

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:

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| 1. AAPA Awareness Initiative Messaging _____ | 8. Overall Campaign X |
| 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: Internal communications program
 Name of Port: Port of Tacoma
 Port Address: P.O. Box 1837, Tacoma, WA 98406
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 Telephone: 253-383-9462 Email Address: rkoon@portoftacoma.com

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.

**Overall campaign
Internal communications program
Port of Tacoma**

Summary statement

In April 2012, the Port of Tacoma unveiled a new mission and a 10-year strategic plan with six major goals. One of those goals is to "Increase Organizational Capabilities." That goal highlights the fact that "Port customers and the community experience the Port through interactions with its employees."

The goal also focuses on "...creating tools that efficiently serve customers, staff and the community and increasing ownership and pride in the Port." The plan also cites the need to "Improve communication and information at the Port" in order to "enhance employee engagement."

The internal communications program highlighted in this entry was developed to help the Port achieve the goal of increasing its organizational capabilities as well as enhancing employee engagement.

While the Port already had a variety of internal communications tools and events in place, this focused effort was the first time that a major internal communications program was developed in such a comprehensive, purposeful and strategic way.

In May 2012, an internal communications survey was sent to all 250 Port employees to establish baseline data in areas such as:

- How the Port's various existing internal communications efforts and methods were working,
- How employees preferred to receive information, and
- What the employees' level of awareness were on various issues and topics.

The results of the survey, which was completed by 118 employees, helped shape the new internal communications program and to ultimately support the Port's mission and goals.

That same survey was sent to Port employees in mid-2013 and mid-2014, giving us data on the effectiveness of our key communications tools and information and see the overall progress of the internal communications program. The annual survey results also help us understand which of our internal communications efforts and tools are most effective, and which ones need improvement.

The survey results (highlighted in Tab 2) show the program is making significant progress not only in improving communication and information at the Port, but also in enhancing employee engagement.

Campaign details

1. *What were the specific communications challenges or opportunities of the internal communications program?*

Many of the challenges and opportunities were underscored by the results of the first employee survey on internal communications in 2012. Here are three examples:

- Only 63 percent of employees “Agreed” or “Strongly agreed” that they understood what our customers expect of the Port.
- Only 63 percent “Agreed” or “Strongly agreed” that they understood what our community expected of the Port.
- Only 50 percent of employees “Agreed” or “Strongly agreed” that the Port’s management team was doing a good job of keeping employees informed about what’s going on at the Port.

The 2012 survey results also provided information on how employees preferred to receive communication, and which existing communication tools they found most worthwhile:

- The top two ways that employees preferred to receive information was: email and meetings.
- A total of 87 percent of employees found value in attending various Port employee meetings (e.g. Wild Wednesday).
- A total of 84 percent of employees preferred to receive information electronically, while 15% of employees preferred to get their information in print.
- Although 42 percent of employees were using social media, only 25 percent wanted to get more information about the Port through social media.

Through the 2013 and 2014 annual survey results, we also receive a variety of comments from employees on specific issues and topics they want to learn more about, which we use to improve the various elements of our internal communications program. For example, many of the topics for brown bag sessions, Wild Wednesday meetings, and articles that appear in Connections and Port Updates come from these employee comments.

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

The Port of Tacoma mission statement is: “Deliver prosperity by connecting customers, cargo and community with the world.” Along with that, the Port also has a 10-year strategic plan, which focuses on “People. Partnerships. Performance.”

One of the six goals of the strategic plan is to “Increase Organizational Capabilities.” One aspect of that goal focuses on enhancing employee engagement. It also states that one of the four ways to achieve that is to “Improve communication and information at the Port.” This internal communications program helps support that goal as well as the Port’s overall mission.

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

Part of the challenge of internal communications at the Port of Tacoma is the fact that the Port's 250 employees do not all work in the same location. Instead, they are scattered geographically at four separate work centers, which are up to five miles apart from each other. The four centers are: Administration, Maintenance, Security and Customer Service. About 100 employees work in Administration and 100 employees work in Maintenance. The other employees work in Security and Customer Service.

In addition, not all employees have access to a computer or email during their work day. This meant that our internal communications efforts needed to take a multi-media approach—in a variety of print and electronic forms.

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

There are eight key internal communications tools that comprise the main focus of the Port of Tacoma's internal communications program. Many of these tools were developed in 2013. Although others existed earlier, the results of the 2013 and 2014 internal communications surveys helped us further refine and improve the focus of these tools.

Here are the eight key components of this campaign:

1. **Connections:** This monthly internal newsletter was a new tool launched in October 2012. A total of 125 copies of each issue of the newsletter are printed and distributed to each of the Port's four work centers. Electronic versions of each issue are posted on the My Port (the Port's intranet site) and promoted on PNN (The Port's digital signage monitors). Past copies of the newsletter are also archived and are available to employees on My Port.
(See sample issues—Tab 3)
2. **Port News Network (PNN):** There are six large-screen digital signage units that display information on Port news items, upcoming events and photos of various Port activities. Initially the PNN monitors were only in the Administration and Maintenance work center. Because a wider range of content has been developed for PNN use (e.g. information on safety, health and security), additional PNN monitors have been added at Security and in Customer Service. A web link also allows our two staff members on the East Coast and in Japan to view the PNN content as well. PNN has proven to be a very effective way to help keep employees at all of our work centers better informed about the Port and more connected with other employees.
(See sample PNN messages—Tab 4)

3. **Port Update:** Since 85 percent of employees said they preferred to receive their information electronically, this new weekly email communications tool was developed. The Port Update is sent to all employees every Monday, and also printed and posted in Port work centers where employees do not have computer access. It provides employees with timely updates on key events and developments happening around the Port, as well as a calendar of upcoming Port employee events and Port-sponsored community events.
(See *sample—Tab 5*)

4. **My Port:** While this internal Port employee intranet site existed in 2012, additional content has been added to focus on key communications efforts and strategic Port initiatives. The Announcements and Employee Planning Calendar sections of the My Port home page are two of the key places where information on internal communications topics, issues and events are posted.
(See *My Port home page—Tab 6*)

5. **Brown bag sessions:** These informal lunchtime meetings have been held periodically for many years at the Port. A total of 26 brown bag sessions were held in 2013, which turned out to be too many sessions in a single year. In 2014, there were nine brown bag sessions attended by a total of 155 employees.

So far in 2015, a total of seven brown bag sessions have been held, with 118 employees attending. We receive written feedback from many of the attendees, which also gives us ideas for future sessions. One of our most popular brown bag topics is when Port staff who attend the annual Trans-Pacific Maritime (TPM) Conference give highlights of what they learned. The March 26, 2015 brown bag session on TPM was rated as a “4” or a “5” (“5” for “Outstanding”) by all the brown bag session attendees who filled out a feedback form.

In addition to Port staff, outside industry experts lead some of the sessions:

- Big ships, big alliances--Led by Bill Mongelluzzo, Journal of Commerce
- Customs Broker 101--Led by Gwen Salisbury (a Port of Tacoma tenant)

Some of these sessions highlight various Port departments and their activities. For example, a group of Port Maintenance employees gave a brown bag session about the various types of work they do. The session had a “show-and-tell” component to it—such as holding up a large piece of metal that was actually a fuse from one of the Port’s container cranes. Other brown bag sessions are led by Port customers, service providers and industry experts. Attendance for each of these sessions ranges from 10 to 50+ people.

When available, PowerPoint presentations used by the speakers are also posted on My Port and mentioned in the weekly Port Update email, so employees can still learn from the session even if they were unable to attend it in person.
(See *photos of the session about the Port’s maintenance team—Tab 7*)

- 6. Customer Connections tours:** Started in March 2013, this program is designed to get our employees more “connected” to our customers. Small groups of employees visit the work locations of various customers and get a briefing and/or tour of their facilities and overview of their operations.

Here are some of the companies that Port employees have visited on these Customer Connections tours: a Tacoma-based candy company (Brown & Haley) that exports products through the Port, a cold storage facility, a shipbuilding company, a short-line railroad and a pasta manufacturing facility. Depending on the space limitations of the facility, between 10 and 20 employees go on each these tours. About 10 Customer Connections tours are held each year.

In addition to learning more about Port customers and how the Port is connected to these customers, another value in these tours is that employees get to know other Port employees on the tour a little better.

(See tour photos and sample Customer Connections feedback—Tab 8)

- 7. Wild Wednesday meetings:** These “all-employee” meetings are held about four times a year. Each of these events highlights some of the Port’s major business initiatives and priorities. On average, about 100 employees attend these meetings, which are held in either the Administration building or the Maintenance building (the Port’s two largest work centers).

John Wolfe, the Port’s CEO, usually plays the lead role in each Wild Wednesday meeting. In addition, we have also worked to give greater visibility to other members of the Port’s senior management team, who are not seen as often by many of the Port’s employees. Each of these meetings is one hour long. If time allows, some type of team competition (e.g. JEOPORTY) is also included.

(See Wild Wednesday photos and JEOPORTY quiz questions—Tab 9)

- 8. Maiden Voyage Program (MVP):** This program started in 2012, when the Grand Alliance shipping consortium started calling at the Port and brought 30 ships to Tacoma for the first time. Like many ports, we hold a special ceremony to take a group onboard the ship and welcome the ship’s captain and vessel to the Port of Tacoma. While these activities are traditionally done by members of the Port’s marketing group, the scope was expanded to give a broader range of employees the chance have an MVP experience.

For the majority of employees, their MVP outing is the first time they have ever been in a shipping terminal or on a large ship. It has also proven to be a good opportunity for employees to get to know each other better during the MVP experience, as well as meet ship crew members from around the world.

Between five to 10 MVP outings take place at the Port each year.

(See photos of MVP outings—Tab 10)

Rod Koon, the Port's senior manager, communications, leads the Port's internal communications program. His work includes writing and editing the monthly Connections newsletter and the weekly Port Update emails. He also does photography and graphic design for the Connections newsletter and PNN slides. A variety of Port staff members also provide ideas and information on key topics highlighted in various aspects of the program.

Rod also arranges the program and speakers for each Wild Wednesday and MCs those events. In addition, he coordinates all of the Customer Connection tours and brown bag sessions.

Aside from staff time, the only major budget impacts associated with this internal communications program are:

- **Connections:** The Port hired a freelance graphic designer in 2012 to develop the design template for the Connections newsletter, with a graphic "look" consistent with the Port's new brand. That fee was about \$1,200. Other than that initial expense, every issue of Connections is designed by Rod Koon and printed in-house.
- **PNN:** Over the last two years, some of the large PNN monitors have been replaced and upgraded. The most recent screen installation cost \$1,265 (including mounting hardware). The total investment for all six of the screens is estimated at about \$7,600.

In addition, the ongoing annual subscription cost for the streaming video package that "feeds" each of PNN monitors is about \$2,200. The company also provides technical support as needed. The vendor we use is StrandVision (www.strandvision.com). One advantage of StrandVision is that content can be added from remote locations, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- **Wild Wednesday:** On average, about \$300 is spent to purchase snacks, refreshments and a few prizes for each Wild Wednesday meeting.