

City with a Voice

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN



Our City's **Vision, Mission, Values**

Vision

A growing, world-class community bringing talent, technology and a great northern lifestyle together.

Mission

We provide excellent access to quality municipal services and leadership in the social, environmental and economic development of the City of Greater Sudbury.

Values

As stewards of the community, we:

- provide high quality service with a citizen focus
- manage the resources in our trust efficiently, responsibly and effectively
- encourage innovation and accept risks
- maintain honest and open communication
- create a climate of trust and a collegial working environment
- act today in the interests of tomorrow

Vision of Communications

The City of Greater Sudbury maintains open and honest communication with its residents and its employees. We engage citizens with a voice of passion and conviction. We are committed to providing relevant and accurate information in ways that are accessible, creative, coherent, and timely. We measure the effectiveness of our communications against established goals and standards to ensure that we meet the information needs of a diverse population.



Communicating in the City of Greater Sudbury...

- Greater Sudbury — a community of communities
- Largest municipality in Ontario by land area
- Diverse community: aging population but a growing youth and student population;
- A centre for education, mining expertise, excellence in health care, government services, and tourism
- 39% of the population self-identified as bilingual
- A skilled and diverse workforce dedicated to the provision of excellent municipal services



¹ J. Cornelissen, BA (Coms), PhD., Professor Leeds University, Corporate Communication.

Municipal communications are separated into three distinct streams:

- **Political communications:** promote a campaign, a platform, or the viewpoint of an elected official. Political communications do not reflect the corporation, but rather an individual; they are the responsibility of political offices.
- **Community communications:** promote community events, or relate to events occurring outside the scope of the municipality as an organization. Communications related to community events fall under the scope of affiliated bodies such as Tourism and Community Action Networks, and as such are not subject to the standards set by Corporate Communications.
- **Corporate communications:** “incorporate a whole range of specialized disciplines, including corporate design, corporate advertising, internal communication to employees, issues and crisis management, media relations, investor relations, change communication and public affairs. An important characteristic is that it focuses on the organization as a whole and on the important task of how an organization presents itself to all its key stakeholders, both internal and external.”¹ Corporate Communications and French Language Services is responsible for providing corporate communications services to the organization. Corporate Communications is the official, unified voice of the City and the corporation.

We Communicate Because...

A City without communications is a city without a voice.

The City of Greater Sudbury has 160,770 stakeholders. Every day, those stakeholders are provided with information pertaining to municipal programs, activities, services, policies and procedures, through both formal communications (such as paid advertisements, municipal notices and newsletters, and media partnerships) and informal communications (such as word of mouth, observation of municipal employees, participation in programs, and consumption of local media).

Corporate Communications performs three essential functions:

- We **manage** the reputation of the organization.
- We **inform** residents.
- We **participate** in a two-way engagement with citizens.

Our Communications Are...

Strategic communications are accurate, consistent, authoritative, timely, creative, accessible, and measured. With these parameters in mind, corporate communications are designed to the standards of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) and Registered Graphic Designers Ontario.

Accurate

As a leader in the community, the City is committed to providing information that is substantiated by municipal subject experts to promote a voice of truth and authority.

Consistent

To promote a reputation-conscious brand, information issued by the City is written, designed, and otherwise communicated in ways that are aligned with an intentional management of reputation, with brand values, as well as with organizational values and corporate priorities.

Authoritative

The City of Greater Sudbury respects its citizens, and builds its image in the community by providing truthful information that comes from the appropriate person.

Timely

The City recognizes that information is only relevant when it is needed. To that end, the City endeavours to ensure that information related to municipal services, programs, policies and procedures is provided when citizens require it, both on a proactive and a reactive basis.

Creative

The City knows that information about municipal services and programs is only relevant if it is memorable. As such, it must stand out from the mass of consumable information that is available to citizens every day.

Accessible

The City communicates in ways that are clear, meaningful and relevant to intended audiences. It provides information in plain language, in both official languages, and in a variety of formats to meet the needs of the diverse population of Greater Sudbury.

Measured

Communications issued by the City are evaluated and measured against set goals and criteria, in accordance with best practices.

What Our **Communications** Tell You About Our City...

The City of Greater Sudbury has a complement of close to 3,000 full- and part-time employees, and the services those employees provide are far-reaching and wide-ranging. The values of the corporation help to identify corporate key messages that underlie all municipal communications, whether they are written or verbal, formal or informal, official or unofficial, planned or unplanned. These corporate key messages form the basis of all communications initiatives.

- The City of Greater Sudbury is a **service-driven organization** committed to providing excellent service to citizens in a cost-effective, efficient, and friendly way.
- The City of Greater Sudbury **values citizens and their input.**
- The City of Greater Sudbury is **a strong economy, a city of opportunity, and a city of innovation.**
- The City of Greater Sudbury is a **unique blend of urban amenities and unspoiled wilderness**, offering a healthy balance between employment opportunities and a relaxed northern lifestyle.
- The City of Greater Sudbury **values its diversity** as part of a northern community of communities.
- The City of Greater Sudbury is a **tourism hub for Northeastern Ontario** and an **internationally renowned destination for public engagement** and education in science and geology.
- The City of Greater Sudbury is **committed to ensuring the well-being of a dynamic, diverse, and multicultural society.**
- The City of Greater Sudbury is **committed to long-term fiscal responsibility and sustainability.**
- The City of Greater Sudbury is **creating a healthy and sustainable community.**

Where We're Going...

A review of communications activities, methodologies, resources, and tools allowed Corporate Communications to pinpoint areas of strength, as well as areas of opportunity. The following main outcomes were identified:

- There is an opportunity to **tell the positive developments within the City** in our own voice;
- There is a **need to rebalance our priorities** to focus more on corporate initiatives and less on routine tactical support;
- The City would **benefit from the development of policies, protocols, and procedures relating to communications activities** to ensure we are engaged in the right work at right time, to be strategic, and to improve consistency;
- **City staff are ambassadors for the organization** and the community and there is an opportunity to empower them with better, more timely, and clearer information about their workplace and their city;
- **Communications must be at the table with programs and projects at the right time** and at the right level to always be part of the process and effectively provide counsel;
- **Corporate communications must be positioned properly in the organization** and must focus on the work of strategic value so that Communications is recognized as a critical partner in achieving business goals.



Five Focus Areas...

These findings are addressed through the Communication Strategic Plan 2012–2014. The following five focus areas, based on the above findings, will guide communications. Action items that will move Communications and the organization forward in the next two years are associated with each of the focus areas.

Consistent strategic corporate focus

The voice of the City is strong, consistent, and aligned with corporate priorities. Primary and secondary communicators speak with one voice. Corporate support for departmental projects is based on aligning departmental priorities along corporate strategic priorities. Communicators across the organization are engaged in a reputation management council and in strategic communication processes.

Goal: *To improve the overall consistency of City messages to our key audiences. To be measured by a content analysis of key communications channels.*

The three main projects to support this focus area in the next two years are:

- Make Communications accountable to the Chief Administrative Officer
- Ensure Council's strategic priorities have communications plans associated with them
- Realign communications resources to support the strategic projects of Council and the organization

Authoritative, professional communications

Communications staff will continue to build skills in the interests of becoming partners in achieving the business goals of the organization.

Goal: *To increase the professional capacity, skills and capabilities of the entire communications team in order to provide excellent client communications support. To be measured by client satisfaction interviews, external reviews of communications outputs, and increased confidence of team members.*

The three main projects to support this focus area in the next two years are:

- Initiate a training program for staff who perform communications work
- Develop policies and procedures for communications work and processes
- Develop templates for routine communications to maximize efficiency and strengthen focus on strategic communication

Five Focus Areas...

Strong and authentic internal communications

Employees are the City's front-line contact with residents on a daily basis. Providing employees with the information and resources they need to be ambassadors for the municipality and champions for the organization is a vital function of Corporate Communications. We will support building employee engagement with the intention of improving employee commitment to common goals and talent retention.

Goal: *To increase employee understanding of City strategies, business goals and their roles in supporting those. To be measured by employee survey results on those criteria.*

The three main projects to support this focus area in the next two years are:

- Re-design the internal website with tools to empower employees to more effectively communicate with each other
- Create and lead an internal communication task force
- Develop and execute a comprehensive and targeted communication plan for employees

Proactive and reputation-building communications

As a leader in Greater Sudbury, the municipal government must build and maintain a reputation as a transparent and engaged partner in the community's development. Communications are truthful and timely. They speak directly to emerging issues and respond to the needs of the community. Corporate Communications provides information and listens to residents, to engage citizens and employees and manage the reputation of the organization.

Goal: *To increase key stakeholder understanding and valuing of the services provided by the City, and increase trust in City administration as effectively managing collective resources to provide effective and efficient public services. To be measured by a stakeholder interviews and a media audit.*

The three main projects to support this focus area in the next two years are:

- Develop a reputation management strategy
- Develop and execute a proactive media relations strategy
- Issue an annual report

Five Focus Areas...

Citizen-focused communication:

Be relevant to our community

Citizens expect and deserve that communications from their municipal government are relevant, timely and accessible to them, and provided in ways that meet their information needs. Corporate Communications takes advantage of all avenues for communication with residents, including both traditional and new media.

Goal: *To provide communications tools, channels and services that meet the information and feedback needs of citizens, as well as a two-way mechanism for citizen input. To be measured by citizen satisfaction survey with a focus on communications.*

The three main projects to support this focus area in the next two years are:

- Redevelop the municipal website
- Measure the outcomes of major communication plans to meet information needs of citizens
- Gather resident feedback on communication tactics that support their needs, such as apps for leisure activities and social media usage

How We're Going to **Get There...**

When we measure the success of the strategic communication plan in 2015, we will see improvements in employee engagement (to be measured by results of a 2014 Employee Feedback Survey), in citizen satisfaction with municipal programs and services (to be measured by a citizen survey in 2014-2015), in the reputation of the organization (to be measured by the results of a media audit), in employee feedback around organizational communication (to be measured by the results of a 2014 Employee Feedback Survey).

Finally, in 2015, Communications will, as a result of the actions in the implementation plan, and concerted focus on training and education, be real partners in the achievement of the organization's business objectives.

