

# 2013 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 _____                |
| 6. Directories/Handbooks _____               | 13. Videos _____                        |
| 7. Miscellaneous _____                       | 14. Visual-Only Presentations _____     |
|  | 15. Websites _____                      |



CATEGORY 1



CATEGORY 2

Entry Title: South Texas Alliance for Regional Trade (START)

Port Name: Port Corpus Christi

Port Address: 222 Power Street, Corpus Christi, Texas 78401

Contact Name/Title: Patricia Cardenas, Director of Communications

Telephone: 361-885-6124 Email Address: patricia@pocca.com

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

Name **PORT CORPUS CHRISTI**

Being as precise as possible, attach a separate entry statement, in English, that includes a descriptive summary of your entry and lists answers to each of the following four key questions:

**1. What are/were the specific communications challenges or opportunities?**

- Describe in specific & measurable terms the situation leading up to creation of this entry.
- Analyze the major internal and external factors needing to be addressed.

**2. What were your communications planning and programming components?**

- Describe your overall goals (desired results).
- Describe your objectives (identify specific, measurable milestones needed to reach your goals).
- Identify your target publics (list primary, secondary and tertiary audiences in order of importance).

**3. What actions were taken and what communication outputs were used?**

- Explain your strategies (e.g., identify media, timing & venue choices requiring tactics to complete).
- Specify your tactics (actions used to carry out your strategies).
- Map out your implementation plan (include timelines, staffing and budget).

**4. What were your your evaluation methods and communications outcomes?**

- Describe formal or informal surveys, or anecdotal audience feedback, used to evaluate success.
- Determine communications outcomes by assessing changed opinions, behaviors and attitudes.

2013 Communications Awards Program

START (South Texas Alliance for Regional Trade)

Port Corpus Christi

Overall Campaign



## Overview

START (South Texas Alliance for Regional Trade) is an innovative concept in promoting regional business opportunities to national and global audiences. It is developed by Port Corpus Christi and two other South Texas ports. The effort is anchored by Port San Antonio to the north, the region's largest industrial airport, Port Corpus Christi to the east, the 5<sup>th</sup> largest port in the U.S. in total tonnage, and Port Laredo on the west, the largest inland port on the U.S. – Mexico border.

### 1. What are/were the specific communications challenges or opportunities?

Port Corpus Christi recognized a need for improved relations and communication among the South Texas ports and the importance of regionalism, key in attracting new business, particularly from international prospects, given the region's robust growth in the energy, manufacturing and international trade sectors. Important target audiences include prospects with transportation needs within our *region* and requiring assistance to make the right business connections.

With this in mind, Port Corpus Christi led efforts that brought the three ports together to develop a unique framework for collaboration. Although a basic concept, bringing the marketing efforts of three large logistics and business development organizations with, sometimes disparate, objectives was a considerable challenge without precedent in the region. While the three ports are not in direct competition with each other, some terms of agreement needed to be met before the alliance could be formed. To launch the effort, a core team comprised of marketing and business development representatives from each organization was formed. The group kept in constant contact and conducted several in-person meetings over the course of a year to develop a mission statement and marketing plan. The purpose of this alliance was not to take the place of any economic development corporation, but rather to create a joint marketing effort that capitalized on each participant's expertise and the collective strength of the collaboration.

### 2. What were your communications planning and programming components?

START is a key tool that is expanding the audiences that are exposed to each participating port's message and supports their respective missions. The effort highlights the array of services that are available through each participant as well as the collective support that is available through the three ports, particularly in the areas of logistics, manufacturing, warehousing and international trade. The group is also highlighting important business opportunities in the energy, manufacturing and aerospace sectors that are growing in South Texas.

#### **START's Mission Statement Reads:**

***To help advance the missions of Port San Antonio, Port Laredo and Port Corpus Christi through joint marketing and communications efforts that highlight key industries in South Texas and the strategic support START members provide individually and collectively to customers in those sectors.***

The group also created a short paragraph to include as a closing to all press releases:

*Port Corpus Christi is a member of START (South Texas Alliance for Regional Trade), a collaborative effort that highlights business opportunities in South Texas in the manufacturing, energy, aerospace, international trade, military and other sectors and the related strategic support provided by Port San Antonio, Port Corpus Christi and Port Laredo. <http://southtexastradealliance.com>*

### **3. What actions were taken and what communication outputs were used?**

A primary vehicle for disseminating START's message have been regional, national and international media outlets, both general interest and trade-specific. Among the group's successes, in early 2013 Port Corpus Christi convened a group of several journalists to develop stories about business opportunities in the region and supported by START members. Correspondents included business writers from China, United Kingdom, Panama and Denmark, as well as 3 U.S.-based business and trade outlets.

An additional target audience is trade groups and business development organizations that provide START access to important prospects. Accordingly, START's initial efforts include working with the Free Trade Alliance in San Antonio and the Logistics and Manufacturing Association in Laredo, which have allowed START participants to reach out directly to groups that include an array of consuls general within the region and important business owners and operators who can benefit from the services available under the START umbrella.

Likewise, START members routinely identify venues such as trade shows and presentations headed up by one or more of the participants as key mechanisms to deliver the group's message. Leaders and business development managers from each port have shared the START message with regional, national and international trade groups at five conferences and trade shows in 2013 to date alone, including events in China and Latin America.

To support presentations and one-on-one engagements with its audiences and business prospects, the initiative has created a flexible array of deliverables branded under START'S "Land, Sea, Air" umbrella and which can be adapted and customized by each port. These include:

- An overview Powerpoint presentation
- 4 pull up banners for trade shows
- A pocket folder with inserts on each of the three ports and a general fact sheet with regional a map
- A dedicated website, [www.southtexastrade.com](http://www.southtexastrade.com)

START is integrated into every Port Corpus Christi presentation. When one port is invited to participate in an event, whether it is local, state, national or international, the other two ports are also invited to participate. START has no dedicated budget, each of the three ports dividing costs evenly. With limited financial resources, and no staff, the alliance's advancement comes from the thoughtful placement of the START message carried by the participants. Below is a timeline of the beginnings of START:

January 2012 – Meetings began

March 2012 – Voted on a name: South Texas Alliance for Regional Trade (START)

April 2012 – Logo and first version of the Powerpoint presentation was created

May 2012 – Port Corpus Christi and Port San Antonio attended ALACAT, first exposure of START

July 2012 – Discussion of website and strategy

December 2012 – Website soft launch

January 2013 – START Presentation to Reporters

January 2013 – START Mission Statement and Press Release Paragraph

March 2013 – START Pull Up Banners Created for Trade Shows (Eagle Ford Consortium was first show)

#### **4. What were your evaluation methods and communications outcomes?**

START's innovation and spirit of collaboration has received astoundingly positive feedback, both during presentations and even from the business press, which is generally not known for voicing pleasant surprise, as it did in a recent article that appeared in the San Antonio Express-News, following a presentation before members of the San Antonio Free Trade Alliance.

To date, START has been highlighted in over fifteen regional, national and international news stories, including in the China People's Daily, Denmark's *Børsen* business newspaper, *Expansion Solutions Magazine*, *American Journal of Transportation*, the *San Antonio Express-News* and the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*.

The alliance continues to move forward as we identify case studies and develop a directory of vendors among the tri-port region and looks forward to continue carrying its message of goodwill and strong business opportunities to an ever-growing number of audiences.