

NONPROFIT MARKETING RESOURCE SERIES / GUIDE 02

NONPROFIT MARKETING

CALENDAR TEMPLATE

*A 12-month planning framework for small cultural institutions.
Structured around program cycles, fundraising seasons,
and audience communications.*

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NONPROFIT MARKETING RESOURCE SERIES · GUIDE 02

This template is designed for small cultural institutions, museums, performing arts organizations, and community nonprofits with limited marketing staff. It assumes a team where marketing responsibilities are shared across one to three people and must be coordinated alongside programming and fundraising.

Use it as a living planning document. Most organizations revise this calendar once per quarter as programming, fundraising priorities, and vendor timelines evolve.

A NOTE ON SCOPE

This framework assumes a small staff with limited dedicated marketing time, typically one to three people managing communications alongside other responsibilities. The goal is realistic planning, not aspirational overcommitment. It is better to execute three channels consistently than six channels sporadically.

FOUR SECTIONS, ONE SYSTEM

01**ANNUAL OVERVIEW**

Map your full year at a glance. Program dates, campaign windows, fundraising seasons, and blackout periods on a single page.

03**CADENCE GUIDE**

Recommended communication frequency by audience segment: donors, general audience, press, and board.

02**MONTHLY PLANNING GRID**

Channel-by-channel planning for each month. Email, social, print, website, earned media, and partner coordination in one place.

04**VENDOR CHECKLIST**

Quarterly coordination tasks across print, digital, broadcast, and media partners so nothing falls through the cracks.

SECTION 01

ANNUAL OVERVIEW

Map your full year before planning individual months. Mark program dates, campaign windows, grant deadlines, and blackout periods here first. Fill in program and event dates first. Campaign windows should open 3 to 6 weeks before each major event or season.

| MONTH | SEASON | PROGRAM / EVENT NOTES | CAMPAIGN WINDOW | FUNDRAISING PRIORITY | BLACKOUT / CONFLICTS |
|------------|---------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| JAN | Winter | Board appeal / year-start push | | | |
| FEB | Winter | Membership renewal outreach | | | |
| MAR | Spring | Spring campaign launch | | | |
| APR | Spring | Grant season (NMTD, city arts) | | | |
| MAY | Spring | Sponsor cultivation | | | |
| JUN | Summer | Mid-year donor touch | | | |
| JUL | Summer | Summer sustainer push | | | |
| AUG | Summer | Season preview / presale | | | |
| SEP | Fall | Fall campaign launch | | | |
| OCT | Fall | Major donor cultivation | | | |
| NOV | Fall/Year-End | Year-end giving / GivingTuesday | | | |
| DEC | Year-End | Year-end close / tax deadline | | | |

TIP

Blackout periods (holidays, competing community events) should inform your send schedule. Mark them before filling in campaign windows so conflicts become visible early.

SECTION 02

MONTHLY PLANNING GRID

Use one row per month. Plan each active channel and note key tasks. Leave cells blank for channels not in use that month. Do not force activity.

| MONTH | EMAIL NEWSLETTER | SOCIAL MEDIA | PRINT / COLLATERAL | WEBSITE UPDATES | PRESS / EARNED MEDIA | GOOGLE ADS/GRANTS | PARTNER COORD. |
|-------|------------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| JAN | | | | | | | |
| FEB | | | | | | | |
| MAR | | | | | | | |
| APR | | | | | | | |
| MAY | | | | | | | |
| JUN | | | | | | | |
| JUL | | | | | | | |
| AUG | | | | | | | |
| SEP | | | | | | | |
| OCT | | | | | | | |
| NOV | | | | | | | |
| DEC | | | | | | | |

HOW TO FILL THIS IN

- EMAIL** Note send dates, subject theme, audience segment (all, donors, members).

- SOCIAL** Note platform focus (Instagram, Facebook), post frequency goal, any paid boost.

- PRINT** Note print jobs in production, programs, postcards, signage, and due dates.

- WEBSITE** Note content updates, event listings, SEO priorities.

- PRESS** Note pitch targets, press release send dates, media partner deadlines.

- GOOGLE ADS** Note campaign focus, grant spend tracking, optimizations.

- PARTNER COORD.** Note vendor check-ins, co-op deadlines, sponsor deliverables.

EXAMPLE: HOW A FILLED ROW LOOKS

The row below shows a completed April entry as an example. Your entries can be shorter — a few words per cell is enough to anchor the month.

| MONTH | EMAIL | SOCIAL | PRINT | WEBSITE | PRESS | GOOGLE ADS | PARTNER |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| APR | <i>Spring exhibition announcement + donor update</i> | <i>Instagram campaign promoting opening week</i> | <i>Opening reception postcards to printer by Apr 1</i> | <i>Exhibition page published; update events calendar</i> | <i>Press release sent March 15 for April opening</i> | <i>Campaign: "things to do Santa Fe April"</i> | <i>Confirm co-op application deadline with NMTD</i> |

SECTION 03

AUDIENCE COMMUNICATION CADENCE GUIDE

Each audience requires a different communication rhythm. Sending too often fatigues your list; too infrequently and you lose presence. These are recommended minimums and maximums based on best practices for small cultural institutions.

GENERAL AUDIENCE / TICKET BUYERS

EMAIL 2–3x per month

SOCIAL 4–5x per week

PRINT Seasonal (3–4x per year)

Lead with programming and events. Keep it calendar-driven. Subject lines should be specific. "June 14 Opening Night" outperforms "Exciting News This Summer."

BEST SEND TIMES

Tuesday through Thursday, 10am or 6pm local time.

AVOID

Friday afternoon, holiday weekends, concurrent with major local events.

DONORS AND MAJOR GIFT PROSPECTS

EMAIL 1–2x per month

SOCIAL N/A (personal outreach)

PRINT Quarterly + year-end appeal

Prioritize impact stories, program outcomes, and acknowledgment. Never lead with an ask. Lead with a result. The year-end appeal is your highest-stakes communication of the year.

BEST SEND TIMES

Tuesday morning; avoid month-end.

AVOID

Major holidays, within 2 weeks of a general ask.

MEMBERS AND SUSTAINING SUPPORTERS

EMAIL 2–4x per month

SOCIAL Members-only content as available

PRINT Annual report + renewal letter

Emphasize access, exclusivity, and belonging. Members should hear about events before the general public. Renewal outreach should begin 60 days before lapse date.

BEST SEND TIMES

Mid-week; renewal emails perform best on Tuesdays.

AVOID

Competing with general audience sends on the same day.

PRESS AND MEDIA CONTACTS

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>EMAIL <i>Event-driven (4–8x per year)</i></p> | <p>SOCIAL <i>Tag / mention for coverage</i></p> | <p>PRINT <i>Press kits for major programs</i></p> |
| <p>Pitch 4 to 6 weeks before opening or event. Follow up once, briefly. Keep pitches under 200 words with assets attached, not embedded.</p> | | <p>BEST SEND TIMES Monday or Tuesday morning for weekly publications.</p> <p>AVOID Friday, same week as competing major cultural openings.</p> |

BOARD MEMBERS

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>EMAIL <i>Monthly report + as needed</i></p> | <p>SOCIAL <i>N/A</i></p> | <p>PRINT <i>Annual report</i></p> |
| <p>Board communication should be structured and consistent. A monthly one-page marketing summary prevents surprises and builds confidence.</p> | | <p>BEST SEND TIMES 3 to 5 days before board meetings.</p> <p>AVOID Ad hoc, reactive-only communication patterns.</p> |

SEASONAL CAMPAIGN TIMING

Cultural institutions share a common seasonal rhythm. Use this guide to align your campaigns with when audiences are most receptive and when competition for attention is highest.

WINTER (JAN–FEB)

PRIORITY: RELATIONSHIP MAINTENANCE, PLANNING, AND QUIET CULTIVATION

OPPORTUNITIES

- Year-start membership push
- Board and donor stewardship outreach
- Program announcement for spring season
- Grant applications (NMTD CoOp, city arts)

CAUTIONS

- Audience attention is recovering from year-end overload
- Keep volume low. Quality over frequency
- Avoid major campaigns in the first two weeks of January

SPRING (MAR–MAY)

PRIORITY: AUDIENCE ACQUISITION AND EVENT-DRIVEN PROMOTION

OPPORTUNITIES

- Season opener campaigns
- Spring membership drive
- Event and exhibition promotion
- Sponsor acknowledgment and mid-year reporting

CAUTIONS

- Spring break and school calendars affect audience availability
- Tourism season begins. Coordinate with Tourism Santa Fe messaging
- Grant deadlines cluster in April. Do not let admin overwhelm communications

SUMMER (JUN–AUG)

PRIORITY: NEW AUDIENCE REACH, IN-PERSON EXPERIENCE, AND PARTNER COORDINATION

OPPORTUNITIES

- Peak tourism season. Highest new audience potential
- Partnership activations with hospitality and tourism sector
- Google Grants spend should be maximized
- Press and travel media pitching for fall preview

CAUTIONS

- Staff capacity often reduced. Plan content in advance
- Email engagement drops in July. Increase social and in-venue presence
- Competition for attention is highest. Keep messaging focused

FALL (SEP–NOV)

PRIORITY: MAJOR DONOR ENGAGEMENT, YEAR-END POSITIONING, AND RETENTION

OPPORTUNITIES

- Fall season launch
- GivingTuesday (first Tuesday after Thanksgiving)
- Year-end giving setup and donor cultivation
- Annual report distribution

CAUTIONS

- Year-end giving window is competitive. Start early
- Thanksgiving week: pause all non-critical communications
- Do not launch new campaigns in late November without strong rationale

YEAR-END (DEC)

PRIORITY: GRATITUDE, GIVING CLOSE, AND YEAR-IN-REVIEW

OPPORTUNITIES

- Year-end tax deadline giving (Dec 28 to 31 window)
- Impact and gratitude messaging to full list
- Board year-end report
- Planning communications for next year

CAUTIONS

- Send volume peaks in December. Stand out or step back
- Personalized donor outreach outperforms mass appeals
- Do not start new initiatives. Execute what is already in motion

SECTION 04

VENDOR COORDINATION CHECKLIST

Run this checklist at the start of each quarter. Vendor relationships require consistent maintenance. Dropped cycles cost time and money when deadlines arrive.

Q1 — JANUARY THROUGH MARCH

PRINT

- Confirm printer relationships and nonprofit pricing for the year
- Order season programs and any spring event collateral
- Review print budget allocation for Q2 through Q4
- Confirm paper stock and turnaround times with primary vendor

DIGITAL

- Renew or review website hosting and domain registrations
- Audit Google nonprofit advertising status and confirm eligibility
- Review email platform subscription and list health (unsubscribes, bounces)
- Update social media bios and profile images for new season

BROADCAST / MEDIA

- Confirm radio and broadcast partner contacts for the year
- Negotiate in-kind trade agreements for the season
- Submit co-op marketing applications (NMTD deadline check)
- Distribute press kit for spring programming to media contacts

INTERNAL

- Confirm marketing calendar dates with programming and development teams
- Set up shared content calendar with staff
- Brief board on marketing plan and Q1 priorities
- Confirm photo and video coverage for key spring events

Q2 — APRIL THROUGH JUNE

PRINT

- Summer program and event collateral in production by May

- Tourism and visitor-facing materials updated and distributed
- Confirm display advertising placements with print partners

DIGITAL

- Google nonprofit ads: audit keyword performance and pause low performers
- Update event listings across platforms (Google, Eventbrite, local)
- Review social performance and adjust frequency or platform mix if needed
- Confirm summer email cadence and pre-write evergreen sends

BROADCAST / MEDIA

- Submit summer event listings to press contacts by mid-May
- Confirm radio schedule and spots for June through August
- Pitch travel and tourism media for summer visitor coverage

INTERNAL

- Mid-year check-in with development on fundraising and marketing alignment
- Confirm staffing for summer communications coverage
- Photograph spring events for fall communications assets

Q3 — JULY THROUGH SEPTEMBER

PRINT

- Fall season program in production by August
- Year-end appeal letter designed and approved by September
- Annual report design initiated

DIGITAL

- Google nonprofit ads: maximize spend during peak tourism season
- Fall email series planned and written by end of August
- Website updated with full fall season programming
- Begin social content creation for fall campaign

BROADCAST / MEDIA

- Fall press kit distributed to media contacts by September 1
- Confirm broadcast schedule for fall season
- GivingTuesday media strategy confirmed

INTERNAL

- Year-end giving strategy confirmed with development
- Board updated on mid-year marketing metrics
- Photo and video assets gathered for year-end storytelling

Q4 — OCTOBER THROUGH DECEMBER

PRINT

- Annual report to print by mid-November for December distribution
- Year-end appeal letter mailed by November 15
- Holiday or seasonal acknowledgment pieces if applicable

DIGITAL

- GivingTuesday campaign assets live and tested by November 1
- Year-end email sequence scheduled (3 to 5 sends between Nov 15 and Dec 31)
- Google nonprofit ads: year-end campaign active with donation landing page
- Donor acknowledgment emails automated and tested

BROADCAST / MEDIA

- Year-end press outreach for season wrap stories
- Confirm any holiday event promotion placements

INTERNAL

- Year-end marketing report drafted for January board meeting
- Next year planning calendar initiated
- Vendor thank-you outreach and relationship maintenance
- Archive assets, metrics, and vendor contacts

WHAT CONSISTENT EXECUTION PRODUCES

Organizations that use a structured planning framework consistently report fewer last-minute communications, stronger donor relationships, and better vendor coordination. The value is cumulative. A calendar that is revised quarterly becomes institutional knowledge.

- Clearer handoffs between programming, development, and communications teams
 - Vendor relationships maintained throughout the year rather than rebuilt each season
 - Fundraising campaigns launched on time with content prepared in advance
 - Board confidence in the marketing function through regular, structured reporting
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HOW SANTA FE MARKETING HELPS

Santa Fe Marketing works with cultural institutions and nonprofits across New Mexico to build and maintain marketing infrastructure, including annual planning, vendor coordination, and communications management.

Services include:

- Annual marketing planning and calendar development
- Vendor relationship management and co-op coordination
- Email, social, and print channel oversight
- Donor communications and year-end campaign management
- Integration with programming and development calendars

Organizations that prefer to manage communications internally often begin with a planning session to build the first annual calendar together.

START A CONVERSATION

[SANTAFEMARKETING.COM](https://santafemarketing.com)

Brian Bixby is a Fractional Director of Marketing & Communications serving nonprofit and cultural institutions in Santa Fe and New Mexico. This template is part of a free resource series for organizations navigating marketing strategy without a full-time marketing department. Visit santafemarketing.com to start a conversation.