2016 COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS PROGRAM

INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSION ENTRY FORM   6163

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   _____
2. Advertisements – Series   _____
3. Annual Reports   _____
4. Audio-Only Presentations   _____
5. Awareness Messaging   _____
6. Directories/Handbooks   _____
7. Miscellaneous   _____

8. Overall Campaign   _____
9. Periodicals   _____
10. Promotional/Advocacy Material   _____
11. Social/Web-Based Media   _____
12. Special Events   _____
13. Videos   _____
14. Visual-Only Presentations   _____
15. Websites   __X__

Please check the appropriate box:

☐ **CATEGORY 1**   x **CATEGORY 2**   ☐ **CATEGORY 3**

Entry Title: New Port Authority Website – www.toledoport.org

Name of Port: Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority

Port Address One Maritime Plaza, 7th Floor Toledo, OH 43604

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Telephone: 419-243-8251 Email Address: hkemler@toledoport.org

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.

8. **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.*

9. **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.*

10. **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.*

11. *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.*

12. **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.*

New Port Authority Website – www.toledoport.org

Summary

The Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority designed a new website (www.toledoport.org) to replace the previous platform that was created in 2011. Our objectives in designing the new website included:

- Complete new design of website that reflects Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority branding
- Make new website mobile-responsive
- Incorporate new Media Room where Port staff can upload news releases, articles, etc.
- Integrate up-to-date social media posts
- Merge existing ToledoSeaport.org within new ToledoPort.org
- Inclusion of the Port's virtual tour (TourThePort.com) within ToledoPort.org

Based on positive feedback from many individuals, the Port decided to submit the website for consideration in the AAPA's Communication Awards Program.

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.*

The purpose of redeveloping ToledoPort.org was to create a new look and feel, as well as reorganizing the design to better fit the growing content and the overall user experience to fit best practices. As technology continues to grow and evolve, the Port Authority needed to change as well to better communicate with their audience. The former website, ToledoPortAuthority.org, was not mobile responsive and could not adapt to different screen sizes for users who are on-the-go. This was not allowing those users to see content without having to scroll from side to side. The former site also had unclear navigation that made it difficult for users to find what they were looking for. In addition to unclear navigation, the site was loaded with text that also challenged user ability to scan and quickly find information. The Port Authority was aware that a total redevelopment had to be completed in order to reach our entire target audience and to become more user-friendly. The new ToledoPort.org launched on April 20, 2016 and was well received by all. Many positive comments prompted the Port Authority to enter this item in the 2016 AAPA Communications Awards Program.

– *Briefly analyze the major internal and external factors that need to be addressed.*

The small team who provided content and input in the development process faced several internal and external factors. Internally, the team was challenged with keeping the design and production cost low while still producing a high quality piece of marketing collateral. The Communications Manager elected to work with AVATAR, a local website development company who developed the previous version of ToledoPortAuthority.org and ToledoSeaport.org. The total cost for the redevelopment, integration and production of ToledoPort.org was $32,540.00. To help keep the Port's cost low, the Communications team provided all content and photos to AVATAR. Another internal challenge was narrowing content down to the point where all necessary information was included so that the website did not overwhelm the reader with lengthy paragraphs or busy graphics. The team wanted a clean, industrial and modern look with a nod to the Port's past. This was achieved by utilizing a layout that focused more on videos and images rather than text, along with the vintage sailor character holding the "Key to the Sea" on the footer of every webpage.

External challenges included producing a product that would stand out from other websites and engage users while on the site. The team focused on the mobile responsive aspect of the site to ensure content was being portrayed the same, no matter how it was being accessed. Another challenge was to ensure all new website content was accurate and up-to-date. We did this by working continuously with all departments of the Port Authority throughout the website redevelopment process.

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.*

The Toledo Lucas County Port Authority has heavily evolved over the years. When the Port Authority was created in 1955, it managed and operated only the Toledo Seaport. As time went on, the Port Authority acquired two airports, a train station, financing programs, a brownfield redevelopment program, an energy efficiency program, and several community outreach programs. The new site was created so that all of these very important programs, assets and services are included directly on the homepage of the new website. As a result, we are able to share up-to-date information about the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority right at the user's fingertips, without having them navigate throughout the entire site.

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

– *Describe the entry's goals or desired results.*

The main goal of the new Port Authority website was to provide up-to-date information in a user friendly manner via a mobile responsive website. We also wanted to integrate the former ToledoSeaport.org into the new Port Authority website. Over the past couple decades, the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority has managed two separate websites – one for the Port Authority and one for the Toledo Seaport. We felt that this was no longer necessary; therefore, we merged the two sites, in addition to the inclusion of the Seaport's Virtual Tour (www.tourtheport.com), so that our website users were able to find all the necessary information on the Port Authority in one location.

– *Describe the entry's objectives and list specific, measurable milestones needed to reach its goals.*

One of our objectives is to utilize the new website from tablets while in meetings with potential clients and partners. In the past, the Port Authority's finance and energy teams have typically printed off several documents to reference while meeting with potential clients; however, the new site allows them to go directly to the mobile responsive website and pull the information up on a tablet. This not only helps the Port Authority "go green" by not having to print multiple documents, but it also shows the potential clients that we are a forward thinking organization.

– *Identify the entry's primary and secondary audiences in order of importance.*

The primary audience for the website would be current and potential Port users (customers, tenants, clients, partners, etc.). Secondary audiences include teachers and students, the business community and anyone from the general public with an interest in the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority.

13. 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.*

The strategy was to include as many videos and photographs into the site in lieu of paragraphs of information. With technology ever-changing, the Port Authority is changing with it, so we continue to promote our services and programs through informational videos, photos, and updated marketing materials. Most individuals are very busy, so we want to make the time they spend on our website count by not having to navigate through a lot of text.

– *Specify the tactics used (i.e., actions used to carry out your strategies).*

The Port Authority hired a local drone videographer to capture several Port Authority assets that we wanted to convey within the first few seconds when visiting the website. This drone footage is only available when viewing the site on a desktop/laptop computer, but we feel that it pulls the viewer into the site and will entice them to navigate further.

— *Detail the entry's implementation plan by including timeline, staffing and outsourcing used.*

The Communications team met internally in May 2015 to begin discussing the need for an updated website. In June 2015, the Communications team sent out a Scope of Work to several website development agencies in the Toledo Region. The Port Authority received seven proposals, which were reviewed and scored by the Communications team in the following categories: project description/summary, proposed creative/design, organization portfolio, project timeline, project budget and references. In August 2015, the Communications Manager elected to work with AVATAR, a local website development company who developed the previous version of ToledoPortAuthority.org and ToledoSeaport.org. Over the next eight months, the Port Authority and AVATAR continued to work together to redevelop the new site. On April 20, 2016 the new site was launched.

14. **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.*

While no surveys were used, all feedback on the new website has been very positive. We have received several emails and phone calls congratulating us on the launching of the new site.

— *If possible, explain how this entry influenced target audience opinions, behaviors, attitudes or actions.*

We feel that the new website promotes the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority as a modern, customer-friendly organization within northwest Ohio. We also hope that by promoting our services and programs directly on the homepage itself, that we are able to see an increase in activity through our finance and energy programs, business development efforts and much more!