

2016 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. Advertisements – Single | _____ | 8. Overall Campaign | _____ |
| 2. Advertisements – Series | _____ | 9. Periodicals | _____ |
| 3. Annual Reports | _____ | 10. Promotional/Advocacy Material | _____ |
| 4. Audio-Only Presentations | _____ | 11. Social/Web-Based Media | _____ |
| 5. Awareness Messaging | _____ | 12. Special Events | _____ |
| 6. Directories/Handbooks | _____ | 13. Videos | _____ |
| 7. Miscellaneous | __X__ | 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: LiveChat – (Live Customer Support)
 Name of Port: Port of Oakland
 Port Address: 530 Water Street, Suite 324, Oakland, CA 94607
 Contact Name/Title: Marilyn Sandifur/Port Spokesperson
 Telephone: 510-627-1193 Email Address: msandifur@portoakland.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 and measurable terms the situation leading up to creation of this entry.
 - Briefly analyze the major internal and external factors that need 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 used for this entry?**
 - Describe the entry's goals or desired results.
 - Describe the entry's objectives and list specific, measurable milestones needed to reach its goals.
 - Identify the entry's primary and secondary audiences in order of importance.
- What actions were taken and what communication outputs were employed 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 entry's 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.

Project Name: LiveChat – Online Customer Support

Port of Oakland – Miscellaneous category



Summary

Following a Port of Oakland public satisfaction survey, we learned that we were positively perceived. However, there was a lack of understanding about the agency's structure and its operations. We determined that one of the strategic ways we could address this issue was to engage more effectively with customers and community who come to our website.

We implemented live support (LiveChat) on the Port of Oakland website to "chat" with visitors in real time, educate them about the Port and provide them with the specific information they are seeking. Previously we relied on an email web form inquiry that was underutilized. We may be the first Port in the US to introduce live, online support.

LiveChat has increased our daily website customer engagement four-fold. The online conversations allow us direct access to our customers and community to increase their knowledge about the Port of Oakland. With more than 3,000 chats since the start of the project we consider this a major success.



2014 Port of Oakland Community Satisfaction Survey

Key Findings from a Regional Public Opinion
Survey Conducted May 13-23, 2014

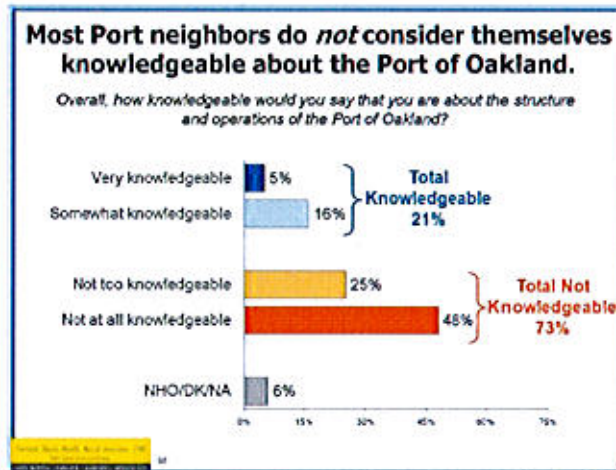
Fairbairn, Madsen, Madsen, Metz & Associates - FMM
Public Opinion Research & Strategy

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1) Communications Challenge/Opportunity

We conducted a survey that informed us that the public, although seeing the Port in a positive light, did not really understand the Port of Oakland agency and its business operations.



The challenge: Educating the public about the Port in a cost effective manner that can deliver quick results.

The opportunity: Enhance Port's online public engagement with key audiences and demonstrate government transparency.

The Port developed three goals:

- 1) Increase public engagement
- 2) Improve customer service through educating and information sharing
- 3) Demonstrate Port transparency

Tactic – Implement an online, pro-active, live support software program staffed with Port communications professionals to engage visitors and provide information in real time.

Internal Factors: This was not in the budget as it was an innovative solution. Staff time commitment, senior management approval, cross-divisional support, staff training on software, and project costs all had to be taken into consideration prior to implementation.

External factors: Prompting website visitors to use the new on-line LiveChat program.

2) Connection to the Port of Oakland's Overall Mission

The Port of Oakland drives trade and transportation through the Oakland Seaport and Oakland International Airport to support the local economy and deliver community benefits.

Wide-ranging LiveChat inquiries include topics like Port jobs, leasing property, registering trucks for Port access, and asking about terminal operations like night and weekend gates.

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These real-time engagements and responses link directly to generating more public support for the Port's activities, promoting business objectives, and enabling more efficient operations.

The more knowledgeable the public is about the Port of Oakland's structure and operations, the more supportive they can be of our efforts to deliver significant public benefits in the form of jobs and major economic impact.

3) Planning and Programming

The Port of Oakland Communications team held multiple planning meetings over a period of two months (October/November 2015) with two other divisions - Social Responsibility and IT.

The cross-divisional team's goal was to determine a strategy of how the website could be used more effectively to reach out to Port customers and the community within the first couple of weeks and then implement the necessary steps.

Strategy - The team chose a pro-active, innovative strategy. They wanted to initiate live conversations on the Port website to actively engage visitors.

Objectives – A) Select a customer-service type software normally used in sales that would deliver quick, positive results for enhancing customer and community engagement through the Port's website. After reviewing three different applications, the team selected LiveChat as it best met the Port's needs: inexpensive, simple to implement, and user friendly for web visitors and Port staff. It also included an automated archive feature and metrics which added value to the program. Conversations can be reviewed for tone and information and engagement activity can be measured. B) Implement the program.

LiveChat is a message that pops up on any page of the Port of Oakland website when a visitor first arrives and asks how we can help. The visitor can choose to engage or close the message box. It's always available should the visitor want to connect later during their website visit.

The primary audience for this program is customers and the secondary audience is community.

LiveChat launched on the Port of Oakland website in December 2015 on schedule.

4) Actions Taken and Outputs

Internal Communications: Prior to the launch internal communications were initiated to ensure acceptance of the project by senior staff and executives with one-on-ones and group meetings. Internal communications to the entire Port staff were conducted through emails and division/department meetings to set the stage for cooperation across the Port for staff to be responsive to inquiries from the LiveChat team when seeking specific information for customers.

External communications: These were launched to promote LiveChat including a press release, social media posts, and a large electronic billboard ad on the SF/Oakland Bay Bridge route where more than

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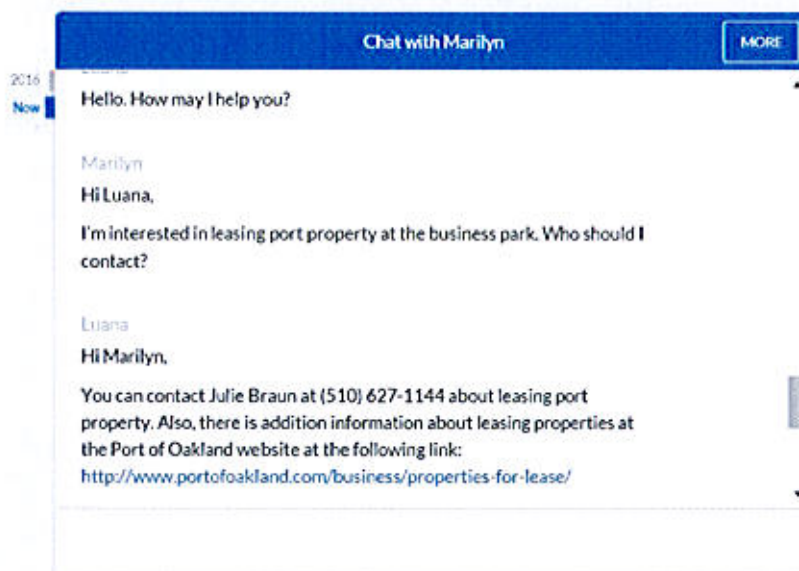
300,000 drivers a day can see it as they cross the span. (The Port owns the billboard so no cost is involved except for the artwork which was only a couple of hundred dollars to create.)

Training: Prior to the official launch, Port staff was briefed on the program. This took little time as it is a simple and easy software program to use.

Budget: The annual cost of the LiveChat program is \$2,832.

Staffing: Six existing staffers respond to the inquiries Monday through Friday during normal business hours. This meant no new hires and the work would be routinely integrated into the daily schedule. LiveChat is staffed by those who are used to communicating with the public and have a broad-based knowledge of the Port and its operations: two from Media & Public Relations, two from Community Relations, and two directors (Communications and Social Responsibility Divisions).

LiveChat launched on the Port of Oakland website in December 2015 on schedule.



5) Outcome and Evaluation

Prior to LiveChat the Port was using a simple email web form system to take in inquiries and respond. The number of inquiries ranged from 0-5 daily. With LiveChat we average 20 inquiries a day or about 100 per week. Since the program began we have responded to more than 3,000 LiveChats. This is four times the engagement we had previously with the web contact email system. This has well exceeded our expectations.

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Customers are using LiveChat to find out how they can track cargo, invest in port property at the seaport, clear customs or lease our land. As a result of LiveChat we've been able to directly connect the customer with the right contact.

For those seeking jobs we've been thanked by many for guiding them to our job listings and explaining how to apply for an open position. We've walked business owners through our small local business certification process on the web.

We're able to help truckers with registering for Port required programs. During the recent closure of one of our marine terminals we countered rumors with facts on LiveChat. We had the ability to directly communicate with truckers and reassure them that no cargo was leaving the Port of Oakland. They would simply be hauling cargo at a different terminal at the Oakland Seaport. When lines to enter a marine terminal would get long, we had a direct way respond to trucker inquiries and describe all the steps we were taking at the seaport to reduce wait times for truckers.

This has been a wonderful opportunity to educate the public about the Port's business lines and operations. We've received very positive external feedback with this program. Online customer support using LiveChat has proven to be an effective way for the Port of Oakland to directly reach out and communicate with customers and community live, dramatically increase our online engagement, and demonstrate the Port's transparency as a government agency by being so visibly responsive to our website visitors.

LiveChat can be seen on our website here: www.portoakland.com