

Building Foundation-Ready Communications Infrastructure

Client: Toybank - A Project by The Opentree Foundation

AT A GLANCE

Challenge: Toybank needed a strategic communications framework to scale operations and attract larger corporate funders

Approach: Comprehensive brand audit, strategy development, workflow implementation, and team capacity building

Result: Foundation-ready communications infrastructure enabling professional stakeholder engagement and fundraising growth

The Challenge

Toybank - Flagship project by The Opentree Foundation, an organisation using play-based learning to empower underprivileged children, had grown organically over several years. While their programmatic impact was strong, their communications infrastructure had not kept pace with organisational growth. As they sought to scale impact and attract larger corporate CSR partnerships, they faced several critical challenges:

- No cohesive communications strategy aligned with organisational goals
- Inconsistent brand messaging across different stakeholders and channels
- Limited internal communications capacity and unclear workflows
- Ad-hoc approach to fundraising communications without a strategic framework

For corporate CSR teams considering partnerships or foundations facing similar growth challenges, these symptoms are familiar: strong programmatic work that isn't being communicated strategically or consistently.

The Approach

I embedded with Toybank as their strategic communications partner, taking a comprehensive approach to building communications infrastructure from the ground up:

Phase 1: Brand Communications Audit & Analysis

- Conducted a comprehensive review of all existing communications materials, channels, and messaging
- Analysed stakeholder landscape and communication needs across donors, beneficiaries, partners, and volunteers

- Interviewed the leadership team to understand organisational goals, theory of change, and growth vision
- Identified gaps between current communications practice and aspirational positioning

Phase 2: Strategic Framework Development

- Developed a comprehensive communications strategy aligned with organisational goals and growth plans
- Created brand messaging framework, including value proposition, key messages, and stakeholder-specific narratives
- Designed fundraising communications strategy specifically targeting corporate CSR partnerships
- Established content strategy and editorial calendar framework

Phase 3: Operational Implementation

- Set up communications workflows, approval processes, and quality control mechanisms
- Created templates and toolkits for consistent implementation across teams
- Assisted in recruiting communications team members with the right skill sets

Phase 4: Deliverables Creation

- Authored the organisation's first strategic newsletter, establishing thought leadership
- Strategised, curated content, and project-managed new website development

The Results

Deliverable	Impact
Comprehensive communications strategy document	Clear roadmap for scaling communications alongside organisational growth
Fundraising communications framework	Structured approach to corporate partnership cultivation
Operational workflows and team structure	Sustainable communications capacity with clear roles and processes
Professional website and content strategy	Enhanced credibility with corporate funders and institutional partners
Trained the communications team	Internal capacity to execute strategy independently

Conclusion

Project delivered on what corporate foundations establishing or scaling CSR programmes need:

- **Strategic Foundation:** Moving from ad-hoc communications to a strategic framework aligned with business objectives
- **Stakeholder Management:** Creating differentiated messaging for diverse audiences - employees, partners, programme participants
- **Capacity Building:** Developing internal team capabilities rather than perpetual consultant dependency
- **Operational Excellence:** Implementing workflows that ensure consistency and quality at scale
- **Professional Positioning:** Creating a communications infrastructure that positions the organisation for larger partnerships and institutional funding

“We had been looking for a Communications consultant who'd be able to build a structured communication vertical for our organisation for a long time, someone who would understand the fine balance of building from the front and leading from behind. It was a tricky ask and when we spoke with Steshia after meeting a bunch of others, not only did we feel comfortable but we knew that our search had ended and we could finally begin working. Steshia's calm demeanour and intense ability to listen, along with her headstrong spirit to know when to push back, to ask the right questions and to quietly get things done the right way, have truly been inspiring for us. We highly recommend Steshia to any growing organisation that needs to build its communication strategies and doesn't know where to even begin. Plus Steshia is a fine human being which made the journey for us so pleasant and fulfilling. We look forward to continuing to work with Steshia as our organisation steadily expands.”

*- Shweta Chari, Cofounder and CEO
The Opentree Foundation, Project: Toybank*