

# Anatomy of a Safety Communications Plan

## EEI Public Safety Meeting

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***A goal without a plan  
is just a wish.***

**Antoine de Saint-Exupery  
(1900 - 1944)**

# What's A Communications Plan?

- A tool to help you think clearly, strategically and objectively – it's essentially a map.
- A measurement tool – it enables you to make sure all the critical communication elements are considered, coordinated and evaluated.
- It can be a “sales tool” to management, peers, other departments and vendors.
- It keeps everyone on the same page and moving in the same direction.
- It allows you to assess your success.
- It must be *FLEXIBLE!*

# The Key Elements

- Desired Business Results
- Critical Issues
- Target Audiences
- Message Strategies
- Communications Strategies
- Tactics
- Measurements
- Resources
- Timelines
- Budget

# Desired Business Results

- What are your final outcomes/objectives?
- Stated in a way that makes business sense.
- Keep the results broad – think big picture.
- Results can be long range and may not be measurable or attained.
- Business results are not communications results (# media stories placed).
- Ask yourself “why am I going to do this?”

# Desired Business Results

(sample)

- Prevent injuries and save lives by reducing the number of third party contacts with overhead and underground wires:
  - Reduce electric service outages and equipment damage due to third party contacts.
- Provide documented account of communication outreach efforts.

# Critical Issues

***Ask: What are the basic issues, challenges and roadblocks to achieving the goal?***

- Long or short term challenges?
- What's the business climate?
- What's been done before – and what will it take to get to the next level?
- Major issues only -- be concise and brief.
- Make educated assumptions.

# Critical Issues (sample)

## **Contractors:**

- Are work-focused and busy; not likely to invest much time reading extensive amounts of information.
- Encompass a diverse range of job classifications; the basic messages are common.
- Are transient and not office bound; they typically report directly to multiple field locations and regularly travel in and out of our service area.
- Those working within our service area are just as likely to be based outside our service area.
- Are ethnically diverse; communications will require English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean.
- Some have a low literacy level.

# Target Audiences

- The audience is key to determining your communication approach.
- Be specific: rifle vs. shotgun.
- Prioritize and narrow the field: Ask yourself “who do I need to reach to attain my desired business result?”
- To whom do you target your message?
- Know their value system.

# Target Audience

(sample)

- Use 220 U.S. Dept. of Labor Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes for the licensed contractors based within the 14-counties served by SCE and other neighboring utilities.
- Painters, roofers, electricians, cable installers, heavy construction companies, excavators, general construction workers, crane operators, agricultural and grove workers, tree trimmers, landscapers, city/public works/county and municipality workers.

# Message Strategies

- Focus the approach to disseminate your key messages.
- Are simple; adaptable to any medium; applicable to all messages; durable.
- Detail your position on an issue -- what do you want them to walk away with?
- Effective communications strategies are built around unified message strategies.
- Tailor the strategy to the audience.

# Message Strategies

(sample)

- Create top-of-mind awareness of the seriousness and dangers of contacting overhead or underground electrical equipment in work areas.
- Align messages with neighboring utilities to ensure consistency.
- Position the company as one that cares about the health and safety of its customers.
- Provide explicit and simple guidelines about safe work practices.
- Reference OSHA safety requirements and the benefits for responsibly providing a safe working environment.

# Communication Strategies

- Who is my audience?
- What is my message?
- How do I reach them?
- Answering these questions requires strategic thinking.
- **Also ask:** *will these strategies help reach the desired business results? Are they relevant to the message strategies? Do they effectively target the audiences?*
- They must be doable!

# Communication Strategies

(sample)

- Use direct mail as the primary outreach tool; use SIC codes to identify all licensed contractors based in and around the 14-county service area, including non-customers.
- Printed materials incorporate a heavy use of simple graphics to illustrate safe work practices; photos reflect the job-specific target audience.
- Work in partnership with other utilities and relevant agencies and associations.
- Use in-language materials.

# Tactics

*Typical tools available to most utilities:*

- Direct mail
- Media relations
- Advertising
- Events and activities
- Web sites
- Bill inserts
- Training presentations
- Speakers bureau
- Build/leverage relationships

# Tactics

***All tactics must support the strategy.  
Weigh each tactic for its:***

- Effectiveness
- Believability
- Cost
- Availability with the resources/budget
- Timeliness
- Ability to deliver key messages
- Ability to reach the targeted audience(s)
- Ability to help achieve the goals

# Tactics

(sample)

## Direct Mail

*Launch a two-phase campaign:*

- First mailing creates awareness of the hazards of electrical lines:
  - Includes a job-specific safety poster and safety pamphlets.
  - Includes a response mechanism for additional free safety materials: posters, safety booklets and collateral support materials.
- Second mailing fulfills contractors' request for additional safety materials.
- Customer representatives deliver complete sets of materials to cities, counties and municipalities, their agricultural, housing developer and large construction company clients.
- Include information on all communications on how to place orders online via web-site.

# Tactics

(sample)

## Advertising

- Place strategically located outdoor advertising in areas providing high ag worker traffic.
- Place :60 radio spots in late morning and drive time slots on key Spanish language stations in the Central Valley.
- Sponsor Dodger Spanish radio broadcasts using in-game, player-read safety messages.

# Tactics

(sample)

## Media

- Pitch seasonal articles to home improvement newspaper columnists reaching the “do it yourself” homeowner.
  - *Spring*: Planting, digging and get ready for summer fix-up projects.
  - *Summer*: Outdoor and workshop activities; general maintenance.
  - *Fall*: Clean-up projects, pruning, winter preparation; indoor safety.
  - *Winter*: Storm damage, outdoor lighting.
- Pitch quarterly articles to vertical trade publications for arborists, agricultural workers, home remodelers and excavators.

# Measurement

*If you don't measure, how will you know if you've reached your goal?*

- Be SMART:
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Attainable
  - Realistic
  - Trackable
  
- Do the measurements link back to your Desired Business Results?
- Do they help you evaluate your success?

# Measurement

(sample)

## Direct Mail

- Service provider creates and maintains a data base of all contractors receiving and responding to offer; data is available, via a secure and dedicated web site, 24/7/365.
- Update and report monthly activity to Safety Council.
- Record fulfillment rate for future evaluation.
- Record data of to who, and when, materials were mailed.
- Record all fulfillment requests.

# Resources

- Explains the staff needed to implement the plan.
- Details who is on the team and what departments are represented.
- Determines your outside needs like ad and PR agency support.
- Helps determine what skill sets are required: writing, media pitching; graphics; Web; public speaker, etc.

# Resources (sample)

## Direct Mail

- Retain an experienced and specialized utility safety communications service provider to provide a turnkey operation for mailing list acquisition, art direction and copywriting, printing, mailing, fulfillment and all record-keeping and maintenance reporting activities.

## Advertising

- Use company's General Market and ethnic ad agencies to produce and place radio and outdoor advertising.

## Media

- Use Corp Comm's Media Department and General Market and ethnic PR agencies to pitch/write/place articles.

## Other Resources

- Coordinate with MCD, Public Affairs and other departments to build new and/or leverage existing relationships with major customers, trade unions and associations affiliated with the target audiences.

# Timelines

- Detail what will be done day-by-day or week-by-week.
- Specify who will do what.
- Work backwards from the completion date.
- Understand the timing involved for tactics that fall outside of your area of responsibility.
- Are there competing activities the ad agency will need to juggle?
- BE sure to work in approval times.
- Develop an overall flow chart/calendar to see how the tactics flow and complement.

# Budgets

- Most utilities are budget driven, not Zero Based Budgeted.
- Ask yourself what expenses are needed: printing, production, travel, postage, media buys, brochures, agency costs, etc.
- Captured costs *vs.* outside expenses:
- Can you tap into existing budgets?

**A good plan, violently  
executed now, is better  
than a perfect plan next  
week.**

**George S. Patton  
(1885 - 1945)**

