

MEMO TO: COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENTS
RE: COMMUNICATIONS AND NEWS GATHERING
FROM: CHARLIE COBB

JULY 7, 1966

The first order of business each day is the gathering of news from SNCC projects. From 9 to 11 am, the WATS line is to be at the complete disposal of the news and promotion departments. GWEN is our WATS operator, and is responsible for making these calls. Attached to the telephone she uses, will be a tape recorder. Calls coming in from the field have to be immediately switched to Gwen, or whoever is manning the WATS for news and promotion. Calls to the field should not be returned from the switchboard, but from the news and promotion department.

Every morning, there will be a collection of reports that have come from the nighttime WATS operator. The morning job of everyone is to make these into news releases, and/or inform Gwen if they need more information as to specifically what else is needed to make the report immediately usable.

By 1 pm we should be sending the first batch of information to the north via the TWX machine. Everyone in the communications department has to learn how to operate the machine.

We must begin to prepare daily statements to be released to the local radio stations. These statements can either be short news releases about various incidents, positions of the organization, or statements by the officers of the organization. These statements should be sent out on the TWX also.

From 1 to 2 pm, the WATS line is restricted to the transmission of data on the TWX machine. MEANWHILE, THE REST OF THE DEPARTMENT WILL BE TYPING, STENCILING, AND RUNNING OFF VARIOUS NEWS RELEASES, AND REPORTS. ALSO, PREPARING MAILINGS.

Once a day, we should develop in detail, the specifics of a particular project or event. Interviews will have to be made by telephone, research will have to be utilized for background material. From 3 to 4 pm, the WATS line is restricted to this usage. Responsibility for this will rotate within the department. This material should be prepared and ready to go by the end of the day.

Field calls returned by news and promotion should not be restricted to conversation about the specific thing called for. Find out about everything that's going on in the area. Let them know what's going on in other places.

We should meet at least once a day.

From 6 until 8 pm, the WATS line is restricted to field calls that will be prepared for release on the TWX that same night. The purpose of these calls should be to follow up on information gathered by the morning WATS calls. For instance, if at 10 am we hear from Rita in Holly Springs that she is bringing people to register, the call at this time should be to get the details of what happened at the courthouse that day. This has to go out on the TWX that same night, so, from 9 to 10 pm, the WATS line is restricted to the TWX operator. News releases and radio reports on nighttime information will be prepared and released in the morning.

It may turn out that we have to alter this schedule in some ways after we get into a day to day routine, but for now we will proceed on the basis of this.