

# 2015 Communications and Strategic Planning Session Takeaways

10/5/15

Develop a written communications plan

Include a mission statement, and short version of the big picture branding / message you want to convey in your every communication (Ex: something like Condos' three C's, **Champion** transparency and trust in government, **Convey** excellence in customer service, **Connect** citizens through efficiency and technology)

Allow divisions to have subset branding (Ex: OPR's Unify, Streamline, Focus; VSARAs Provide, Protect, Promote and Preserve)

Define ourselves before the media vacuum defines us

Find our voice

- Smart government
- Transparency
- Bridging the trust gap with government
- Customer service focus, how government should be
- Solve problems
- Have fun with it

Get out there with positive stories, engage and connect citizens to our services

Digital presence

- Revamp web to have a news feed and social media links
- Include pictures, videos, hashtags, social media info and calls to action in news stories and press releases
- Get on Twitter / YouTube / Google+
- Connect with local college or intern for economical video production / digital content
- Videos on the website, including how-to's for systems and direct and engaging messages to our audiences
- Connect through LinkedIn

Have a regular editorial calendar for known recurring events – tell stories (See Chris' draft list)

What is newsworthy?

- Timely, innovative (new technology)
- Impact, results (data)
- Current news tie in (hurricane coming)

- Consumer protection (OPR especially)
- Human interest (deputy's great-grandmother)
- Broad appeal (babies, kittens, oldest poll-worker)
- Provocative (human trafficking)

#### Negative news

- Take charge, control the story, don't overreact
- Value, Fact, Action
- Bridge, pivot to what you want to talk about

Public / Private partnerships – explore this more with business profiles, research with our data and archives, health care and licensing, corporations and nonprofits, etc

#### **Action items:**

- Communications plan drafted, circulated to directors, final approval by Jim (Chris and Kay)
- Compile our post-its to come up with our mission / goals / branding (Kay, Chris)
- Connect with journalists, bloggers, emphasize single point of contact (Chris)
- Twitter account for Vermont SOS (Chris and Liz)
- Social media use policy, goals and clear guidelines for other divisions (Jim, Chris, Liz)
- Twitter account for VSARA (Tanya), possibly OPR (Hollis)
- Purchase high quality camera / phone for pictures and video (Liz)
- Contact local colleges and universities (VCFA) for interest in video production for a class or an intern for upcoming election cycle (Chris and Liz)
- Determine feasibility of web updates to include more videos and pictures, news feed and social media feed, plus "Secretary's desk" coming to forefront of homepage (See Gov's home page <http://governor.vermont.gov/>) (Chris, Steve, Liz, Sarah E)
- Develop media calendar – Chris has a draft (Jim, Chris, Liz, ask Directors)
- Begin to promote Transparency Tour, Online Voter Registration as test cases for using Twitter effectively)
- Future press releases to go out as html, not pdf (Liz, Steve, Sarah E)