

# 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 _____                    |
| 3. Advertisements – Series _____             | 10. Promotional/Advocacy Material _____ |
| 4. Annual Reports _____                      | 11. Social/Web-Based Media _____        |
| 5. Audio-Only Presentations _____            | 12. Special Events <u>1</u> _____       |
| 6. Directories/Handbooks _____               | 13. Videos _____                        |
| 7. Miscellaneous _____                       | 14. Visual-Only Presentations _____     |
|  | 15. Websites _____                      |

☒ CATEGORY 1

☐ CATEGORY 2

Entry Title Know Your Port by Bike  
 Port Name Port of Seattle  
 Port Address 2711 Alaskan way, Seattle, WA 98121  
 Contact Name/Title Nancy Blanton, Manager Business + Corporate Communications  
 Telephone 206-787-3364 Email Address blanton.n@portseattle.org

Please indicate precisely how your port's name should be listed on any award(s) it may win:

Name Port of Seattle

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)

## **AAPA 2012 Communications Award Application**

### **Category 12 — Special Events**

#### **Port of Seattle “Know Your Port by Bike” event**

##### **Situation**

The Port of Seattle operates several large transportation facilities that are visible along the Elliott Bay waterfront—container cargo terminals, grain elevator, cruise ship terminals, factory trawler moorings and recreational marinas—that are used by tens of thousands of people every day. The port has a wide and disparate set of stakeholders, including political constituents (King County voters elect the Port Commission), airline and shipping customers, cruise line customers, tenants, regulatory agency staff, elected officials and employees. However, through a series of outreach efforts, including community events, public open houses, speaking engagements and tours, it became clear that the general population in King County really did not realize these facilities are all owned by their public port authority, and do not understand the Port’s mission and purpose. Most people don’t think much about the Port of Seattle until they are directly affected by it.

We wanted to use the occasion of our Centennial year, 2011 to engage the local community in our wonderful waterfront, but also as a “teachable moment” when individual interests could merge with the port’s in a very positive and educational way. The more our local community knows about and understands port businesses, the more likely they are to support important needs, like freight mobility for cargo terminals, and access for cruise ships that deliver a lucrative tourist business to downtown retailers and restaurants. Our solution was a free, family-oriented summer biking event along the waterfront biking/walking pathway, with stations along the way where they could learn about the facilities before them. We labeled the event “Know Your Port by Bike,” and it was held on a sunny day, June 5, 2011.

##### **Research**

In 2007, an informal branding study indicated that among King County citizens, about 75% fall into the “don’t know/don’t care” category – that is, they don’t know what the port does, how it operates, or why they should care. An earlier telephone survey found that only half of respondents knew they paid taxes to the port, and even fewer knew the percentage of their tax dollar that goes to the port. Anecdotal information continues to reinforce the idea that most of our citizens do not know about the critical impact the port has on the local economy. Yet these individuals are called upon to make decisions about the port when they vote for Port of Seattle commissioners. While the Centennial used many products and activities to engage the community on several levels, this event was designed to be fun while allowing effective learning to take place almost incidentally to the activity. By inviting the general public to meet port employees, visit port properties and facilities in a free, fun and family-oriented setting, we could highlight the economic impact of the port and illustrate our efforts as environmental stewards of public lands.

## **Goals & Objectives**

This event addressed a high-level organizational goal to:

- Enhance public understanding and support of the Port's role in the region.

Our objectives were to:

- Create an outreach opportunity to illustrate the Port of Seattle's scope within the community
- Engage at least 200 people in the event

Strategies to reach our goals were to

- o Involve partner organizations
- o Reach audiences not typically associated with the port
- o Use eye-catching and fun graphics to grab attention

## **Audiences**

- For the event itself we engaged and coordinated with Seattle Department of Transportation, Seattle Parks Department, Port Police and Fire departments for bike route safety and first aid, US Army Corps of Engineers, and numerous Port employees as volunteers.
- Our focal audiences were fenceline neighborhoods, the local bicycling community (a new audience for port messaging), port tenants and customers, King County citizens, and Port of Seattle employees.

## **Implementation/Execution**

To reach a new audience we embarked on a completely new type of outreach which was a free, family-friendly bike ride. Except for one mile, the entire 14-mile, round-trip course was on Port of Seattle property, showcasing major Port assets (cargo facilities, cruise terminals, commercial fishing operations, grain terminals and recreational marinas). The port had never undertaken an event like this in its 100 year history. We contracted with Cascade Bicycle Club, who advised and assisted with planning and logistics.

### ***Budget***

The total budget allocated for the event was \$10,000 of which \$5,000 was paid to Cascade Bicycle Club for their specialized consulting in large-scale bike events. Another \$3,000 was used for promotional specialty items, for a total of \$8,000 -- \$2,000 under budget. We also purchased a fun illustration for the communications, to generate the fun and family-oriented atmosphere we were looking for.

### *Use of Resources*

Promotional materials including a "passport" for getting stamps as riders visited each station, event posters, specialty drink coasters, and the "Then and Now" location specific posters, were created in house. The colorful posters and coasters were hand delivered and were very popular for area bike shops, sporting goods stores, community centers, libraries and cafes and coffee shops in the vicinity of the ride. Bikers could purchase special branded biking shirts bearing our centennial logo, and received branded and numbered rider bibs at registration, that are typical to most biking events and often become keepsakes from the ride.

### **Evaluation/Effectiveness**

Our goal was to have 200 registered participants. More than 250 officially registered – either online or at the event. Since there was no way to cordon off the bike route, we did see larger than expected numbers of bikers along the course.

We engaged a number of partner organizations as noted above, and partnered with the bicycling community, a large group the port had not previously engaged in any specific way. In addition, the ride engaged more than 50 port employees either as volunteers or riders.

We might have brought in even more riders, but another larger-scale ride was being sponsored in a different part of town that we did not know about prior to scheduling ours. Still, the media interest we were able to generate was very helpful toward our goal to reach audiences not typically associated with the port. We are very pleased with our reach to people thinking in a recreational mode, and perhaps thinking in a different and positive way about the Port of Seattle.

We received a significant amount of unpaid coverage in traditional media and community press outlets, not to mention blogs. In newspapers, primarily *Ballard News* and *Seattle Times*, several stories resulted in 2,684,300 impressions. In e-newsletters we received an additional 74,000 impressions, and 30,000 on blogs. Social media including Facebook and Twitter resulted in nearly 10,000 more.

Anecdotal feedback told us that many of these riders had never used the course before and did not realize the facilities along the way belonged to the port. They expressed thanks for the event, and many (including port commissioners) suggested it might become an annual event.

As a follow-up, we produced a video of the event which was posted on our Intranet, Internet, and Youtube sites. The Youtube version generated more than 200 views.