Engaging Your Citizens Today and Tomorrow

Begin & Continue the Conversation

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Break the Norms

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Local Government

- Governance
- Technology
- Demographics
- Resources

"A great student is what the teacher hopes to be."

*Star Wars, The Clone Wars (Season 3, Ep 22)*
Governance

• Strategic planning
• Public forums and events
• Regular administrative updates
• Announcements
• Media training & events
Technology

• Customer service systems
  – 311, SeeClickFix, Robocalls, etc.

• Video features

• Social media

• E-blasts

• Surveys
Demographics

• Identifying audiences.
• Reaching diverse groups of people.
• Providing understanding of how decision impact different groups of people.
Resources

• People.
• Seeking outside funding.
• Identifying grants and opportunities.
• Data & information for decision making.
• Working with partners.
If What...

So What?
If what, so what?

• Three key components to communicating effectively:
  – Strategic Plan
  – Communication Plan
  – Ability to implement
Strategic Plan

• Strategic Plan
  – Core communication tool for an organization.
  – Guides work of organization & departments.
  – Sets goals, objectives, strategies, tactics.
  – Shows public how tax dollars are being spent.
  – Provides context.
  – Shows public what the work is accomplishing.
Macon-Bibb’s Strategic Plan

If what...

- 14-month process.
- A retreat and 3 work sessions with newly formed Commission.
  - Developed Mission, Vision, Focus Areas, & key projects.
- Multiple meetings with the public and stakeholders.
- Department Head retreat.
  - Identified additional projects.
  - Began adding action steps to complete projects.
Macon-Bibb’s Strategic Plan

So what...

• Used to develop budgets by prioritizing work of the departments and allocating needed resources.
• Cited by Commissioners in reasons for voting on issues.
• Projects used as goals needing to be accomplished during media coverage.
• Earned a Silver Circle Award from 3CMA.
Communication Planning

The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

George Bernard Shaw
Communication Planning

• Communication Plan
  • Supports organization’s Strategic Plan
  • Identifies effective ways to reach audiences to:
    • Provide desired and needed information.
    • Collect information to help organization make decisions.
    • Answer questions and address concerns.
    • Solve issues.

“A very wise Jedi once said *nothing happens by accident.*”
– Anakin Skywalker
What do we communicate?

How do you decide?

• Must identify what people need & what to know.
  – Need to know: property tax rates, changes in services, public meetings, price changes, emergency information...how well government is doing on its goals.
  – Want to know: pool hours, summer programs, accessing services, how neighborhoods can be improved...how well government is doing on its goals.
What do we communicate?

How do you decide?

• Need a two-way communication model to both distribute and collect information.
  – Both should affect the other.
  – Information collected and response from delivery can be used to help make decisions, resolve issues.
  – Provide people a way to ask questions, express concerns, & provide praise AND criticism.
How do we communicate?

• Public forums/meetings
• Media coverage
• Websites
• E-blasts
• Printed publications
• Social media
• People walking in off the street
How do we communicate?

How do you decide?

• Go where your audience is, not where you want them to be.
  – Similar to real life (Waffle House vs. IHOP)
• Develop messaging to convey goals & work of organization. PROVIDE CONTEXT!
• Tailor that message to the tools that best reach people.
Macon-Bibb Public Affairs

Centralize the message.
Decentralize the messenger.
Macon-Bibb Public Affairs

• Strategic communication
• Traditional media
• Partner, government relations
• Online and social media
• Video & photography
• Graphic design
• Customer service
• Crisis communication
Macon-Bibb Public Affairs

• Assisted with development of Strategic Plan.
  – Helps develop county-wide messaging, apply bigger picture ideas to daily efforts of departments, partners.
  – Developed county-wide communication tools.

• Beginning work with departments on specific communication efforts.
  – Identifying Mission, audiences, effective tools, visual images, audiences, and more.
  – Give them the tools to better communicate with specific audiences, public.
Centralize the message.
Decentralize the messenger.

- Traditional media
- Web posts or blogs
- Social media
- Video features
- Newsletters / E-blasts
- One-on-one comms
- Employee comms
- Public forums

Core story or message
Traditional media coverage

• Provides third-party verification of story.
• More authentic and believable than post on government website.
• Built-in audience means larger reach.

“Traditional media remain a trusted source for information. When it comes to the news, there is no substitute for a factual, balanced story.”

- Lisa Noble, PRWeek, January 6, 2014
Traditional media coverage

• Reporters are not your friends...they’re also not your enemies.
  – They are doing a job.
• Always be willing to speak, or explain why you’re not the one to speak with.
  – Offer an alternative.
• Provide facts, figures, and documentation.
  – Be a reliable source.
Traditional media coverage

• Be ready with stories to suggest on slow news days.
• Be AS or MORE ready to discuss the negative as you are with the positive.
• Help them connect to other stories when possible.
• Answer the questions they ask, not the questions you think they’re asking.
Traditional media coverage

• Newspapers
  • Telegraph, 11th Hour, Que Pasa, Middle Georgia Informer

• Television stations
  • 13WMAZ, 41NBC, WGXA, Que Pasa, Telegraph

• Radio stations
  • GPB Macon, Cumulus, Clear Channel

• Magazines
  • Georgia Trend, Macon Magazine, Macon Black Pages, Georgia Family
## Traditional media coverage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Days Covered</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Hits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>31/31</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>27/28</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>31/31</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>29/30</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>29/31</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>28/30</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>28/31</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>27/31</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>29/30</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>155</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>29/31</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>27/30</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>28/31</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>343/365</strong></td>
<td><strong>94%</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,721</strong></td>
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Social Media

• Pick the channels where your public is talking.
  – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, etc.
• Recognize social media is public and is a two-way communication tool.
• Only start a page if you’re willing to use it.
  – Post information.
  – Respond to people’s questions/concerns.
Social Media

• Determine the type of information and delivery that resonates with audiences.
  – News articles
  – Web postings
  – Pictures from events
  – Announcements
  – Questions seeking feedback

• Monitor metrics on when you get most likes, shares, comments, etc.
## Social Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Account</th>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Followers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macon-Bibb</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>1,359</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Twitter</td>
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<td>Mayor’s Office</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
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<td>Facebook</td>
<td>1,244</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>1,171</td>
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Social Media

Other supported channels

- Main Street Macon
- Shop Local Macon
- Macon-Bibb GCAPS
- Friends of Amerson River Park
- ONPPI
- Mayor’s Council of Clergy (in development)
- Various organizations, causes
Multimedia Content

Website postings

- Should have a strategy of posting new content to your website on a regular basis.
- Press releases, announcements, updates.
- Helps in search engine rankings.
- SEO has changed to value content linked from other places.

COUNTY & COMMUNITY NEWS
keeping the citizens informed

- Macon-Bibb, partners to celebrate new & improved fountains
- Student leadership cohort travels to the Gold Dome, Suwanee
- MaconBibbTV features Memorial Park SPLOST project
- Macon-Bibb nationally ranked for customer service in February
- Partners break ground on Hunt School Village housing development
- Franca's Buffalo Wings opens at Historic Bowden Golf Course
- Fire Dept reminds you to 'Change Your Clock, Change Your Battery'
- Tax Commissioner's Office holding tax relief seminars
- Aspiring Eagle Scout uncovers, memorializes Negro League History in Macon-Bibb
- #WomenofMaconBibb celebrated all March
- Macon-Bibb remains top in country for resolving issues with SeeClickFix
- HR attending Job Fair with position, application information
- Tax payment reminder letters being sent
- Parks & Rec, Regional Library celebrate Reading Awareness Month
- Municipal Court Clerk, Chief Information Officer appointed
- Daisy Park gets major overhaul
- Bridge could be named for former Mayor of Macon
- Marchers talk about life, legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Commissioner Al Tillman holding Town Hall Forum Friday
Multimedia Content

Macon-Bibb website

- CY2015:
  - 343,276 unique visitors
  - 738,019 visits
  - 2,364,064 pageviews

www.maconbibb.us
Multimedia Content

Online videos

- Use PEG/IT teams to do *more* than stream governing body meetings or host public access shows.
- Showcase the work of your government and improve transparency.
Multimedia Content
Multimedia Content

Online videos

• Can easily film video with cell phones.
• Simple editing software is available online, but not necessary.
  – Quick interviews with people discussing a topic can be shot start to finish.
Multimedia Content
Customer Service

• The public needs a way to do more than answer questions.
• Need a process for:
  – Requesting services and seeing them completed;
  – Complaining and learning they were heard; and
  – Asking questions or seeking information.

“The danger is not to know the truth.” – Yoda
Customer Service

- Macon-Bibb uses SeeClickFix to monitor service requests and issues reported.
- 70+ services available from 8 departments.
- Ranked nationally for use in 2015.
  - Top 10 each month since August 2015. (Rankings began July 2015.)
  - Ranked 8th overall for CY2015 with 14,015 issues resolved.
- Ranked 4th in February behind cities with 3-4x our population.
  - Closures per person was higher than all cities above us.
Public Forums

• Be purposeful in their structure.
• Determine what you want people to know.
• Make sure public has quality time for input.
• Set up a way for public to see their input being used.
Employee communications

• Give them the information they need to answer the phones, talk in public.
• If it’s important enough to announce to the press, it’s important enough to tell your employees.
• Develop regular communications directly to employees & through the directors.
Aligning Strategies & Tactics

"A plan is only as good as those who see it through."

*Star Wars, The Clone Wars (Season 1, Ep 4)*
Celebrating Daisy Park

Central Message & Details
Multiple groups working together.
Shared vision for master plan.
Raised funds to support plan.
Identify all improvements.
Arrange for joint celebration on completion.
Arrange for visual: turning on the water feature.
Celebrating Daisy Park

*Press release*
Include all details and messaging.
Send to all members of media, involved partners, directors, & elected officials.
Post to website.
Distribute via social media.
Celebrating Daisy Park

Event

Arrange for as many people to participate.

Have all groups involved have a speaker.

Invite area residents and students.

Ensure press has ample video, interviews.

Live tweet quotes/updates.

Post handful of key photos to Instagram.
Celebrating Daisy Park

Newsletter/E-blast
Quick write-up announcing park’s completion.
Include link to pictures posted on Facebook.
Distributed to full communication list.
Write-up posted on website.
Posting linked on social media sites.
Celebrating Daisy Park

Video feature
Create a video news feature on that day.
Include in later newsletter/e-blast.
Post to social media sites.
Send directly to involved partners, asking them to share.
Celebrating Daisy Park
The Bigger Picture

• More than just a new water feature.
• Community working together.
• Later included in city-wide Turn on the Fountains event.
• Improves Macon-Bibb’s Quality of Life, part of Strategic Plan.
• Repeat above steps for larger event.
Ability to Implement

“Great leaders inspire greatness in others.”

*Star Wars, The Clone Wars (Season 1, Ep 1)*
Forward Together
Forward Together
Other resources

City-County Communications & Marketing Association - [www.3cma.org](http://www.3cma.org)

Engaging Local Government Leaders - [www.elgl.org](http://www.elgl.org)

PRDaily – [www.prdaily.com](http://www.prdaily.com)
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