

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 _____ |
| 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 _____ X |

Please check the appropriate box:

- CATEGORY 1 CATEGORY 2 CATEGORY 3

Entry Title Port of Hueneme Website - www.portofhueneme.org

Name of Port Port of Hueneme

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Contact Name/Title Will Berg/PIO or Rene Negron/Managing Partner-Brandstrata

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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.
- 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

AAPA's 2015 Communications Awards Program Submission

Port of Hueneme Website Project www.portofhueneme.com

With the development of the Port of Hueneme's strategic business plan and its rebranding and renewed communication strategy of 2013, the new Port website has become a significant communications channel for the engagement of its three key audience segments: Community, Industry Partners, and Internal Partners.

The updated site represents a vast improvement over the previous site, which had become outdated and unable to reflect the Port's renewed vision and mission. Clearly, The Port required a new website that could serve as a communications hub and provide rich, valuable content to support the Port's strategic objectives.

To fulfill this critical goal, the Port engaged the services of Brandstrata, the branding and communications firm responsible for the Port's rebranding strategy.

Brandstrata developed and delivered the website over an eleven month time span, the process encompassing strategy, design, development, and deployment. The new site launched in November of 2014.

Results provided by various measurement tools have exceeded expectations. Overwhelmingly positive audience feedback has validated the efficacy of the website strategy and the extent of audience impact. Although the site has been operating for a brief period, the current trajectory indicates its performance will surpass short-term milestones.

What are/were the entry's specific communications challenges or opportunities?

Prior to 2012, The Port of Hueneme, as with many smaller ports, had limited industry awareness and virtually no transparency of communications with its community. These limitations not only hampered business development, but restricted The Port's ability to garner community support for various Port-related programs and initiatives. With the hiring of a new CEO in March of 2012, the Port launched many strategic initiatives design to raise awareness of and generate support for the Port's high value.

In 2013, the Port of Hueneme completed a brand re-development process initiated to support the Port's strategic plan and facilitate smart growth and community engagement. A new logo and messaging were developed to stimulate broader awareness of The Port, improve competitive differentiation, and better reflect the Port's position as a leading niche market port.

With the new identity and strategic plan in place, the key challenge was determining the optimal approach for reaching and engaging with its wide variety of stakeholders and audiences. This vast group included business partners, community and industry leaders, residents, staff, and prospective customers.

The obvious and most effective communications solution would be the revamping of the Port's static and outdated website. Needed was an engaging portal that would inform the community and establish the Port's position as a vital commercial trade gateway that has a significant economic impact on the region.

The initial communications challenge was overcoming the underlying perceptions of Port transparency, and positioning the Port's value to the community and the maritime industry. Ongoing measurement of audience awareness and perception of the Port would be critical for the refinement of the website and communications strategy.

The primary objectives of the new website were:

- Increasing overall community awareness and perception of the Port as a key economic engine.
- Increasing industry awareness and perception of the Port as a vital West Coast gateway for niche cargo.
- Establishing The Port as a trusted and open resource for maritime information in the region.

In order to achieve these goals, these critical factors would have to be addressed:

- Website content must provide significant value and present a relevant image to the various audience segments that interact with the site.
- The Port must maintain transparency and reliability in the delivery of web content.
- The Port must utilize other digital, social, and traditional communication channels to drive traffic to the website.
- Content must be ever-changing to create continued interest and engagement.

How does the communication used in this entry complement the organization's overall mission?

The Port of Hueneme's stated vision/mission is as follows: "to be the preferred port for specialized cargo and provide the maximum possible economic and social benefits to our community and industries served, and to operate as a self-supporting port that enforces the principles of sound public stewardship maximizing the potential of maritime-related commerce and regional economic benefit."

The Port website will be the key communication channel for realizing this vision because:

- It offers the Port "reach" to its target audiences, both domestic and overseas.
- It is a distribution channel of real-time information that's relevant to the industry and the community.
- It provides the community and trade partners a current and accurate depiction of the Port's operations, financial efficiency, environmental stewardship, and economic impact.
- Coupled with social media, it provides an open forum for the exchange of information and social perspectives.

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

Initial goals were set forth to realize The Port's vision/mission and its strategic plan. These goals centered on establishing The Port as a respected source of truth and transparency for all matters relating to local maritime business. Additional goals were set forth to emphasize the Port's value to the community and the industries it serves. To achieve these objectives, the Port website needed to reach specific milestones:

1. Website layout and navigation designed to facilitate the optimal user experience for each of the three key audience segments.
2. Website content and messaging designed to resonate with users and position the Port's value proposition as it relates to each audience segment.
3. A site look and feel that employed new branding elements: logo, messaging tone, brand personality, and signature graphics.
4. Consistent messaging, graphics, and content that complemented all other communications materials circulated by the Port.
5. Up-to-date site content that satisfied changing requirements and maintained the interest of the primary audiences.
6. Sufficient social and audience interaction to keep site relevant, engaging, and accountable to all key audience segments.
7. Site awareness and traffic that increased at an exponential rate.

The Port's clearly identified and defined their 3 target audiences for the website project. Those key segments are as follows:

Primary Audience Segments

- *Community*: Defined as Local and County Residents, Community Leaders, Local Businesses, and Local Government.
- *Industry Partners*: Defined as Customers, Prospects, and Business Partners (Navy, Logistics, Shipping Lines, BCO's, NVO's)

Secondary Audience Segment

- *Internal Partners*: Defined as Staff, Labor, and Harbor Commissioners.

Community and Industry Partners were the main targets of the site's initial release, while the Internal Partner segment will be addressed through the current development of a Port Intranet site. Future plans for the website include a Partner Portal for Port customers and business partners.

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

The Port of Hueneme employed the branding and communications firm Brandstrata to implement the design and development of its new site. Brandstrata practices a 5-step methodology for site implementation: Discovery, Design, Development, Deployment, and Success.

The Discovery Phase involves a thorough analysis of the competitive environment, as well as an assessment of the Port's business and technical requirements in order to define specifications and timing ("roadmap") for the entire project.

Once the website project kicked off with Discovery, Brandstrata gathered essential information through meetings and discussions with the Port's core communications team. These interactions gave Brandstrata an opportunity to review and define the functional and technical requirements, user stories, and brand/creative direction. A primary goal at this point was defining the most effective approach to website design, development, and implementation, as well as insuring these priorities aligned with the Port's strategic communications objectives. Brandstrata initiated a technical review of the existing site, as well as competitor/comparable sites in order to assess the optimal approach to look and feel, positioning, and user experience. The information gathered was assembled into a Project Roadmap that took into account technical and user experience requirements, project timeline, and schedule.

With Discovery data as a foundation, the Design phase launched with an analysis of the current information architecture to pinpoint the optimum approach to creative development of site wireframes and page design direction. The site would be designed to support SEO best practices.

In order to create a fully responsive website design that adapted to the optimal viewing environments of smartphones, tablets, and desktops, Brandstrata selected a WordPress responsive website template.

With a new template in place, the Port collaborated with Brandstrata to implement the remaining key tactics of the Design strategy. During this phase, various discussions were conducted, while rounds of Sitemap development took place to determine the optimal site navigation and user experience. Once these design elements were approved, the creative team started on the Wireframe designs and the refinement of the optimal layout and on-page user experience.

To conclude the Design phase, Brandstrata developed key visual elements (color, font, images and graphics) and site branding.

To provide the optimal visual impact, the Port commissioned a professional photographer to capture vivid images of The Port and most importantly, the people that make cargo move.

With the design and navigation approved, Brandstrata launched a Development phase that involved integrating the design theme with WordPress, as well developing custom

features and functionality. Features included Vessel Schedule, user-friendly Meeting Schedule, real-time Weather and Tide conditions, and media gallery.

The next key activity was the Deployment phase. During this stage, Brandstrata conducted a QA testing of the site, while Port staff involved themselves in user acceptance testing and website refinements. At this point, key data was migrated to the new site, and a launch plan and timing strategy were implemented.

Finally, the Port launched the Success phase of the project. This stage drew on both traditional and web marketing tools to create awareness and drive traffic to the new site. The Port Communication Team collaborated with Brandstrata to formulate a social media strategy for Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. This effort was intended to build awareness and stimulate demand for the new website. The Port also leveraged the popularity of its annual Banana Festival (over 12,000 attendees) to introduce the new website and encourage social engagement through various contests and giveaways.

With a development timeline of 44 weeks, the website officially launched in November of 2014.

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

The Port of Hueneme's new website has been live only 5 months. Yet audience feedback and engagement levels have exceeded expectations.

To track and assess the website's success and fulfillment of key objectives, various measurement tools have been deployed. These advanced tools include: Google Analytics, as well as mechanisms that monitor The Port's social media sites, website comment forms, and blog posts.

Google Analytics has measured a 200% increase in new visitors, an over 300% increase in duration of website visits, and a 250% increase in page views.

Our social media monitoring has validated the public's positive response to the website, contributing to a phenomenal 400% increase in Facebook likes and an over 550% increase in social visits. In addition, feedback from website comment forms and the Port's blog also have been overwhelmingly positive.

Although the new website is still in its infancy, unsolicited positive feedback from the community and the maritime industry verify its ability to engage key audiences. A community and industry survey is scheduled for distribution at the end of 4th quarter. By capturing additional relevant data, the survey will assist us in measuring progress and will suggest future refinements to the website.