Council Communications Group Meeting

February, 2016

Robert Vanasse
Principal, Stove Boat Communications
Executive Director, Saving Seafood
Council Communications Group Meeting

Challenges
Faced by Council Communicators

Audience
Determining and Reaching Your Targets

Digital Tools
To maximize effectiveness
Launched in 2009 with two original purposes:
- outreach to public, journalists, regulatory community and elected officials,
- outreach to industry members, to create conversations
Introduction

- We have worked formally with the NEFMC and WPRFMC, and informally with the MAFMC
- Additionally, although not a Magnuson-Stevens Act Council, we have worked extensively with the ASMFC
Challenges

• The following are some challenges that councils are facing:

  • Effective communication:
    • It’s vital to ensure that stakeholders - especially fishermen - and the media are aware of relevant council meetings and activities.
    • We get a lot of requests and hear complaints about council actions being difficult to learn about, and participate in. Sometimes the concerns are warranted, sometimes they are unjustified.
Challenges

• Meeting broadcast/participation:
  • Not everyone can attend meetings, and not everyone can afford to send lawyers or other representatives in their place.
  • It’s important to find an effective way to include as many people as possible
  • Some councils only broadcast full meetings, other also broadcast committee meetings
  • What is the most effective way to let people participate remotely?
Challenges

• Post meeting communications:
  • It’s important to get information out quickly
  • It’s also very important to translate council actions into plain English. These documents are often difficult to for a lay audience, or even a slightly educated lay audience to understand.
Challenges - Media Monitoring and Distribution Services

Cision, Vocus, Meltwater
PR Web, PR Newswire, Marketwire

- Stove Boat has used all 3 services, we are currently trying out Marketwire. These services can be expensive (PR Newswire: $500, PR Web: $300, Marketwire: $170)
- They will all tell you that using their service will ensure that your press release is read in news rooms around the country, and they can measure the effectiveness of your communications. This has not been the case in our experience.
- These services work very well for making your story immediately come up in search engines, but as far as having the story picked up, our biggest successes have come from constant contact blasts to carefully maintained databases.
- Monitoring is fraught with challenges.
Challenges – Determining your effectiveness

• Beyond simply collecting stories and using that information to identify reporters, media monitoring should be analyzed to determine if your messaging is working and your point is being made.
• All of these services will tell you that you can do analysis and create charts with the push of a button, but in fisheries, it isn’t that simple.

“Menhaden” 2012 vs. 2015

• This Chart is an example of a report that can be produced in Meltwater. It shows the change in tone for a specific time period.
Determining and Reaching Your Audience

- General Press
- Trade Press
- Participants in the Fisheries (Those who are Regulated / Affected)
  - Fishermen, Vessel Owners,
  - Buyers, Processors
- Community of “Stakeholders”
  - ENGOs, “Locavore” movement
- Other Federal, State & Local agencies
- Shoreside & related businesses
- Academics, Educators & Aquaria
Determining and Reaching Your Audience - Journalists

- It is difficult to find relevant reporters and media outlets.
  - Other than trade press, we have not found a single news outlet with a dedicated commercial fishing beat.
  - Fisheries is often one of many topics a reporter will cover.
  - You most likely know the primary local reporters in your region who cover your Council issues, but when a major issue arises you get coverage from neighboring regions, or from outlets that do not usually cover fishing issues.
  - A good way to find these reporters is to monitor stories of importance to your fisheries.
Determining and Reaching Your Audience
- Eliminating Noise

• Setting up these searches, however, comes with its own challenges. You can’t simply search for “fish.” You need to sort through the noise to determine what is relevant.
  • Ex., Recipes, recreational fishing, mascots, etc.

(("New England" OR Massachusetts OR Maine OR "New Hampshire") near/10 (Groundfish OR cod OR Haddock OR Scallop* OR "Sea Scallop**" OR Monkfish OR Skate OR "Thorny Skate" OR Dogfish OR "Atlantic Herring" OR Herring OR Shad OR "River Herring" OR "red Crab" OR Whiting OR "white hake" OR hake NOT Restaurant NOT Seared NOT Diner NOT Dinner NOT Grilled NOT soup NOT Menu NOT title:Menu NOT title:Dine NOT title:dinner))
The two main systems for email campaigns are Constant Contact and Mail Chimp. Both systems allow you to create and use templates, and maintain various lists and subsists (i.e., species, state, etc.).

- Much better than having a list in excel or an address book
- Both systems provide analytics, such as “opens”, “bounces”, “clicks”, etc.
- It’s important to regularly perform maintenance. Updating email addresses as people change jobs and correcting bounced emails.
  - People can also add or remove themselves
Tools - Websites

- A website should be the hub for all information relating to the Council: Meeting dates, documents, webinar access, fishery information, etc.

- There are several platforms available for websites (Wordpress, Squarespace, etc.)
  - It’s not necessary for everyone to be using the same platform unless you would like them to be integrated.
  - North Pacific currently hosts and all-council website. Should that be used more? Traffic analysis?

- News feed from a reliable source.
Tools - Social Media:
Don’t just check the box
Social Media

- Social media should be something that is set up and handled intelligently, not just because you think you have to.
- In our experience, our main constituency, fishermen, do not use twitter. Twitter may be useful for outreach to journalists, but most people in this field do not use it.
- Facebook can be an effective tool when used properly, but it can get expensive.