up to the age of 50 as the secondary audience. Our audience consists of entrepreneurs and innovators from a variety of backgrounds who are working to make social change, either through existing grassroots organizations or new ones that the CSI will help them start. The CSI will impart the key message that they support social innovators with resources, using innovation to catalyze social change.

Strategies we will use in our communications plan include media relations, social media relations, community relations, special events and digital communications. We will use specific tactics to execute each strategy, including publishing a news release, engaging media representatives and creating a content calendar to maintain a social media presence. We will also host workshops and events, and publish promotional emails. The CSI website will be updated, and paid promotion will be used to create awareness on social media platforms. We will also send brand ambassadors to college campuses during job fairs to recruit future applicants. The estimated budget amounts to just over \$300 thousand for one year. The success of these goals are to be evaluated by December 2020.



Research Summary

The Centre for Social Innovation (CSI) was conceptualized in 2003 as a means to provide access to office facilities and resources to organizations in the social mission sector. Our founders envisioned giving these smaller social mission organizations a shared space in which to collaborate and lower costs, allowing them to better create social change. The CSI was officially opened to 14 founding tenants in June 2004, and it was one of the first coworking spaces in the world. Our current CEO is Tonya Surman.

Our mission statement is as follows: “We are here to help provide small businesses and startups with the basic necessities they need to succeed, as well as plenty of networking opportunities. Our goal is not only to assist them, but to foster a better sense of belonging and community by strengthening connections amongst like-minded organizations with similar goals and values.”

Our brand is more generic in focus than most social justice-oriented organizations. This is because we provide a space and resources for other organizations in the social mission sector, which have more specific social missions. As a result, the more general approach to social justice that we take is effective for our role in supporting the roughly 1000 member organizations of the CSI. The CSI has some weaknesses. We lack a consistent identity across our website and social media platforms. Our mission also comes across as vague and not clearly defined, which can make it difficult to communicate what we do to visitors on our website and social media.

The CSI has several core values that inform our objectives. We put people and planet first, focussing on human interests and the environment. We identify our members as innovators. We also have a strong focus on collaboration between their our member organizations and social innovators. They have a commitment to authenticity and transparency. We promote healthy workplace cultures, which includes a commitment to diversity, equity, and accessibility.

The CSI also runs a variety of programs and workshops that operate beyond coworking. These are aimed at helping our members create social impacts and include topics such as Social Entrepreneurship 101 and various climate action ventures. The Agents of Change acceleration program aims at amplifying the impact of projects the CSI sees as having high potential. There is currently a lack of awareness of our organization, the services we offer and our commitment to social innovation and creating solutions to social issues.

The CSI has three locations in Toronto. CSI Spadina is located at 192 Spadina Avenue, CSI Annex is located at 720 Bathurst Street, and CSI Regent Park is located at 585 Dundas Street East.

Situation Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Unique premise	Weak brand awareness, identity and consistency lacking a clear vision or mission statement	Propose a website revamp, improve social media	Funding
Only coworking space in Toronto that is inclusive and actively promoting diverse organizations	Confusing, unclear website	Identifying a concrete mission to focus on	Lack of brand awareness and inconsistency means people won't form a lasting impression
Already has 1,000 members	Inconsistent logo; different variations online	Connect with students to ensure future clients and brand awareness	People won't take them seriously until they define their mission and fix their website
Provides one of the very first coworking spaces worldwide	Member list not easily searchable	Network and collaborate with small businesses who need help, and potentially with their partner businesses	People won't trust them at first because they're small and relatively unknown
In the most diverse city worldwide, meaning more diverse network opportunities	Website member list function has issues displaying members E onwards	Request government funding	
Aimed at younger people, who can provide long-term benefits	Inconsistent tone of voice on website; sometimes casual, sometimes pedantic	Build reputation, then ask businesses and other entities for funding	

A lot of unemployed college grads to target	Not very well-known; limited advertising		
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Objectives

Business Objectives

Our business objectives are to:

1. Provide shared office space and resources, through memberships, to 10% more social innovation organizations, by December 31, 2020.
2. Build 10% more community partnerships by December 31, 2020.
3. Connect 25% more social innovation organizations to one another by December 31, 2020.

Communication Objectives

Our communications objectives are to:

1. Increase awareness of the CSI and their values and services, by 25%, amongst our primary target audience, by December 31, 2020.
2. Increase the belief, amongst our target audiences, that the CSI is innovative, diverse and inclusive, by 25%, by December 31, 2020.
3. Increase the belief, amongst our target audiences, by 25% that the CSI is an agent of social change.
4. Increase the knowledge of membership benefits amongst our target audience, by 25%, by December 31, 2020.
5. Increase CSI membership by 15% (150 members) by December 31, 2020.
6. Increase attendance of new entrepreneurs and members at networking events by 25% by December 31, 2020.
7. Increase social media following on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram by 15% by December 31, 2020.
8. Increase Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram engagement (including likes, comments, retweets) by 15% by December 31, 2020.
9. Increase our appearance in the media by 10% by December 31, 2020.

Audience Analysis

Primary Audience:

1. Young adults, aged 21-35, who are tech-savvy and eager to implement their social innovation business ideas through networking and expansion. They are primarily recent college or university graduates interested in becoming entrepreneurs.
2. Later-career adults, aged 35-50, who are interested in leaving traditional employment to start their own social enterprise. They are also inspired to take on the challenge of being entrepreneurs.

Both of these target audiences are entrepreneurs and innovators, from diverse gender, racial and cultural backgrounds. The organizations we aim to target are involved in resolving social issues, and who often experience barriers to participate in social innovation. They also use social media and in-person networking as their preferred mode of communication.

Secondary Audience:

1. Media representatives, journalists, broadcasters and writers
2. Social media influencers
3. Internal staff
4. The board and management

Key Messages

The Centre for Social Innovation should have a clear, coherent, and consistent voice, appropriate for their audiences. They must use professional language that is easy to read. The key messages must support the business and communications objectives. The key messages are as follows:

1. We support social innovators with office space, resources and networking.
2. We catalyze social change through innovation and collaboration.
3. We live our values through our commitment to diversity and inclusion

Strategies

Media Relations

Communications Strategy

Our first strategy applies media relations by leveraging the power and influence of traditional media channels, and media influencers, to achieve our communication objectives. These channels include television, radio and print broadcasters, local, regional and national outlets. We will use traditional media channels to inform our target audiences of how the CSI supports social innovators through shared office space, resources, networking and learning opportunities. We will also use the strength of media relations to persuade our target audiences that the CSI is innovative, diverse and inclusive, and able to catalyze social change. We will inspire them to join the CSI as members, and contribute to social change through their innovative business ideas. To achieve these objectives, we will establish a voice that is informative and influential to communicate the CSI's impact and dedication to social innovation and spark conversation

Social Media Relations

Our second strategy applies social media relations, leveraging the power and influence of social media channels, to achieve our communication objectives. These channels include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and LinkedIn. We will also identify and engage with key influencers on social media, individuals and other organizations, who will share the messages of the CSI communication strategy. Similar to the media relations strategy, we will use social media channels to inform our target audiences of the work the CSI does to support social innovators. And we will use the influence and reach of social media to convince our target audiences that we are innovative and able to catalyze social change. Again, we will speak in a voice that is informative and influential to communicate the CSI's impact and dedication to social innovation and spark conversation. Again, we will use this strategy to inspire them to join the CSI as members, and to contribute to social change through their innovative ideas.

Community Relations

Our third strategy employs community relations, leveraging the influence and reach of community relationships and networks to achieve our communication objectives. We will hold a speaker series, networking events and workshops to reach our target audiences with our messaging. We will create partnerships with campuses, community centres, and employment centres to achieve our communication objectives.

Special Events

Our fourth strategy employs special events, leveraging the reach and promotional potential of large public events to reach our target audiences and achieve our communication objectives. We will host speaker events on College and University campuses, and a large annual event such as a Climate Change

Digital Communications

Our final strategy leverages the power and reach of digital communications, including promotional emails, newsletters sent via email, and podcasts. We will also revamp the website. We will use the powerful reach and influence of digital communications to achieve our objectives.

Tactics

Media Relations

- Write and distribute a news release.
- Send communication packages to local news organizations.
- Request interviews with local media influencers.
- Write guest articles for print media, using earned media to gain access to publications.
- Create a list of media and influencers to target with our messaging.

Social Media Relations

The social media platforms will include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn.

- Create a content calendar for all current social media platforms.
- Create a list of social media influencers and influential organizations to target with messaging.
- Facilitate the ability organizations of awareness of the CSI on their social media accounts.
- Create online communities to prompt discussion, and build relationships
- Post strategically, and increase daily posts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to increase awareness and knowledge of CSI.
 1. Create a Facebook group that facilitates conversations around social change and social innovation.
 2. Share informative, educational articles, and infographics.
 3. Facilitate and engage in conversations on Twitter during CSI events.
- Interact with and acknowledge existing social innovation organizations that work with the CSI, to demonstrate diversity and inclusivity.
- Use paid promotion on Facebook, Instagram, and Instagram Stories to increase reach and engagement.
- Repost and share content by CSI partners.

Community Relations

- Campus visits to promote awareness of the CSI,
- Have brand ambassadors on campuses to recruit future grads.
- Have speakers at campuses to inform and persuade students to join and start their own business.
- Orientations and networking events (advertised heavily through social media and email marketing).
- Host networking events for existing members.
- Host skill-building workshops for members and non-members (non-members must pay).

Special Events

- Speaker events on College and University campuses.
- Host a large speaker event building on the Climate Change movement, illustrating how small-scale social innovation can lead to large-scale change.

Digital Communications

- Revamp the website
- Redesign website to clearly communicate who they are and what they do as an organization.
- Create blog and feature blog posts to increase knowledge of CSI, their purpose and impact and the role of social innovation in Canada.
- Host podcasts and speak as a guest on podcasts.
- Email outreach (email newsletters, updates)
- Send weekly e-newsletter to members, new recruits and internal staff

Communications Strategy

4. Special Events													
Research locations													
Research catering													
Research Speakers													
Hire event coordinator													
Hire A/V, photographer/videographer													
Meet with caterers													
Organize event													
Secure Media coverage													
Select/Contact/Book Speakers													
Book venue													
Book catering													
Launch events													
	Months												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	
5. Digital Communications													
Redesign website													
Hire graphic designer													
Create email newsletters													
Distribute email newsletters to members internal staff													
Research podcasts													
Write podcasts													
Schedule podcasts													
Publish podcasts													
Research bloggers													
Write guest blog posts													
Publish blog posts													

Budget

New Personnel for the Year

Personnel	Salary
Communications Manager	\$70,000 per year
Content Writer	\$40,000 per year
Web Designer	\$50,000 per year
Social Media Officer	\$45,000 per year
Total	\$205, 000 per year

Public Orientations for Non-Members (max 500 people including media guests)
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Items	Details	Totals
Room rental	\$1000/day (for a big room that can hold 500+ people)	\$1,000
Pamphlet printing costs	\$0.15 per pamphlet Have extras	\$100
Presentation and AV equipment	Podiums, chairs, microphone, speaker, projector	\$700
Drop-off catering	\$10/person	\$5,000
Social Media campaign	\$50 per platform; Facebook, Twitter, Instagram	\$150
Email marketing campaign	Mailchimp - Standard Plan \$15 per month, for 1 year	\$180
Canada NewsWire Press Release and Publishing	\$500 to write and release it	\$500
Total	*1 per year	\$7,630

Communications Strategy

Networking Events for Partners and Stakeholders (max 100 people per event)

Items	Details	Totals
Room rental	\$500/day (for a medium room holding up to 300 people)	\$500
Pamphlet printing costs	\$0.15 per pamphlet Have extras	\$40
Presentation and AV equipment	Podiums, chairs, microphones, speakers, projector	\$400
Snacks and refreshments	\$5/person	\$500
Workshop events	Will include some skill building workshops, \$500 allocated towards it	\$500
Subtotal		\$1,940
Total	*6 per year, multiply subtotal by 6	\$11,640

Campus Events (max 200 students per event)

Items	Details	Totals
Presentation and AV equipment	Podiums, chairs, microphones, speakers, projector	\$500
Snacks and refreshments	\$5 per person	\$1,000
Pamphlet printing costs	\$0.15 per pamphlet Have extras	\$60
Subtotal		\$1,560
Total	*8 campuses, multiply subtotal by 8	\$12,480

Campus Visits During Job Fairs

Communications Strategy

Items	Details	Totals
Booklet printing costs	\$0.25 per booklet Have 600 booklets	\$150
Free snacks	Cheap snacks like popcorn	\$200
Subtotal		\$350
Total	*multiply subtotal by 8 for each event	\$2,800

Grand Total Calculation

Expense	Yearly Cost
New personnel	\$205,000
Public orientations	\$7,630
Partner and stakeholder events	\$11,640
Campus events	\$12,480
Campus visits	\$2,800
Subtotal	\$239,550
Taxes (13% of subtotal)	\$31,141.50
Subtotal with taxes	\$270,691.50
Contingencies (20% of subtotal with taxes)	\$54,138.30
Grand Total (contingencies plus subtotal with taxes)	\$324,829.80

These costs were estimated based on research through Google. There are several things to note about what was excluded from and assumed in these costs. Firstly, we did not include additional personnel for the events because we will be mass hiring company workers at the beginning of the year who will be guest speakers, ticket checkers, greeters, and other key roles.

We also only included email marketing costs for the first event because it is a yearly subscription that can also be used for the other events. Canada NewsWire was only used for the one public event as well because there will be no need to get public word out about member-exclusive events.

Communications Strategy

For the campus events we assumed that the room would be provided for by the school and that they would also cover event marketing to the students (through fliers, social media, and email). We made the same assumption about the campus visits during job fairs; assuming that a couple of tables and chairs for our brand ambassadors would be provided for by the schools. This is why those costs were not covered in our budget. We also assumed we would not be getting paid by the school to come and speak at the events, so if we do it will be an added bonus.

Lastly, the presentation and AV equipment costs varied depending on the event size - the larger the event, the costlier it would be to provide more speakers, mics, podiums, and chairs.

Evaluation of Success

We will evaluate the results and ongoing effects of our communications plan a year after we begin it, which will be on December 31, 2020. We will measure it in reference to our communications and business objectives; if we hit them, then we are successful. This will be done by measuring the increase in membership sales, as well as by seeing how many people attended the events we will be hosting throughout the year.

Measuring how often our company was mentioned or acknowledged by the media will be another means of evaluation. This includes print, audio and video news clippings, and a measurement on how many journalists covered us in their stories and how often. These are some examples of outputs.

There is also social media evaluation, which involves monitoring our number of mentions, our overall reach, number of followers gained, number of likes and comments, retweets, impressions, and click-through rates. All of this will be compared to our 2019 results to see how much we improved since then.

We will also use exit polls online on our website asking questions such as “how did you find our website?”. This poll will give us a general idea about the public’s perception of CSI as well as how quickly it is spreading and through what means. This will all be on top of the regular checks we will be doing to see how many website views we get throughout the year. This is an example of outcomes to see how people’s behavior and attitude towards our company has changed as a result of our outputs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have created a comprehensive one year long communications plan that is estimated to cost just over \$300,000. To recap, here are our key messages:

1. We support social innovators with office space, resources and networking.
2. We catalyze social change through innovation and collaboration.
3. We live our values through our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

We currently have a lot of room for improvement; we have a weak mission statement and identity, along with an overall lack of consistency online. However, we also have a lot of potential and opportunities to improve these things as our premise is unique and we are in a diverse city with many young college students and recent grads (our primary audience) who are looking to start their own businesses. Our main threat right now is a lack of government funding.

Our business and communications objectives include creating more community relations, gaining more members, increasing brand awareness and getting more people to come out to our events.

Our strategies involve media relations, social media relations, community relations, special events, and digital communications. We have a very thorough list of tactics to help us achieve these objectives, including hosting events, launching news releases, and creating a content calendar for our social media.

We will evaluate our success by December 31, 2020 by seeing if we met our business and communications goals, such as by measuring the increase in social media engagement and how many people attended our events. On top of that, we will also use exit polls on our website to gain a general idea about the public's perception of CSI and how they came across our website.

By 2021, our brand should be much more defined and successful according to our objectives.