PORT OF STOCKTON - WWW.PORTOFSTOCKTON.COM

AAPA 2017 Communications Awards Program, Classification 15 – Websites

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A key part of the Port of Stockton's mission is to provide outreach and education to residents and businesses about the Port and the role it plays in the Stockton/San Joaquin County area. This includes information about the type and amount of cargo that flows through the Port as well as the economic impact that the Port has on the community. In addition, the Port wanted to share its deep commitment to environmental stewardship with the community at large. The Port also has a global maritime audience that we must communicate with in order to foster continued growth and business development. As a website is often the first point of contact with that audience, we wanted to ensure that appropriate and timely information was always available on the site.

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

We began to update the original website to include new information, new and easier navigation throughout the site, and the ability to make use of tools that are currently available, including access to videos on the website that are of interest to our audiences.

The biggest challenge we faced was the fact that the website has two distinctly different audiences. First, we want to communicate with our target audience of residents and businesses in the Stockton and San Joaquin area. The second audience is all those people and entities involved in maritime cargo movement. This includes not only our current business partners, but a global audience as well. As we're always looking to acquire additional business, we had to develop a site that addressed the needs of that global audience. So we created subsections that included information about our facilities, our foreign trade zone, tariffs and other important areas of the Port. We also provided an opportunity for companies to get a bid using an online request for bid/quote form without having to leave the website.

Another challenge we faced was to find a way to share the volume of information we had with our audiences without getting viewers bogged down trying to find specific information.

We created a website navigation system that had broad headers, which were then broken out by sub headers that provided specific navigation links to additional information.
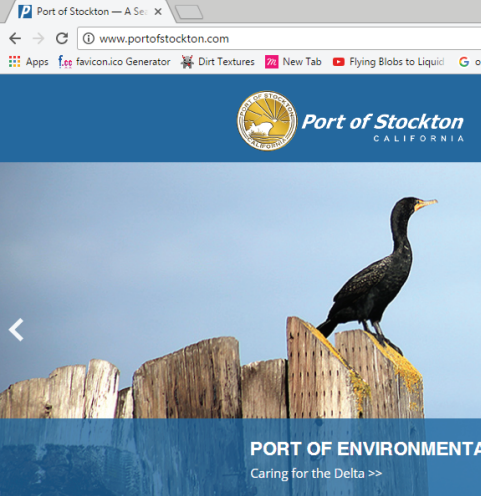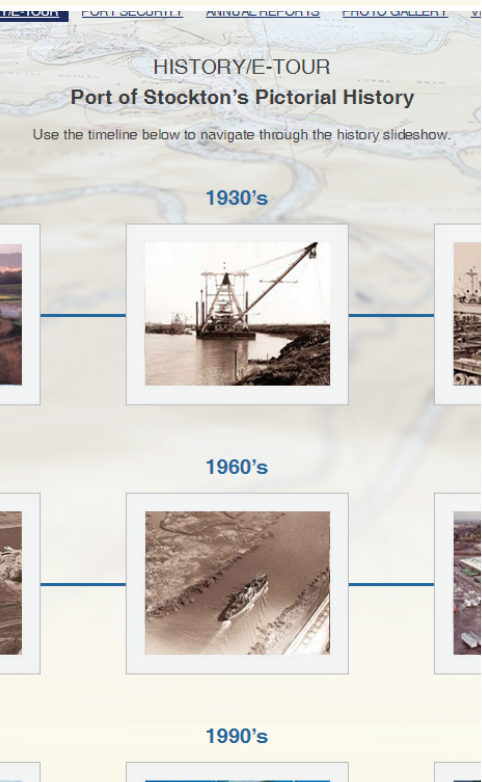
2. HOW DOES THE COMMUNICATION USED IN THIS ENTRY COMPLEMENT THE ORGANIZATION'S OVERALL MISSION?

The Port's mission includes several key components that help to connect with the community and its business partners, including providing excellent services to our current partners while attracting new business. In addition, ongoing education to area residents and businesses is an important role for the Port, as well as part of its overall mission statement.

For residents and businesses within the Stockton/San Joaquin area, we want to convey on an ongoing basis the economic impact that the Port plays on the local economy, as well as the types and amounts of cargo that pass through the Port each year. In addition, we want to showcase our environmental stewardship, and have a section devoted to the various programs we run in that regard.

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

Components of the website design included:

Analysis
We looked at the original website and found the areas that needed updating in order to make it easier for visitors to find the information that they're looking for, whether it was the public or global maritime shipping companies.

Design, Copy and Visual Content
The site underwent a total redesign, with simplified navigation and new architecture that helped our website stand out. The design used a simplified color palate, a search feature, type that was easy to read, copy that was both engaging and informational, and visual content including photos that kept visitors engaged on the site for longer periods of time.

Interactive
We wanted the site to be interactive and user friendly, so we made the "Ship Cam" more prevalent. People can watch ships come and go from the Port, as well as videos that people could watch right on the website showcasing various facts of the Port, including our environmental programs and community efforts. We also updated the "E-Tour" section, which included a photo gallery by date that disseminated historical information about the Port directly to our visitors. In addition, we included a feature that lets people email us directly from the website, encouraging dialogue with our audience. One of the other large overhauls of the site was to make it ADA compliant for all visitors.

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

We placed our website's URL in all of our external communications and advertisements, so people would know how to find us. We also placed banner ads on regional web networks letting people know that the new

website was up and running.

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

The best way to evaluate a website is by traffic - how many visitors visit the website each month. We compared the numbers from our original website to the newly revamped one, which showed a significant increase in visits, as well as time spent on the website:

Original Website Analytics
January 2016 – April 2016:
Sessions: 52,106
Page views: 127,186
Average Session: Duration 2:21

Revised Website Analytics
January 2017 – April 2017:
(Site launched on 11/1/16)
Sessions: 126,182
Page views: 341,373
Avgerage Session Duration: 3:40