STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN

2021

Selkirk College

contents

Strategic Communications and Public Relations initiatives lead the development and execution of communications strategies to manage and elevate the profile of Selkirk College. This is achieved through the production and distribution of high-quality content that engages internal and external audiences and builds brand recognition. The Primary goal is to create positive publicity to help build public loyalty to Selkirk College; improving and promoting the college's image in support of institutional goals.

"Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics."

– Public Relations Society of America

At its core, public relations is about influencing, engaging and building a relationship with key stakeholders across numerous platforms in order to shape and frame the public perception of an organization. Public relations also encompass the following:

- Anticipating, analyzing and interpreting public opinion, attitudes and issues that might have an impact, for good or ill, on the operations and plans of the organization.

- Counseling management at all levels in the organization with regard to policy decisions, courses of action and communications – including crisis communications -- taking into account their public ramifications and the organization's social or citizenship responsibilities.

- Protecting and positively affecting the reputation of an organization.

- Researching, conducting and evaluating, on a continuing basis, programs of action and communications to achieve the informed public understanding necessary to the success of an organization's aims. These may include marketing; financial; fundraising; employee, community or government relations; and other programs.

- Planning and implementing the organization's efforts to influence or change public policy.

- Overseeing the creation of content to drive customer engagement and generate leads.

Below are some of the disciplines/functions within PR:

- Corporate Communications

- Crisis Communications

- Executive Communications

- Internal Communications

- Donor Relations Communications

- Integrated Marketing Communications

- Media Relations

- Content Creation

- Events

- Social Media

- Multimedia

- Reputation Management

- Speechwriting

- Brand Journalism

PROCESS

Public Relations and strategic communications have a renewed focus at Selkirk College. This includes restructuring the Marketing Communications team to allow for attention to this area. The current Strategic Communications Plan and supporting tactical planning documents, consider a phased approach to adopting these best practices within the institution.

The following outline the process Selkirk College is undertaking with this work over the course of the next 12 months. Additional planning materials will continue this work annually.

PHASE 1: UNDERTAKE ONGOING ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

- Establish avenues to assess best practices within PSI sector, ongoing SWAT and PEST

- Build and maintain work plans that continue to monitor sector, PR practices/professional development and opportunities to expand reach and impact of communication initiatives

- Investigate and consider tools and tactics to measure Perception (IPSOS, IR initiatives/existing surveys and tools)

- Define foundation building activities (including internal partnerships), essential to advancing the identified priorities

PHASE 2: DEVELOP AND EXECUTE STRATEGY TO EDUCATE AND IMPLEMENT THIS WORK INTO INSTITUTION

- Create awareness tools (PowerPoint, briefing note) to support internal presentations

- Map out framework (Strategic Communications Tactical Plan) in calendar format – clearly identifying content featured from all schools, services, department etc. and identify audiences, accountability and communications goals

- Develop and define workflow for all involved in ongoing execution (marketing ticket system, communications, content owners, technology use, CMS, Digital Strategy)

- Review strategy and tactics with all content owners in series of department meetings/sessions, adjust tactical plan based on feedback

- Continue to adjust tactical plan and execute lead time with established timeframes (30, 60, 90-day work back schedule, annual priorities etc)

- Assist with strategic communication requirements for executive, including presentation development, interview talking points and speech writing

PHASE 3: EXPAND THIS WORK WITH ONGOING ANNUAL PLANS

- Continue to integrate the use of technology into all communications initiatives – ensure alignment with Digital Strategy

- Adjust communications team workload and work plans accordingly

- Build professional development opportunities into department priorities

- Maintain ongoing environmental scans

- Continue to leverage relationships with sector communications leads, industry partners, AEST Ministry and municipal government contacts

- Provide ongoing briefings to leadership team

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS: PRIORITIES AND TACTICS

1. ASSESS ALL EMPLOYEE EMAIL COMMUNICATION TACTICS

- Consider frequency, format , tone, content plan

- Participate in policy review (policy #2500,6005) Appropriate use of College Email

- Explore technology options (O360 migration) and process for limiting access and providing clarity of use

- Consider HR implications – re: continued use of college email for retirees

- Plan for future e-blast/content strategy considering all internal needs (IT communications?)

2. REVIEW CURRENT COLLEGE INTRANET (MYSELKIRK) AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Conduct content review and document current information architecture

- Needs assessment – meet with internal department to determine communications (pushing out) and content needs (static content as resource)

- Research best practices within corporate communications and PSI use of intranet

- Align with college Digital Strategy related to future intranet, integration of other sites (ERP)

- Explore use of "confluence" and current IT site go.selkirk.ca

3. DEVELOP INTEGRATED INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS PLAN AS COMPONENT OF FUTURE INTRANET

- Assess all current internal e-blast and newsletters (multiple departments, content owners- HR, TLI, IT)

- Assess all employee email communication content (communications department, IT, Project Aurora etc)

- Make recommendations for future considerations for delivery of content to employees- published on intranet and schedule of outputs for email communications

- Incorporate crisis communication planning into this framework

- Work in conjunction with digital strategy to build execution plan

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS: PRIORITIES AND TACTICS

1. DEVELOP AND EXECUTE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS TACTICAL PLAN

- Create database of all planned institutional communications through a calendar year

- Be intentional with considerations for audiences (future student, current student, industry, Alumni, partner, employer, donor/supporter, government, employees)

- Design, implement and adapt process for dispersal of official "News Stories" issued via Communications Department

- Incorporate tracking mechanism for alignment with strategic directions and values

- Incorporate crisis communication planning into this framework

2. CONTINUE TO COLLABORATE WITH MARKETING DEPARTMENT TO DESIGN AND EXECUTE SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY – SPECIFICALLY FOCUSED ON DISTRIBUTION OF INSTITUTIONAL CONTENT WITH CONSIDERATION FOR A VARIETY OF AUDIENCES

- Assess and redefine audiences – target various platforms accordingly

- Assess content strategy – develop and maintain workflow in conjunction with Strategic Communications tactical plan

3. WORK IN CONJUNCTION WITH DIGITAL STRATEGY TO DEVELOP CONTENT PLAN TO BE INCORPORATED INTO REDESIGN OF SELKIRK.CA (EXTERNAL SITE)

- Consider content related to: News Stories, official events, audience

- Consider content derived from: all schools'/program areas, Applied Research, Student Affairs/Current student services/engagement, Recruitment, Advancement

- Consider strategic directions: priorities around Indigenization, applied learning, commitment to DNI, wellness, health and safety and sustainability

- Assess and consider future workflow for content management strategy

4. EXPAND ON CURRENT ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER STRATEGY AND EXECUTION PLAN

- Further implement as a tactical component/touchpoint of Strategic Communications Tactical Plan- focusing first on "Community Eblast" and then "Stay Connected- Alumni Newsletter" with plan to relaunch Alumni outreach in conjunction with Advancement Department (grow Alumni stories)

- Assess database of current subscribers'/list serve – design and execute ongoing campaign and initiatives to grow subscription base and extend reach

- Explore current platform (Create/Send), current template design and cost of services – reassess and make reconditions accordingly

5. REVIEW AND ESTABLISH STRATEGIES FOR MEDIA OUTLET PARTNERSHIPS AND MAKE FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS AREA

- Assess current landscape of media coverage within region

- Redefine scope outside of community – based on institutional goals

- Identify gaps in potential media coverage – focused on partner publications such as BCCAT, CICAN, BCCOLLEGES, targeted industry publications aligned with our programming and research initiatives.

- Consider media monitoring and collecting/reporting metrics such as impressions, reach etc. to drive future recommendations

- Proactively seek and manage strategic executive visibility opportunities

AUDIENCE	GOAL	STRATEGY	ACCOUNTABILITY	SUPPORT
Current Student	Contribute to student experience, communicate supports, retention	Current student experience provides example of what future students can expect – be clear and paint this picture – use channels where students are (social media)	Student Affairs, Registrar's Office, Library, Housing, Bookstore, Food Services, International Department, Sustainable Selkirk, Education Division and Indigenous Services	Marketing team, Communications team
Future Student	Recruitment	See Recruitment Plan	Recruitment team	Marketing team, Communications team
Employee	Contribute to positioning of institution, employee is brand ambassador	Component of employee engagement	Human Resources Department	Communications team
Community (all/general)	Build and maintain public loyalty	Influencers – affect recruitment, retention and advancement goals	CEES, ARIC	Communications team, Advancement team
Government	Maintain and improve funding	Support with PSI Government relations communications	Leadership team	Communications team
Donor	Fundraising for student supports and capital projects	See Advancement Plan	Advancement team	Communications team
Employers/ partners	Expand on applied learning opportunities, strengthen pathways to employment for students		Advancement team	Communications team
Alumni	Fundraising goals, recruitment tool – success stories, proof points for career pathways	See Advancement Plan	Advancement team, Education Division	Marketing team, Communications team

OUTCOMES

The Strategic Communications Plan will result in the following desired outcomes:

BUILD FOUNDATION

- Increase institutional awareness, maintain professional development and establish ongoing learnings in public relations discipline

CREATE FRAMEWORK

- Develop and execute Strategic Communications Tactical Plan (see supporting spreadsheet), continue to adapt based on first year of execution

CROSS COLLEGE COLLABORATION

- Utilize a change management approach to implementing workflows that consider a centralized approach to institutional communications

ANALYZE AND INNOVATE

- explore each identified instructional audience and link through plans that will ensure alignment and coordinated approach

This work could also see the creation of

- Student Experience Communication Plan and Recommendations
- Alumni Engagement Strategy and Communications plan
- Ongoing Digital Strategy

APPENDIX/ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

SWOT – ANALYSIS OF CURRENT STATE OF SELKIRK COLLEGE COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVES

SWOT analysis is a simple, but useful, planning tool for assessing internal and external factors impacting on your organization's success, now and in the future.

The SWOT methodology identifies internal strengths (S) and weaknesses (W) of the organization and external Opportunities (O) and Threats (T) in the marketplace.

STRENGTHS

- Strong visual brand in place
- Established media partnerships and beneficial workflow in place for media coverage
- Proven ability to communicate through storytelling
- Skilled and experienced writers and content creators within team
- Established long term partnerships with industry and government
- Renewed strategic focus on advancement and donor engagement
- Established marketing and recruitment initiatives in place
- Use of social media and digital strategy
- Collaborative partnerships with communications leads throughout sector

WEAKNESSES

- Current websites (external site and intranet) are not mobile friendly, poor user experience with interface
- Lack of awareness internally on importance of communications
- Information Technology policies in place affecting approach to employee communications (all employee emails, intranet access for content management)
- Fragmented approach to content ownership and management institution wide
- Capacity/workload reduced due to vacancies not filled (due to COVID-19 pandemic)
- Lack of data to drive digital reconditions (google analytics, SEO)
- Historic existence of "silo approach"
- Current media relations strategy lacks reach beyond regional outlets

OPPORTUNITIES

• Newly defined strategic area within college – capacity and workload to support

• Completion of Project Aurora will help streamline student communication

THREATS

• Crisis and issues management maintaining large percentage of workload (due to COVID-19 pandemic)

• Fragmented approach to web strategy institution wide

• Limited funding to support capacity for this work

PEST – EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

A PEST analysis is a strategic business tool used by organizations to discover, evaluate, organize, and track macro-economic factors which can impact on their business now and in the future. The framework examines opportunities and threats due to Political, Economic, Social, and Technological forces. Outputs from the analysis inform strategic planning processes and contribute to market research.

POLITICAL

Political or politically motivated factors that could impact the institution.

• Ministry of Advanced Education mandate could shift depending on government in place and or Minister – new Minister as as of Nov 2020

• Financial review of sector planned in Ministry mandate letter

• Provincial direction related to the training of International students could switch based on current government in place

ECONOMIC

Overall economic forces that could impact success of institution.

• Loss of tuition revenue as a result of pandemic related low enrolments

• Increasing cost of infrastructure, technology and internal training needed to respond to shift to online learning as a result of pandemic

SOCIAL

Social attitudes, behaviors, and trends that impact institution and target audiences.

• Response to UNDRIP and commitment to Indigenization plan involves changing culture of institution and raising awareness with various audiences

• Global social movements demanding heightened responses to institutions in areas of equity, diversity and inclusion.

TECHNOLOGICAL

Technology that can affect the way learning is developed, delivered, distributed and marketed.

• Shift to online learning requires change management and adoption of learning platforms among teachers and learners