

# 2012 COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS PROGRAM

## INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSION ENTRY FORM

(Please copy and complete this form for each entry)

Check only ONE entry classification below:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. AAPA Awareness Initiative Messaging _____ | 8. Overall Campaign _____               |
| 2. Advertisements – Single _____             | 9. Periodicals <u>  X  </u>             |
| 3. Advertisements – Series _____             | 10. Promotional/Advocacy Material _____ |
| 4. Annual Reports _____                      | 11. Social/Web-Based Media _____        |
| 5. Audio-Only Presentations _____            | 12. Special Events _____                |
| 6. Directories/Handbooks _____               | 13. Videos _____                        |
| 7. Miscellaneous _____                       | 14. Visual-Only Presentations _____     |
|  | 15. Websites _____                      |

☒ CATEGORY 1

☐ CATEGORY 2

Entry Title The Port of Houston Authority Magazine  
 Port Name The Port of Houston Authority  
 Port Address 111 East Loop North Houston, TX 77029  
 Contact Name/Title Lisa Ashley  
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Please indicate precisely how your port's name should be listed on any award(s) it may win:

Name The Port of Houston Authority

Being as precise as possible, please attach a separate entry statement, in English, that:

- **Defines the Communications Challenge or Opportunity**
  - Situation Analysis (assess major internal and external factors)
  - Problem Statement (briefly describe in specific & measurable terms)
- **Summarizes Planning and Programming**
  - Goals (summarize desired outcome or end result)
  - Target Publics (be specific; list primary and secondary audiences if appropriate)
  - Objectives (identify specific and measurable milestones needed to reach goal)
- **Identifies Actions Taken and Communication Outputs**
  - Strategies (identify media choices, etc., that require tactics to complete)
  - Tactics (specify actions used to carry out strategies)
  - Implementation Plan (include timelines, staffing and budget)
- **Summarizes Evaluation Methods and Communications Outcomes**
  - Evaluation Methods (describe either formal surveys or anecdotal audience feedback used)
  - Communications Outcomes (isolate PR impacts to assess changed opinions, attitudes, behaviors)

**The Port of Houston Authority Magazine**  
Category 1, Classification 9. Periodicals

**Brief Description:** A quarterly magazine designed to build and reinforce positive impressions of the Port of Houston Authority by the stakeholders who determine the Port Authority's ability to secure funding to expand operations and facilities

**Background:** Since 1923, the Port of Houston Authority has regularly published an external magazine of news and information useful to port users and stakeholders. For many years it served as an important communications tool for conveying vessel schedules and similar information to shipping customers. However, as electronic communications have supplanted printed materials in this regard, the Port Authority's magazine has also modified its communications objectives. Those objectives are now based on market research concerning messaging, and management's need for continued congressional funding for ship channel improvement projects, voter approval in bond elections to improve port facilities, and positive stakeholder relations. Although customers receive the publication, their decisions on using the port are made for financial, operational, and geographic reasons. Stakeholders have become the more important target audience for this publication. The magazine is one of the tools used to maintain and strengthen the positive opinion of the Port Authority held by stakeholders.

This entry shows a recent transition of the magazine from a bi-monthly to a quarterly publication starting in 2012. The decision to make this transformation came after careful consideration, meetings with staff and port managers, and consultation with stakeholders. The decision rested primarily on two considerations: budget savings and use of other forms of communication to fill the void, such as the monthly electronic newsletter and increased social media.

**Audience:** Harris County voters are a key strategic audience for the Port Authority, because they decide the fate of continued bond funding for port expansion projects. The mailing list consist primarily of the addresses in Houston and Texas of decision makers, business leaders, elected officials, news media, environmentalists, and community leaders as well as customers from around the world.

**Budget:** \$21,450 an issue, printed bimonthly, 15,000 copies

**Strategies:** Market research on messaging tested highest in four areas: economic development/financial growth, security, environmental impact, and quality of life. An annual meeting with each port manager provides insight into expected developments for the coming year so that an editorial calendar can be developed. The calendar is left flexible enough to take advantage of theme changes based on new developments. Themes assigned for each issue mirrored messaging results. Security was the focus of the September/October edition, with the economic strength of steel cargo during 2011 as the cover story for the November/December issue. The Spring 2012 issue highlighted the Bayport Container Terminal's fifth anniversary and other articles looked at projects

designed to improve efficiency and the bottomline. Each issue makes use of the center spread to highlight the cover story in terms of relevant numbers and measurements. This is a new feature employed over the past year garnering very positive feedback from readers.

The entire creative team of communications management, writers, photographers and graphic designers meets weekly to review projects and develop work plans including story development for each magazine issue. Each magazine's theme dictates the overall story development although current news items are also included in each issue. Writers feed visual ideas to the photographers as work is in progress. Graphic designers present cover ideas and layouts as they are created.

**Results:** The annual port magazine readership survey shows that 75% of respondents looked forward to receiving the magazine, and 67% said the magazine gave them information they couldn't find anywhere else. In fact, 49% said they read the entire magazine.

Commissioned professional market research shows that at 60%, the Port Authority maintains the highest name awareness of the names of public organizations tested. Some 76% of respondents approve of the job the Port Authority is doing and 60% agree that growth of the port authority's facilities through the new Bayport Container Terminal is a good idea.

In addition, a current copy of the publication is often seen on display in the waiting areas and in the local and Washington offices of congressional representatives and their support for various projects is unwavering. They represent the most critical constituency at present with regard to continued federal funding for maintenance dredging.