

AAPA 2020 Communications Awards

Port of New Orleans

Entry Category: Periodicals

Entry Title: Port Record

The Port Record, previously published since 1942 as the official magazine of the Port of New Orleans (Port NOLA), is now a newsletter sent electronically, every two months to a stakeholder list of 5,000 readers. The Port Record promotes Port NOLA and its assets, engaging customers, potential customers and the maritime community. It is used by our Commercial staff, Commissioners and customers to market the Port and convey our value to a variety of stakeholders in an editorial format that is not overtly a marketing piece.

1. Challenges or Opportunities

The transition of the Port of New Orleans' quarterly print magazine, the Port Record, to a digital medium, has enabled it to remain an effective marketing tool and has allowed the Port of New Orleans to successfully adapt to innovative ways of reaching our audiences.

Having the Port Record accessible digitally, reaches our readers and stakeholders more efficiently and promotes the Port of New Orleans as the premier Port for a variety of cargo and cruises in a journalism-style newsletter that is compelling and useful to the reader without being an overt advertisement or marketing piece.

The Port Record offers opportunity to promote New Orleans and Louisiana in addition to displaying Port activities, growth and expansions.

2. Mission:

The Port of New Orleans mission is: To drive regional economic prosperity by maximizing the flow of international trade and commerce as a modern gateway.

With the Port's mission in mind, the content of the Port Record is crafted to illustrate the importance of freight-based commerce. Shippers, carriers, terminal operators, cruise lines, Class I railroads and more are considered as potential sources for feature and news stories, videos and collaborative content.

3. Planning and Programming Components:

Overall goals/desired results: Continuing to build readership momentum by offering the Port Record as an engaging digital "magazine" that serves to promote the Port of New Orleans, strengthen relationships and attract new customers and cargos. The Port of New Orleans consistently achieves this goal with modern design and written content packaged in a journalism style rather than a promotional style. The full stories are accessed via links and hosted on [Port NOLA's website](#).

Objectives: Our objectives in creating an electronic newsletter remain to increase readership and assist stakeholders in accessing Port NOLA happenings more frequently and efficiently than one would with a quarterly print magazine. The Port Record also continues to serve as a marketing tool offering news and developments about the Port and its partners, as well as economic development in the region. Measurable milestones continue incorporating: Open rates, click rates and requests to be added to the subscription list.

Audiences: The Port Record's primary audiences include Port customers and tenants, potential new customers, members of the Port community, legislators and other policymakers. Secondary audiences are Port staff and Port of New Orleans Board of Commissioners.

4. Actions & Outputs:

Strategies:

Planning sessions by the Communications team (2 staff) prior to each issue, continues to be effective in identifying a strong, well-rounded strategic editorial lineup that includes: news about the Port and our customers, important issues, our board and staff, economic development news for New Orleans and the state, and mentions or photos of key players in the maritime industry. The magazine's sections include:

- **Lead Story:** One, or occasionally two, stories that are deemed most important and placed at the top of the newsletter with teaser copy to encourage clicks.
- **Inside Story:** Three short features on news or developments that require more than a news brief but less than a longer cover story. Their headlines urge clicks.
- **Video:** Interactive link for readers to click through and view one of Port NOLA's videos.
- **Snapshot:** One photo with a detailed cutline to promote our partners and key industry people, or other significant events.
- **Fast Fact:** A "By the Numbers" type of statement to impart a bit of information about one of Port NOLA's four lines of business to the reader. Links to the applicable Port NOLA website page.
- **In The News:** Links to recent media coverage Port NOLA received.
- **Port News:** Links to Port NOLA website Press Release page.
- **Work at Port NOLA:** Links to Port NOLA website Jobs page.
- **Upcoming Board of Commissioners Meeting:** Provides the next meeting dates and links to Port NOLA website Board Meetings page.
- **Your Port Your NOLA:** Provides information regarding the monthly public boat tours to encourage engagement and links to the Port NOLA Public Events webpage.
- **Pathways to Procurement:** Encourages businesses to engage with the Port and links to the Port NOLA Procurement webpage.
- **Subscribe Here:** Included as a link for new subscriber requests.

Tactics & Implementation Plan:

- Two designated Communications staff plan the newsletter lineup.
- The newsletter editor compiles recent news and writes new content as needed, assigning some stories to other staff as capacity allows.
- The stories are edited by a minimum of two staff.
- The newsletter editor sources the images.
- The newsletter editor creates each of the website content pages to link to the newsletter.
- The newsletter editor creates a new masthead for each issue.
- The newsletter editor builds the email in the ESP Constant Contact.
- The newsletter is tested by a minimum of three staff to ensure readability and links are enabled correctly.
- The timeline from content planning to publication is typically 4 weeks.
- Using the ESP Constant Contact, an issue is emailed every two months.
- The newsletter editor collects analytics for each issue to share with senior staff.

5. Outcomes & Evaluation

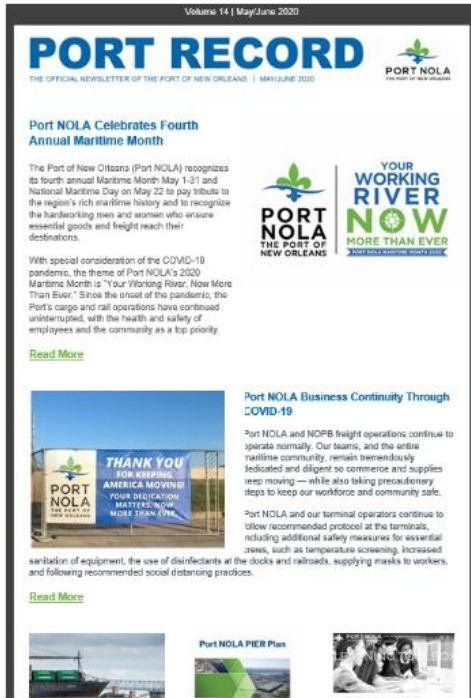
Communications outcomes: General anecdotal feedback is that the Port Record is a good read with news and information that is important to the Port community, our Board and our customers. We receive a steady flow of inquiries to be added to the mailing list. Additionally, our reach is further extended when the newsletter and its links get picked up and forwarded by our stakeholders through their digital channels.

Evaluation of success:

- Demand for the Port Record: The number of Port Record subscribers has increased with each issue, now totaling over 5,000.
- Anecdotal compliments are received with each issue.
- Each issue receives minimal unsubscribe requests.
- In the second year of digital publication, the 2019 Port Record Analytics are as follows:

- 5 issues – Jul/Aug 2019; Sept/Oct 2019; Nov/Dec 2019; Jan/Feb 2020; May/June 2020
- Average Open Rate: 26.83%
- Average Click Rate: 16.33%
- For comparison, companies sized 50+ have an average open rate of 22.8% and click rate of 2.75%. Business-related newsletters average between 20-22% open rates and about 2.6% click rate overall. We are trending above average on open rate and we are surpassing click rate standards by leaps and bounds.

An image of the beginning of a recent issue of the Port Record electronic newsletter:



Port Record May/June 2020 <https://conta.cc/2N1HiXG>

Port Record Jan/Feb 2020 <https://conta.cc/3e6W4IB>

Port Record Nov/Dec 2019 <https://conta.cc/30HrGRj>

Port Record Sept/Oct 2019 <https://conta.cc/2YBy7Tj>

Port Record July/Aug 2019 <https://conta.cc/2UKnZGw>

The Port Record webpage can be seen [here](#), with image below:

