

The Jetsons Meet Mayberry

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CITY OF GENEVA, IL COMMUNICATIONS



“If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail!” — Benjamin Franklin



- 40 miles west of Chicago
- Just over 21,000 residents
- ~150 employees
- 100+ specialty shops
- Historic downtown shopping district
- Kane County seat

BEFORE 2008:

- No specific employee assigned responsibility for communications
- No IT budget or plan for long-range communications
- No use of social media
- Outdated website & user-
"unfriendly"
- Not taking advantage of existing resources
- No policy positions



2008-2014:

- Created an employee “Communications Committee”-Defined purpose/goals
- Developed communications policies (Who, What, When, How)
- Developed a 5 year communications plan/budget
 - Updated website
 - Digitized quarterly newsletter
 - Use of social media
 - Ramped up public access TV programming
 - Created telephone information line
 - Utilized existing resources
 - Utility bills
 - Theater marquee
 - Created Communications Coordinator position



Plan
“How to Eat
an Elephant”

TIPS & TRICKS

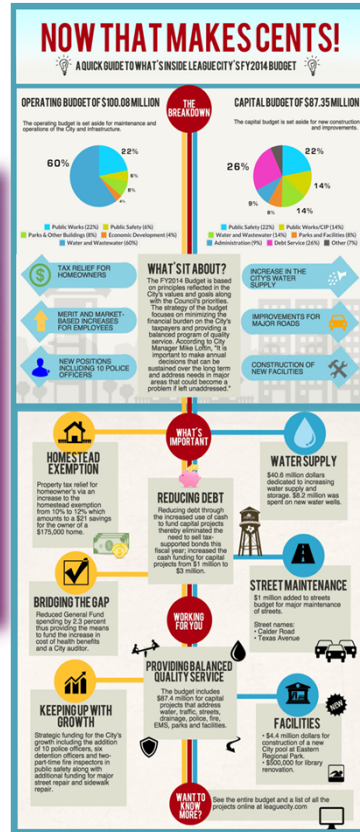
- Content is king
 - Gatekeeper?
 - What & how much to relay?
- Context
 - How/when to relay it?
- Visuals
 - Videos & photos
 - Residents & employees
 - Elected officials
- Graphics
 - PicMonkey (free photoediting)
 - Piktochart (free infographic software)
 - Inkscape (Illustrator-like freeware)



A Picture is
Worth a
Million
Words



Inkscape



Piktochart



PicMonkey



WEBSITE:

- Created 1998; Updated 2004 by Economic Development Dept.
- Budgeted next update over 2 fiscal years (2011-12)-High cost
- User-friendly
- Keep adding information
- Customer request tracker
- Customized email alerts
- Integrate Geographic Information System (GIS)
- Searchable
- RSS (Rich Site Summary-delivers regularly changing web content)
- Maintained regularly
- No cost after update


SOCIAL MEDIA:

- Post messages on FACEBOOK
 - Page created by high school student
- Send text messages on Twitter
- Post videos on You Tube
- Post PowerPoint presentations on Slideshare & City website
- NIXLE-Police-only text messages
- Weekly “GenevaMail” bulletin
- Quarterly City newsletter
- A photo gallery is worth a million words
 - Submitted by staff, residents, & businesses
- No cost



PUBLIC ACCESS TELEVISION:

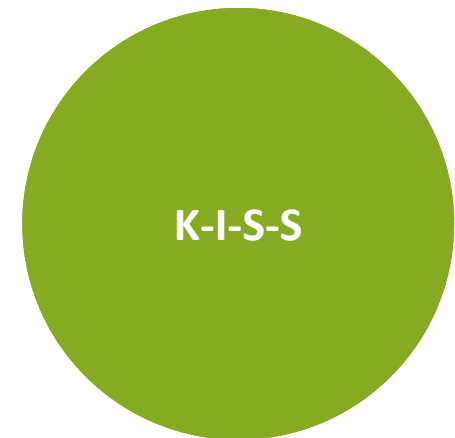
- Worked with local cable companies to install necessary hardware
- Local channels by two cable providers
- Televise public meetings
- Ramped-up programming-no “public” access; only government & education
 - “Business Beat”
 - “Officially Speaking”
 - “Geneva Works”
 - “Windows to Our Past”
 - Public service announcements
- Scrolling text messages
- Partnering with School District/sports
- No cost after initial equipment



There's No
Business
Like...

TELEPHONE INFO LINE:

- Utilized available POTS telephone line & internal extension
- Requested unused phone number
 - (630) 232-INFO (232-4636)
- Greeting is generic unless needed for special event or incident
- Created directory & recordings for 50 “FAQ” subjects-by department
- Accessible for non-tech savvy
- Available 365/24/7
- Low cost



EXISTING RESOURCES:

- Community utility bills
 - Message on the bill
 - Inserts/stuffers
- Theater marquee
- Posters in store windows
- Coffee with Mayor
- “Meet & Greets” with aldermen
- Listening sessions
- City Administrator walk-about
- Don’t forget about the “old fashioned way”
- No or low cost



COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR:

- Planned 5 years before implementation
- Annual cost \$48,000 plus benefits
- Exempt status/No overtime
 - Website maintenance
 - Quarterly newsletter
 - Weekly email news bulletin
 - Photographer
 - Social media
 - INFO line messages
 - Public service announcements
 - News releases
 - Public access television
 - Utility bill messages/inserts
 - Posters/flyers



Time to Bite
the Bullet

REACHING A DIVERSE AUDIENCE:

- Determine who is listening/watching:
 - Tech savvy & not so tech savvy
 - Students
 - Seniors
 - Engaged & interested
 - Special interests
- Use various media to reach them
 - Technical and non-technical
- Be consistent (timing and type)
- Tell story by making personal connections
- Information must be accurate & timely
- Articulated well & grammatically correct
- Professional and unbiased



Hello in
There...

IN SUMMARY:

- Dedicate resources to communications
- Start with an agreed-upon goal/purpose
- Get “buy-in” from elected officials, management and employees in all departments
- Create a plan & budget
- Determine what kind and how much information
- Content and context are important
- Use videos and photos
- Graphics make a complicated story simple
- Let the community/employees tell your story
- Appeal to all audiences
- Measure results (i.e. hits on website; # of subscribers)
- Never stop improving



Hello in
There...

Questions/Comments?



The logo features the text "ICMA 100th ANNUAL CONFERENCE" centered against a light blue background with white fireworks. The "100" is in a large, blue, stylized font, with "th" in a smaller, orange, cursive font. "ICMA" is in a blue, sans-serif font above the "100". "ANNUAL CONFERENCE" is in a blue, sans-serif font below the "100".

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