Classification: 2 – Annual Reports

Port Category: 3

Submission: The Port of Virginia
FY2018 Annual Report
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The Port of Virginia’s FY2018 Annual Report offers an engaging and approachable overview of the port’s performance over Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018). The report featured information on our operations, our financial performance, community initiatives, updates on our $700 million infrastructure projects, our channel deepening efforts, and more.

Concise writing paired with compelling photography invite the reader to explore our port’s efforts and learn how the port plays a major role in the economic and environment health of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The print version of the report featured two special “pull-out” sections provide readers with a creative way to demonstrate the progress being made on the capacity-increasing projects at our two largest container terminals. The digital version was converted into a virtual page-turning experience to help further immerse the reader in the report.

Figure 1: Bold photography and powerful design are paired with easy-to-read copy to help tell the port’s story.

I. CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Our role as a catalyst for commerce means we have a responsibility to maintain and advance the health and promise of our port, our people, our communities, and our environment. And with the data we’re collecting, processes we’re implementing, and projects we’re spearheading, we’re proud to say we’re seeing great progress towards that end.
Our Annual Reports have continued to improve since we began sharing them in 2015, and overall anecdotal feedback has been positive. However, we have heard that previous reports provided a great deal of information that was too technical in nature, so it was important for us to be very mindful of the amount of copy we chose to include, as well as how it was written/explained. We dramatically reduced the amount of topics, and supported articles with graphics and images in order to be mindful of our readers.

II. SUPPORTING OUR MISSION & BUSINESS OPERATIONS

The Port of Virginia’s mission includes the phrase, “Above all, we will remain responsible members of the communities we serve, a valuable resource to our customers, an excellent place to work, and an economic engine for the region.”

The Annual Report provides us with an engaging format to demonstrate our commitment to environment, operational, and economic sustainability by educating our wide variety of audiences about our efforts and sharing demonstrable results. Examples shared in the report include:

“We will remain responsible members of the communities we serve…”

• The port gave away thousands of water bottles and cozies, along with hats and vests to our motor carrier partners during National Truck Driver Appreciation Week.

“…a valuable resource to our customers…”

• The port is investing more than $1 billion to improve land and water infrastructure to better accommodate Ultra Large Container Vessels (ULCVs)

“…an excellent place to work…”

• More than one-third of port colleagues participated in at least one development program during FY18.

“…and an economic engine for the region.”

• The port helped generate 5,00 new jobs in FY2018.
• New and expanding port customers invested more than $700 million in expansion initiatives throughout the Commonwealth.

III. PLANNING & PROGRAMMING COMPONENTS

Creating the report requires a great deal of planning. The major components include writing, editing, design, production, and distribution.
After working with advertising agency Meridian Group for the past two reports, The Port of Virginia chose to bring nearly the entire process in-house for the FY18 Annual Report. The port selected Meridian to draft initial copy for each article, but all editing and graphic design was performed by the port’s Marketing and Communications team members.

The report was inserted into a mid-November issue of “Inside Business” a weekly regional business publication and sent to its 8,000 subscribers. Further, port colleagues in our Government Affairs, Economic Development, and Sales teams sent links to the web-based version of the report to port customers, partners, and stakeholders.

IV. ACTION PLAN & OUTPUTS

After working with advertising agency Meridian Group for the past two reports, The Port of Virginia chose to bring nearly the entire process in-house for the FY18 Annual Report. The port selected Meridian to draft initial copy for each article, but all editing and graphic design was performed by the port’s Marketing and Communications team members.

We held our initial meeting with Meridian in May 2018 to discuss the overall direction of the copy and to determine the articles to be written. Our graphic design team created the “visual language” for the report in May as well. Also, we knew we had to wait for our financials to be verified and certified before including them in the report – which takes place in September, so articles were delivered to the port in July and layout was complete in August. Once the financials were verified, we were able to plug in the final numbers, and send the files to the printer to ensure we met their October deadline. The report was inserted into a mid-November issue of “Inside Business” a weekly regional business publication and sent to its 8,000 subscribers.
Bold imagery and plain language help readers understand the impact the port has on its communities, the Commonwealth, and the country.

Graphic-supported captions help crystallize key information points.

Easy-to-understand timelines help readers understand the port’s plans for the future.
The FY2018 Annual Report was sent to approximately 8,000 subscribers of Inside Business. The report as sent to the nearly 7,000 contacts in the port’s Customer Relationship Manager software. We had 777 views of the report from that distribution – 11.1% of the audience.

You can find a link to our 2018 Sustainability Report here (http://www.portofvirginia.com/fy18-sustainability-report/).