PADUCAH
Be the Best

Communication Enhancements in Paducah

A Plan to Build Paducah's Brand as it Strives to Be the Best

March 2021

Direction: In January 2021, the City Manager's office was given the directive to enhance the City's communications. To gather input, ideas, and clarity, City Manager Jim Arndt and Communications Manager Pam Spencer met with each member of the Paducah Board of Commissioners from January 20 through January 29. This plan to enhance and grow the City's communication is the result of gathering the feedback from the Board, local media professionals, a meeting with Leadership Paducah, research, and departmental feedback.

ENHANCEMENT 1 – Focus on Citizen-Centric Communication

Best Practices

- ❖ Ensure that the communications experiences (i.e. message and channel) meet the needs of the citizen. Use a variety of opportunities to shape the narrative.
- ❖ Foster two-way conversations when possible.
- ❖ Shape content that informs and engages residents plus focus on responding to inquiries and concerns.
- ❖ Implement Plain Writing Act of 2010 elements. ["Plain language" is writing in a way that helps readers understand the content in a document the first time they read it. Write clearly and get to the point without using unnecessary words or technical jargon, and organize information into clearly marked groups and subgroups.]

Proposed Enhancements

1. Strategically communicate.
    a. Implement Plain Language, avoid jargon, and emphasize key points with special attention to the website, news releases, and social media.
    b. Embrace opportunities to tell the City's story and repeat content.
    c. Write in a concise, coherent positive manner and focus on public relations.

d. Add communication plan to Agenda Action Forms to encourage internal communication.
e. Use Government 11 with monthly programming on project updates.
f. Promote sidewalk and road rehabilitation plans prior to implementation.
g. Build relationships with local media outlets and pitch story ideas.

2. Expand information reach.
    a. Relaunch *My Paducah – Stay Informed, Get Involved* initiative and create information cards promoting website, contact information, etc. for public.
    b. Engage and inform citizens through paid advertising. Include a communications budget within priority projects to cover advertising and marketing options such as print, mobile marketing van, radio ads, printing, and postage.
    c. Encourage City team to share content to increase engagement.
    d. Promote curbside recycling and other city projects in a "Did you know" format on exterior of solid waste trucks.
    e. Conduct Topical Town Halls and/or traveling Commission Meetings.
    f. Mail "one-pager" project summaries to churches, barber shops, and salons.
    g. Develop a citizens' academy for local high schools' civics curriculum.

3. Gather feedback to build relationships and trust.
    a. Poll citizens (i.e. neighborhood poll on Nextdoor) to inquire about reach and methodology, look for gaps in our reach.
    b. Gather statistically valid citizen feedback through National Community Survey and/or businesses through National Business Survey.
    c. Conduct relationship-building quarterly lunch meetings with local media.
    d. Conduct relationship-building lunch meetings with representatives of various organizations and business sectors.
    e. Conduct relationship-building lunch meetings with local non-traditional promoters (i.e. bloggers, influencers, and podcasters)

4. Elevate Communications as a pro-active approach throughout the City culture.
    a. Prepare presentations for the Board of Commissioners meetings that incorporate use plain language and avoid jargon. Summarize key points into a short memorable list to educate the public.
    b. Discuss new projects and programs at the Board of Commissioners meetings prior to introduction/adoption to enhance public understanding and awareness.
    c. Incorporate communications in the planning, budgeting, and implementation of projects by project leaders which includes the development and sharing of key points with the Communications Manager.

     d. Invite Communications Manager into special event development (i.e. ribbon cuttings, ground breakings) to complete Special Events Checklist that addresses logistics, celebration needs, event agenda, and recognition responsibilities.

     e. Unless approved by the City Manager, only members of the Leadership Team should speak to the media on behalf of city projects. (Note: The Board of Commissioners are invited to speak to the media at their own discretion.)

Funding Needs

- o Paid advertising, printing, and postage – to be included in priority project's budget
- o National Community Survey or National Business Survey
- o Meeting budget (i.e. lunches)
- o Contract with audio service for travelling Commission Meetings

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ENHANCEMENT 2 – Grow the Online Presence

Best Practice

- ❖ Design communications tactics and approaches around the web as the core channel with a focus on integrating communications and service delivery.

Proposed Enhancements

1. Update the backend software and modernize the theme for the City's website.
    a. Create splash screen on website for enews sign-up and information
    b. Push social media feed to homepage
    c. Create call to action buttons to increase ease of access and visual recognition
    d. Create individual pages for Board's priority projects
2. Migrate to email marketing platform for enhanced digital delivery.
3. Promote online services and software go-live with Citizen Self Service features (i.e. EnerGov, credit card payments).
4. Energize social media platforms with visual content, concise messaging, and boosting.

Funding Needs

- o Website theme and software upgrade
- o Email marketing platform cost
- o Social Media boosting
- o Digital camera

Setting Up for Success

❖ Strategically develop a communications plan at the onset of projects.
❖ Coordinate media interviews with staff through Communications Manager to assist with messaging, information gathering, and talking points. Communications Manager to be present at staff interviews when possible.
❖ Continue being accessible and transparent with local media outlets as we partner with them to share the progress of Paducah's projects.
❖ Provide interview availability to local media by the Board of Commissioners and City Manager immediately following Commission meetings.
❖ Continue using the Media List email to inform Board of Commissioners and Leadership Team of interviews with media. Be thorough in describing the interview.
❖ Provide Board of Commissioners with news releases prior to distribution in addition to talking points and FAQ documents on priority projects and other issues. Communicate with Communications Manager on information needs.
❖ Evaluate the communications progress through quarterly meetings between each member of the Board of Commissioners and the Communications Manager.

Completed or Underway

❖ January 2021
  - Added West Kentucky Living and In and Around Paducah to media email list.
  - Created new lead for Agendas/Minutes/Packets from website homepage. Only one click to get to meeting information.
  - Added Board of Commissioners to Media list email grouping.
  - Scheduled Board of Commissioners and Planning Commission meetings to air on Facebook.
❖ February 2021
  - Created Highlights graphic for post meeting quick summary – *Illuminating the Actions of Your City Government for Paducah's Success and Growth*.
  - Created Board Thank you graphic with images of board appointees.
  - Embedded Commission Meeting and Planning Commission Meeting Youtube playlists on City's website.
  - Created comprehensive Online Services section of website.
  - Researched email marketing platform.
  - Held first quarterly Media Lunch meeting on February 17.

- o Scheduled a 30-minute Monday through Thursday time slot on City Manager's calendar for media accessibility.
- ❖ March 2021
  - o Implemented email marketing platform.
  - o Scheduled bimonthly meetings among Mayor, City Manager, and Communications Manager to discuss communications, priority projects, and citizen concerns.
  - o Held first Town Hall meeting for Southside Neighborhood on March 4.