



# WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE PUBLIC

(Yes. It IS a must-do.)

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## ABOUT ME

- 25+ year comms professional
- 9+ years at City of Naperville
- Emphasis on strategic communications, policy

**SOLID** ADVICE



COMMUNICATION IS:



- Necessary to preserve reputations and manage crises
- Something any government of any size can achieve
- A way to build trust and goodwill with your residents, businesses, and visitors

# 1

You're gonna need  
~~a bigger boat~~, I mean,  
**A PLAN**

- Establishing communications as part of your planning process will help you **better respond in a crisis** OR simply have a **better launch and execution** of a service, event, or program
- Communication is **not an afterthought** – it should be a component of every project, program, or initiative
- During planning, **talk about what the public needs to know** and anticipate what questions they may have, then **work that into your plan and messaging**
  - Communication plans should include: key messages, objectives, audiences, tactics, deadlines, a calendar, and follow-up tasks (e.g. removing messaging once a project is complete)



## To Do

- Put a communication plan template together
- Anticipate questions/conduct a mini SWOT for major initiatives
- Develop key messages that will be consistently used

# 2

## DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS (or, why the little things matter)

- Remember: **RIGHT over RUSH**
- Provide **clear and concise** details that reflect what the public wants to know
- Write at an 8th-grade level – **translate technical details/government jargon into “everyday” language**
- In a crisis:
  - Get the facts and communicate them as the situation stands
  - Set clear expectations for the timing of the next communication, then **stick to it**



### To Do



Ask your organization’s call takers what kind of questions they get most frequently



Consider if your community has multilingual needs & make sure your communications reflect this

# 3

## Meet your audience **WHERE THEY'RE AT**

(AKA)



- Use **multiple channels** for communicating information – **meet your public where they are at in the way they're most comfortable consuming information**

- Naperville's mix:
  - Website
  - Social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube)
  - Naper Notify (mass notification system that sends phone calls, text messages, emails, push notifications with emergency and community messages)
  - Video
  - eNewsletters
  - Printed resident newsletter in utility bills
  - Press releases

### To Do

- Evaluate your current communication methods
- Consider at least one print/traditional, one digital, and one experiential (e.g. academy, open house)

# 4

## A PICTURE (OR VIDEO) IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

- **Videos and pictures are essential** to use in your communications
- Many tools available to help non-professional videographers and photographers shine!
  - iPhones/Android phones
  - iMovie
  - Online teleprompter software
  - Unsplash
  - Canva

*(Non-graphic-designers can easily use it!)*



### To Do

- Evaluate your current photo/video equipment
- Review the resources slide for links to tools discussed today

# 5

## MAINTENANCE.

**It's where you win.**

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- **You must commit** to maintaining any communication channel you establish, especially in the digital realm
- **No maintenance = your community doesn't trust it or forgets about it**
- Naperville's approach: teams of specialists dedicated to web/social media maintenance; multi-department approach to web/social content and social channel maintenance



### To Do



Audit your current communication channels, especially digital ones. When did you last update them? Consider a maintenance schedule to help keep you on track and balance this against other tasks.

# COMMUNICATION RESOURCES

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## For your writing:

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### **Associated Press stylebook**

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AP style is used by journalists

Available in print, online, plug-ins

[www.apstylebook.com](http://www.apstylebook.com)



### **Grammarly**

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Helps identify spelling and grammar mistakes as you write

Available in a variety of formats

Free or premium accounts are available

[www.grammarly.com](http://www.grammarly.com)

## For visuals/video:

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### **Canva**

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Online design and publishing tool

[www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com)



### **Unsplash, Pixabay, Pexels**

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Royalty-free stock image sites

[www.unsplash.com](http://www.unsplash.com), [www.pixabay.com](http://www.pixabay.com), [www.pexels.com](http://www.pexels.com)



### **Teleprompter Mirror**

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Free teleprompter software and apps

[www.telepromptermirror.com/software](http://www.telepromptermirror.com/software)



### **Dropbox**

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Visual storage/sharing

Varying levels of free/paid personal/business accounts

[www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com)



### **Bensound**

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Royalty-free audio

[www.bensound.com](http://www.bensound.com)



# THANK YOU!

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[www.naperville.il.us](http://www.naperville.il.us)



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