

FROM OVERWHELM TO CLARITY

Building a Simple Digital System

Organized by the Goethe-Institut
Facilitated by Vanessa von Hilchen

Workshop overview

Session 1 – From Overwhelm to Clarity

September 16, 2026, 11 a.m. CDT

Build a simple digital system and identify what your organization should tackle first.

Session 2 – Social Media for Engagement and Visibility

September 30, 2026, 11 a.m. CDT

Learn practical ways to use Facebook, Instagram, Canva, events, posts, stories, and reusable content.

Session 3 – Email Communication and Community Building

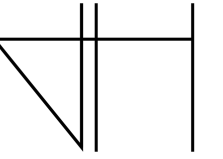
October 14, 2026, 11 a.m. CDT

Create useful newsletters, strengthen your email list, and develop a realistic communication schedule.

Session 4 – Website, Visibility, and Measuring What Matters

November 4, 2026, 11 a.m. CST

Improve your website, Google visibility, basic analytics, and long-term digital routine



Hello!

- Started my career in journalism
- 15+ years in nonprofit, political and public-sector communication
- Specialized in digital communication and strategy
- Led communications at the Goethe-Institut San Francisco

Vanessa von Hilchen



BEFORE WE START

60 minutes

A concise introduction to digital communication

Questions are welcome

Please use the chat

Recording

This session will be recorded

Materials

Slides and worksheets will be shared afterward





WHO ARE

YOU?



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 01** Use a simple framework for communication planning
- 02** Prioritize communication efforts with limited resources
- 03** Understand how digital channels work together
- 04** Identify opportunities to improve your organization's digital presence



**WHAT DO WE MEAN BY
DIGITAL
COMMUNICATION?**





**Digital communication is how people
find, understand and connect with
your organization online.**

e.g.

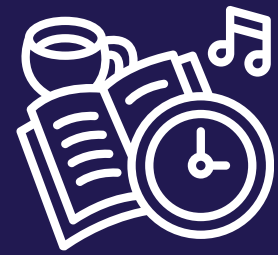
- **Website**
 - **Email & newsletters**
 - **Social media**
 - **Messaging & online communities**
 - **Event pages & community calendars**
 - **Search & discovery**
- 



DIGITAL COMMUNICATION CAN FEEL LIKE A LOT



COMMON CHALLENGES



Limited capacity

Communication competes with many other responsibilities.

01



No clear ownership

Tasks are spread across different volunteers.

02



Too many platforms

Keeping everything up to date takes time.

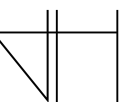
03



Limited expertise

Not everyone has a communications background.

04



LESS IS MORE

Effective digital communication
isn't about perfection or
omnipresence.

It's about priorities and
consistency.





The key is to make
better choices about
what to focus on.





**HOW DO WE MAKE
THOSE CHOICES?**



EXAMPLE



- **Small, animal welfare organization**
- **Newly founded**
- **Based in Lafayette, CA**
- **Limited Resources**
- **First adoption event**
- **8 weeks left**
- **Figure out how to get people to show up**



EXAMPLE

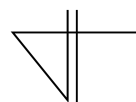


EXAMPLE





**KNOW YOUR
GOAL.**





GOAL=
concrete result you
want your
communication to help
achieve.



A group of five people, three women and two men, are crouching on a paved surface outdoors, interacting with several dogs. The dogs include a small light-colored dog, a medium brown dog, a black and white speckled dog, and a larger tan dog. In the background, a wooden sign with a dog silhouette and the text "PAWS TOGETHER" is visible on a building wall. A large blue circle is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**PAWS TOGETHER'S GOAL IS TO
GET 10 POTENTIAL ADOPTERS TO
THEIR FIRST ADOPTION EVENT.**



FOUR SIMPLE QUESTIONS

● Who do we need to reach? → Audience

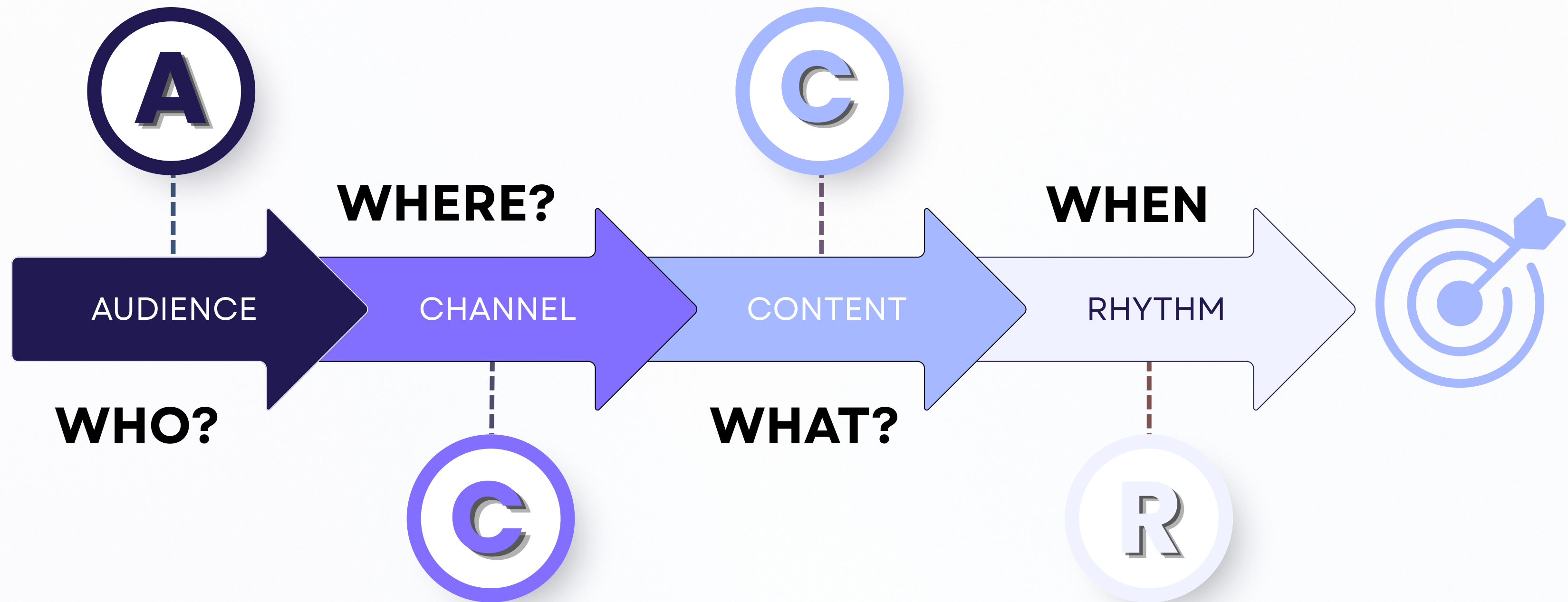
● Where do we reach them? → Channel

● What do they need to know? → Content

● When and how should we communicate? → Rhythm

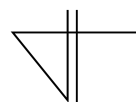


ACCR-FRAMEWORK

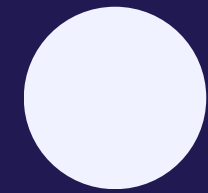




**LET'S
PRACTICE.**



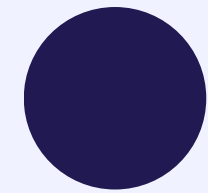
FOUR SIMPLE QUESTIONS



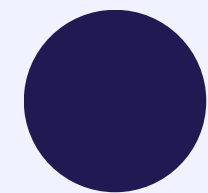
Who do we need to reach?



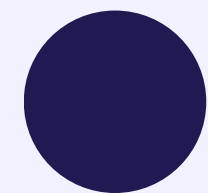
Audience



Where do we reach them?

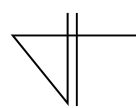
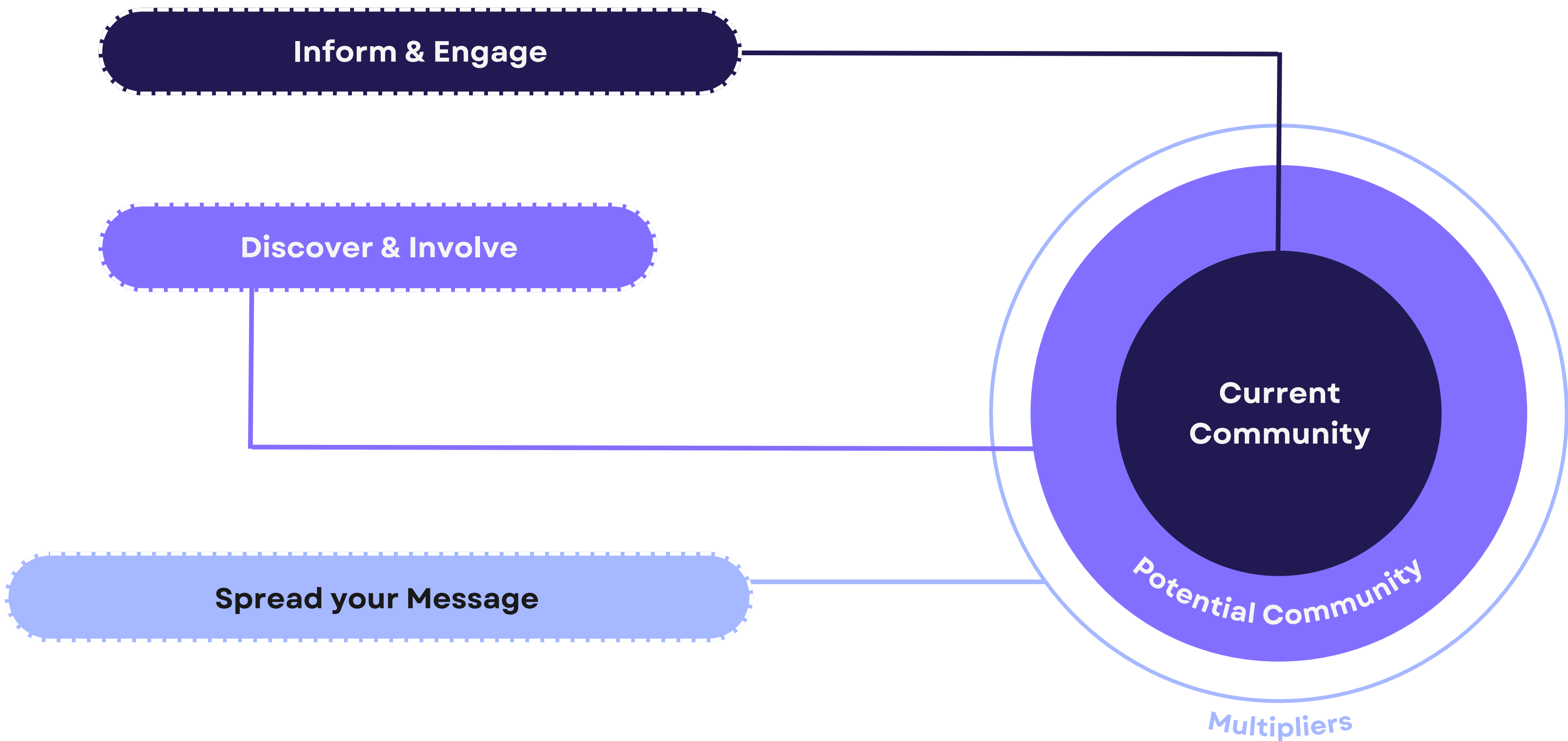


What do they need to know?

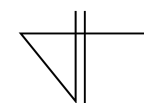
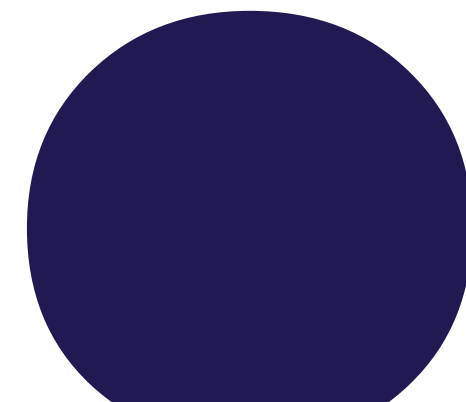


**When and how should we
communicate?**

THREE BROAD @ AUDIENCES



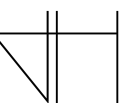
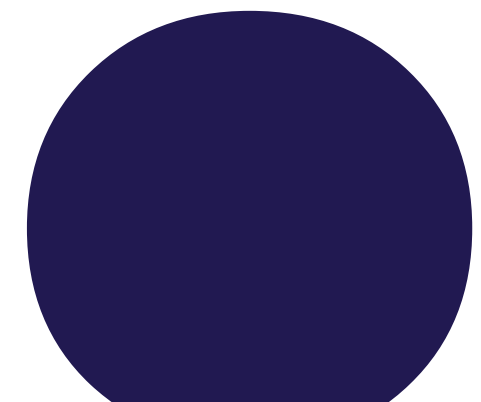
WHO IS PT'S **Ⓐ**UDIENCE?



WHO IS PT'S @AUDIENCE?



PAWS TOGETHERS'S GOAL IS TO GET 10 POTENTIAL ADOPTERS TO THEIR FIRST ADOPTION EVENT.



WHO IS PT'S @AUDIENCE?



Multipliers



SIMPLE AUDIENCE PROFILE

1. Location & demographics

Where do they live? What age or life stage are they in?

2. Interests & Values

What do they care about? What matters to them?

3. Lifestyle & Behavior

What does their everyday life look like?

Where do they spend their time - online and offline?

4. Motivation

What might make them interested in what we have to offer?

What might encourage them to take action?

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PT'S AUDIENCE PROFILE

WHO IS PAWS TOGETHER'S AUDIENCE?



LOCATION

In and around Lafayette



LIFESTYLE

Ready and able to care for a pet



INTERESTS & VALUES

Care about animal welfare



MOTIVATION

Looking to give an animal a loving home



POTENTIAL ADOPTERS

SPECIFIC ENOUGH TO GUIDE OUR CHOICES.

PT'S AUDIENCE PROFILE

PT'S PRIMARY AUDIENCE IS PEOPLE IN AND AROUND LAFAYETTE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN ANIMAL WELFARE AND CONSIDERING ADOPTING A DOG.

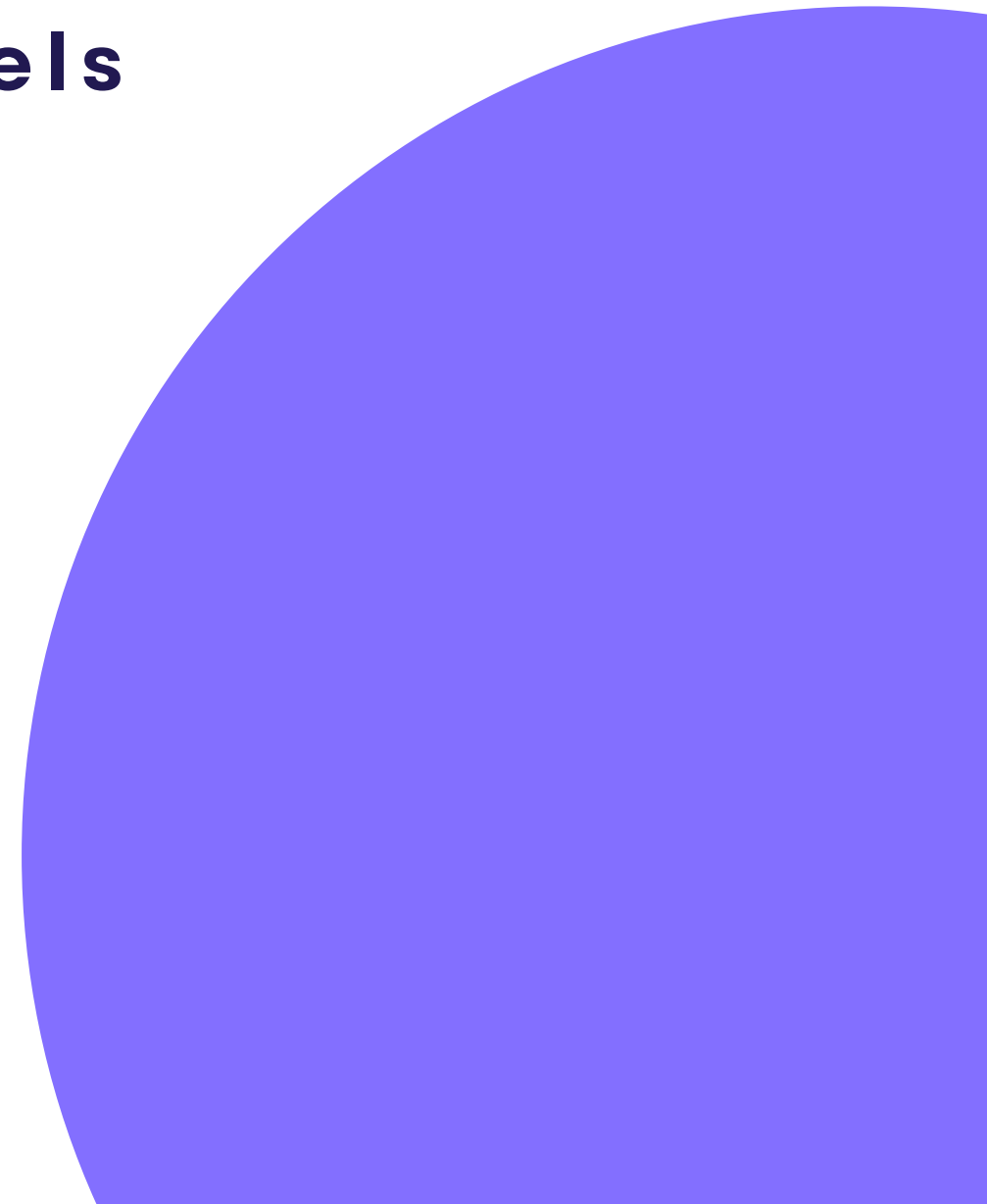
TO ACHIEVE OUR GOAL...

● Who do we need to reach?

● Where do we reach them? → Channels

● What do they need to know?

● When and how should we communicate?



THREE WAYS TO REACH PEOPLE

1. Contact them directly

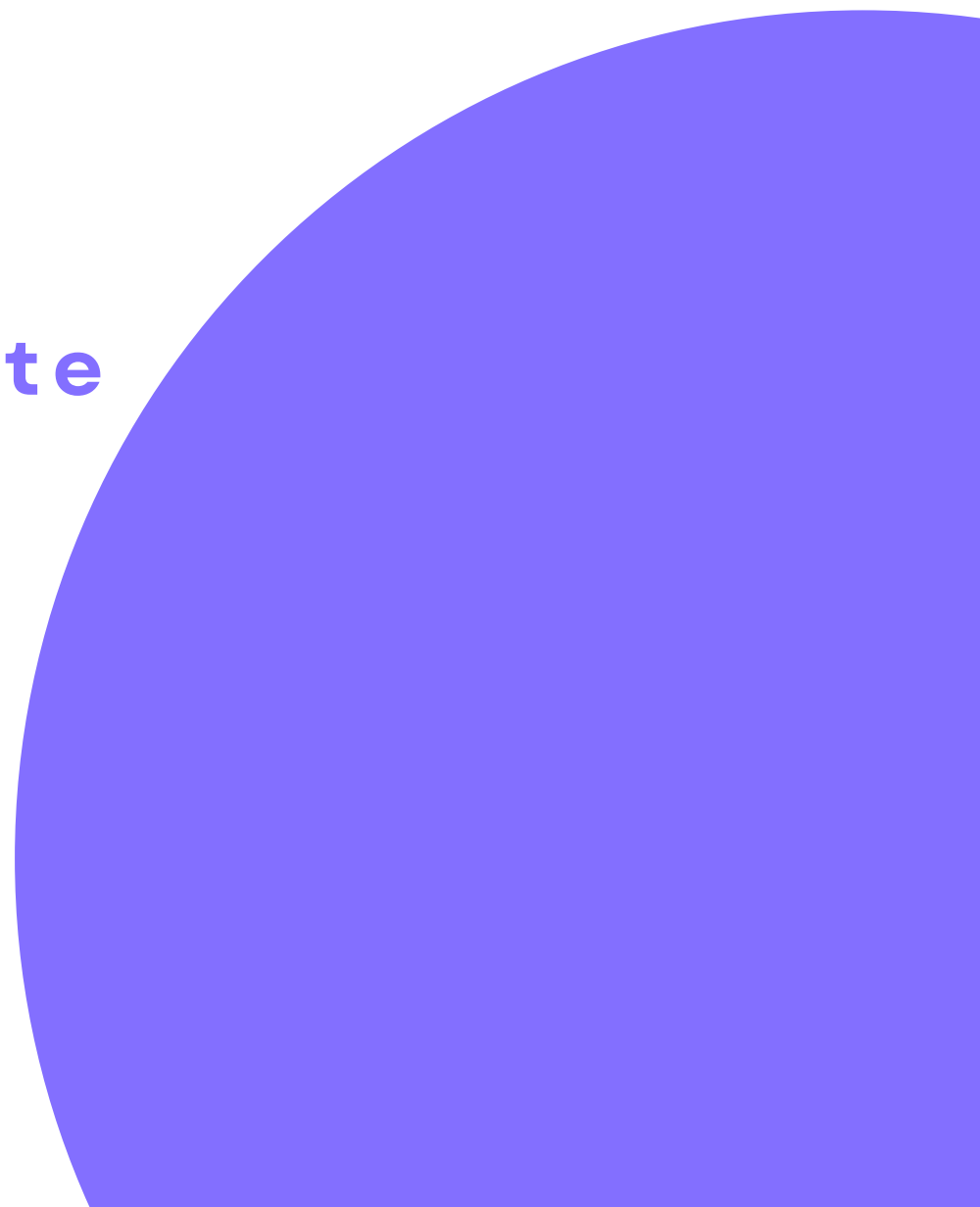
e.g. WhatsApp, Email, Newsletter

2. Help them find you

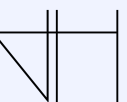
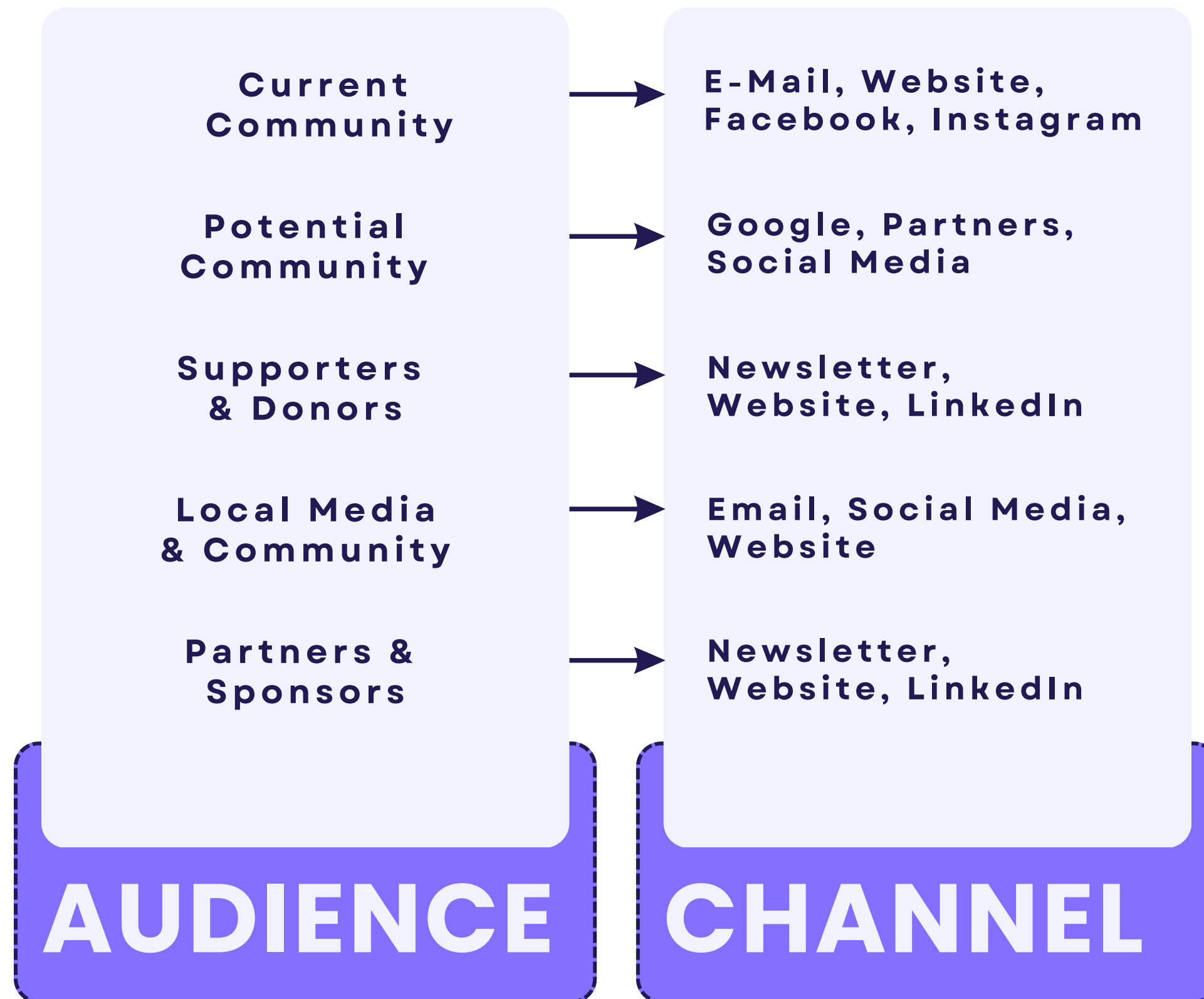
e.g. Google, ChatGPT, Website, Ads, Eventbrite

3. Meet them where they are

e.g. Social Media, Special Interest Groups



WHAT © CHANNELS FOR WHICH AUDIENCE?



WHAT © CHANNELS SHOULD PT USE?



PAWS TOGETHER'S GOAL IS TO GET 10 POTENTIAL ADOPTERS TO THEIR FIRST ADOPTION EVENT.

PT'S PRIMARY AUDIENCE IS PEOPLE IN AND AROUND LAFAYETTE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN ANIMAL WELFARE AND CONSIDERING ADOPTING A DOG.



WHAT © CHANNELS SHOULD PT USE?



PAWS TOGETHERS'S GOAL IS TO GET 10 POTENTIAL ADOPTERS TO THEIR FIRST ADOPTION EVENT.

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1. Contact them directly

2. Help them find you

3. Meet them where they are



WHERE CAN PAWS TOGETHER REACH THEM?



CONTACT THEM DIRECTLY

Email • Existing supporters • Direct messages



HELP THEM FIND YOU

Website • Google • Adoption platforms • Event listings



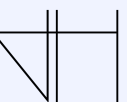
MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE

Social media • Local groups • Partners • Local media



POTENTIAL ADOPTERS

CHOOSE THE MOST USEFUL WAYS TO REACH YOUR AUDIENCE.



TO ACHIEVE OUR GOAL...

● Who do we need to reach?

● Where do we reach them?

● What do they need to know? → Content

● When and how should we communicate?

SIMPLE ©ONTENT RULES

1. Useful

Give them the information they need

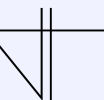
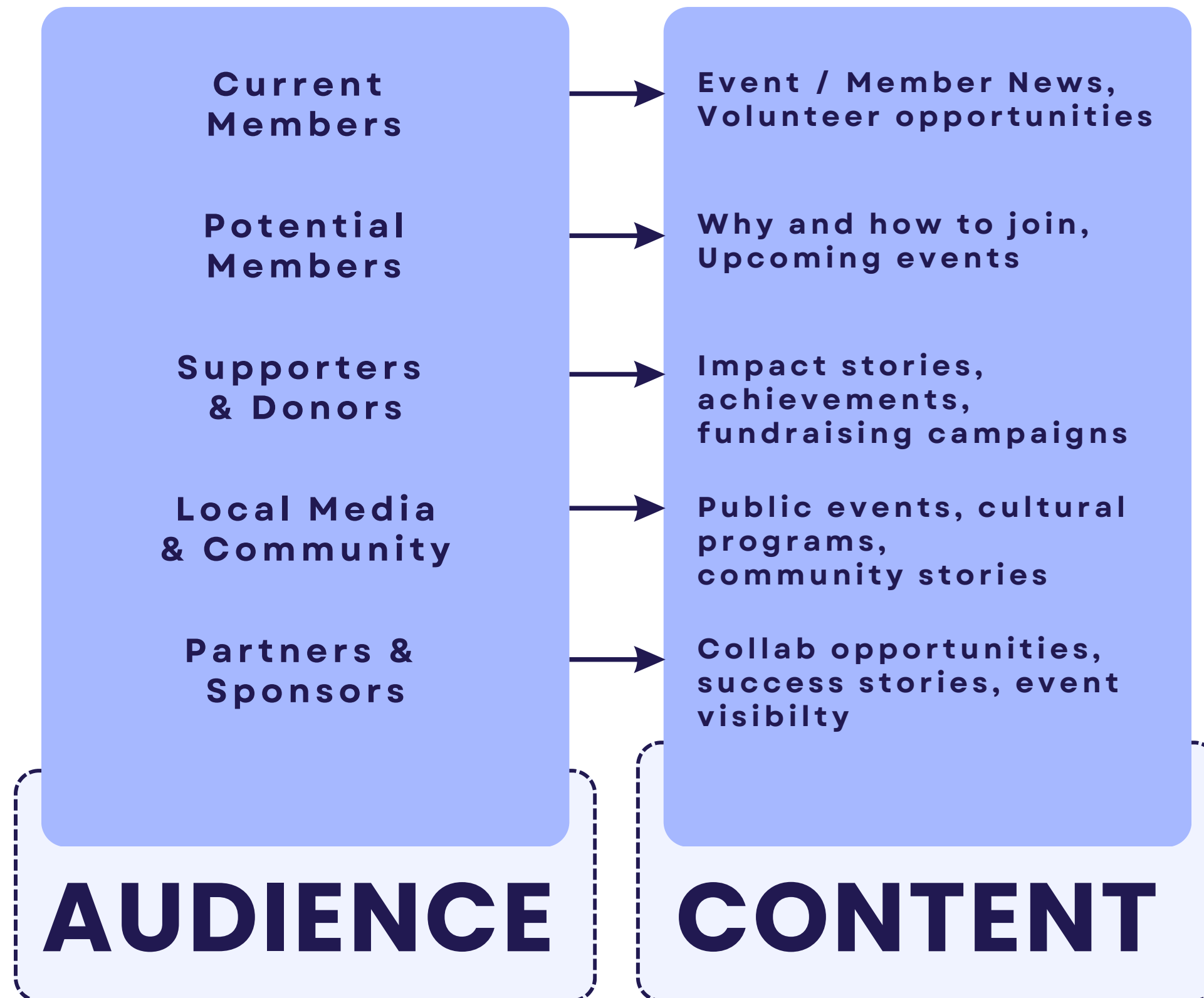
2. Relevant

Give them a reason to care

3. Actionable

Make the next step clear

WHAT ©ONTENT DO THEY NEED?



WHAT ©ONTENT DOES PT NEED?



WHAT ©ONTENT DOES PT NEED?

1. Useful - Give them the information they need

- Event date, time & location
- Dogs available for adoption
- How the adoption process works
- What to expect at the event

2. Relevant - Give them a reason to care

- Photos and stories of the dogs
- Their personalities and needs
- Benefits of adopting a rescue dog
- Stories of successful adoptions

3. Actionable - Make the next step clear

- Join us at the adoption event
- Register for the event
- View available dogs
- Contact us with questions

WHAT CONTENT DO POTENTIAL ADOPTERS NEED?

WEBSITE



SOCIAL MEDIA



EVENTBRITE



SAME CORE MESSAGE. ADAPTED TO THE CHANNEL.

TO ACHIEVE OUR GOAL...

● Who do we need to reach?

● Where do we reach them?

● What do they need to know?

● When and how should we communicate?

➔ Rhythm

TIMING VS. FREQUENCY



TIMING

**START EARLY ENOUGH TO REACH
YOUR GOAL WITHOUT PRESSURE.**

FREQUENCY

**CHOOSE A RHYTHM YOUR
ORGANIZATION CAN MAINTAIN.**



FIND YOUR OWN RHYTHM

CONSISTENCY OVER FREQUENCY

One useful post every week is better than five posts followed by two months of silence.

DIFFERENT CHANNELS, DIFFERENT RHYTHMS

Your website, newsletter and social media do not need to be updated at the same frequency.

START SMALL

Choose a rhythm you can maintain for the next three months. You can always add more later.

FIND YOUR OWN © RHYTHM

e.g.

Newsletter → Monthly / Quarterly

Social Media → 1x per week

Website → Review monthly

Calendar → Before each event

FIND PAWS TOGETHER'S [®]HYTHM

PAWS TOGETHER'S 8-WEEK COMMUNICATION PLAN



THE RIGHT INFORMATION AT THE RIGHT MOMENT.

GREAT JOB PAWS TOGETHER!





FROM PLAN TO EXPERIENCE



ONE POSSIBLE JOURNEY...





**YOU CAN'T CONTROL WHERE PEOPLE
FIND YOU FIRST.**

**BUT YOU CAN MAKE SURE THEY ARE
ABLE TO FIND, RECOGNIZE AND ENGAGE
WITH YOU EVERYWHERE.**



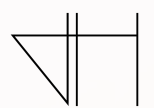
DIGITAL PRESENCE CHECK

01 Findable

Clear 02

04 Connected

Active 03



DIGITAL PRESENCE CHECK

01

Findable

- Is your Google Business Profile claimed and up to date? (if applicable)
- Is your contact information easy to find?
- Does every social media profile link back to your website?



DIGITAL PRESENCE CHECK

02

Clear

- Is there a clear "About Us" description?
- Is it obvious what your organization offers?
- Is there a clear CTA? (Join, Donate, Contact Us)
- Is important information easy to find?
- Is your navigation simple and intuitive?

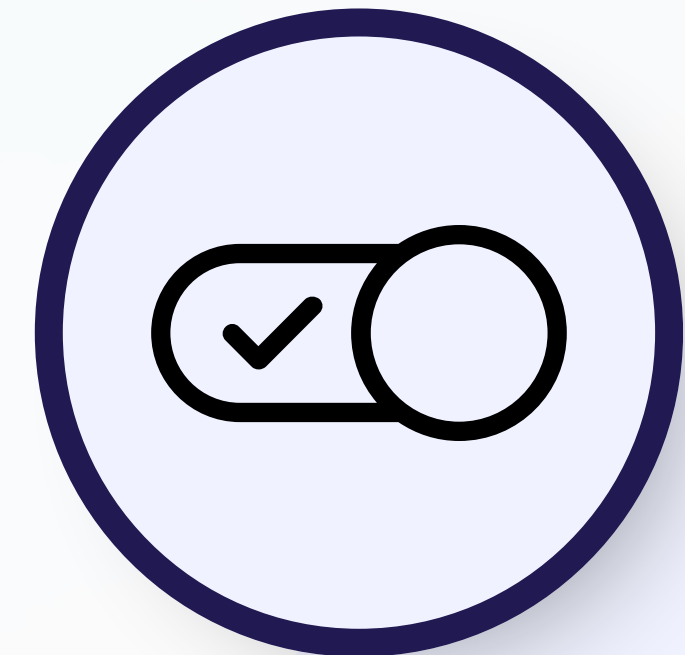


DIGITAL PRESENCE CHECK

03

Active

- Are upcoming events visible?
- Are your latest news or social posts reasonably current?
- Is outdated information removed?



DIGITAL PRESENCE CHECK

04

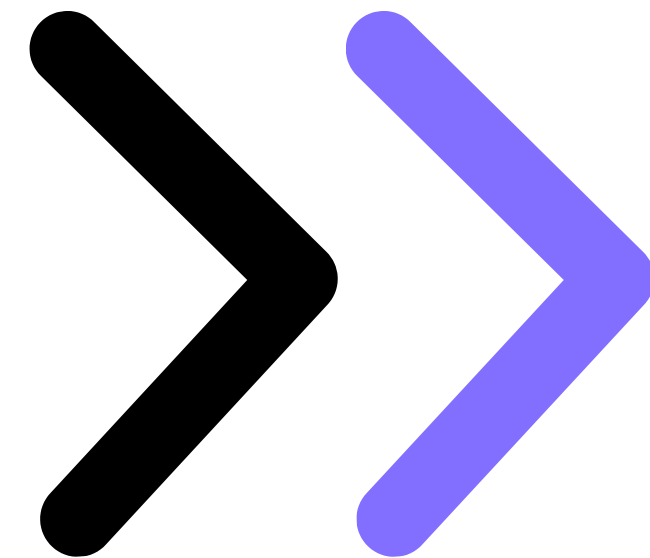
Connected

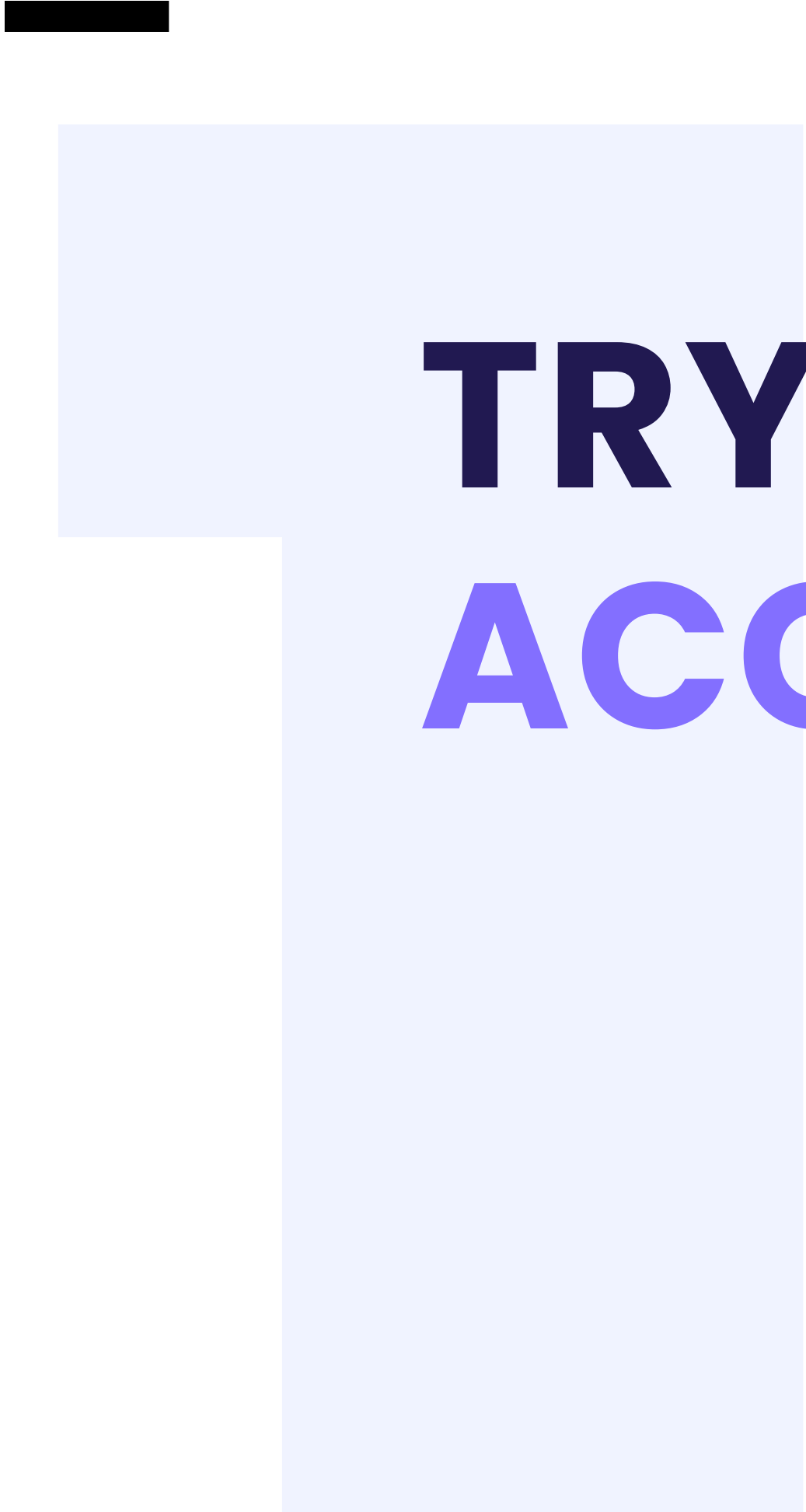
- Does your website link to social media and vice versa?
- Can people subscribe to your newsletter?
- Can visitors easily find the next step? (Register, Join, Donate, Contact)
- Are your channels using the same organization name and branding?





**CHOOSE YOUR
HOMEWORK.**





**TRY THE
ACCCR FRAMEWORK.**





**CHECK YOUR
DIGITAL PRESENCE.**





SESSION 2

Social Media for Engagement and Visibility

September 30, 11 a.m. CDT





THANK YOU!

C. v. Uith

