



Program
EXCELLENCE

Program Quality Standards

Brand Awareness & Communications Building Block

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Our Brand Awareness & Communications quality standards relate to:

- **Branding** – including implementing the Special Olympics visual identity
- **Marketing Communications** – including communications with media
- **Marketing Planning** – including annual and strategic marketing plan
- **Marketing Relationships** – including marketing and media professionals and companies
- **Internal Communications** – including communication with key internal stakeholders (staff, volunteers, athletes, etc.)
- **Marketing Resources** – including marketing materials and website
- **Risk Management** – including crisis communications



For standards related to fundraising, see the Raising Funds Building Block. For standards on general risk management, see the Planning & Financial Management Building Block.

Program Quality Standards

The Program Quality Standards are a tool to help Programs develop and grow. They were a 'ground-up' initiative - created with input from Programs in all Regions. The standards are for Special Olympics Accredited Programs, specifically for Program Leaders. They enable Program Leaders to understand, manage, support and deliver activities to a high level of quality.

Using the standards:

The standards are grouped into 10 'building blocks'. Within each building block, most standards have three stages. Read them from left to right – starting with Stage 1 and moving in the direction of Stage 3.

You can use the standards to conduct a self-assessment, help set goals for your strategic and operational plans, track your progress and celebrate your growth.

The standards can help you set goals in your plan, but do not replace your Program's plan which should outline specific growth goals. You may also consider using the self-assessment tool we have created to help you.



Brand & Comms	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Branding	Program implements SOI brand guidelines for visual identity for basic materials (e.g. banners, stationery)	Program consistently implements visual identity on all tools and materials (e.g. website, uniforms)	Program consistently implements visual identity at all levels of the Program
Marketing Commu- nica- tions	Program has one identified spokesperson and athletes support marketing activities	Program has at least two spokespersons, one of whom is an athlete leader	Program has a group of spokespersons including influential leaders (e.g. celebrity, politician)
	Program ensures key media are informed about Special Olympics and seeks coverage	Program secures media coverage of major events and activities	Program has established relationships with media outlets and secures year-round media coverage
	Program has an established, managed social media presence	Program leverages social media to support marketing activities	Program integrates social media into its website and evaluates social media to guide marketing strategy
	Program issues a generic newsletter (or similar) twice a year to communicate with external audiences		Program issues newsletters (or similar) to specific audiences (e.g. Schools, Health providers) and publishes an annual report
	Program promotes its activities and events to generate public awareness	Program conducts ongoing marketing activities to raise awareness and understanding	Program collaborates with partners and sponsors in ongoing marketing activities
Marketing Planning		Program has an annual plan, with metrics, for raising awareness	Program has multi-year marketing strategy and evaluates marketing activities annually
Marketing Relation- ships	Program has established relationships with marketing and communication professional(s) for guidance and support	Program has a VIK arrangement with one or more marketing agencies	Program has sponsorship arrangement with at least one marketing agency
	Program has established relationships with media professionals for guidance or support	Program has a VIK arrangement with one or more media outlets	Program has media sponsorship from at least one media outlet

Brand & Comms	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Internal Communications	Program provides updates to key stakeholders such as staff, key volunteers, Sub-Programs, local Programs and Board on a regular basis	Program has a dedicated page (or pages) on its website for internal communications	Program seeks and uses feedback from key stakeholders and has platform that allows for collaboration and sharing of ideas (e.g. social media or intranet)
		Program produces communication materials for athletes	Program has formal channel for athletes and partners to express opinions
Marketing Resources	Program uses basic marketing materials (e.g. fact sheets, press release, brochure, t-shirt, poster, event flyer, presentation)	Program uses advanced marketing materials (e.g. videos, infographic, advertising, media kit)	Program uses customized marketing materials for specific audiences (e.g. for government, corporate, law enforcement, potential donors)
	Program has up to date contact information, news, stories, events and sports on 'Program locator page' at www.specialolympics.org	Program has a professionally designed website with up to date news, stories, events and sports offered; and usage is tracked	Program website has interactive features designed to attract and engage the public (e.g. online giving, volunteer)
	Program designates a skilled person to capture good-quality photo/video for marketing materials	Program maintains an e-library and takes high-quality photos/videos	Program promotes itself using professionally produced print and electronic media
Risk Management		Program has a crisis communication plan and a designated spokesperson for crisis situations	All Program staff are prepared to implement crisis communication plan