



AAPA COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS PROGRAM

North Carolina Ports

Retail Services Brochure

Classification: 10. Promotional Materials

Port Category: 2

SHORT, DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY OF YOUR ENTRY

Over the course of the past two years, NC Ports has completed a brand overhaul. It redesigned its logo, created an identity package, new website and awareness campaign.

NC Ports is submitting its new Retail Services 16-page brochure (headline: “Port of Competitive Advantage”), which was originally used at the Retail Industry Leaders Association Supply Chain Conference to create awareness for the many advantages NC Ports can offer North Carolina-based corporations and as an economic development tool for corporations seeking a site for operations in North Carolina.

1. WHAT ARE/WERE THE ENTRY’S SPECIFIC COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGES OR OPPORTUNITIES

In 2015, North Carolina State Ports Authority set aggressive growth goals for itself. However, the NC Ports brand was outdated and not indicative of a brand ready for growth. Leadership at NC Ports made a bold decision to jettison the current brand and undertake a complete brand overhaul. NC Ports knew they had a compelling point of differentiation and brand story to tell the market to drive growth. Additionally, there were many changes and new developments underway at the Port, such as infrastructure changes and investments to prepare for Post-Panamax vessels, a newly opened cold storage facility, and news of new intermodal rail lines connecting the Port to major transportation hubs in the state.

NC Ports attends the Retail Industry Leaders Association Supply Chain (RILA) conference each year. To generate interest for NC Ports at the show, the Port needed an overview piece to introduce its new brand and message to corporations with current ties to North Carolina or corporations who might consider North Carolina for their operations.

North Carolina is the ninth most populous state and is growing at a rapid rate. It is a prime state for corporations to build their operations, and there are many retailers with distribution and headquarters already in North Carolina. This creates a lot of opportunity for North Carolina Ports.

Equipped with a new brand identity, messaging strategy, exciting new developments and stories, North Carolina needed a package to take to RILA to showcase its new brand, capabilities and advantages.

2. HOW DOES THE COMMUNICATION USED IN THIS ENTRY COMPLEMENT THE ORGANIZATIONS'S OVERALL MISSION?

The mission of the North Carolina State Ports Authority is to enhance the economy of the State of North Carolina. The Ports Authority will be managed like a business, focused on the requirements of its customers. North Carolina's Ports are recognized for self-sustaining operations, environmental stewardship, highly efficient workforce, satisfied customers, and modern, well-maintained facilities and equipment.

North Carolina is a business-friendly state. The economic development partnership for the state of North Carolina aims to retain corporations in and attract corporations to North Carolina. The North Carolina Ports play an important role in economic development efforts to enhance the state's economy. Beyond location and convenience, the easier a port is to work with, the more desirable a state or site appears to corporations.

The messaging of this brochure tells a complete story of the mission of North Carolina Ports by covering the following content:

- NC Ports' brand promise of dedication to customer service and problem solving for its customers
- The port's efficiency at serving its customers and visitors
- New infrastructure investments and infrastructure changes to help the Port of Wilmington meet the needs of the Post-Panamax shipping industry
- Innovative new facilities available to customers, which support the industries in North Carolina. For instance, the new cold storage facility suits well with many of the pork and poultry exports from North Carolina
- Availability of current and future transportation options that will provide unprecedented access to its customers
- Shovel-ready sites for customers seeking to add new retail/distribution sites proximate to the Port of Wilmington, which directly contribute to the economy of North Carolina through jobs and tax revenues

3. WHAT WERE THE COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMPONENTS USED FOR THIS ENTRY?

Goals and Desired Results:

The goal of this promotional piece was create interest in North Carolina Ports and educate current customers on exciting new developments at the ports. The objectives of NC Ports were to:

1. Define and introduce the new NC Ports brand
2. Establish NC Ports as a legitimate player in the industry
3. Emphasize the differentiators (Customer Service, Efficiency/Productivity and Infrastructure Improvements)
4. Generate new leads

Since the initial use of this brochure was at a tradeshow, the desired outcome of a potential or current customer reading this brochure was to generate leads. This piece needed to inform and intrigue the reader enough for them to need to learn more about NC Ports. Additionally, this piece could be used by members of the NC Ports team to walk a potential customer through a particular advantages or offerings of North Carolina Ports.

The communications objectives of this piece were to

- provide an overview of the port's capabilities and location advantages
- highlight infrastructure investments and construction underway at the port
- showcase current transportation infrastructure plus future transportation services
- build equity for the port by listing major corporations/industries working with the port
- demonstrate the economic impact the port has on the State of North Carolina
- tell the NC Ports' story in a beautiful way

Audiences:

Primary

Logistics managers at Beneficial Cargo Owners and 3PLs (Third Party Logistics providers) in the Retail Industry.

- Awareness for NC Ports among carriers and BCOs was low; and it was low even among BCOs doing business in North Carolina. Decisions they make about ports of calls are very well thought out – it's a long process that takes into consideration everything from location, the actual cost at the port to available infrastructure, port congestion, customer service, etc. The ultimate total cost of doing business with a particular port drives the overwhelming majority of decisions (whether carrier or BCO), but the ease of working with a port can also play a role; and in some cases, be a tie breaker in the decision (as long as total cost is relatively similar). Given the complexity of choosing a particular port, once a decision is made, it sticks for a while. They need a lot of information to make a switch.

Secondary

Current Carrier and Beneficial Cargo Owners

- Carriers and BCOs enjoy doing business with NC Ports. They see the benefits from a customer service level, but they also need to be reminded of all that NC Ports has to offer and how they will help make them successful. The brochure needed to showcase all the benefits and changes happening at the ports to reassure them that NC Ports is going to be a major player in the market for years to come.

4. WHAT ACTIONS WERE TAKEN AND WHAT COMMUNICATION OUTPUTS WERE EMPLOYED IN THIS ENTRY?

Knowing brand awareness was low among NC Port's target audiences and NC Ports had a new, refreshed brand, NC Ports had to tell their story in a clear and intriguing way.

NC Ports engaged its advertising agency, HMM Agency to develop this piece. NC Ports and HMM determined the objectives of the piece, key advantages to include, new services, and stories to tell to create an outline for the brochure. Using the brand positioning and messaging developed during a brand awareness campaign plus insights garnered about the industry, copy was written tailored to the unique needs of the retail industry.

5. WHAT WERE THE COMMUNICATIONS OUTCOMES FROM THE ENTRY AND WHAT EVALUATION METHODS WERE USED TO ASSESS THEM?

This brochure was first distributed at the RILA Logistics Conference. Business developers used this piece with tradeshow attendees to tell the NC Ports story. Readers have been complimentary of the piece. Additionally, this piece has been used at other industry tradeshows, economic development events, and even in business development meetings.

The feedback from BCOs, carriers and even representatives from other states has been tremendous. The piece, in part, has been responsible for multiple leads and new container services showing interest in the Port of Wilmington.

Overall, the feedback has been complimentary of the new direction for the North Carolina Ports and the new level of professionalism credits their forward momentum and builds confidence in them as a brand and organization.