

Terms of Reference (5): Communications

BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

CIOFS already has a communications team in place which has done yeoman's work in managing the international website and social media, getting the news out at significant events (such as the General Chapter) and, most recently, in launching the international newspaper (VOX Franciscana). The intent of this proposal is to take communications to higher levels.

Communications plays a critical role in all facets of an organization, both internal and external. Effective communications are essential to building and maintaining relationships within the organization, establishing effective teams, facilitating innovation, contributing to the growth of the organization, and ensuring transparency and sense of trust in the organization.

PROPOSAL – SUMMARY

Proposal 5 – OFS International Office of Communications

It is proposed that a permanent International Office of Communication be established and staffed with professionals possessing the requisite skills in communications, website/social media management and publishing. In some cases, the office may have to retain professional staff on a contractual basis to ensure quality work. This Office or Secretariat would be responsible for:

- developing an international communication strategy for the OFS;
- performing media relations and issuing News Releases on specific events providing the OFS with a common voice that reflects its Franciscan vocation and mission (e.g. refugee crisis, natural disasters, etc.);
- managing the CIOFS website and social media;
- developing promotional material for the OFS (eg. posters, flyers, videos, etc.);
- publishing an international newspaper (electronic and hardcopy); and
- creating and maintaining a database of international and national contacts.

SCOPE

An essential part of the work of this office would be to determine the best tools for communicating with the OFS, given the diversity of its membership and availability of technology.

These proposals are intended to utilize the expertise of Secular Franciscans from across the world, and especially non-elected members of the OFS, in supporting the responsibility associated with communication internally and externally. The implementation of this proposal is contingent on continuous and effective communication between the members of the Presidency and the Communications Office.

APPROACH

As an initial step, Phase 1, a team of 5 Secular Franciscans who have experience in the field of public relations, communications, writing, design, social media, publications and publishing would be established to develop a coordinated international communication strategy for the OFS. This is a significant piece of work that overlaps with most of the other proposals contained in the 2017 Instrumentum Laboris. An understanding of the Order, its priorities, its needs as far as communication is critical in ensuring that the strategy address and encompass the priority areas. Within this strategy ...

1. The team would have to determine the situations when **press releases** would be sent out and to whom. A cadre of OFS reporters should be identified to assist the team.
2. The team will also need to review the **website** and plan a strategy about updating and expanding it as appropriate. A website manager should be named. It should be determined whether this will be a paid position or a volunteer position. Preferably, it should be someone who understands website management and who also understands the OFS as an international organization. Funding may be also required to update the website
3. **Social Media** will also need to be addressed – how and when to use it, what should be promoted, who should be invited as friends, who will maintain it, how often it should be updated. The Order already has a Facebook page and Twitter account. Should it also have a presence in other social media like Instagram. The team that maintains these venues should be well versed in the opportunities available.

4. **Promotional materials** should be itemized in the strategy. The team should determine the needs of the Order, whether to offer the material in digital, hard copy or both. Materials might include: brochures, booklets, manuals, prayer cards, flyers, leaflets, videos. Whatever materials are prepared, should be branded with the OFS logo, and, somehow identified as an OFS product. A team of editors and designers should be named to ensure that any material prepared by CIOFS is branded appropriately.
5. Publishing an **international newspaper**. Should it be only electronic format or should the order print copies in all four languages? Who would receive it? How would the Order pay for printing and mailing? Would we allow advertising to help pay for the printed version? Who could advertise in the publication? What are the types of things that would be promoted? What types of features could be included? Who could submit articles? Could we let the members of the Order submit stories for consideration? (Background: The Presidency has taken the first steps in providing an international newspaper in electronic format, but there a numerous possibilities for expanding it.) An editorial board should be named, including members of the Presidency. A staff of reporters from around the world should be identified. And, if the plan is to offer advertising, an advertising staff should be named. There are various ways that advertising could be managed. It would be the responsibility of the strategic team to recommend a process.
6. A team should be organized to develop a worldwide database of OFS members (at least international and national officers), organizations and offices with whom the Order should build a relationship, media outlets. If the goal is to provide a venue for dispersal of the publication, a separate database with a list of subscribers should be developed.
7. A translation team should also be organized. This team should include: Italian, English, Spanish and French. Two translators should be identified for each language, one going in one direction (e.g. English to Italian) and the other going in the other direction, (Italian to English). The level of expertise in each language will determine the direction in which they translate.
8. A number of phases to this project can be envisioned. A period of one year would be given to establish this initial team and to have it complete the first phase of this project, the strategic plan. Within this plan, a timeline for each of the areas will be arranged and a budget (if needed) will be developed. The strategic plan will also identify or recommend sources for funding. The first phase of this work would be conducted virtually using teleconferencing technology.

RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Minister General, Vice-Minister General or Presidency Councillor
- People Resources experienced in the different areas identified above
- Budget for print materials and videos
- Budget for development and maintenance of website
- Mailing Budget
- No financial resources are required for the first phase of this project

SOURCE OF FUNDING

- International Presidency
- National Fraternities
- Advertising (if strategic plan calls for it) for the newspaper
- Donors/Grants

RESPONSIBILITIES

A team of five people is proposed for the first phase of this project. Based on the composition of the team, responsibilities would be assigned to develop each of the areas of the proposals.

It would also be the responsibility of this team to propose the work that would need to be done in subsequent phases of this project.

TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

A timeframe of one (1) year is proposed to complete the first phase of this project.