

Greater Wellington Regional Council

Communications Strategy 2003-2006

Summary

Introduction

This is a summary of Greater Wellington Regional Council's Communications Strategy 2003-2006. The first section is an executive summary of the full document, including background information on the purpose of the strategy, the outcomes and tools to be used, the principles on which the strategy was developed, the role of communications within the overall mix of tools and audience research.

The second section includes the full list of communication tools and outcomes adopted by Greater Wellington.

Section One – Executive Summary

Purpose

In 2003 Greater Wellington made a strategic commitment to working toward a sustainable region. The purpose of this strategy is to focus the communications resources of the organisation on supporting this outcome.

Achieving this outcome requires more than regulation, policy development, or even direct intervention in areas such as flood protection, land management and pest control (although all these things and many others are essential to achieving our goal). Achieving the outcome requires an informed, motivated community willing to actively play their part, and also willing to support the regulation, policy and intervention that we undertake. Working to achieve this community-wide involvement is a new development for Greater Wellington, and builds on smaller scale programmes already being run by divisions

This is not an operational plan. It does not describe activities for individual programmes at a strategic or divisional level. Rather, it is the framework within which operational plans are developed and monitored through the first three years of the 2003-2013 LTCCP.

Communications outcomes

The strategy identifies five outcomes that contribute to the overall outcome of a sustainable region. These outcomes are:

- Raising awareness and knowledge of sustainability.
- Achieving voluntary change among individuals and groups.

- Developing partnership and collaboration with the community.
- Creating a positive perception of the organisation so we can more easily achieve our strategic outcomes.

- Supporting divisional communication programmes.

Communications tools

Four groups of communications tools are identified that will enable the organisation to communicate effectively with target audiences. The tools are based on a communications framework adopted by Council on 18th March 2003:

- A brand that communicates the organisation's purpose and role.
- A social marketing programme to directly engage the public in the achievement of our outcomes.
- A strategic communication programme using media to communicate with the region as a whole.
- Divisional communication programmes to focus on projects and activities.

The strategy is based on the following principles

A medium to long-term approach. This approach acknowledges that while raising awareness can be achieved relatively quickly, changing behaviours and attitudes requires a long-term focus. We won't achieve our goals with one-off, short programmes.

Actively seeking partnerships. Achieving many of Greater Wellington's outcomes requires the successful development of ongoing partnerships with individuals, communities or organisations. In the medium and long-term, developing partnerships with the community will benefit the organisation's overall reputation.

Engaging the whole community. This strategy is based on the principle that individuals can make a difference to their local environment. By engaging with the whole community, and offering information and actions that can be easily adopted, we plan to offer individuals an opportunity to contribute to achieving a sustainable region.

Working co-operatively. Developing the framework of the communication strategy in parallel with the LTCCP means there will be close integration with divisional communication and marketing activities that support the Take Ten outcomes.

Being audience-centred and using a wide range of communication tools. This strategy will use detailed and ongoing research to develop messages and target audiences. The strategy makes use of a full range of communication tools to achieve its outcomes, and also uses a social marketing approach to engage the audience/public and sell its messages.

How communications contributes to behaviour change

One of the principles of the strategy is using a wide range of communications tools to achieve our goals. This principle supports the approach of this strategy that communications is a business tool that should be integrated with other tools, like regulation, incentives or direct intervention, to achieve the best overall outcome.

The following diagram [insert diagram] shows how communications programmes compliment the other mechanisms available to us to achieve a sustainable region. New Zealand research on how to achieve environmental behaviour change and international research on social marketing, agree that using a combination of tools to influence individual behaviour change is more effective than any single approach.

Audiences

All communications should be based on understanding the interests and needs of the audience with which we are attempting to communicate. This understanding is then balanced with the tactical or strategic needs of the organisation to reach a final decision on what is communicated, and when and how the message is delivered.

At the individual issue or project level, this understanding is best developed by divisional communications staff. At a strategic level the Communications Department, undertakes regular research to better understand the attitudes and behaviours of the public.

Section Two – tools and outcomes

Communication tools

One of the principles of this strategy is to make use of a full range of communication tools to achieve its outcomes. Four main types of communication tools have been identified:

1. A brand that states who we are and what our purpose is.

The brand is a keystone in the communication of our strategic outcomes. The brand describes the organisation's role and purpose while explicitly recognising our regional focus. The brand, and its supporting story, position the organisation as the lead agency responsible for achieving a sustainable region.

Consistent and professional application of the brand will help raise awareness and knowledge of our role and purpose across the community. The brand and its associated story quickly explains our role, purpose and goal.

2. A direct social marketing campaign that involves local residents in our programmes.

The social marketing programme is designed to achieve voluntary attitude and behaviour change among individuals and groups across a wide spectrum of the community. The social marketing programme compliments existing programmes such as the environmental education initiatives that are detailed and participative but reach small segments of the community. The social marketing programme will be less detailed, but will seek to engage a much larger segment of the community in actions that contribute to achievement of a sustainable region.

3. A mass media programme that raises awareness of our activities.

The existing mass media programme comprises the *Elements* newspaper, radio advertising, and general marketing activities. It is designed to provide the whole community with easily accessible information about our activities.

4. Divisional communications that support issue and stakeholder communication programmes and product-focused marketing and communication activities.

Divisional communications and marketing are generally focused on issues and projects. This communications strategy provides a framework for the development of divisional communication and marketing plans so that the achievement of divisional objectives contribute to the achievement of Greater Wellington's overall outcomes.

Outcomes

This section describes five communications outcomes focused on contributing to the achievement of a sustainable region. For each of the outcome areas measures have been identified for evaluating Greater Wellington's success. While these measures focus on directly evaluating the success of communication activities, the success of the programme will also be reflected indirectly in the achievement of Take Ten outcomes. In this regard the communication strategy is similar to the environmental education strategy that seeks to achieve long-term change through school programmes. The delivery of the school programmes can be directly measured, but the achievement of long-term outcomes can only be inferred from changes to attitudes and behaviour over time.

Communication outcomes

Outcome one	A high degree of awareness and understanding in the regional community of the social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of achieving a sustainable region, and Greater Wellington's role in achieving this outcome.	
Measures	Baseline 2003	Outcome 2005
Increased public understanding of Greater Wellington's role.	December 2003 awareness survey found that 29% of regional public associate Greater Wellington with care for the environment. 81% of the public believe Greater Wellington is fulfilling its role well.	June 2005 awareness survey found that 35% of the region's public associate GWRC with care for the environment (+6%). 84% of the public believe GWRC is fulfilling its role well (+3%).
Increased public understanding of social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of achieving a sustainable region.	57% do not understand the concept of sustainability. 18% associate it with the environment and 11% with the economy.	41% of the region's residents did not understand what a sustainable region meant (+16%). 29% of those who had heard or, or are members of Be the Difference did not understand what a sustainable region meant (+28% on baseline of residents).
80% of residents are concerned about the environment or environmental issues.	Environmental Behaviour Survey (2001), 68-75% say they are concerned about the environment.	54% of the region's public say they are concerned about environmental sustainability, 30% are neutral. Note: a more specific question about sustainability was used in 2005 than in 2003.

Outcome two	Individuals, communities and organisations in the regional community have made long term behaviour and attitude changes that support achieving a sustainable region.	
Measures	Baseline 2003	Outcome 2005
80% of people surveyed are doing something positive for the environment.	In December 2003 67% of residents said they were currently doing something positive for the environment. 71% believed they could be doing more <i>now</i> .	76% are currently doing something positive for the environment (+9%) 80% of people believe they can do something positive for the environment (+2%) Focus groups report that the programme is prompting minor behaviour changes.
8% of households have enrolled in the Social Marketing Programme by 30/12/04.	Baseline – response to ARC’s Big Cleanup is approximately 8% of households.	12,300 households (7% of the region’s households) had joined the programme by 30 June 2005. The programme has successfully recruited a cross-section of the region’s residents. 40% of Be the Difference members say they have changed their behaviour as a result of the programme.

<p>20% of residents have participated in an organised environmental action in the past year.</p>	<p>In December 2003 17% of the public said they were regularly involved in an environmental cause, and 19% said they had taken part in one-off environmental action.</p>	<p>14% of the region's public said they were regularly involved in an environmental activity (-3%).</p> <p>23% of the region's public say they have taken part in a one-off environmental activity in the past year (+4%).</p>
--	--	--

<p>Outcome three</p>	<p>The organisation has partnerships and collaborations with communities and organisations in support of the goal of a sustainable region.</p>	
<p>Measures</p>	<p>Baseline 2003</p>	<p>Outcome 2005</p>
<p>Number of community groups working with Greater Wellington in support of a sustainable region.</p> <p>Number of collaborations with government, business or other organisations in support of a sustainable region.</p> <p>Number of collaborations with TA's.</p>	<p>No existing baseline.</p>	<p>Partnerships achieved with:</p> <p>Resene Paints, BP New Zealand, Honda NZ Ltd, Panasonic, Ministry for the Environment, Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority, Wellington City Council, Masterton District Council, Whitcoulls, California Garden Centres, Stagecoach, Mana Coachlines, Tranz Metro.</p> <p>Stakeholder research shows overwhelmingly positive response to the programme.</p>

<p>Outcome four</p>	<p>There is a positive and consistent profile of the organisation and its key functions.</p>	
<p>Measures</p>	<p>Baseline 2003</p>	<p>Outcome 2005</p>

<p>60% of surveyed residents of the region have positive views of the GW.</p>	<p>58% of regional residents had a positive view of GWRC, 34% neutral.</p> <p>81% of the public believe Greater Wellington is fulfilling its role well, very well or extremely well.</p> <p>89% of residents were aware of Greater Wellington.</p>	<p>55% of regional residents (-3%) had a positive view of GWRC, 34% neutral.</p> <p>84% of the public believe GWRC is fulfilling its role well (+3%).</p> <p>84% of residents are aware of the GWRC (-5%)</p>
---	--	---

<p>Outcome five</p>	<p>Communications supports the programmes that make up the Take Ten.</p>	
<p>Measures</p>	<p>Baseline 2003</p>	<p>Outcome 2005</p>
<p>All staff are aware of GW's strategic goals (Take Ten), and how they contribute to its achievement</p>	<p>Internal communication audit, 2001. On a scale of 1 – 6, knowledge of the organisation's long term plan scored 3.5, and local agenda 21 (sustainability) 2.6.</p>	<p>None yet available.</p>