



2019 AAPA Communications Awards Program
Port of New Bedford Website
portofnewbedford.org

The Port of New Bedford is submitting its newly designed website to the AAPA's Communications Awards Program. The Port of New Bedford's goal in redesigning the website was to clearly and succinctly convey a large amount of information to current and prospective port users.

1. The Port of New Bedford's main challenge in redesigning its website was ensuring that all pertinent information was on the website without overwhelming visitors with too much information. An additional challenge was speaking to three completely separate audiences: a) commercial fishermen/port customers; b) tourists and visitors; c) potential business owners looking to open, expand, or relocate their maritime-based operations. It is important to provide website visitors with all pertinent information, but not to overload them with text – so we also relied heavily on video and pictures to illustrate what the Port of New Bedford has to offer. We also took the opportunity to link to external websites for information instead of being duplicative and re-presenting that information on our website. (To learn more about the rich history of the Port of New Bedford, we linked to the National Parks' website.)
2. The main mission of the Port of New Bedford is to encourage economic development, while also attracting tourists and visitors to the city and to Pope's Island Marina. Therefore, the goal of the website was to convey both main messages to those two audiences. One, that the Port of New Bedford is a large, full-service industrial port that can accommodate many maritime businesses, and, two, conveying to potential tourists and visitors that the Port of New Bedford is rich in history and culture, and a great place to visit to learn about the whaling history, enjoy authentic Portuguese cuisine, and take in a vibrant arts scene.
3. The Port of New Bedford worked with a website developer to create a clear and attractive website that clearly and intuitively guides visitors to the information they are looking for. In designing the site map, we put ourselves in the shoes of potential visitors – creating distinct menu labels: "Doing Business" and "Visiting" – again, to quickly and easily guide both primary audiences (business owners and tourists) to the information they are looking for. To put the website together, we put together a planning document to guide us through the process:
 - Identify the audiences
 - Develop a clear and intuitive site map
 - Identify illustrative images and video; create images and video where needed
 - Develop clear, concise copy
 - Identify external websites and information that the Port's website can link to
 - Review and test the website and incorporate feedback before finalizing

While encouraging economic development and tourism were main goals, another goal was to convey to all website visitors that the Port of New Bedford is the most valuable commercial fishing port in the country and the leading seafood hub on the east coast.

4. We worked with a website developer that brought the expertise of website redesign and visual graphics to support the goal of the website redesign. We also sought input and feedback from all staff members who work with the Port's different customers on a daily basis. The Marina Director developed the language and layout for the Marina pages; the assistant harbormasters developed language and clarity for the Commercial Fishing portion. All staff and New Bedford Port Authority Commissioners reviewed the entire website for accuracy, clarity, and visual appeal before it was made public. All feedback was incorporated into the site. The entire website redesign took approximately a year, from procuring the contractor, to developing the site map and layout, creating the video and gathering images, editing and writing copy, and finally reviewing and finalizing the site.
5. In reviewing the site for feedback and edits, we relied on longstanding staff who interact with port customers on a daily basis. We also asked staff the most commonly asked questions customers have in general, and the most commonly asked questions customers have regarding the website. The Commissioners were also asked to review the site and provide feedback. Going forward, we will continue to solicit feedback on the site and make edits whenever necessary to continuously enhance usability.