

STAFF REPORT

TO: Communications Subcommittee

FROM: Communications Adviser

DATE: 23 September 2010

REFERENCE: C797

SUBJECT: Communications Subcommittee Success and Role Improvement - RFN10-09-17

PURPOSE

To identify the improvements and advances within the purview of the current term's Communications Subcommittee and to invite discussion and identification of, for the next term's Subcommittee, improvements that will further assist the governance and delivery of the Council's communications function.

DISCUSSION

The role of the Communications Subcommittee has evolved over the past three years from being a tactical sounding board to one where the strategic nature of the Council's communications obligations are discussed, directed from and reported to.

To maintain the success and achievements of the current Subcommittee, the members are requested to debate and discuss with officers the improvements that could be made to support the new Subcommittee and officers in the delivery of the function within the next term.

To aid the discussion, a summary of the achievements of the last term are attached as Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION

The Communications Subcommittee:

1. Discuss and debate possible improvements in the governance of the communications function.
2. Identify recommendations to the Corporate Services Committee.

Chris Choat
Communications Adviser

Appendix 1: Achievements of 2007-2010 Term

81% of surveyed residents feel that there is more than/enough information supplied to them by Council.

Tasman District residents are more likely to feel there is enough/more than enough information supplied to the community, than residents nationwide.

(NRB Communitrak Survey 2010)

Key activity

The development of a performance based contract with a contracted communications services delivery company to assist in the delivery and management of the Council's communications.

Oversaw the appointment of the internal position of Communications Advisor

Oversaw the appointment of the internal position of Web Master and the re-creation of www.tasman.govt.nz

A&P Show 2009

Oversaw a complete new approach to Council's A&P show display for 2009. Increased focus on interactivity, engagement through use of striking visuals and the active promotion of key District facts to enable the audience to better appreciate the work undertaken by Council. The result was very positive feedback from visitors/residents and Councillors. The presence at key events such as shows has been viewed positively and will be continued to be developed as means of communicating with the residents and ratepayers of Tasman.

Tasman District Council Brand Consistency and Placement

The development of Council's brand and the strategy for its consistent application to ensure residents and ratepayers are aware of what they receive for their rates.

Cost and Quality Measures

Oversaw the development and application of quality measures around all Council communications - including radio, Newslines, media releases, public consultations etc. Also monitored and evaluated communications spend and made recommendations for improving value and impact.

Newslines

63% of residents mention 'Newslines - The Mag' as their main source of Council information (55% in 2009).

Choose a preferred 'look and feel' for the redesign of Newslines in 2009. The new format is modern, fresh and easier to read.

Oversaw the inclusion in Newslines of the new Community Recreation page, It's On events guide, staff profiles, double page 'Updates' section and growth of the publication to 12 pages.

Oversaw the process of ensuring that Newsline is received by all ratepayers in the Tasman District including businesses and those with PO boxes.

Maintained Newsline - The Mag as the number one way Tasman residents, who are aware of information about Council, receive that information (92-94%)

Oversaw the streamlining of the Newsline creation and sign off process, which has resulted in better visibility for Council staff, an increase in the quality and balance of content and a more timely sign off process.

Boredom Busters.

Oversaw the streamlining of the Boredom Busters process to ensure that the magazine arrives in schools no later than three weeks before the end of term. This has resulted in much-improved readership and engagement (measured through competition entries and feedback from OSCAR program providers).

Jam Magazine

The Subcommittee has overseen the transformation of Jam magazine into a national award winning publication. The Subcommittee has also been instrumental in driving the need for Jam to remain relevant to its audience and their reading habits. The result is Jam Online launching in October 2010.