GREATER SALT LAKE
Municipal Services District

Communications and Marketing Plan

Purpose

The purpose of the MSD Communications and Marketing Plan is to inform residents, build trust, promote transparency, and improve public service accessibility. It aims to enhance community engagement through the effective use of diverse communication channels while ensuring all residents and stakeholders of MSD communities are well served.

All MSD communications will adhere to strict standards for accuracy and plain language, with a strong emphasis on citizen engagement.

Executive summary

The Greater Salt Lake Municipal Services District (MSD) Communications and Marketing Plan establishes a strategic framework to inform residents, build trust, promote transparency, and strengthen community engagement across all MSD communities. This plan outlines how the MSD will deliver clear, accurate, and accessible information that highlights municipal services, supports community identity, and fosters two-way dialogue with residents, businesses, and stakeholders.

The plan's communication goals include:

- **Inform and Educate** – Ensure residents understand MSD services, projects, funding, and community initiatives.

- **Promote Accessibility** – Provide information in plain language, multiple formats, and multiple languages to serve all community members equitably.

- **Strengthen Engagement** – Encourage resident participation through surveys, meetings, events, and digital platforms while highlighting how input informs decisions.

- **Enhance Brand and Trust** – Elevate MSD visibility and credibility by maintaining consistent, professional, and community-centered messaging.

- **Prepare for Emergencies** – Provide timely, accurate, and coordinated communication during crises to ensure public safety.

Success will be measured through clear performance metrics, including increased digital engagement, resident feedback, media coverage, participation in community events, and public perception of the MSD's role. By combining best practices with a variety of communication channels—print, digital, in-person, and interactive tools—the MSD will build stronger connections with residents and continue to serve as a transparent, dependable, and innovative municipal service provider.

MSD Mission Statement

The MSD's mission is to deliver forward-thinking, innovative municipal services through a fiscally responsible, adaptable, and comprehensive approach tailored to each distinct community we serve.

MSD Vision Statement

The MSD's vision is to be the municipal service provider every community wants to work with.

Communications Vision Statement

To enhance awareness and understanding of the services provided by the MSD, strengthen community engagement across all MSD communities, lead media relations for MSD and its communities, ensure transparency, and lead by example through the use of innovative, creative, and effective communication strategies.

Suggested Taglines

Service. Trust. Community.

Dependable Services. Connected Communities.

Built on service. Driven by Community.

Goals

- **Inform and Educate Residents:** Increase awareness of the MSD and its services, city/town projects, growth initiatives, construction projects/purpose, and community connections. Create a simple way to explain what the MSD does to residents, council members and stakeholders. Create a video to share on social media explaining the MSD.

- **MSD Services:**

  - **MSD services:** planning & development, engineering, stormwater management, permitting, inspections, GIS/mapping, addressing.

- **Contracted services:** Public works operations (snow removal, road maintenance). animal services.

- **Service changes or disruptions:** road closures, delays, detours, maintenance schedules.

- **Planning, Zoning & Development:** upcoming construction or infrastructure projects, new development or land use changes, zoning updates, long-term planning initiatives (general plans, sustainability goals).

- **Service costs and funding:** how services are paid for, budget transparency, where tax dollars go, annual budget summaries, capital improvement plans, grant and funding opportunities for residents.

- **Emergency and Safety Information:** severe weather alerts, evacuation procedures, emergency shelters, cooling centers, public health notices.

- **Digital and Tech Tools:** city website, online service request forms, GIS or interactive maps, sign up for alerts or newsletters, applications.

- **Environment & Sustainability:** recycling and composting, water conservation, energy efficiency programs, green space initiatives, tree planting program, air quality awareness.

- **Increase Civic Engagement & Participation:**

  - **Public meetings & hearings:** communications presentations, media training, updates on communication-related legislation, and annual report. Seek feedback from city/town leadership.

  - **Election & voting information:** dates, registration, local candidate information (neutral representation).

  - **Surveys** and community input opportunities.

  - **Promote participation** in city initiatives.

  - **Local festivals and events** – meet with the residents one on one.

  - **Volunteer programs or City/Community committees**.

- **Brand MSD and Communities:** Promote the MSD brand through logo clothing, booths at local events, through consistent branding. Help improve public perception in MSD communities by using their city branding and highlighting city/town progress and opportunities.

Best Practices

- **Be Clear, Concise & Consistent:** Write all public-facing materials in plain language, free of technical jargon and avoid the use of acronyms whenever possible. Keep messages brief and focused - especially in digital formats. Ensure communication materials are accessible and easy for everyone to understand.

- **Unified Messaging:** Maintain a consistent tone, voice, and visual style – including fonts and branding across all communication platforms. Reinforce understanding by repeating key messages through multiple channels.

- **Key messages:** Develop core messages that define the organization's value and purpose. These should be repeated across all communication channels to build recognition.

- **Transparency:** Regularly inform the public on city council decisions, budgeting, construction updates, and project developments.

- **Visual Engagement:** Use photos, videos, and infographics to simplify complex information and make messages more engaging. Ensure visuals are high-quality, relevant, and reflect the diversity of MSD communities – remember, a picture is worth a thousand words.

- **Community-Driven Stories:** Feature testimonials, interviews, and local success stories to highlight community voices and achievements. Use storytelling to build authentic connections, foster pride, and strengthen trust between residents and the MSD.

- **Two-Way Communication:** Encourage feedback, questions, and community input – and demonstrate how that input informs decisions. Use surveys, polls, and open houses to gather insights. Respond quickly to comments on social media and to resident service requests.

- **Localized Campaigns:** Tailor messaging to different neighborhoods to address unique needs and interests.

- **Celebrate Milestones:** Highlight project completions, new services, and local achievements to build positive momentum.

- **Message framing:** Tailor messages to resonate with each audience. For example, congressional committees may focus on processes, while the public is more interested in outcomes.

- **Accessibility and Inclusion:** ADA, multiple languages, screen-reader friendly PDFs, alternate text for images, closed captions on video.

- **Utilize multiple communication channels**: Reach residents where they are by using a mix of digital and traditional platforms. Maintain consistent messaging and branding across all channels.

  - Website: Clear, mobile-friendly, easy to navigate; serves as the primary source for accurate, up-to-date information.

  - Email newsletters: Share timely updates, announcements, and community stories directly with subscribers.

  - Social media: Engage residents through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X, and Nextdoor; use these channels for two-way communication and quick updates.

  - Text alerts (SMS): Provide emergency notifications and time-sensitive updates.

  - Printed Materials: Continue distributing flyers, mailers, and newsletters to reach residents who prefer non-digital communication.

  - Public Meetings & Events: Use in-person engagement to strengthen trust, gather feedback, and promote transparency.

Communication Channels & Target Demographics

1. Print Media - Newsletters, Flyers, Postcard, Direct Mail:

- **Target Audience:** Older adults (45+), long-term residents, and households with limited digital access.

- **Purpose:** Announce public meetings, open houses, construction updates, events, and information postcards such as snow removal, parking restrictions, code enforcement, landscaping, etc. Also provide local interest stories featuring residents and/or mayor or council members. Also, MSD projects.

- **Examples:** City/town -distributed newsletters, flyers for neighborhood updates, door hangers, and mailed notices.

- **Audience personas:** Long-time residents, new residents, renters, young professionals, small business owners, Spanish-speaking residents, and community minded.

2. City Website (Main Information Hub):

- **Target Audience:** All residents, businesses, developers, stakeholders and regional partners.

- **Purpose:** Serve as the central location for city updates, planning and development, permits, public records, and emergency notices.

- **Examples:** Dedicated pages for initiatives, project timelines, and public feedback forms.

3. Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn):

- **Target Audience:**

  - **Facebook (30-65+):** Families, retirees, local community groups.

  - **Instagram (18-40):** Young professionals, visually driven audiences.

  - **Twitter (25-50):** Professionals, fast updates, news seekers and news media alerts.

  - **LinkedIn (30-55):** Developers, business leaders, regional partners.

- **Purpose:** Share real-time updates, event promotions, project progress, construction updates, feel-good stories and engagement directly with the community.

- **Examples:** Weekly progress photos, livestreams of council meetings, polls, and community Q&A sessions.

4. Nextdoor (Neighborhood-Focused):

- **Target Audience:** Homeowners, neighborhood leaders, community advocates.

- **Purpose:** Announce localized construction updates, safety alerts, and community-specific events.

- **Examples:** Road closures, neighborhood-specific project notices, and event invitations.

5. TextMyGov (SMS-Based Communication):

- **Target Audience:** All residents, particularly those without regular internet access.

- **Purpose:** Provide an easy, app-free way for residents to ask questions, report issues, and receive city updates via text.

- **Examples:** Pothole reporting, event reminders, emergency notifications, and service requests.

- **Best Practices:** Leverage automated responses for FAQs, direct reports to the right departments, and engage citizens in two-way communication.

6. **Civic Engagement Platform:**

- **Target Audience:** Tech-savvy residents, younger professionals, and community advocates.

- **Purpose:** Gather feedback through surveys, polls, and public discussions, fostering real-time engagement and transparency.

- **Examples:** Community input on development projects, feedback on city events, and resident-driven planning initiatives.

- **Best Practices:** Use community platform applications to engage residents in city planning, zoning changes, and long-term strategic initiatives.

7. **Email Campaigns (Newsletters and Announcements):**

- **Target Audience:** Working professionals (25-65+), parents, and local businesses.

- **Purpose:** Monthly updates on city progress, project launches, and upcoming public meetings.

- **Examples:** Monthly e-newsletter featuring long range projects, park updates, events, letters from the mayor and/or council members, economic development updates and spotlights on local citizens.

8. **Video Content (YouTube, Facebook Video):**

- **Target Audience:** 18-50, families, visual learners.

- **Purpose:** Showcase major developments, behind-the-scenes city operations, and interviews with city leaders.

- **Examples:** Project videos and time-lapses of construction projects, park projects or road development.

9. **Community Events (In-Person Engagement):**

- **Target Audience:** All residents, families, retirees, and students.

- **Purpose:** Engage with the public directly, share information, and encourage face-to-face feedback.

- **Examples:** Summer festivals, public forums, and city-sponsored open houses.

Situation analysis

Assess the current communication landscape to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT).

- **Current state review:** Evaluate existing communication methods, public perception, and brand reputation. Use social media analytics, web traffic data, and other available metrics to understand the current situation.

- **SWOT analysis:**

  - **Strengths:** What communication assets and capabilities does the organization possess?

  - **Weaknesses:** What communication barriers or challenges does the organization face?

  - **Opportunities:** Where can communication efforts be improved or expanded?

  - **Threats:** What potential risks could damage the organization's reputation? This includes anticipating potential misinformation or crisis scenarios.

Crisis communications

A government communications plan must include a clear protocol for managing unexpected events or crises to ensure timely and factual information is shared with the public.

- **Designated spokespeople:** Appoint and train official spokespeople to ensure consistent messaging.

- **Pre-approved messaging:** Develop templates for press releases and talking points for potential crisis scenarios.

- **Fact-checking protocol:** Establish a strict process for verifying information before it is released to prevent the spread of misinformation.

- **Rapid response system:** Define roles and responsibilities for monitoring information, drafting responses, and deploying communications during a crisis.

- **Stand up a Joint Information Center (JIC) if needed:** In times of emergency establish a JIC at the MSD or work closely with the Salt Lake County Emergency Operations Center and their JIC.

- **Coordinate messaging with Salt Lake County Emergency Services.**

Evaluation

Measuring success is critical for understanding what works and refining future communication efforts.

- **Success metrics:** Define what constitutes success for each objective. Examples include media mentions, website traffic, social media engagement, and public survey results.

- **Feedback mechanisms:** Create avenues for collecting input from stakeholders, such as surveys, online polls, and social media monitoring.

- **Performance review:** Conduct regular performance reviews to measure progress against objectives and adjust the plan as needed.

- **Measurement benchmarks:**

  - Increase MSD social media followers by **15% annually** across all platforms.
  - Achieve an average **40% open rate** on monthly email newsletters.
  - Grow participation in surveys, polls, and online engagement platforms by **20% per year**.
  - Ensure all video and digital content includes **captions, alternative text, and ADA-compliant formatting** by the end of the fiscal year.
  - Host or participate in a minimum of **six community events per year** with measurable resident interaction.

Team Roles and Responsibilities

Team roles and responsibilities: Clearly define who is responsible for each part of the plan, including content creation, channel management, and crisis response.

MSD oversite community websites: Magna, Kearns, Copperton, Brighton and White City. (Note: Emigration manages their own website, the MSD does not have access to this site.) – As authorized by the City or Town, the Communications Manager, Long Range Planning and City/Town Social Media staff.

MSD website: Communications Manager

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MSD Printed Newsletter: Communications Manager

Kearns E-newsletter: Communications Manager and Long Range Planning

Magna E-newsletter: Communications Manager and Long Range Planning

Community Engagement and Public Events: Communications Manager and Long Range Planning

Flyers, postcards, construction information: Communications Manager and Long Range Planning

Timeline – Annual Calendar

- **Monthly Email Newsletter:** Distribute monthly newsletters with a Mayor's Message, updates and reminders about upcoming city council meetings or construction notices, as well as community partner updates and city sponsored community events.

- **Biannually Mail Print Newsletters:** Distribute newsletters in April and September each year to update residents about ongoing projects, upcoming events, and milestones. (28,000+ homes)

- **Weekly Social Media Updates:** Post consistent content across all platforms, including project highlights, council decisions, and city celebrations.

- **TextMyGov Notifications:** Share brief, direct updates on road closures, event reminders, and safety alerts. (Copperton)

- **Ongoing Surveys:** Launch interactive surveys and project updates (at the start of major projects) to gather public feedback and publish results to keep residents informed.

- **Annual Report:** Present a year-in-review print report summarizing major achievements, new developments, and future goals for each community.

Moving Forward

By integrating best practices and using a balanced mix of communication channels - print, digital, in-person, and interactive - the MSD will continue strengthening connections with residents. This approach reinforces our commitment to transparency, reliability, and innovation in delivering municipal services to every community we serve.