

## PERIODICALS

### *PORT LOG*

*Port Log* is the quarterly magazine for the Port of South Louisiana. Each issue serves as a mirror of our 54-mile district, mixing news, features and artwork to showcase the developments that are important to us and our region. Aside from our website, the magazine is our main method of marketing the Port and informing the stakeholders of innovation and progress. By producing a tangible piece of media, we are able to tell the stories that are most important to us outside of the digital realm, guaranteeing that our message is seen apart from the regular saturation of online news.

#### **1. 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.**

Until 2013, the Port of South Louisiana produced one magazine, *The Port Log*, which was largely constituted by a directory. However, after contracting with Renaissance Publishing, we made the decision to move to a quarterly format. In this way, we would be able to tell more stories at an increased frequency, which added both news and follow-up value to the features contained in the magazine; with our annual publication, it was essential that all writing be "evergreen," since it would not be refreshed for another year. Our publication now covers exciting developments and partnerships in the area as they unfold, along with updated and modern art direction.

Three issues a year (Spring, Summer and Fall) are dedicated exclusively to news and features, while our Winter issue supplements this material with both an alphabetical and categorical directory of our membership. The magazine is mailed to over 3,000 companies around the country, including maritime-related companies and site selectors, warehouse operators, political leaders, etc. It is also available on our website in an interactive format hosted by Issuu.com, also produced by our publisher.

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

Even though we are the largest tonnage port in the western hemisphere, we have always suffered from name recognition since our port is named "Port of South Louisiana," and not affiliated by name with a location such as New Orleans or Baton Rouge. Mailing a quarterly publication to 3,000 companies, four times a year, increases familiarity with our name on a consistent basis. This has certainly helped educate people on our Port.

Another challenge is the size of the Spring, Summer and Fall issues, which on average include 24 pages of editorial content, plus supplemental advertising. However, this hurdle has proven to be a blessing, as it challenges us, our editors and our publishers to decide which stories are most important at that time. The result is a concisely written publication free of filler content, with a larger fourth quarter edition that adds even

more editorial value.

## **2. 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 Port of South Louisiana's mission is to promote maritime commerce, trade and development and to establish public/private partnerships for the creation of intermodal terminals and industrial facilities. With *Port Log*, we are able to create a direct, lasting connection to existing and potential customers, and that connection is used to spread the word about what's new, interesting and relevant in the area where we live and do business. We highlight many companies located in our 54-mile, three-parish jurisdiction to display their capabilities and to promote area projects that have the potential to incite further economic development and stimulation. Each issue also includes our industrial map, which illustrates every industry located in our jurisdiction as well as sites that are available for industrial development, further supporting our mission of promoting and encouraging maritime commerce.

## **3. What were the communications planning and programming components used for this entry?**

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

The goal of this project was to produce an informative marketing piece that would provide detailed information on the activities and undertakings in our district. Each quarterly issue is another chance to posit ourselves at the forefront of the news cycle, ensuring that we engage our audience at least four times a year as opposed to one. We also strive to create a publication that serves as both a means for communication and an everyday resource to our members and business partners.

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

In order to actualize our mission of creating a publication that is both a news tool and an everyday resource, we and our publisher developed a plan that is twofold: the front half of the magazine is to be weighted by relevant news, objectives and developments. With this dedicated space, we make certain that all of our assets are capitalized on, showing our total intermodal capabilities with water, road, rail and air. In this front section, we also include a quality of life piece that is focused on humanizing the Port, as it's important to us include lite reading options alongside the nuts-and-bolts of our more technical, industrial stories. The second half of our publication is resource driven; here, we include our industry map, categorical directory and alphabetical directory, which can be referenced for business leads, contact information and site selection. Anyone looking for updates on the Port would find everything they need at the front of the book, while anyone looking for tools to engage with the Port and our partners need only flip to the back of the book.

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

Our audience is primarily composed of two groups: maritime companies such as shipping agents, freight forwarders, barge companies and site selectors. In addition, the publication is mailed to local, state and national political leaders and various other groups. By balancing news, light features such as leisure and travel, industry information and additional resources, we hope to engage not only those in the port and maritime industry, but also leaders and citizens in our region. Commerce at the Port of South Louisiana is important to everyday life in our jurisdiction, and we hope to illustrate the effects of our work by informing people outside of this industry about the initiatives we lead and support that influence day-to-day life.

**4. 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.**

While we have often employed the use of digital press releases and news circulation, the typical internet user is inundated with online media on a near-constant basis. We found that there were demonstrably superior results with printed media, and there is research to support this: according to the City and Regional Magazine Association, average time spent on a website is just 2 minutes, while average time spent reading a magazine is 20-25 minutes. Internet users also report that they trust printed media more than digital news, with 90% of adults reporting engagement with a printed magazine in the last six months — the highest percentage of all time. This information led us to increase our investment in print and to further our digital footprint with our magazine content. Our first strategy was to increase the frequency of our publication, to increase ad sales in the magazine for added investment for our business affiliates, and to circulate our magazines both physically and digitally to accommodate every reader's preferred format.

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

First, we worked with our publisher to decide how to best package a quarterly magazine. As previously detailed, each installment features news, light reading and resources. We dedicate at least 15 pages per issues to information about new improvements within the Port, and the development/expansion of private industry in the Port district. *Port Log* introduces the reader to high-level officials, commissioners and plant managers, as well taking it to the opposite end of the spectrum and showing the many benefits of living in south Louisiana. The strategy to add the "Around the Port" feature, detailing many fun activities and festivals that happen in this area annually, has allowed us to combine work and play all to appeal to non-maritime citizens and industry professionals alike.

In addition, Renaissance Publishing writes, designs and prints our *Port Log* to ensure quality of content and design. A member of the business development department at the Port supplies the publisher with well-thought out topics to feature in each issue,

along with the company and contact names that we want interviewed. What results is professionally written content that includes sources and attributions from prominent industry officials to add authority and value to each piece. Most of the pictures, including the cover, are either Port photos or are supplied by the company the story is written about. This is all coordinated through one person at our Port. All proofing, changes and recommendations are sent to the publisher from the Port. The Port gives the final approval of all copy included in the Port Log with the exception of advertising which is paid for by each individual company.

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

Each magazine is produced on a three-month timeline. The first two weeks of this time are primarily dedicated to solidifying an editorial plan that covers all necessary and relevant news items; it’s during this phase that we ensure the Port’s focus and mission are being brought to the forefront. From that point, three weeks to a month are dedicated to the writers, who communicate with Port officials, the publisher and all necessary sources to produce the stories we want in the style we want. Once a story is turned in to the publisher, it receives a first round of editing before coming to the Port, at which point we conduct an internal review and provide necessary edits. From there, any remaining time is spent to perfecting the layout and design of the issue; back and forth edits are conducted between the publisher and the Port before press time.

In the days leading up to the delivery and release of the magazine, the publisher creates a digital newsletter made up of that issue’s content. This is done in a digital marketing system called Robly, which goes beyond traditional newsletter systems to include automated intelligence. Using an email list provided by the Port, the publisher sends out the newsletter to all members and affiliates; after a pre-determined time, Robly will automatically resend the email campaign to users who didn’t open or interact with it the first time. The timing of each email delivery is also tailored to each user, based on the times that they most actively engage with their inboxes. Robly also uses A/B variants: for instance, we can send one version of the newsletter with Subject Line A to a quarter of our email list, while another quarter will receive the newsletter with Subject Line B. After monitoring results, Robly will send the remaining email subscribers the subject line that was most successful.

**5. 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.**

Data and evidence point to the success of both our print and digital campaigns. The number of advertisements in our magazine has increased by 21% since 2016, showing that businesses and organizations see the benefits that come from an affiliation with the Port of South Louisiana. By continuing to improve the quality of our magazine and the material in it, the perception of our Port will only get better, and more and more community leaders will want to establish relationships with us.

On the digital end, newsletter engagement has increased dramatically due to our AI technology; when promoting the Spring 2019 edition of the magazine, our initial open rate was 23.24% (5% above the industry standard for marketing emails) with a click rate of 7.87% (5.91% above industry standard). Those numbers continued to increase when Robly AI re-delivered the campaign to inactive users, gaining us an additional 6.36% open rate and an additional 33.33% click rate. This serves to demonstrate that our users care about and want Port-related content; we simply have to give them the tools to find and engage with us in a convenient, efficient manner.

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

Since launching the quarterly *Port Log*, we have received many calls, emails, and comments from businesses in the area who want to participate in the publication. Word of mouth and hand-to-hand distribution have also led to an increased mailing list, which we update quarterly and provide to our publisher before the mailing of each issue. This means we are reaching more and more people every time we publish *Port Log*.

In addition, the magazine has driven more business to our publisher; they have acquired several contract projects from businesses and organizations who saw *Port Log* and were impressed enough to pursue their own projects. One such example is the St. John the Baptist Parish Assessor's Office, who cited our magazine as their inspiration for creating their own marketing materials with Renaissance Publishing. Our magazine has become not just an asset to us, but also to our partners, affiliates, and citizens.

By highlighting the success and prosperity of our Port and our region, we are actively stimulating engagement and growth, and we will continue to implement and build on these strategies to maximize our connection to the community.