

## 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 _____ 1             |
| 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 _____                      |

Please check the appropriate box:

<input type="checkbox"/> CATEGORY 1	<input type="checkbox"/> CATEGORY 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CATEGORY 3
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Entry Title: US West Coast Labor Dispute: Mitigating the Impacts  
 Name of Port: Port of Oakland  
 Port Address: 530 Water Street. Oakland, CA 94607  
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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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## **Summary of Port of Oakland entry:**

### **US West Coast Labor Dispute: Mitigating the Impacts**

#### **1. What are/were the entry's specific communications challenges or opportunities?**

##### **Situation:**

In the fall/winter of 2014, the US West Coast was preparing for the possibility of a major work stoppage at 29 West Coast ports, including the Port of Oakland. The threat of a strike or shutdown, related to the continuing stalemate between waterfront employers (Pacific Maritime Association – PMA) and the dockworkers union (International Longshore and Warehouse Union - ILWU) appeared imminent. The ILWU had been working without a contract since July 1, 2014. The Port of Oakland developed a communications plan in the event there was a significant post-Thanksgiving labor action. If a strike had occurred, we were prepared to communicate quickly and effectively so that we could provide timely and accurate information to our tenants, business partners, customers, the media, and general public. It would be important to prevent misinformation and correct any misconceptions about the facts of the situation should a work stoppage arise.

The risks were: customer defections; Port of Oakland caught between the two negotiating parties and perceived as powerless; Port could be blamed for work stoppage although not a party to negotiations; and prolonged work stoppage.

The Communications plan was implemented and no long-term West Coast strike or shutdown occurred at the ports. The situation morphed into a cargo slowdown over a period of months. The lack of a labor contract, exacerbated by increase in cargo volume and equipment shortages, disrupted operations and degraded productivity at West Coast ports from San Diego, CA to Seattle, WA. At the height of the cargo disruption, 20 ships were backed up waiting to come into Oakland. Productivity at the marine terminals dropped.

##### **Internal and External Factors:**

With the continuing lack of a contract settlement between the ILWU and PMA, more cargo coming through Oakland, and a shortage of equipment, the Port of Oakland adjusted its communications strategies and tactics accordingly to meet the changing circumstances – a cargo slowdown and ship backlog (i.e. no strike/shutdown).

The external factors that had to be addressed were:

- Threat of cargo diversions from Oakland to competing ports
- Impact of negative media coverage
- Customer dissatisfaction

The internal factors were:

- Port staff needed a simple way to measure the daily impact of the dispute
- Port staff needed to assess the daily impact on its customers

Port needed changes in customers' attitude toward the Port and customers' behavior – diffusing anger and keeping customers and cargo here

## **2. How does the communication used in this entry complement the organization's overall mission?**

***Mission Statement:*** *The Port of Oakland delivers the highest value to our customers and community through sustainable stewardship and growth of our assets, optimal performance of our people, and clarity of focus on our aviation, maritime, and real estate businesses.*

The Port of Oakland continued to deliver value to its customers even in the face of challenge.

The Port of Oakland and its partners support more than 73,000 jobs in the region and generate approximately \$7 billion in annual business revenue and \$600 million in tax revenue. The Oakland seaport generates 40% of those jobs. Sustaining the Oakland seaport's business with strategic communications during the labor dispute and resulting cargo slowdown was critical for maintaining the Port's role as a major economic engine in the SF Bay Area.

In advance of a possible strike/shutdown, the Port of Oakland educated the public about the importance of the Port as an economic engine and significant generator of jobs in an effort to discourage a strike/shutdown and explain the consequences to the region should one occur. Although a West Coast port strike did not occur, the operational disruptions that slowed the movement of cargo up and down the West Coast intensified.

The Port of Oakland had no active role in the contract dispute since it was not a party to that process. Nevertheless, the Port demonstrated to its customers that it was actively involved in seeking resolution through various communications including editorials, press releases, media interviews, a Port blog (microsite), specific email blasts to target audiences and social media. The Port was extremely pro-active reaching out daily to reporters locally to globally, via emails and phone calls and responding to all inquiries.

With clarity of focus on this maritime challenge, Port Communications worked with IT and its external webmaster to develop a Port Operations Status Update (microsite) for its customers, media and public. Anyone who went to the Port website home page would see the pop-up message, click on it, and get the latest details on maritime operations. The Port also created a Twitter update on the home page. These would be updated daily or more frequently if the information changed.

To deliver high value to its customers, the Port developed detailed Q&A sheets to address the most likely questions anyone would have about the situation. The microsite included the Q&A documents as well as other key documents on the left side of the status update page such as the Port of Oakland's opinion piece by Executive Director Chris Lytle published in the San Francisco Chronicle – *Port of Oakland too essential to endure labor dispute* (Nov. 24, 2014); the letter from Senators Diane Feinstein and Boxer calling for swift resolution of the ILWU/PMA issues (Feb. 9, 2015); editorials that the Port

encouraged in the SF Chronicle – *Labor Impasse threatens West Coast ports* (Feb. 10, 2015) and *Port dispute threatens US economy* ( Feb. 19, 2015); and other third party advocacy letters/editorials related to getting the dispute settled and port activities back up to speed. To the right of the daily update, key contacts with phone numbers were listed for Port officials, Marine Terminals, Railroad Companies, and other key partners like the US Coast Guard and US Customs and Border Protection.

The Port also developed a daily vessel operations update and a marine terminals operations update that was distributed to Port partners who found this information helpful for making business decisions during this difficult time.

The Port received praise over the phone and through emails from reporters locally to globally for providing timely information, daily updates, being responsive and providing contacts and background details. The Port of Oakland also received praise from its customers, who although upset at the circumstances, appreciated everything we were doing to advocate for a resolution to the dispute and to facilitate cargo movement.

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

#### **Overall Goals and Desired Results:**

Demonstrate that the Port is taking control;

ensure accurate and timely reporting;

Provide customers with a level of confidence about doing business at Oakland

Early in the labor dispute, the Port of Oakland significantly increased cargo volume through marketing and letting its customers know that Oakland had room to handle more cargo as the backlogs were building in Southern California. Oakland achieved a record cargo volume in CY 2014. Then as the labor dispute continued and more off-scheduled ships came to Oakland, the cargo slowdown intensified in Northern California. The volume of cargo moving through Oakland waned in January 2015. Communications built a case for recovery. The decline in cargo was temporary; recovery was steady; and cargo volume returned in two months.

#### **Program elements:**

Communications Plans - Examples in binder for work stoppage and reporter outreach

Educational editorial from Port Executive Director on value of Port in terms of jobs and economic impact (published in San Francisco Chronicle -In binder under Microsite/blog)

Development of Q&A sheets as circumstances required (In binder under Microsite/blog)

Frequent press releases – 17 press releases (in binder) during five months of labor dispute covering latest information and pro-active steps Port was taking to advocate for labor agreement and facilitate cargo movement (Distributed to various audiences including employees, media, electeds, community and maritime stakeholders). Also posted on Port website home page, newsroom and incorporated into

daily blog (microsite); Press release archive

<http://www.portofoakland.com/newsroom/pressReleases/2015/>

Successfully encouraged two opinion pieces in major regional paper (San Francisco Chronicle – in binder under “success” tab)

Pop-up operational status on Port homepage – Pop-up linked to new microsite providing Port maritime operational status updates daily, supported with key documents and contact information for customers and media. Following the tentative ILWU/PMA contract agreement the Port of Oakland transformed the status operations update into a Portwide blog. Current blog site:

<http://www.portofoakland.com/newsroom/dailyblog.aspx>

Development of detailed daily vessel operations report – shared with key staff and maritime business partners and stakeholders through email blasts (binder)

Development of detailed daily maritime operations report – shared with key staff and maritime business partners and stakeholders through email blasts (binder)

On site tours for reporters

Twitter – brief vessel and maritime operations updates for public

Facebook – posting of press release links, articles, and editorials related to labor dispute/cargo slowdown, as appropriate

Weekly Communications outlook distributed every Friday – Existing communication sent to Port Commissioners, senior management and key staff. It included stories related to US West Coast labor dispute and Port of Oakland anticipated for the upcoming week, with the publications listed and the expected tone. It also included upcoming press releases, issues and key messages for Port leadership. Examples in binder

Morning Headlines – Existing communication sent to Port Commissioners, senior management and key staff via email blast. Also, it's posted on the Port's Intranet for all employees. The headlines include internet, print and broadcast stories related to Port of Oakland and US West Coast ILWU/PMA dispute. See a few examples in binder that demonstrate Port of Oakland's presence in media. Examples in binder

Note: During the three months of the height of the labor dispute, the Port held a significant presence in the media putting forward its messages. For example the Port of Long Beach, CA (LB) is three times the size of the Port of Oakland and the third largest port in the nation. Based on independent media measurement, Port of Oakland had 75% to LB's 25% share of voice during that three-month period.

Video on website home page, *Vessel Logjam: And then there were none*

<http://www.portofoakland.com/newsroom/videos/trade-gateway.aspx>

was created to announce end of vessel backlog and steps to improve cargo efficiency, while still recognizing customer and business partner challenges.

Maritime Newsletter (monthly) – Existing publication posted on Port website and distributed to maritime stakeholder list through email blast. Incorporated culmination of month's significant information on key maritime operations data, press releases and editorials, and labor dispute updates. Two examples in binder – website link to current APRIL newsletter:

[http://www.portoakland.com/pdf/maritime/MaritimeNewsletter\\_0415.pdf](http://www.portoakland.com/pdf/maritime/MaritimeNewsletter_0415.pdf)

The complete press releases are in the binder that exhibit the Port of Oakland's evolving messaging used through the Port's multiple communications channels.

Here are some examples of the headlines/messages the Port used:

Dec. 22, 2015 [Added measures at Port of Oakland to handle cargo increase](#)

Jan. 5, 2015 [New Saturday/Sunday Gates Ease Some Pressure on Port of Oakland Cargo Buildup](#)

Jan. 6, 2015 [Port of Oakland Applauds Call for Federal Mediator in Labor Talks](#)

Jan.13, 2015 [Port of Oakland Broke All-Time Cargo Handling Record in 2014](#)

Feb. 4, 2015 [Port of Oakland issues statement on West Coast labor impasse](#)

Feb. 9, 2015 [Port of Oakland Updates Operating Status, Waterfront Labor Talk](#)

February 11, 2015 [Port of Oakland Launches Maritime Operations Web Portal](#)

Feb. 20, 2015 [Port of Oakland applauds waterfront contract settlement](#)

March 17, 2015 [Port of Oakland cargo volume down 36.67% in February](#)

April 7, 2015 [Ships That Bypassed Oakland Now Restoring Weekly Calls](#)

April 15, 2015 [Port of Oakland Container Cargo Volume Rebounds in March](#)

**Primary audience:** Customers/Tenants/Business partners

**Secondary audience:** Media

**Other audiences:**

Internal – Port Commissioners; Senior Management; Employees

External – Electeds, Community, General Public

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

See above for actions, tactics and products.

## **Strategies:**

A key strategy was to generate a volume of intensive, credible communications outreach. This was required because the Port of Oakland is the third busiest in California and much smaller compared to our neighbors in Southern California. In order to gain visibility in a crowded media space (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> busiest ports in the nation are Los Angeles and Long Beach – both in Southern California), the high intensity volume of communications was needed to overcome the Port of Oakland's smaller stature. Also 29 ports were impacted by the West Coast labor/management situation and the Port of Oakland wanted to be sure to be "heard".

Another strategy was to emphasize the Port of Oakland's attributes as a containerport – capacity to handle more cargo volume, deep harbor for big ships, huge container cranes to handle larger vessels, and two Class I railroads right in the heart of the seaport.

The Port of Oakland also chose not to "sugar coat" the problems that were plaguing West Coast ports including Oakland. The Port of Oakland provided transparency by reporting on the backlog of ships and any issues with daily maritime operations.

Pro-active - Reaching out pro-actively and often to specific reporters daily from local to global

Responsive – responded to every inquiry

Encouraged third party advocacy for swift resolution of labor/management dispute

## **Timeline and Staffing:**

The implementation timeline began in mid-October 2014 preparing our microsite and early communications in case there was a strike/shutdown at the 29 US West Coast ports post-Thanksgiving. As the situation evolved (no pro-longed work stoppage) into a continuing labor dispute with sporadic cargo slowdowns among the 29 West Coast ports, we continued our focused communications through the rebound of cargo at the Port of Oakland this year (about six months).

The efforts periodically involved (over the six months) the three key Communications staff, the executive assistant to the Communications Director, an in-house reprographics person, Port IT staff (3), the Port's external webmaster (2), maritime staff for vessel and operational updates (3), and others for consultation and messaging development (Executive Director, Maritime Director, Maritime Marketing Manager).

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

Port of Oakland received positive feedback mostly through phone calls and email from customers, business partners, electeds and media for our timely communications, advocacy for swift resolution among parties, and efforts to improve cargo efficiency at the Oakland seaport.

The Port's page views for its operational status update page during the peak of the vessel backlog at Oakland was more than 10,000 views. The Port video for when the vessel backlog ended attracted nearly 800 views.

**The open rate on the Port of Oakland's press releases from Dec. 22, 2014 to April 15, 2015 related to maritime activities and the cargo impacts from the labor/management dispute ranged at the lowest 22.3% (announcement of blog) to the highest at 37.3 % (Port issues statement on impasse). This is an excellent open rate among government agencies using the GovDelivery system. The average open rate is typically 10-12%. (Data in binder)**

Two editorials by the Port's executive director were published – one in the Journal of Commerce , a premier industry publication and the other in the SF Chronicle, the major paper in the Bay Area. The SF Chronicle also published their own editorials supporting quick resolution of the labor dispute and the importance of the Port of Oakland to the region. Customers expressed appreciation to the Port's maritime staff for the operational updates during the challenging time. The Oakland seaport had a record 2014 Calendar Year for cargo throughput. Jan./Feb. cargo figures were down. Cargo rebounded in March and the port attracted a new customer (Patagonia) despite the disruptions.

The Port knows it probably lost a few maritime customers, but most stayed with Oakland despite the challenges. Customers said they appreciated the transparency and that the Port faced the issues head on with communications like:

### **Port of Oakland says no to business as usual**

**CHANGE NEEDED AS WEST COAST RECOVERY BEGINS.**

Local electeds to those serving in Congress thanked us for our consistent communications.

Port of Oakland influenced local and industry coverage of the story as evidenced by the morning headlines. The Port made sure the impacts of the labor/management dispute and cargo slowdown were covered and that the Port was providing good information to those who needed it. The Port of Oakland became a great resource for the story as evidenced by the calls from national and international publications.

On a lighter note during the holidays (Dec. 2014) the local CBS TV affiliate, when reporting on congestion at Southern California ports, said in one of the news clips that the Port of Oakland "saved Christmas".

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