

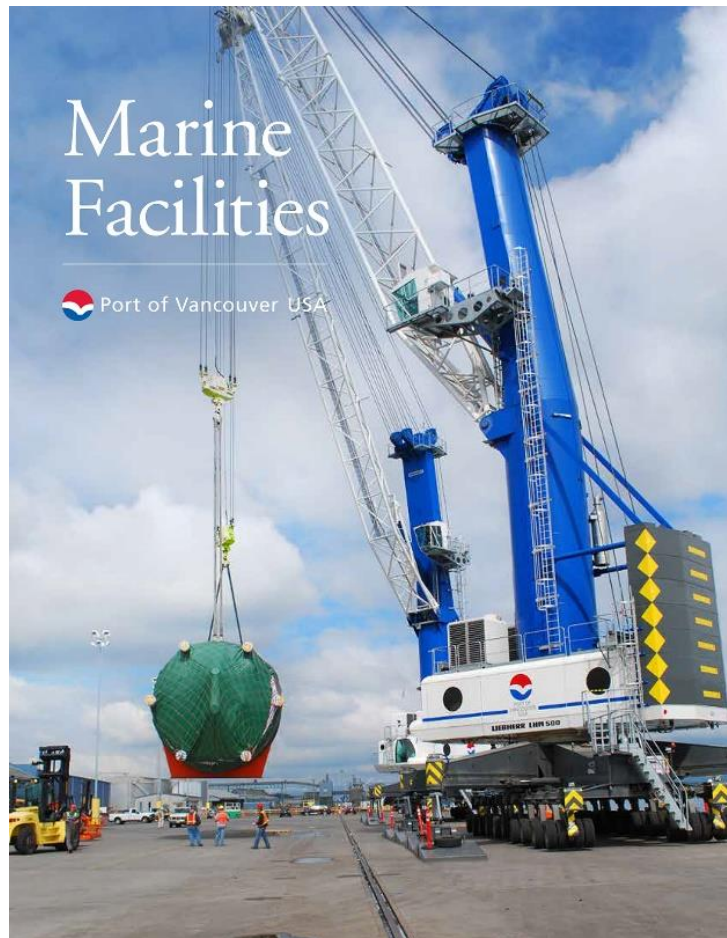
**AAPA 2020 Communications Award Program
Port of Vancouver USA**

Classification: Directories/Handbooks
Entry title: Marine Facilities Guide

Summary

There is intense competition among West Coast ports for marine customers. The Port of Vancouver USA developed a comprehensive *Marine Facilities Guide* to showcase the particular capabilities of each of our marine terminals and other unique competitive advantages that the Port of Vancouver USA provides. The guide features detailed aerial photos that give a realistic, bird's-eye view of the port's marine terminals and berths. It also includes a map detailing all port facilities and rail and river connections.

The primary audience for this piece is potential marine customers and marine industry professionals. In addition, the guide is also used as a logistics planning aid by port terminal operations staff as they coordinate with stevedores, longshoremen and truck drivers.



1. Challenges and opportunities

Not only do we have a name that sometimes gets our port confused with our Canadian colleagues to the north, but the Port of Vancouver USA is located 106 river miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. To get on the map, so to speak, with marine customers who might not look past the coastline when considering a port, our sales and marketing team needed an attractive and easy-to-understand facilities guide that highlights the outstanding combination of capabilities and advantages our location provides.

The *Marine Facilities Guide* was designed for the sales and marketing team to use in discussions with potential customers as well as a leave-behind piece that customers can refer to as they evaluate port options. We also produced a digital version of the guide that the sales team can instantly email to customers anywhere in the world.

We have a vast number of great things to say about our marine facilities, but we didn't want the guide to be a dense and overwhelming, text-filled book. Sales directors want to be able to explain particular aspects of the port themselves during sales consultations rather than have customers wade through pages of text. We intentionally limited the amount of copy in the guide, keeping text succinct and providing links to other resources that customers could follow for more detailed information. In the digital version of the guide, we also embedded clickable links that offer instant access to videos and other materials.

The port had never before produced a piece of collateral where the accuracy of every detail was as important as with this guide. This required considerable time and effort to check, double-check and triple-check all the numbers, figures, depths and distances. Due to the busy travel schedules of our expert sales team, it took almost a year to vet all the details in the guide with port operations and sales staff.

2. Incorporation of mission

The port's mission is to provide economic benefit to our community through leadership, stewardship and partnership in marine, industrial and waterfront development.

The *Marine Facilities Guide* is an instrumental tool for delivering on this mission by more effectively communicating the features, capabilities, expertise and geographic advantages that the Port of Vancouver USA offers marine customers. Simply put, when a new marine customer ships through the port, our local community benefits. This guide helps the sales and marketing team attract new marine customers.

3. Planning and programming components

Led by the port's marketing manager, the external affairs team had the goal of creating a piece of collateral that could be used by port sales staff and terminal operations staff to communicate the many advantages that the port offers marine customers. Over the course of a year, external affairs held meetings with sales and terminal operations staff to plan out the document, align priorities and objectives and ensure the accuracy of the content included.

The external affairs team worked with the port's agency partner to develop the outline, write the content, select photos and develop information that ran alongside maps in the brochure.

While the guide is designed to be used for several years, it also features a simple format that allows for ease of updating in the future, if needed.

4. Actions and communications outputs

This *Marine Facilities Guide* is used in a variety of ways, including:

- Sales tool to aid in customer conversations
- Leave-behind for domestic and international marine marketing trips
- Marketing collateral for potential marine customers
- Logistics aid for terminal ops staff and other terminal workers

The sales team also requested a digital version they could share via email with customers who were overseas or not easy to meet with. The digital version includes embedded links to videos showing the terminal at work, and downloadable sales sheets and brochures.

The overall budget, including development, printing and digital programming, was \$29,000.

5. Evaluation methods and communications outcomes

Internal port staff has been extremely pleased with the brochure as a sales, marketing and information tool. The guide has been instrumental in enabling the commercial and sales staff to communicate effectively with both existing and new customers. The visual aids that the guide provides enable sales staff to easily demonstrate in great detail the full spectrum of capabilities the port offers.

Since its completion the brochure has been used during marketing trips to India, Singapore, South Korea, China and Japan—as well as throughout Europe, Canada and the US. The brochure has also been helpful during discussions with government officials in Washington, DC, and our state capital, Olympia, Washington.

Supporting documents

- *Marine Facilities Guide* [<https://www.portvanusa.com/resources/marine-facilities-guide/>]
- *Marine Facilities Guide* Interactive version (PDF)