

Voice of the Volunteer Survey Communications Plan Guide (with templates)

Developing a Communications Plan

A communications plan outlines what, when, and how you will share information to achieve your goals. A well-structured communications plan is essential for delivering the Voice of the Volunteer Survey, ensuring your volunteer survey reaches as many people as possible and encourages meaningful participation. Thoughtful planning not only increases response rates but also demonstrates to volunteers that their input is valued and acted upon.

Here's a framework to guide your communications:

1 month before launch: Build anticipation

Let your volunteers know the survey is coming. Share why it matters, how their input will make a difference, and when they can expect it. You can also take this opportunity to let your volunteers know that the survey will be anonymous. Use this time to build excitement and reinforce that every voice counts.

Survey launch day: Initial communication

Send out your first official communication announcing that the survey is open. Use multiple channels to reach volunteers wherever they engage. This could be email, online messaging platforms, posters in shared spaces, or your newsletter. Make the message clear, concise, and action-oriented.

During the survey: Ongoing reminders and engagement

Keep the survey visible with periodic reminders. Highlight the closing date, reiterate why participation is important, and consider creative touches. You might use fun visuals, short volunteer testimonials about why participation matters, or visual countdowns.

After survey closes: Share results and next steps

Communication doesn't stop once the survey closes. Analyse the results and share key insights with both volunteers and paid staff. Develop and communicate an action plan showing how feedback will be used to make improvements. This demonstrates accountability, closes the feedback loop, and builds trust for future surveys.

Tips for Survey Communication



Plan and schedule: Map out your communications in advance and stick to the timeline to keep volunteers informed and engaged.



Be clear and concise: Explain why the survey matters, how responses will be used, and ensure your commitment to acting on the feedback is clear.



Consistent core messaging: Keep key details like how to access the survey, closing date, anonymity of responses, and what happens afterward, consistent across all channels, while varying the format and tone.



Get creative with your promotions: Email may be the main channel but think beyond it. What about team meetings, newsletters, posters, or social media? These forums can help reach more volunteers and keep the survey top of mind. Or even consider equipping volunteer ambassadors to help spread the word and promote to their peers.



Highlight next steps: Let volunteers know what will happen once the survey closes and results are analysed; let them know how their input will influence improvements or decisions.

Suggested Timeline for Survey Communications

This timeline assumes email is your primary communication channel, however, tailor it to your volunteer group. Consider other channels that your volunteers engage with most and use them to maximise reach and participation.

Tip: Space survey reminders based on response rates. If participation is high, you can reduce the number of reminders. Response rates vary widely depending on the audience, how engaged they are, and how the survey is delivered.

Timing	Action	Notes
1 month before launch	Coming soon email	Let volunteers know the survey is coming, why it matters, and when it will open. Build anticipation.
Launch/Day 1	Initial email	Provide survey link, explain purpose, and closing date. Use multiple channels: email, newsletters, team messaging, posters.
Mid-point	Reminder email	Thank volunteers who have already participated and encourage those who haven't.
Final week	Reminder email	Emphasise the closing date and the importance of every response.
Two days to close	Urgency reminder email	Highlight last chance to participate. Reinforce key messages.
Closing day	Final day reminder email	Remind volunteers the survey closes today; encourage immediate participation.
1-2 weeks after survey closes	Post-survey follow-up email	Thank you and confirmation of next steps e.g. when to expect results, and how volunteer input will be used.

Tips for Sharing Survey Feedback



Use multiple channels: Reach volunteers wherever they engage – email, online messaging platforms, posters in shared spaces, or your newsletter. Make sure information is accessible and consistent.



Share the raw data: Be transparent and let volunteers and paid staff see the survey results, trends, and overall responses. This builds trust and shows you value their input.



Explain what it tells you: Highlight key takeaways, including successes to celebrate and areas that need improvement. Make the insights easy to understand and relevant to the audience.



Show what's already underway: Outline current initiatives or changes in progress that address the areas for action identified in the survey. This demonstrates responsiveness and accountability.



Invite ongoing feedback: Encourage volunteers to continue sharing thoughts beyond the survey. Feedback loops can include meetings, suggestion boxes, or



Outline next steps: Be clear about what will happen next, including timelines for any actions or improvements. Let volunteers know how their input will shape the future of your volunteering program.