City of Kawartha Lakes Communication Strategy

Communication: The strategic **management of relationships** between an organization and its diverse stakeholders through the use of a variety of communication methods to achieve mutual understanding, realize organizational goals and serve the public interest.

About the Strategy

The Strategy supports the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan, and will be a **driver in achieving the City's corporate goals** of creating a vibrant and growing economy and providing an exceptional quality of life.

(Insert image of 2 Strategy priorities – or use all 3 and highlight the two above)

The Strategy has been developed by the new Communications, Advertising and Marketing department and outlines the goals and action plan for the City of Kawartha Lakes over the next three years, from 2017-2019.

The main objectives of the Strategy are to build capacity to listen and respond to audiences, maximize the use of technology and align communication practices with the way Kawartha Lakes residents prefer to communicate with their government.

The City of Kawartha Lakes Communication Strategy is centred on the knowledge base acquired through a collection of in-house studies, public consultation, interviews, departmental input, municipal best practices and staff resources.

Vision

An aware and involved community.

Engaged and responsive City employees.

All stakeholders working together to listen, respond, and collaboratively shape the future of Kawartha Lakes.

Mission

Develop the framework for communications that provides access to information to engage the City's various audiences while actively developing internal communications capacity.

Guiding Principles

- **Listen** closely to all audiences by building in two-way communication methods.

- **Respond** to the needs and interests of various audiences with information that is **timely, clear, accessible** and **transparent**.

- **Collaborate** wherever possible to maximize resources and effectiveness.

- **Take Responsibility –** Every employee and member of Council has a role to play in listening to stakeholders, incorporating feedback and communicating effectively.

  (visual of Listen, Respond, Collaborate, Take Responsibility – in continuous loop)

Audiences

Inside

1. Residents (Seasonal and year round)
2. Business community and partners of the City
3. Media
4. Staff
5. Council

Outside

1. Potential visitors
2. Potential residents
3. Potential business operators, developers and other investors
4. Potential staff

(Visuals of each, or showing a close group/small crowd inside a circle, larger group on outside of circle)

Goals

Goal One: Continuously improve the <u>quality of communication tools</u> available for audiences to connect with the City.

"Whether the communication is written or verbal, formal or informal, the question must be asked as to whether or not it was **effective**."

-Carl Prichard

Actions		
Year One (2017) **Tool Development**	**Year Two (2018)** **Refining and expanding the tool kit**	**Year Three (2019)** **Looking to the future of our tools**
Develop the new City **websites** (corporate, tourism, library) to allow ease of access for all audiences. Provide additional online services such as e-commerce, subscription-based updates and mechanisms for two-way communication such as online chat, citizen engagement forum and more.	Continue to add new features and enhance existing platforms based on web analytics. Ensure the website features are adequately staffed to support demand.	Explore custom mobile applications based on analytics and audience feedback concerning existing tools. *New budget item*
Develop and maintain **Website Governance Policy**, and implement across all administrators and active users. This will address security, access to post content, standards of language, archiving standards, process for upgrades/improvements, minimum response times and more.		
Seek out **local community opportunities** to share City messaging and engage residents. E.g. Community boards in libraries/arenas/service centres and popular gathering spots, articles in local publications and other grass roots opportunities to reach audiences at the community level		
	Develop an **Open Data Policy** and integrate data sets into the City website and other open data websites as it becomes available.	
Create **e-newsletters** for each applicable audience. Develop editorial content, design and timeline for each.	Refine the frequency, content and delivery of communications based on metrics from year one.	
Actively build subscriptions to various e-newsletters via communications and advertising plans and by incorporating sign-up reminders into City correspondence with various audiences.		
Create and implement a **Social Media Policy.** Develop	Enhance the social media platforms and level of	Develop advanced metrics to measure

training to support the policy and cultivate new staff and Council capacity in this communication tool. Work toward standard practices in place across the organization.	engagement among audiences.	success of social media based on best practices. Support ongoing staff training and development for social media excellence.
Collect and analyse all data from existing communications, across all departments, to inform the new **Branding and Advertising Strategy.**	Implement all applicable changes to communications tools based on the new Branding and Advertising Strategy to be developed in 2017. *New budget item*	

Goal Two: Ensure audiences receive information that is <u>easy to access, timely, clear and transparent</u>.

Actions

Year One (2017) Tool Development	Year Two (2018) Refining and expanding the tool kit	Year Three (2019) Looking to the future of our tools
Create and continually keep current an **inventory of communication vehicles** to reach audiences including: paid/earned media, digital and social media, existing City publications, community/business group publications and others.		
Develop a **schedule of communications** to reach each audience under the guiding principles of timely, clear, accessible and transparent information. This schedule is developed in consultation with various City departments to ensure programs, events and new information are effectively communicated to meet department objectives.	Adjust and refine frequency, content and delivery based on results.	Introduce **new communication vehicles** as required in response to audiences' needs for information. E.g. Open data sets, new social media platforms, new e-newsletters, etc.
		Explore partnerships with community and business groups to assist in sharing City messages and soliciting feedback.
Use existing tools to **measure the reach and impact** of communications. Existing measurement tools include: Analytics from website, e-communications, community forums, social media, attendance at and success rates of various programs and events run by the City.		
Intentionally communicate each message in **plain language that is easily understood.**		

"How well we communicate is determined not by how well we say things but by how well we are **understood**."

-Andrew Grove

Goal Three: Build media relations capacity across the organization.

Actions		
Year One (2017) **Developing capacity**	**Year Two (2018)** **Refining and expanding capacity**	**Year Three (2019)** **Looking to the future**
Create and execute a **Media Relations Policy, Media Relations Procedure**, and **Crisis Communications Plan**.	Continue to operate under the Media Relations Policy and Procedures. Monitor and evaluate brand exposure annually.	
Regularly train designated staff spokespersons and target to re-train every three years.		
Identify and train a Crisis Communications Team in case of large-scale emergency.		
Develop and maintain an **Issues Matrix** for Council, spokespersons and front line staff to be prepared to comment to the media and respond to public enquiry.		
Enhance local media relationships by providing more information on critical or complex issues through media packages, briefings and more face-to-face time with key reporters.	Develop new multi-media resources for press releases and media packages**.**	Explore new media best practices and integrate with communications strategy.
Proactively identify newsworthy stories across the City and present them in compelling ways to **local** media.		
	In collaboration with the Economic Development Strategy (2017) and Branding and Advertising Strategy (2017), develop a **targeted Media Relations Plan** to reach desired **outside** audiences (potential tourists, residents, investors) through **earned media** with a focus on regional/national/international media. *New budget item*	Based on results in 2018, explore the opportunity to increase internal capacity for media relations, or secure a partner on retainer to achieve objectives with **outside** audiences with a focus on regional/national/international media.

"Excellent public relations can help the rest of the organization be excellent."
James E. Grunig, *Excellence in Public Relations and Communications Management*

Goal Four: Improve the quality of internal communications.

"An organization's culture and an organization's brand are really just two sides of the same coin."

-Tony Hsieh

Actions		
Year One (2017) **Tool Development**	**Year Two (2018)** **Refining and expanding the tool kit**	**Year Three (2019)** **Looking to the future of our tools**
Refine and consistently employ existing tools such as all-staff emails, printed newsletters, staff meetings, employee Intranet and SharePoint to keep staff abreast of corporate policy, procedures, projects and issues.	Alongside the Information Technology Strategy and Human Resources Strategy, develop parameters for a **technology solution to connect all employees, regardless of access to the network**. The solution would include incorporating proven best practices **for increasing employee awareness and engagement and shaping corporate culture**. Actively market the new tool to all staff via a variety of communication tools to ensure adoption. *New budget item*	Based on solutions implemented in 2018, measure the effectiveness of the new tool in increasing quality of communications, awareness level and engagement of staff. Define desired employee culture as supported by the Human Resources Strategy. Cross promote other communication tools (website, e-newsletters, social media) with this tool to leverage overall success. Compare results to qualitative findings from 2016 Employee Town Hall meetings with HR.

Support staff in complying with current brand standards for logo use, consistency in formatting documents and procuring advertising and marketing materials.
      Educate **new staff** to be 'brand stewards' during the onboarding process.
      Educate **current staff** to be 'brand stewards' through regular communication and training of the above processes.		

Segment staff based on "profiles" involving job function, tenure, location, access to technology, etc. Use these profiles to customize communications where possible, based on need for information, interest, and access to technology.		
Encourage staff to **stay informed** of City issues and projects by subscribing to e-communications via the website. Encourage staff to **provide input** to the City using current two-way communication vehicles available to all audiences.		
Intentionally communicate each message in **plain language that is easily understood.** Respect the time, role, responsibility and interest level of each staff segment.		