



Community Relations and Being Media/Communications Savvy in Today's Electronic World

Presented by Ghida S. Neukirch, City Manager, City of Highland Park

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We're in this Together

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Who are your partners and how often do you meet with them?

- Start with Employees - - they are the greatest ombudsmen!



Make MAGIC

Employee Engagement

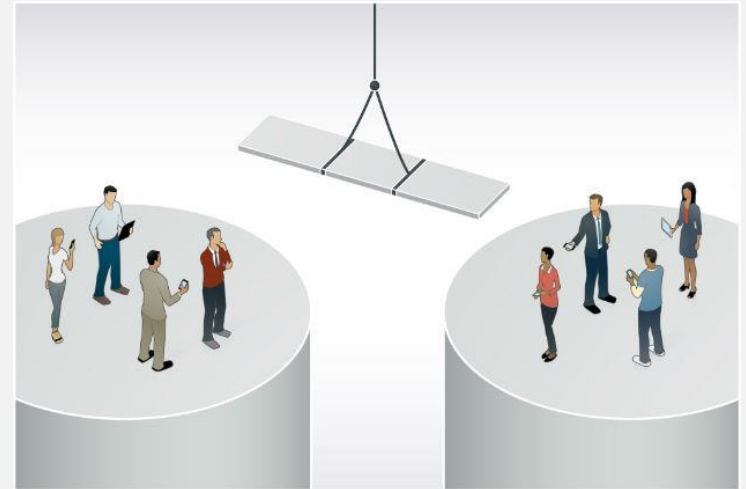
- M – Meaning
- A – Autonomy
- G – Growth
- I – Impact
- C – Connection



“Many hands make light work”

Employee Engagement

- New employee meetings
- Attendance at staff meetings
- Employee Newsletter
- Enews
- Annual State of the City Meetings
- Review recognition programs
 - ACE program
 - ABCD program
 - Commendations
- Employee Resources
- “HP Cares” programming
- Employee Activities Committee
- Integrated Management Teams, i.e. DEI Team
- Are you having fun? = productive



Who are your partners and how often do you meet with them?

- Employees are the greatest ombudsmen!
- Local Government Partners (Schools, Park District, Township etc)
- County Government
- Resource Partners (Legal Aid Clinic, Josselyn, 211 Lake County etc)
- Largest Employers
- Significant Partners (Hospital, Ravinia Festival)
- Property Owners
- Business Districts
- Community Organizations
 - Chamber
 - Rotary
 - LWV
- Neighborhood Groups



Communication Plans & Policies

- Senior Communications Team
- Do you have a comms professional on staff or someone assigned this responsibility to lead?
 - Media touch-point
- Communications Committee (1-2 reps/dept)
- Communications Plan
- Communications Policy
 - CHP Brand & Style Guide
 - External Communications Tools
 - Media Relations Protocols
 - Crisis Communications
- Social Media Policy
- Media Relations Administrative Order
- Emergency Operations Plan

Communication Modalities

- Public Meetings
 - Email
 - Phone
 - In Person
 - Web site
 - Highlander Newsletter
 - Enewsletter – public safety alerts, business alerts, general information
 - Facebook, Twitter - www.facebook.com/HighlandParkIL; @CityHPIL
 - YouTube - www.youtube.com/user/CityHPIL
 - LinkedIn
 - HPTV
 - Service Request Tracker
 - Mobile Application (Smart911, Enjoy Highland Park)
- and more!



Value of Crisis Communications Plans & Practices

A crisis communications plan prepares you for the worst day of your professional life by empowering you to:

- Be proactive as quickly as possible.
- Focus your attention solely on the task at hand.
- Effectively delegate to other members of your team.
- Successfully collaborate with colleagues at other organizations responding to the same crisis.
- Support the community by consistently speaking with “one voice.”

Who is practicing your plan with you??? Include all partners

Crisis Communication Considerations

- Mutual Aid for Communications/Management Professionals
 - Established schedule for public updates
 - Dedicated Web Page
 - Language Translations
 - Smart 911
 - Rave/Nixel et al
 - IPAWS
 - Business Card Contacts
- and more!



Day to Day Considerations

Think like a politician; Act like a manager

- How many social media sites for the City?
- Who should respond on behalf of the City?
- How to manage elected official communication on social media?
- Separate personal and professional accounts
- Removal policy

Communication Plans & Policies

- Senior Com
- Communica
- Communicat
- Communicat
 - CHP B
 - Externa
 - Media R
 - Crisis C
- Social Media P
- Media Relation
- Emergency Op



What are your objectives?

- Reach and inform. Consider the topic, target audience and intended mode of communication
- Communicate with constituents in a civil and unbiased manner
- Increase civic engagement
- Provide consistent messaging
- Disseminate time-sensitive information as quickly as possible Promote collaboration between sister governments and organizational partners
- Direct online users back to the City's website

Maintaining Strong Community Relations

When to say yes, and how to say no

How are you involved in the profession and in the community?

- Illinois Law Enforcement Training & Standard Board
 - Illinois Local Government Hispanic Network Board
 - Rotary Club Past President & Community Service Chair
 - Highland Park High School Career Exploration Co-Chair
 - Ravinia Festival Staff Liaison
 - Highland Park Hospital Community Advisory Committee
 - Downtown Property Owners Association Staff Liaison
- Offer a reasonable excuse
 - Suggest an alternative
 - Consider professional development opportunity for others
 - Be kind

Community outreach vs Comm. Engagement

- Short-Term
 - Marketing
 - What can the organization do for the community (vice/versa)
 - One group benefits the most
 - Transactional
 - Directional
- Long-Term
 - Relationship building
 - What can the org. and community accomplish together?
 - The entire community benefits
 - Connecting
 - Cyclical

If they don't know you personally, Don't take it personal

- “...Why are women so darn stupid?”
- “I am sick of calling the creepy people at City Hall....”
- “Are you looking after the City @ghidaneuk – Not”
- “Driving on Clavey is like being trapped in a port-a-potty”
- “We have SHIT plowing in the winter, and SHIT services all year long”

Ms. Neukirch,

It looks like (for not the first time this year), our city has become the subject of unjustified and unreasonable online attacks. I just wanted to reach out to say thank you for all you do for our city.

Questions?

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