



Work Session Summary Minutes

OREGON

Communications Discussion

January 30, 2025. 9:30 AM
Courthouse Square, 555 Court St. NE, Salem
5th Floor, Suite 5232, Commissioners Board Room

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Colm Willis, Kevin Cameron, and Danielle Bethell.

Board's Office: Shawnnell Fuentes, Toni Whitler, Jon Heynen, and Matt Lawyer.

Legal Counsel: Steve Elzinga.

Commissioner Danielle Bethell called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m.

Summary

Discussed the 2025 communications strategy, emphasizing the use of YouTube and Facebook, with 83% of Americans using social media. Reviewed survey data showing public safety as a top concern, while public health and waste reduction interest has declined. The board plans to increase content, including long-form videos and proactive outreach. Discussed improving internal communications, using a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, and engaging staff through quarterly updates and feedback opportunities. The importance of fact-based content and the need for a consistent public engagement strategy were highlighted, with a focus on addressing misinformation and improving public understanding of key issues like the Mossman case and waste energy facilities.

Background

- The goal was to review the current state of communications, identify opportunities for improvement, and establish a strategic direction for the year ahead.
- Key topics included:
 - Social media trends.
 - Survey data on public interests.
 - Content strategy.
 - Public engagement.
 - Internal communications.
 - Key Performance Indicator (KPI)'s/metrics for measuring success.

Presentation

- Overview of the communications plan and goals for 2025:
 - Increase content that tells the county's story, including long-form video.
 - Update infrastructure to improve efficiency and reach.
 - Increase proactive external outreach.
 - Improve internal outreach and engagement with staff.
 - Measure outcomes to drive continuous improvement.

- Review of latest Pew Research data on social media usage trends:
 - YouTube continues to be the most used, with 68% of U.S. adults using it.
 - Facebook remains the dominant social media platform, but its usage is declining compared to YouTube.
 - Instagram and TikTok have seen significant growth, particularly among younger demographics.
- Discussion of 2023 DHM survey results and insights on public interests:
 - Public safety and community activities are the top areas of interest for residents.
 - Public health and waste reduction/recycling topics have seen decreases in interest levels.
 - Information about county parks ranked low in the survey:
 - Parks update blog post performed exceptionally well organically.
- Proposal to increase content and improve public engagement:
 - Collaborate with departments to highlight their work and activities.
 - Utilize long-form video content, such as "Day in the Life" videos with public works and parks.
 - Leverage the county's studio to produce engaging, visually appealing videos.

Discussion

- Balancing the frequency of external communications (e.g., blog posts, emails) to maintain engagement without causing attrition:
 - Potential to trial different email frequencies and monitor engagement.
 - Suggestion to move to a consistent bi-weekly email schedule.
- Importance of fact-based, visually engaging video content to educate the public:
 - Need a more interactive and conversational format, rather than just talking.
 - Consideration of incorporating data and studies to support the content.
 - Involvement of policy analysts to provide subject matter expertise.
- Strategies for involving departments and commissioners in content creation:
 - Coordinating with departments to highlight their work and activities.
 - Potential for commissioners to participate in video projects and ride-alongs.
- Approaches to improve internal staff communications and feedback mechanisms:
 - Monthly internal staff newsletter with updates on the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) program.
 - Consideration of quarterly or biannual all-staff meetings.

Other

- Suggestion to provide quarterly updates to the board on communications progress, including opportunities for improvement and current performance.
- Idea to create business cards with the employee feedback hotline information to encourage staff to provide input.

Next Steps

- Develop a quarterly plan for major content initiatives and video projects.
- Explore options for a more engaging studio set-up and filming approach to improve the visual appeal of videos.
- Coordinate with departments on "Day in the Life" style videos to highlight their work.
- Prepare scripts and supporting data for educational videos on key topics, such as the Mossman issue, waste-to-energy facilities, and "catch and release".

- Discuss with staff about preferences for engagement with commissioners, such as brown bag lunches or informal meetings.
- Propose new KPI metrics for the communications program, including survey data on public perception of county communications.
- Provide quarterly updates to the board on communications opportunities, successes, and areas for improvement.

Adjourned – time: 10:38 a.m.

Minutes by: Mary Vityukova

Reviewed by: Gary L. White