

Communications

Date of Approval by Council: 07/17/2012

Resolution No.: 501/2012

Lead Role: Chief Commissioner

Last Review Date: June 20, 2017

Next Review Date: 02/2021

Administrative Responsibility: Communications

Special Notes:

Respecting communications protocols is a key government function pursuant to Policy GOV-001-029: Organizational Roles and Responsibilities. The Council Communications Policy GOV-001-033 sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Mayor and Council Members.

Policy Statement

The purpose of Strathcona County's communications policy is to ensure that communications – both to external and internal audiences – are proactive, strategic, effectively managed, consistent and responsive to the diverse information needs of the organization's key publics.

Definitions

"Publics" means taxpayers, residents, staff, community organizations, businesses, County suppliers, other levels of government, and all other individuals and groups with whom Strathcona County works with and/or serves.

Guidelines

In communicating with its diverse publics, as per its strategic plan, Strathcona County will:

1. Facilitate proactive, two-way communications with its publics.
2. Provide its publics with timely, accurate, clear, objective and complete information about its public policies, programs, services and initiatives.
3. Promote coherent, consistent communications within, between and among County programs – one organization, speaking with one voice.
4. Identify and address communication needs and issues routinely in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, programs, services and initiatives.
5. Encourage Strathcona County Council and Administration to follow a protocol in terms of communicating with like levels of representation about programs, services and activities with which they are familiar and for which they have responsibility (e.g., Mayor to Premier; Chief Commissioner to Deputy Minister, etc.).

6. Adhere to applicable federal, provincial and local laws, regulations and policies. All content (messaging, data and digital images) must be able to be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with these laws.

Communications' function is governed and guided by policies, practices, acts and plans (and any related procedures) to ensure professional and ethical conduct, and alignment with other corporate requirements. These include:

- Strathcona County's Strategic Plan
- Strathcona County Corporate Values (Respect, integrity, fairness, safety, cooperation)
- Code of Ethics and Responsibilities Policy (HUM-001-001)
- Corporate Records and Information Management Policy (GOV-002-013)
- Privacy Policy (GOV-002-026)
- Public Engagement Policy (GOV-002-025)
- Social Media Policy (GOV-002-028)
- Systems and Data Security Policy (GOV-002-023)
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Roles and Responsibilities

A. Executive Team and Directors

1. The Chief Commissioner and Associate Commissioners (Executive Team), and Directors represent Strathcona County externally on all management issues, programs and activities. Where appropriate, directors may act as spokesperson, or designate knowledgeable staff, including technical or subject matter experts, to speak in an official capacity on issues or subjects for which they have responsibility or expertise. To ensure coordinated and effective communications, departments are required to consult with Communications staff before conducting media relations.
2. Executive Team provides leadership to the Director of Communications in establishing communication priorities and themes, and approves corporate communications priorities. The Director of Communications acts as the first level of response for day-to-day communications requirements and issues, and is responsible for establishing and managing Strathcona County's communications policies and guidelines, protocols and standards.

B. Communications Department

In support of the organization's strategic direction, communications policy and guidelines, Strathcona County's Communications Department will:

1. Advance the reputation and a positive image of the organization to its publics through timely, accurate and integrated communications of Strathcona County policies, programs and activities.
2. Advise and assist elected officials, senior management and departmental communications staff in areas related to communications planning, stakeholder relations (issues management, internal communications and emergency and crisis communications), digital media (websites, digital assets and social media), production (including advertising), and public engagement.

3. Use a variety of new and traditional methods of communications to accommodate the needs of a diverse public. To promote two-way communication, County materials will provide residents with a phone number, email, mailing address, Internet address and social media channel as applicable for more information or input.
4. Manage the effective and appropriate use of the organization's brand and visual identity.
5. Collaborate with department management and/or communications staff to facilitate effective integration of individual department activities with the overall corporate objectives.
6. Manage the production and delivery of all advertising and creative services (writing, design, print and digital production) for organization-wide programs and initiatives, and advise and provide assistance for departmental programs and initiatives.

Procedures

Administrative guidelines and procedures have been developed in support of this policy to set direction and requirements to follow as Strathcona County endeavours to communicate with its publics.