

BUILDING + EXECUTING A COMMUNICATION PLAN

...WITHOUT COMMUNICATION
STAFF



OUR GOALS

A communication strategy sets the tone and direction for all external activities, so all efforts work in harmony to bring about the desired outcome.

By gathering input from stakeholders and external partners in advance, a port:

- limits or mitigates potential dissent
- builds trust in the public eye
- Presents a cohesive message and united front
- Provides a map for staff and related partners to respond and refer to projects throughout development stages



THE ARGUMENT

- We need someone full time
- We don't have the time
- Communications plans are the least important thing on our agenda



THE REFUTATION

- There are many communications tasks you can automate – today's tools are available in free or low-cost formats
- Clear, concise communications plans save you time from dealing with last-minute issues and public objections
- Discussing and committing to a game plan means your agenda becomes more manageable with clear roles and expectations



BREAKING IT DOWN

- Identify issues
- Identify stakeholders
- Reach out and establish relationships before issues arise, create good will
- “Fluff” counts for a lot in establishing a positive impression of what the port’s goals are for the community
 - “What have you done for me lately?”



YOU DON'T NEED

- A full-blown, multi-platform communications strategy right out of the gate
- - scalability is key, don't overcommit to a plan that isn't executable
- A huge budget (or ANY budget)



TEN STEPS

STEP 1: Agree on a summary of the current situation

STEP 2: Engage stakeholders

STEP 3: Figure out your external resources and how to leverage them

STEP 4: Define your audience

STEP 5: Define your hypothesis / theory on how this audience receives information

STEP 6: Figure out what behavior or perception you want to impact



TEN STEPS

STEP 7: Decide what the benefit is for the audience (what do I get out of this?)

STEP 8: Assign responsibility on who is reaching out to whom

STEP 9: Draft your speaking points & agree upon your position (a united front is key)

STEP 10: Draft key speaking points + create a plan to disseminate them in the places your audience listens well

THEN: Measure success metrics, and adjust



TELL THE STORY

- Brevity is best – you have less than 30 seconds to gain your audience's attention + make them care
- (Don't bury the lede)
- Use Images
- Q&A with stakeholders
- Showcase the WHY
- Engage with the positively impacted
- (even though negative can be more vocal)



NO-COST TOOLS

- **ADOBE SPARK** for creating content
- Free templates, replace images and font – instant poster!



NO-COST TOOLS

- **USE YOUR WEBSITE:** for more than a placeholder.
 - The Port of Ridgefield posts regular blogs from the Commission and Executive Director point of view



Opinion: Teamwork Rules In Ridgefield
By Scott Hughes, Commissioner



Opinion: Advanced Manufacturing Center
Will Grow, Protect Jobs
By Brent Grening, CEO



Ridgefield Waterfront Comes Alive!
Summer 2019



NO COST TOOLS

- **MAKE A VIDEO** – Use...Powerpoint!
- Save a presentation as a video, Set to royalty-free music, upload to YouTube.
- Example:
Port of
Columbia



NO-COST TOOLS

- **NO PHOTOGRAPHER?** Source photography from visitors by searching

on social, requesting permission to re-use (credit photographer)



OUR BEST TIPS

RULE NO. 1: KEEP IT SIMPLE

- Over-complication happens FAST. Expert perspective and research can make your message convoluted
- Get to the point and speak in layman's terms
- Point out the benefits before discussing the costs



OUR BEST TIPS

RULE NO. 2: BREVITY IS MEMORABLE

- Brevity is key – memorable soundbites are more effective than a lengthy presentation
- Being vague shuts down trust that ports do good things for their communities



OUR BEST TIPS

RULE NO. 3: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TECHNOLOGY

- Technology is here to make our lives easier. Seriously.
- Divide tasks and manage them via calendar reminders.
- Manage your distribution list (use a free google drive spreadsheet)
- Make it easy for the public to reach you (questions@portofXYZ.com)



OUR BEST TOOLS

RULE No. 4: LISTEN

- Half of the communications battle is receiving feedback.
- If your approach isn't working, you'll hear about it.
- Be receptive to meeting your audience where they are.



MESSAGE RETENTION

- FILL IN THE BLANKS:
- KEEP IT _____, BE _____, _____.

