

# 2015 COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS PROGRAM

## INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSION ENTRY FORM

Please copy and complete this form for each entry.  
Create a separate document for answering the five questions below.

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 <u>  X  </u> _____          | 14. Visual-Only Presentations _____     |
|  | 15. Websites _____                      |

Please check the appropriate box:

CATEGORY 1

CATEGORY 2

CATEGORY 3

Entry Title   TransPORTer  

Name of Port   Port of Los Angeles  

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On separate paper, **FIRST** write a short, descriptive summary of your entry, **THEN**, in as much detail as needed, specifically address each of the following five questions and number your answers. Your answers equal 50% of your score.

**1. What are/were the entry's 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. How does the communication used in this entry complement the organization's overall mission?**

- Explain the organization's overall mission and how it influenced creation of this entry.

**3. What were the communications planning and programming components for this entry?**

- Describe your overall goals or desired results.
- Describe your objectives and list specific, measurable milestones needed to reach your goals.
- Identify your primary and secondary audiences in order of importance.

**4. What actions were taken and what communication outputs were used in this entry?**

- Explain what strategies were developed to achieve success and why these strategies were chosen.
- Specify the tactics used (i.e., actions used to carry out your strategies).
- Detail the implementation plan by including timeline, staffing and outsourcing used.

**5. What were the communications outcomes from this entry and what evaluation methods were used to assess them?**

- Describe any formal/ informal surveys used, or anecdotal audience feedback received, that helped in evaluating the success of this entry.
- If possible, explain how this entry influenced target audience opinions, behaviors, attitudes or actions.

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*Project Name:* TransPORTer (mobile educational exhibit) Program

*Port:* Port of Los Angeles

### Summary

The TransPORTer is a 53-foot shipping container that was transformed into a mobile, self-contained educational outreach exhibit about the Port of Los Angeles. The TransPORTer brings the Port of LA to schools and events in a fun, interactive way for people of all ages.

### Communications Challenge/Opportunity

The Port of Los Angeles (POLA) is committed to teaching people of all ages about ports, the maritime environment and the industries that facilitate goods movement and global trade in a positive and stimulating way. The TransPORTer mobile educational exhibit (TransPORTer) takes the Port of Los Angeles to the community and to schools and conferences - instead of requiring those groups to visit the port - teaching large audiences in a stimulating, interactive way that captures attention and provides information about the Port of Los Angeles, international trade and the maritime industry.

The TransPORTer broadens views of the POLA and its connection to the Southern California region and the nation, while teaching about its economic impact, jobs, and environmental, security and community initiatives. The TransPORTer teaches Southern Californians that from the clothes they wear, to the computer they work on and to the food they eat, the Port of Los Angeles plays a role in their daily lives.

Some of POLA's other outreach programs focus on visiting the Port of Los Angeles - including boat tours and presentations - showing the importance and economic impact of the nations' number one container port. However, these visit and tour opportunities are not conducive to very large groups. It is not feasible to bring thousands of conference attendees or a whole school to POLA for a visit. It was challenging to convey that same message at a table at a conference or by providing a school presentation. Also, we were finding that due to school budget cuts, although our school boat tour program covers bus subsidies for all or most of the school transportation costs, schools were still having trouble securing the remaining minimal funds to visit POLA.

This program provides the opportunity for the Port of Los Angeles to reach large audiences. Sometimes the TransPORTer is at events, conferences and schools as far away from the Port of Los Angeles as Sacramento, Barstow or Ontario - places from which many people may not have had the opportunity to visit the POLA. Other times, the TransPORTer is at our own events at the POLA such as "TallShips Festival LA" providing attendees with the opportunity to not only enjoy our event and the LA Waterfront, but to learn about it as well.

The challenge is to educate as many people as possible about the POLA in a way that appeals to all ages and can be stimulating during a 15-minute classroom visit or at a large conference or community event.

To measure the success of this ongoing program and continue to improve upon it in future years, staff developed a program evaluation form that TransPORTer visit organizers are asked to complete after a TransPORTer event to gauge the overall effectiveness of the program. Also, records have also been kept and continue to be kept year after year to compare the number of participants reached, events, etc.

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### Nexus to the Port's Overall Mission

This program supports the overall mission of the Port of Los Angeles. The *Port of Los Angeles Strategic Plan Update 2014* (Strategic Plan) identifies "Strong Relationships with Stakeholders" as one of its four strategic plan objectives.

In the Strategic Plan, under "Strong Relationships with Stakeholders," an initiative is to "attract visitors to the LA Waterfront of Wilmington and San Pedro." Taking the TransPORTer out into the community fosters strong relationships with stakeholders and attracts visitors to the LA Waterfront. Los Angeles residents, who otherwise may not have visited the Port of LA or sought information about the Port of LA, may walk into an enticing Port of LA exhibit at an event. Before entering the exhibit, visitors are greeted at a Port booth with LA Waterfront maps opened on the table and offered to them along with fliers for upcoming events along the LA Waterfront. This often sparks conversation about new and exciting things happening at the LA Waterfront and guests frequently walk away with a map, event fliers and other Port informational brochures sometimes saying to Port staff or their family members that they would like to attend an upcoming Port event or visit the LA Waterfront. Visitors then walk into the exhibit and learn about the Port's economic impact, environmental initiatives, security programs and jobs created – all great messages that encourage strong relationships.

Students at school events learn how the Port impacts their daily lives in addition to all the things noted above. It is very possible that these messages do not end with only the students and educators that participate in these visits. Students that visit the TransPORTer may go home to tell their parents about the Port of Los Angeles and educators may teach more students and other educators about the Port of Los Angeles.

This program has reached more than 20,000 people per year over the past couple of fiscal years and is on track to do the same this fiscal year while fostering relationships and attracting visitors to the LA Waterfront.

### Planning and Programming

In September 2008, after approximately one year of planning efforts with a consultant, POLA completed and received the Port of Los Angeles TransPORTer mobile educational exhibit. A 53-foot container was used as the outer portion of the environmentally friendly exhibit. What better exhibit shell than a shipping container for a Port of Los Angeles exhibit?! The self-contained exhibit included a trade route map, jobs display, crane game simulator, "what's in the box?" activity, oral history videos, sounds of the port display and information on the port's environmental, security and community programs. Last year, the oral history video area which was developed at the time of the Port of Los Angeles centennial and had contained three small screens only allowing for oral histories to be displayed was revamped allowing for great flexibility.

A bid was released to secure a contract/purchase order for an annual lease, liquefied natural gas- (LNG)-powered tractor rig, driver, storage, and maintenance services for the TransPORTer for a one-year period subject to extension for two additional years. The driver, from the contracted firm, also conducts site checks at each location in advance of the visit to ensure that the large exhibit can feasibly enter and fit in the desired location and that location is determined prior to the visit. The contracted driver of the exhibit will arrive to the school or event site early, set-up the extensions, stairs, games, etc. The total contract amount for these services is not-to-exceed \$45,000 annually.

Existing program materials developed in-house by Public Relations staff include TransPORTer piggybanks that fold to look like the TransPORTer, TransPORTer coloring books, a TransPORTer request form, and a school visit schedule for the organizer to complete prior to the event.

Two Public Relations staff members – a full-time employee and student worker – typically attend a school site visit. During a 15-minute TransPORTer visit by a classroom, Public Relations staff members greet the class,

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provide an age-appropriate, engaging, brief overview of port operations including the economic impact of the port, jobs connected to the port, its environmental programs, etc. Students then have the opportunity to spend about ten minutes in the TransPORTer. When that time is over, POLA Public Relations staff provides a three question oral quiz on what was discussed and learned in the TransPORTer. Students that raise their hands and answer those questions correctly receive a POLA prize such as a backpack or ruler. The teacher is provided with a POLA item for each student such as a TransPORTer piggybank or coloring book for elementary students and pencil cases and pens for high school students so every student leaves with something.

At community events and conferences, two to three (depending on length of event and crowd size) POLA staff members work at the TransPORTer. A table is placed at the entrance with one to two POLA staff members available to hand-out brochures, promote the LA Waterfront and upcoming events, discuss POLA and answer questions. The table typically includes POLA brochures, TransPORTer piggybanks or coloring books, and a promotional item for adults (determined by the supply at the time and type of event). Visitors are able to explore the exhibit. At large events, a staff member maintains a line at the entrance to ensure that the number of people inside the exhibit at one particular time is safe and appropriate. We have found that being at an event with the TransPORTer rather than only a table brings more people to the exhibit area to learn about the port. Community members and conference attendees are often amazed at what they learn about the port inside the exhibit.

*Goals:* The goal of this program is to educate as many people as possible about the Port in an age-appropriate, positive and stimulating way. POLA strives to teach people about the connection that the port has to their everyday lives; the economic impact of the port; the career opportunities connected to POLA; and the environmental, security, and community programs underway at the port. Another goal, last year, after having the exhibit for five years, was to ensure that the content inside the exhibit was relevant to the Port's current messaging and flexible for each event and school visit.

*Objectives:* The objective is to receive an overall rating of "excellent" on every TransPORTer evaluation form received by our office. In addition, every evaluation form received would state that the organizer would participate again in the future and recommend the TransPORTer to others.

Another objective is to maintain an outreach of at least 20,000 visitors per fiscal year maximizing use of the exhibit.

Last year, another objective was to provide some updates and maintenance to the exhibit and ensure that it was relevant and flexible for different types of events, while minimizing, as much as possible, the impact that this time out of service would have on the visitor reach for the year.

*Primary Audiences:* The primary audiences for this program include classes of students at schools and the general public at community events. These groups request the TransPORTer the most frequently and make up the majority of the TransPORTer visits.

*Secondary Audiences:* Secondary audiences include students at youth conferences and professionals at business conferences. These events are not as frequent as primary audience events. They run more similarly to community events than school visits.

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### Actions Taken & Outputs

*Strategies:* Through this, and other education and community programs, we have found that a successful strategy is making program materials easily accessible, convenient and in a location that target and secondary audiences could easily locate. We have also discovered that email is often the preferred method of communication providing the flexibility for requestors to communicate at their convenience.

We decided to include opportunities for the TransPORTer at our own POLA events. We also realized that the TransPORTer is an advertisement in itself and could be used as a promotional tool.

Last year, Public Relations decided that it was important to update the exhibit to remain relevant, consistent with current strategic initiatives and messaging, flexible for all audience types, and interesting for those that request the TransPORTer year after year. We were aware that taking the TransPORTer out of service to make these updates could affect program numbers for the year and wanted to minimize that effect as much as possible.

*Tactics:* The Port of Los Angeles website provides a convenient location for teachers, school administrators, event and conference planners to easily access program information. On the Port of Los Angeles website, there is a TransPORTer webpage complete with TransPORTer photos, information, a downloadable TransPORTer request form and a downloadable TransPORTer coloring book. An email address was set-up specifically for the TransPORTer, [transporter@portla.org](mailto:transporter@portla.org), and emails can be sent directly from that webpage.

We utilize social media to notify the public that the TransPORTer will be at community events. We also take the opportunity to bring the TransPORTer to our own POLA events when possible and applicable.

At TransPORTer events, we set up a table outside of the exhibit, and pass out LA Waterfront maps and fliers for upcoming events, Port of LA facts and figures sheets and Air Quality Report Cards to attract visitors to the LA Waterfront and to communicate the great things going on at the Port.

We realized that the TransPORTer is a huge advertisement in its own right. It's hard not to notice the TransPORTer driving down the freeway. We placed a huge Quick Response Code (QR Code) on the back of the TransPORTer so that passengers driving behind or near the TransPORTer would be able to scan the code on their smart phones and have direct access to the newly created Port of Los Angeles "PORTal" allowing users to select the education programs webpage, Facebook webpage, "LAitude" e-newsletter, newsroom, or LA Waterfront website.

It was determined that the best time to pull the TransPORTer out of service for updates to minimize the effect on visitor reach for the year would be the colder months when requests are historically lower than the warmer months. During this time period, it was boldly noted at the top of the TransPORTer webpage that the TransPORTer was out of service.

The TransPORTer was created during the Port of Los Angeles centennial year. It contained a large area of black and white historical images with three small TV screens that was only capable of displaying historical oral history videos. It was determined that this area would be great to update and make more flexible so it could be utilized in different ways for different audiences and events. We determined that it would be more cost effective to make a display in that area that we could easily manipulate and update on site rather than needing to renovate that display often. This area was brightened up with a picture of the port at sunrise and revamped with a 50-foot TV screen and Mac mini which allows for the flexibility to play any video or PowerPoint that best suits the event audience. For example, at a school or community event we can play our "Port 101" video, at an Earth Day event we can show an environmental focused PowerPoint, and at a community event in Pasadena we can play a LA Waterfront promotional video to attract visitors to the LA Waterfront.

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Some of the other exhibit updates included servicing the trade route map, rewrapping the aerial photo with an updated photo, rewrapping the outside of the TransPORTer, and developing and including a "Can You Spot the Port Images?" activity.

*Implementation Plan:* The TransPORTer visited schools, community events, and conferences. Any requests for the TransPORTer during the out-of-service period were offered another opportunity when it was back in service.

A team of Port of Los Angeles staff members from Public Relations, Graphics Services and Construction and Maintenance came together to brainstorm ideas and determine in-house capabilities to update the exhibit. An outside vendor was used for wrapping the outside of the exhibit and printing and mounting the images on the inside of the exhibit. All other updates were done by staff.

One Port of Los Angeles staff member administers the program, maintains the program calendar and responds to requests on the TransPORTer email account. At school events and smaller community events, typically one student worker joins one Public Relations staff member to staff the event. Large community events are typically staffed with two Public Relations staff members and one student worker allowing for someone to manage the table at the TransPORTer, assist inside the TransPORTer and manage lines when necessary. A contracted driver transports and sets up the exhibit at each event.

The budget for this program includes \$45,000 for the contract and approximately \$20,000 was spent in updates and maintenance in the last program year. Program materials and promotional items are already in existence and what is available at the time of the event/school visit is utilized. Besides the contract amount, bringing the TransPORTer to an event or school site costs staff time for two to three employees. Approximately 500 students are able to visit during a typical school visit and several thousand people are able to visit during a busy community event.

### Outcome and Evaluation

During Fiscal Year 2013/2014, the TransPORTer had approximately 21,515 visitors. Not including the updates that were made this year, approximately \$2.09 (\$45,000 / 21,515) was spent per exhibit visitor. The audience number for Fiscal Year 2013/14 was very similar to Fiscal Year 2012/13, when approximately 21,440 guests visited the TransPORTer. However, during Fiscal Year 2013/14, the TransPORTer was out of service for four months for updates so that number could have been higher otherwise. The TransPORTer is scheduled for a few more visits through the end of this fiscal year. Audience numbers for Fiscal Year 2014/2015 will be available in June 2014, but are on track to surpass 20,000 visitors again.

People are often surprised by what they can learn in the TransPORTer all while having fun. Adults often enjoy the TransPORTer just as much as kids do. They read, ask questions, watch videos and even play the games! They often take LA Waterfront maps, upcoming event fliers and other brochures with them when they leave, encouraging a future visit to the LA Waterfront.

TransPORTer evaluation forms are still be collected for this year. Evaluation forms received thus far ranked the program as excellent and very informative and organizers stated that they would recommend the program to others.