



# COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

2021



# Purpose

*Corporate Communications – a set of activities that manages and orchestrates all internal communications aimed at creating favourable points of view among those on which the organization depends.*

This Town of Calmar Communications Strategy provides a framework that guides Town of Calmar corporate communications philosophy, goals, tools, and actions. Need for a Communications Strategy has been identified in Council's Strategic Plan 2020-2024 and Organizational Audit (2021).

This Strategy:

- Provides a guidepost for enhanced communications that are transparent, efficient, effective, and consistent.
- Recognizes there are distinct communications needs: 1) for a government organization wanting to enhance its internal communications skills and mechanisms; 2) for residents who both want enhanced understanding of what the Town of Calmar is and does and want an engagement role in formative elements of Town direction; and 3) for investors, visitors, and potential new residents who need clear understanding of community value proposition.
- Is "right-sized" for a small community with limited resources.
- Provides a spirit of authenticity of style that is critical to generating depth of human connection and trust needed to elevate strategic aspiration and achieve the transformative.
- Isn't standard-fare communications strategy with a dog's breakfast of objectives and tools, including those inherent in our day to day – from phone to email etiquette to meetings. A small set of identified strategic tools is surrounded by a more important scratching of the surface to articulate what motivates humans to absorb messages, connect and engage, and what kind of culture we need to nurture and sustain new ways forward. This isn't about to do list check-boxes. It's about deeper inter-connectivity as a Town of Calmar community in pursuit its vision.

# 1 Communications Context

Our understanding of the power of communications, and valuation of the importance of communications – THE FOREST - is far more important to success than creating more tactics – THE TREES.

## THE WHAT AND THE WHY

- Strategic Direction: The Why. The rudder on the ship. Plot points in your story (e.g. ag, land, housing) that communications content focuses on.
- Brand Strategy: builds around plot points, establishes key messages and visuals.
- Repeatable content: the consistent “Why” that places dynamic, always-changing communications content in context of vision and strategic direction.

## THE HOW

- Communications Strategy: principles, carefully chosen tools, and a style that connects with residents - aligned with available resources. Internal document that is a guidepost for communications implementation.

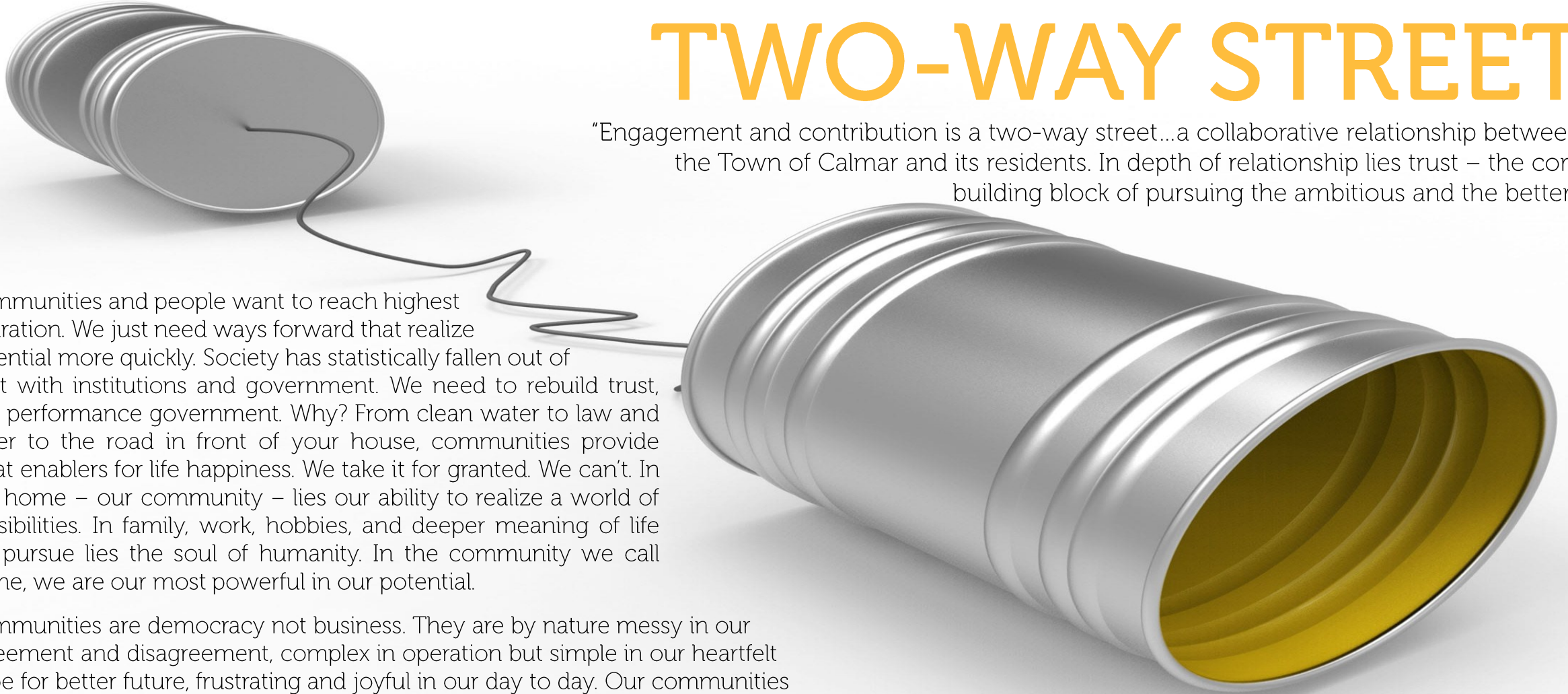
### A Communications Equation

$$\frac{\text{Tools + Style} \sqrt{\text{PRODUCT}}}{\text{Value of Communications (Corporate Culture)}} \pm \begin{matrix} \text{Community} \\ \text{Trust} \\ \wedge \\ \text{Awareness} \\ \text{Knowledge} \\ \text{Engagement} \end{matrix} > \text{Experience} = \text{EFFICACY}$$

# SUCCESS IS A

# TWO-WAY STREET

“Engagement and contribution is a two-way street...a collaborative relationship between the Town of Calmar and its residents. In depth of relationship lies trust – the core building block of pursuing the ambitious and the better.”



Communities and people want to reach highest aspiration. We just need ways forward that realize potential more quickly. Society has statistically fallen out of trust with institutions and government. We need to rebuild trust, and performance government. Why? From clean water to law and order to the road in front of your house, communities provide great enablers for life happiness. We take it for granted. We can't. In our home – our community – lies our ability to realize a world of possibilities. In family, work, hobbies, and deeper meaning of life we pursue lies the soul of humanity. In the community we call home, we are our most powerful in our potential.

Communities are democracy not business. They are by nature messy in our agreement and disagreement, complex in operation but simple in our heartfelt hope for better future, frustrating and joyful in our day to day. Our communities are...us...like family. Highest hopes and aspirations are realized by the depth and breadth of our personal and collective investment in its future.



# SHARED VALUES SHARED JOURNEY

In these days of busy lives and step back from involvement assuming others will look out for us, our “better” societal conversation too often makes way for voices of discontent...the some of us not the most of us. It's time the optimists, the solution seekers, and the doers – The Pragmatics – reclaim a shinier, more ambitious, more hopeful community conversation and narrative on our path forward.

Democracy is always vulnerable. Our investment in it determines its trajectory. It's time we each personally renewed our commitment to give oxygen to our municipal government in need of us...to honour our past and pay it forward to a better future for our children and grandchildren. We can be the best of us. The choice is ours to make.

## **We will alter our trajectory in our values, by:**

- 1) Recognizing that democracy is an investment from all of us.**
- 2) Embracing awareness, engagement and contribution is a two-way street...a collaborative relationship between the Town of Calmar and its residents. In depth of relationship lies trust – the core building block of pursuing the ambitious and the better.**
- 3) Voting.**
- 4) Giving disagreement a hug. Sorting out disagreement respectfully opens a door to the amazing and the transformative.**
- 5) Having respect in our real-world and online conversations for anyone who serves their community – paid and unpaid.**
- 6) Substituting the angry conversations taking the air out of society with a strength in numbers wanting a shinier, more ambitious, more hopeful community conversation and narrative.**
- 7) Doing the “one small thing” for our community, recognizing we all have something to offer – from mayor to green thumb.**
- 8) Being the community and people with five solutions for every problem, not five problems for every solution.**
- 9) Elevating above the stones in the road with a constant reminder we are aiming for legacy our children and grandchildren will be proud of.**
- 10) Feeling the urgency to out-do vs out-talk.**

# MARKETING VS COMMUNICATIONS



## COMMUNICATIONS

*The Focus of our Communications Strategy.*

What we do INTERNAL to the community that is focused on resident satisfaction and contribution to community-building.



## MARKETING

What we do EXTERNAL to the community that is focused on investment attraction, and tourism development.

*Use of our Brand for economic development and tourism investment and visitor attraction.*

Marketing and Communications are essentially the same in their intent and approach. For purpose of this Strategy, they have been distinguished from each other based on target audience.

# Key Strategy **Insight**

**BETTER**

**MORE**

**RIGHT**

## A "RIGHT-SIZED" **COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

Just like Goldilocks who preferred porridge, chairs and beds that weren't too big, too small, but just right, a key strategic insight is that Town of Calmar staff and residents desire more communications, but "more" is a slippery slope of trying to do too much with too little resources. More for the sake of it generates poor results. A better strategic approach is to carefully focus on a small number of "right" tactics that residents pay most attention to, with "better" content and style that deepens our human connectivity and appreciation of the value of municipal government to resident pursuit of life well-lived.

# THE COMMUNICATIONS SPECTRUM

## -Community Communications-

A focused Communications Strategy chooses tools that best align with goals and specific community dynamic. The range of tools typically used expands as a community grows in size and complexity.

### Internal Communications

- Email
- Meetings
- Intranet
- Training
- Newsletter
- Events
- Memos
- Webinars
- Surveys and polls
- Chat – e.g. Zoom
- Email signatures

These are examples of tools used/could be used by the Town of Calmar to engage with and communicate to staff.

- Website
- Social media
- Flyers
- Brochures
- Word of mouth
- Video
- Blog
- Newsletter
- eMail
- Annual Report
- Mayor’s messages
- Utility insert
- Tax notice insert
- Texts
- Online chats – e.g. Zoom
- Direct with staff on issues of interest
- Direct with Council on issues of interest
- Surveys / polls
- Open houses (plan-making)

These “middle ground” tools are used/could be used to engage Town of Calmar residents in direction setting and initiatives, but are also paid attention to by prospective investors, new residents, and visitors.

### External Communications

- Advertising (print, online, out of home, traditional media)
- News releases
- Events
- Email
- Content marketing
- Promotional material
- Radio
- TV
- Billboards
- Point of sale (e.g. new home builds, grocery stores)

These are examples of tools used/could be used to “sell” Town of Calmar value proposition to prospective investors, new residents, and visitors.



## 2 The BIG Picture

Our Vision, Value Proposition, and Community Development Roadmap – OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION – enables communications to be more powerful by relating initiatives to “The Why.” Our stepping-stones can be seen in context of the BIG Picture.



# THE POWER OF WHY

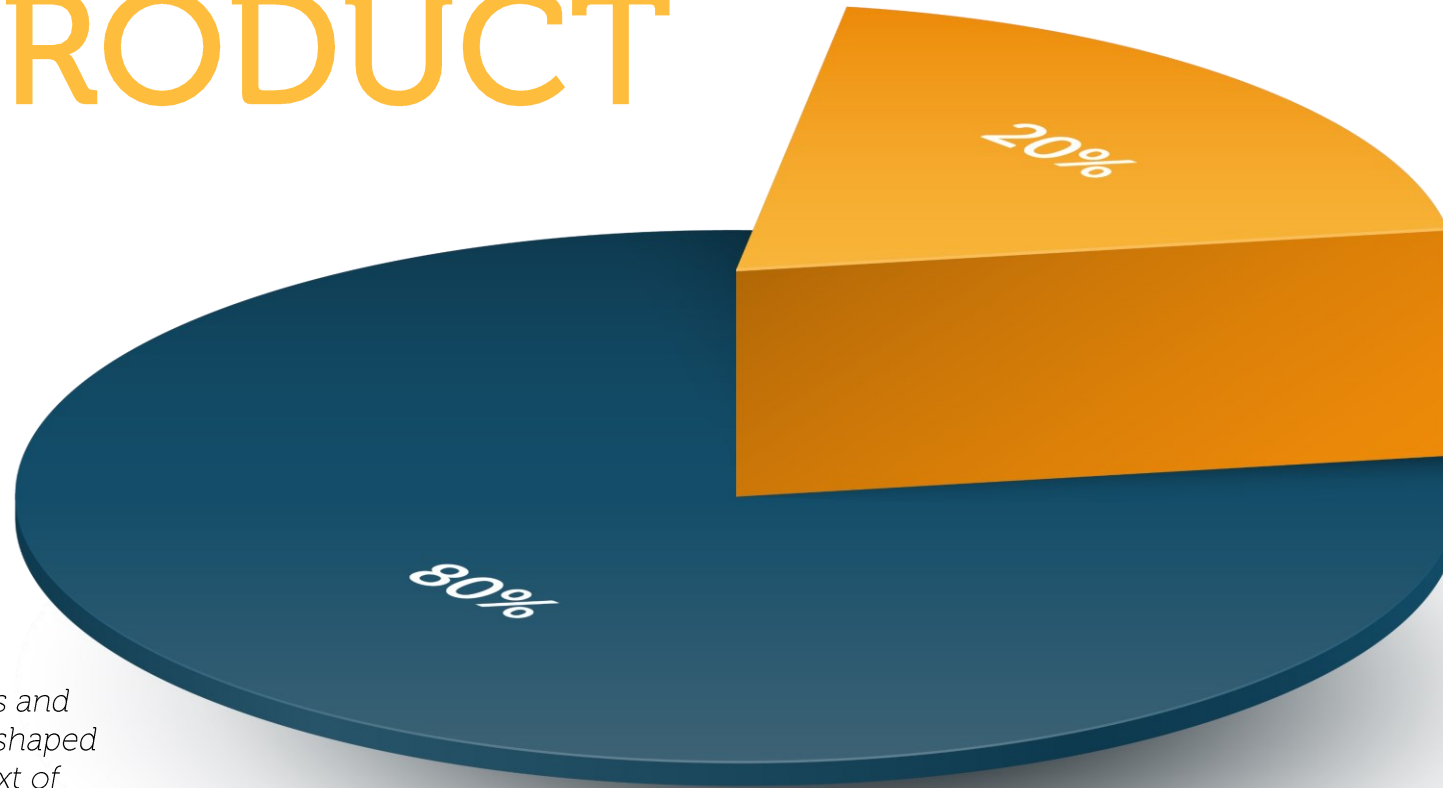
Have communications be driven by “THE WHY.” Answer the question for residents: why does this piece of information matter to me? Why should I care? Link to strategy, and connect to emotive themes like jobs, kids, and legacy-building to achieve exponential benefit from communications vs linear benefit of simple “talking more.”

*Communicate Vision, Value Proposition, Community Development Roadmap in key and repetitive ways like back of business cards, boilerplate in news releases, vision published frequently, and electronic signature sign-offs.*

# THE POWER IS THE PRODUCT

## The Product

*Services, amenities and value proposition shaped by action in context of vision.*



## The Story

*Communications and marketing.*

Every municipal election cycle in most communities, "communications" is quickly identified as a sore spot. Communications typically isn't the real issue; the "Product" (community development) is lagging or isn't interesting enough to connect with people and keep them engaged. Great Product sells itself – the 80%. Great communications – the 20% - is just elegant spin on the ball to put Product success in the right context.

# Calmar: Our Ambitious Future

## Our **Vision**

Home is where the heart is in Calmar – as the Edmonton region’s most affordable community. Connected to the earth in what we sow and grow. Connected to the neighbours you know. Pursuing an energized downtown, imaginative new housing options, and new types of spaces and places for entrepreneurs to grow their craft.

*A prism applied to all actions...*





# Value Proposition

WHY DO WE MATTER? Answer this question and 80% of a community's economic development pathway is defined via connection to people and enterprise who best connect with value proposition. And the more unique or powerful the value proposition, the further the lengths people will go to pursue it.



## Affordable housing with urban amenity access

*This is a quantified value proposition, tracked over time.*



Amenity (in order): trails, library, arena (Src: Recreation Master Plan)

Lifestyle: safe, friendly, connected community, small, location (Src: Town of Calmar staff workshop, 2021)

# TOWN OF CALMAR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP

## GROW CALMAR

Calmar's industrial development strategy should target agriculture services as priority #1, with a secondary general regional industrial services target. Vertical farming/greenhousing is a natural fit.

## THE LANDSOME STRATEGY

Calmar is struggling with industrial land availability (e.g. orphan wells). The community needs more industrial land to grow its industrial base and meet a non-residential assessment target.

## NICHE EXPERIENCES

Calmar won't win the race to chain and big box stores. Calmar's opportunity lies in unique experiential retail and services.

## THE AGRIHOOD

Agrihoods – where residential development, productive agriculture, and commercial opportunity converge - is a key distinguishing housing product development pathway that aligns with Calmar area agriculture strength.

## ADVANCED BROADBAND

It's no longer good enough just to be connected to the Internet. Gigabit broadband is now an essential utility re investment and resident location decision making, an enabler of competitive economies of the future.

## HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Calmar has a significant housing price competitive advantage. Calmar should maintain and enhance housing value proposition via policy and advocacy for housing choice, and alignment with new home-based commercial opportunities.

## GET DOWN... TOWN

Calmar should prioritize and accelerate implementation of the Community Vitalization Plan as the heart and soul of community life, and placemaking.

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The economy is evolving, with a greater share of self-employed, and/or work from home...the "independents." Calmar can stand out from the crowd by enabling physical space and program opportunities that accelerate local small business growth rates.

Who? Millennials, Gen Z, Families

# 3 Goals, Key Messages & ACTIONS

Our communications meat and potatoes helps us focus our energy and resources on best-fit actions.



# Communications Goals

Strengthen resident awareness of, and satisfaction with, the Town of Calmar by:

1

Connecting residents with Town initiatives and successes.

2

Enhancing engagement with residents to help shape direction and feedback.

3

Increasing internal Town of Calmar capacity to communicate with citizens in meaningful ways.

WHY? More satisfied and prideful residents generate myriad benefits – from volunteerism to investment. Residents are also our best “salesforce” for new investment, residents, and visitors.



# Communications Plan on a Page

# THE HEALTH KICK 3

## THE GRAVY

- Content Focus: Top 3 initiatives, tangible project updates – in context of The Why are strong community desires. Celebrate successes also appreciated.
- Style: Story matters. Images matter. Wordcraft matters. Be interesting.
- Techniques: The Pyramid, Story elements, Emotion, Image and Word Choice.

Most Resident-Desired Content / Style: The Why, Top 3 Initiatives, Tangible Project Updates, Celebrate Success Stories (Src: Calmar Communications Survey, 2021)

## 1 THE MEAT

Resident Communications Tools: Facebook, eNewsletter, Email, Municipal Website. Council meeting minute summaries.

- Short and snappy on social media. Drive to web link for deeper information.
- Sharpen eNewsletter content on more strategic initiatives and context. Branded template (Mailchimp). Opt-ins and push notification (Email list).
- Brand templates for outputs.
- Frequency: Social media – once/week (strategic content), Council meeting minutes – bi-weekly, eNewsletter – monthly. Website: Dynamic content (News), thought leadership on as-need basis.

Most Resident-Desired Tools: Facebook, eNewsletter, Email, Municipal Website (Src: Calmar Communications Survey, 2021)

## 2 THE POTATOES

Town of Calmar (Internal): Communications themes in Lunch 'n Learns. On-boarding "Welcome to Calmar", Personal Performance Plans, Quarterly Staff Meeting Content

Resident Engagement Tools: Surveys, Stakeholder Workshops, Feedback Loops.

# Communications Key Messages

Key messages are what we repeat in our communications outputs to relate all we do to the bigger picture.



As a resident you are an owner of, and investor in, Calmar.



The Town has successes in its pursuit of vision.



There is a strategic plan in place that guides our actions.



Success – new jobs, new things you see – will take some patience. Know we're working on it.



We need your help to build a community you take pride in, creates jobs, and attracts investors and visitors.

# 1

# COMMUNICATIONS OUTPUTS

OUTPUT	DESCRIPTION	CHANNEL	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING	ANNUAL BUDGET
OUR TOP 3 THINGS	Rolling list of Top 3 initiatives being worked on (branded template). Always include min. 1 item economic development-related.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newsletter item</li> <li>• Facebook post</li> </ul>	Communications	Monthly	\$3000 (12 x 5 hours x \$50/hr)
SUCCESS STORIES	An annual report on a page (branded template) that celebrates Calmar initiative successes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook,</li> <li>• Website (Annual Report on a page)</li> </ul>	Town staff - content, Communications - layout	Annual	\$500 (10 hours x \$50/hr)
eNEWSLETTER	Town-produced newsletter highlighting strategic initiatives/successes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook post</li> <li>• Website main page</li> <li>• Opt-in / push notification email list (Mailchimp plug-in on website)</li> </ul>	Town staff - content Communications - layout	Monthly	\$3700 (12 x 5 hours x \$50/hr contractor + \$650/yr Mailchimp service at 2.5K monthly emails - mailchimp.com)
SOCIAL MEDIA	Mixed of "Top Things", Good News, Business Successes, Community Events, Economic News. Curation from third party sources if content is strategic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook</li> </ul>	Communications (Style & Content Guide). Posts by department heads.	Once per day (current post rate)	\$6250 (125 hrs @\$50/hr contractor + stock image purchase \$1K annual)

# 1

# COMMUNICATIONS OUTPUTS

OUTPUT	DESCRIPTION	CHANNEL	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING	BUDGET
COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS	Short summary of key Council meeting decisions. (e.g. City of Castlegar - <a href="https://www.castlegar.ca/news/council-highlights-november-1-2021/">https://www.castlegar.ca/news/council-highlights-november-1-2021/</a> )	Website – News section	Communications	Monthly	\$2400 (12 X 4 X \$50)
CELEBRATIONS OF SUCCESS	Celebrate business openings/successes/milestones, and people in strategic spaces – e.g. makers, creators, housing innovators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook posts</li> <li>• Newsletter items</li> <li>• Makers stories/video on website</li> </ul>	Communications	Ongoing – feeds into Facebook/newsletter frequency	\$2500 (10 annually x 5 hours x \$50)
WEBSITE	Timely updating of dynamic content on Town website (News, Events, Calendar of Events).	<a href="http://www.calmar.ca">www.calmar.ca</a>	Communications	Ongoing	\$5000 (100 hours x \$50)
NEWS RELEASES	Funding announcements, major announcements, significant initiative or milestone progress vis a vis Strategic Direction subjects.	Website news section	CAO / Communications	As needed	\$1250 (5 annually x 5 hours x \$50)
					<b>TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET: \$25000</b>

Key Insight: content re-purposing lies at the core of these communications outputs, where a single story can be repurposed into multiple outputs. This approach creates communications efficiency, and addresses the “old-school” Marketing Rule of 7 that says one must hear a message at least 7 times before they’ll take action related to the message (participate, act, understand, etc.). In today’s 24/7 world where attentions spans are limited and declining, this number is higher.

# 2

# ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

OUTPUT	DESCRIPTION	CHANNEL	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING	BUDGET
SURVEYS	Facebook polls on issues-based feedback (e.g. animal licensing). SurveyMonkey or other platform – 1/major strategic plan. 1 Strategic Issues Community Survey per 4 years at start of Council mandates.	Online Survey	Communications	As-needed	\$4000/survey development and analysis + \$500 annually Survey Monkey Advantage Annual Plan
STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS	Build custom key stakeholder groups for issues or plan-making development and feedback. Develop email list and communications process specific to project scope and timeline. General process (in order): 1) Capacity-building and Discovery (SWOT) workshop; 2) Strategic Planning workshop; 3) Online or in-person output presentation; 4) Document / output feedback loop via email edits. See <i>Key Insight note below</i> .  Hold annual Key Stakeholder Roundtable to discuss community issues and pathways forward.	Workshop	Communications	As-needed	\$4000/stakeholder group – setup, logistics.
FEEDBACK LOOPS	Open houses for major plan development. Document posting to website and social media with request for feedback on issues-based initiatives.	Open House  Facebook	Communications	As-needed	\$2000 (online)-\$4000 (open house) / feedback loop  TOTAL ANNUAL ENGAGEMENT BUDGET: \$0 (no major plan-making)- \$12-\$14,000 (per plan)

Key Insight: an excellent Strong Towns article – “Most Public Engagement is Worse Than Worthless” [https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/most-public-engagement-is-worse-than-worthless?utm\\_content=bufferff188&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=facebook.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer&utm\\_source=facebook.com&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=meetedar&utm\\_content=080618most-public-engagement-is-worse-than-worthless&fbclid=IwAR2YqdQNFx-hrEhCtE9NT\\_qMGGCwgtSV-Rux6btkfBO1jzOpTnew07KDh\\_U\\_-](https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/most-public-engagement-is-worse-than-worthless?utm_content=bufferff188&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=meetedar&utm_content=080618most-public-engagement-is-worse-than-worthless&fbclid=IwAR2YqdQNFx-hrEhCtE9NT_qMGGCwgtSV-Rux6btkfBO1jzOpTnew07KDh_U_-) highlights strategic need to focus community engagement on: value of Town “interpreters” with subject matter expertise who can translate feeling and opinion into story of the future for feedback purposes (vs blue sky exercises); value of residents in comparative prioritizing (e.g. a taxation question re what services people want more or less of), a need to solve problems at the core of engagement; value of expertise (creating a two-way street with residents where we need to build bridges to trust in governance and subject matter expertise; a need to ask people how they feel (to translate) vs what they want in technical details; value of pilot initiatives; value of issues-based surveys with full educational detailing of issues, pros and cons, etc.; and the value of small-group resident Stakeholder teams where capacity-building and a measure of subject matter expertise can be built.

## 3

## COMMUNICATIONS CAPACITY BUILDING

OUTPUT	DESCRIPTION	CHANNEL	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING	BUDGET
LUNCH 'N LEARNS	Educations/awareness building-focused staff gatherings, with a topic schedule including communications skill-building.	N/A	CAO or delegated Director	Quarterly	Internal. Budget needed if external speakers / contractors desired.
EMPLOYEE ON-BOARDING	A Welcome to Calmar information package that includes curated strategic direction materials, vision/mission, and corporate culture and values.	N/A	CAO or delegated Director	Ongoing	Package can be developed internally.
PERSONAL PERFORMANCE PLANS	Develop annual personal performance plans (to focus performance reviews), including communications objectives.	N/A	CAO or delegated Director	Established by Dec 31 annually for following budget year.	N/A
STAFF MEETINGS	Gathering of all staff to build relationships, with a strategic initiative and successes discussion lens.	N/A	CAO or delegated Director	Quarterly	N/A

# FUTURE STRATEGIC PATHWAYS

## 1) Online Community Engagement Tool

a) Web-Based Engagement Platform - as the Town of Calmar and the communications role grows and advances, communications outcomes can achieve efficiency and level of engagement benefit from use of online engagement tools. There are two options: a) a third-party tool (e.g. <https://www.bangthetable.com>); b) build engagement tools into a future Town of Calmar website update. A major platform like WordPress is getting increasingly sophisticated with capability of plug-ins.

b) Email-Based Engagement – tools like Mailchimp (<https://mailchimp.com/>) enable direct email interaction with residents (e.g. surveys).

## 2) Social Media

Add one additional social media channel (YouTube and video work recommended given video is visual and therefore more “sticky” than most forms of marketing. Additional options: Instagram, Twitter).

- *A Community Stakeholder Survey in 2021 placed high value on Town use of social media channels.*

## 3) Public Speaking

In context of a relationship-focused brand and Communications Strategy, be proactive in Mayor, CAO, Directors, and public-facing functions (e.g. EDO, Communications) seeking presentation of strategic direction and “year in review” to community organizations.

# QUICK WINS

- Undertake a photo contest open to residents to build a Town of Calmar photo library (with consent forms/permission for use) that is used for public-facing Town of Calmar communications and marketing.
- Create easy access to direct staff contacts (generic department email addressing, and phone numbers that auto-forwards to responsibility areas within the Town of Calmar) in the footer of the Town of Calmar website.
- Post Town of Calmar Strategic Direction document to Town of Calmar website and promote community read of it via News functionality on Town of Calmar website, and social media posts.
- Use a boilerplate community description in news releases:

The Town of Calmar (pop. 2230) is small town living for all it's worth as a family-friendly community that is one of the Edmonton region's most affordable. A growing, close-knit community valued for its recreation and culture amenity, the Town's desirability as an affordable business and lifestyle choice will grow with its initiative focus on downtown enhancement, expansion of housing choice, and agriculture services and value-added food and beverage production investment attraction, and new types of spaces and places for entrepreneurs to grow their craft.

- Use a two-line value proposition and lifestyle tagline on the bottom of all staff emails:

Small town living for all it's worth.

Our Service Promise: Feels like family.

- Create a "Getting to Know Calmar" information package for circulation to new residents (e.g. welcome wagon, via new utility bill accounts) as an extension of the internal (staff orientation) that includes curated strategic direction materials, vision/mission, recent success stories, and top current initiatives.



# PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

## Quantitative:

- Net Promoter Score – tracked over time with rising trend, baseline as at next Community Survey.
- Resident Satisfaction with Communications - tracked over time with rising trend, baseline as at next Community Survey.
- Year over year rise in number of: Facebook followers, eNewsletter opt-ins, Town of Calmar website views.
- Key performance indicators for specific engagement activities (e.g. plan-making).

## Qualitative:

- Communications procedures, tools, templates and processes become ingrained in Town of Calmar operations.

# About Net Promoter Score

## HOW LIKELY IS IT THAT YOU WOULD RECOMMEND TO OTHERS THAT THEY LIVE (WORK) IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

- Measures loyalty.
- Commonly used as a core marketing evaluation dimension.
- Companies use benchmarking in order to measure how strong their score is in relation to other companies in their industry. Scoring can also be tracked over time as a key performance benchmark.

"Promoters" (score 9-10) are loyal enthusiasts who keep buying from a company and urge their friends to do the same.

"Passives" (score 7-8) are satisfied but unenthusiastic customers who can be easily wooed by the competition.

"Detractors" (score 0-6) are unhappy customers.

Subtract % Detractors from % Promoters. Scoring range: -100 to +100. Positive is good. >+50 Excellent

Context (previous community research, Rynic, 2015-2020):

*Live = community. Work = municipal corporation*

Athabasca County  
Live: 0

Alberta SouthWest (15 communities)  
Work: -74 to 10, Average: -13

City of Wetaskiwin  
Live: -65, Work: -19

Rural Educators Symposium  
Edmonton, 2017

Town of Outlook, SK  
Live: 17

Black Diamond  
Live: 46

Clearwater County  
Live: 8, Work: -44

-350 respondents from rural Alberta-  
Live: 28, Work: 28

Key recommendations address resources needed to solidify a communications function within the Town of Calmar.

# Key Implementation Recommendations

- 1 Consolidate the communications function into a singular, professional position.
- 2 Communications function to produce: a) style & content guide for each output – including examples - to build internal communications capacity, and b) directly execute Outputs.
- 3 Contract a Senior to Mid-Level Communications Advisor 2022-2024 (one year contract with two-year renew clause) for communications functionality – specifically to establish frameworks and content & style consistency that can be emulated. Core contract: \$25-35K/yr. Supplementary contract in plan-making phase (additional \$15K).
- 4 Hire a Communications Coordinator 2025+ with direct report to a Director with communications subject matter expertise and skillset. \$50-\$60K/yr.

# 4 “Culture Eats Strategy For Lunch.”

Plans are about people not paper....made powerful only when Attitude, Talent, Leadership, Values, Engagement, Vision, Action, and Communication converge to build the Trust in “Team Calmar” needed to achieve the strategic and ambitious.



# Town of Calmar

## Communications Values



**REFRESHING** – our “stories, simply told” will use plain language, compelling images, creativity, and friendly personality, to better connect with residents in a world of noise.



**AUTHENTIC** – we will communicate with unfailing honesty and openness, knowing transparency is the essence of being human, and builds trust.



**TIMELY** – we will provide frequency of project updates that aligns strategic explanation and updating with what one sees going on around town.

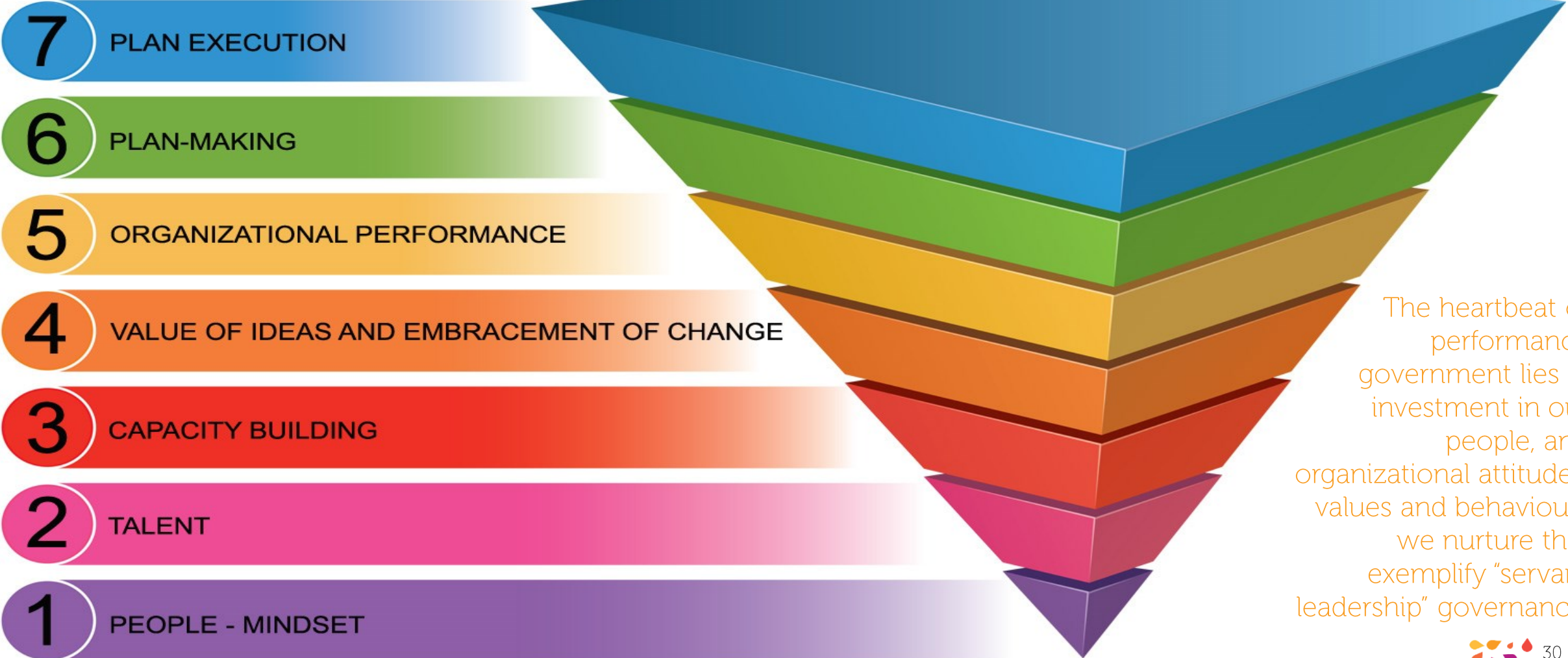


**ENGAGING** – we will seek constructive feedback and input as calls to action in our communications and resident interaction.

You are a customer not a  
“ratepayer.”

Our service promise to you:  
*Feels like family.*

# EXCEPTIONAL ORGANIZATION BUILDING -THE ONE SMALL PYRAMID-



The heartbeat of performance government lies in investment in our people, and organizational attitudes, values and behaviours we nurture that exemplify "servant leadership" governance.

# BELIEF / VALUE / RESPONSIBILITY

We need to put communications at the strategic centre of the municipal operation – aware of all facets of the organization to be able to communicate strategically, to connect initiative dots, and to answer “The Why”. This deeper beating heart of communications lies at the core of ability to make deeper connection with residents, with the myriad benefits of deeper connectivity.

Where we need to value communications

*Critical thinking...conversation...empowerment  
Manager or Director  
Budget spread across all departments...service*



How we often value communications

*“Talk”...output check list  
Coordinator  
Siloed function...cost.*

# 5 Style Matters

Image, wordcraft, story and personality in Style matter more than the communications Tool for desired effect: aware, knowledgeable, and engaged residents.





# BREAKTHROUGHS COME FROM UNDERSTANDING THE SHARK AND THE GOLDFISH PARADOX



## The Shark and the Goldfish Paradox:

*More Bravery=Less Consensus*

*Communities Must Be Creatively Brave To Get Noticed*

Be careful where your goldfish swims to stand out from the crowd with your great ideas or initiative. The change-averse sharks lurk to make lunch out of you if your steely resolve wavers for even a second. Why?

The introduction of new ideas that propose to change the order of things is like the Whac-A-Mole arcade game. The little mole pops up. Our reflex instinct is to bop it back down. Our default setting is that we like the predictable. Surprises create reaction. Reaction tends to be loudest in voices of dissent. The silent majority who are rooting for movement toward things that aspire and inspire are....silent. Natural momentum moves toward a lowest common denominator that ruffles the fewest feathers. The victim is our ability to reach higher aspiration. This paradox is most visible in community marketing and communications. Creative expression is an art form. Reaction is subjective. Consensus in anything is impossible; it's least possible in very subjective spaces.



We are exposed to 5000+ advertisement and brand exposures per day per person. Research says about 12 messages make an impression we engage with. Among a sea of grass blades is your message – just hoping to be noticed. We can all cite breakthroughs where stepping out from the crowd has generated handsome reward in terms of response. Yet our consensus-driven instinct to water down to de-ruffled feathers produces melba toast aerial pictures of communities and “Discover Us” slogans. It’s a safe bet, but it’s a bet on selling the future of our community that will fail.

To gut check, flip through a magazine or a tourism guide and ask yourself what you really notice. Or ask yourself what you really watch on YouTube. We want desired actions – like completing a survey, workshop engagement, or better awareness of what’s going on in town and why it matters. But minus creativity and art in approach, we may check boxes to say we have performed a task but we aren’t actually motivating what we want and need to happen. We can’t be cold and clinical; we need to be warm and....HUMAN.

A front page says: How good is our steak? Last week a man who was choking on a piece refused the Heimlich Maneuver. Makes you interested in reading page two doesn’t it? Think of what is said and how it is said as a return on investment – where connecting with residents a first time is money well saves in avoiding the many more times needed to put a bland message out there that doesn’t connect.

Understand the Shark and the Goldfish paradox and we open the door to a breakthrough in connecting with people when you communicate and market. The only way around this paradox is to understand it and to insert it into the negative reaction inherent in any effort to change the order of things.

We are guided by principles that will help us break through the clutter connect with residents. We will:

- Stand up and be noticed.
- Keep the overall effort simple. Our “lizard” brains love simple.
- Look hard for the compelling visual that is less building and large geography and more people, faces, and hands that have a thousand words to say. It feels like finding a needle in a haystack...and it should.
- Use the inverted pyramid approach in our communications ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inverted\\_pyramid\\_\(journalism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inverted_pyramid_(journalism))), starting with a good lead-in hook at the top in as few words as possible, supported by more details deeper in our stories.
- Use a classic storytelling technique: a plot/character, a pain point people have, and how what we offer resolves the pain point.
- Be less fussy about what is “professional” and more fussy about what actually connects with residents at a deeper level. This includes artful wordcraft, the power in a picture, and seeing the lighter and brighter side of life.
- Always talk about strategic objectives, knowing residents grant more latitude to communications style and content in strategic context.



# COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

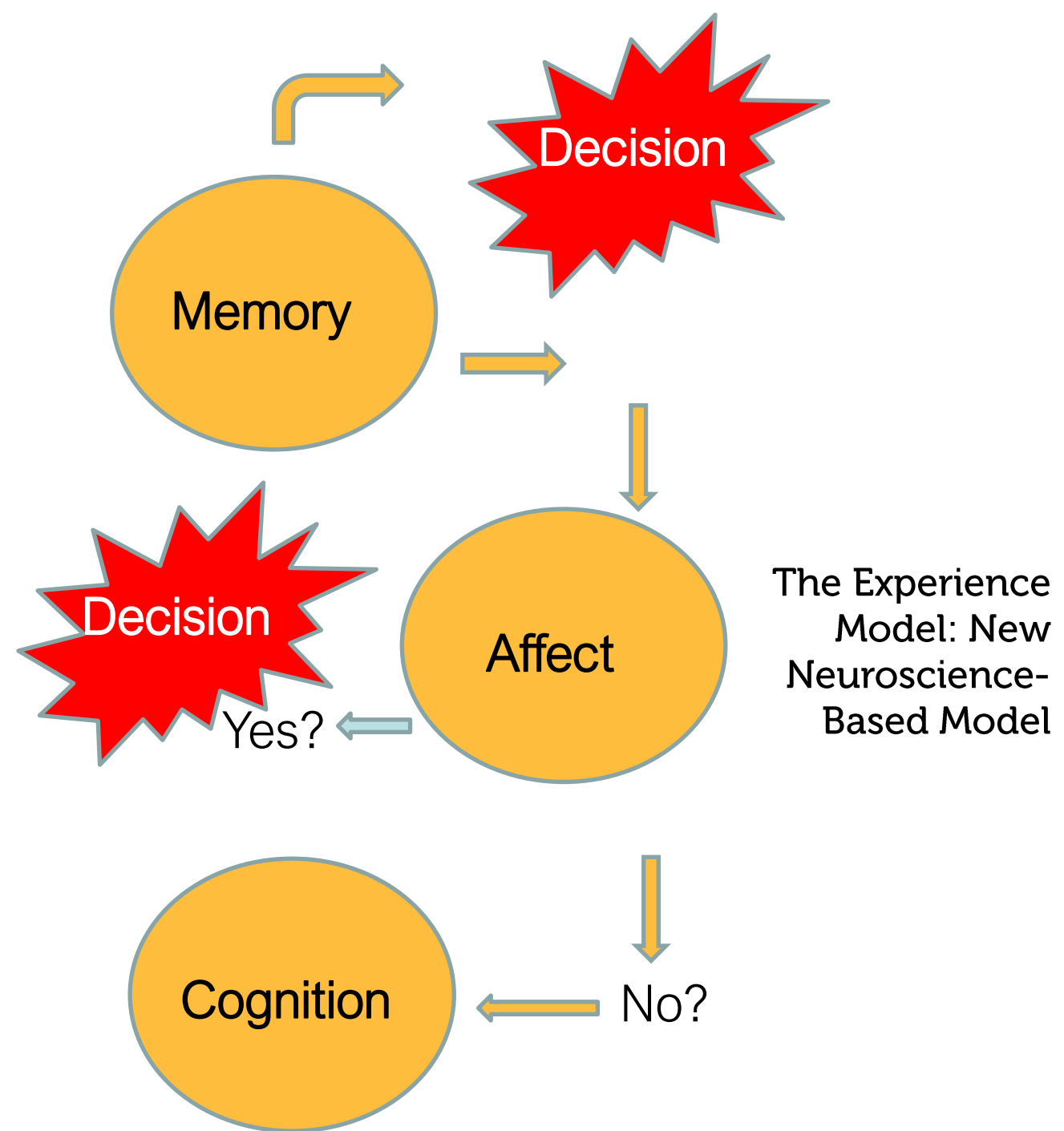


BACKGROUND  
-REFERENCE ONLY-

## The Persuasion Model: Old Model



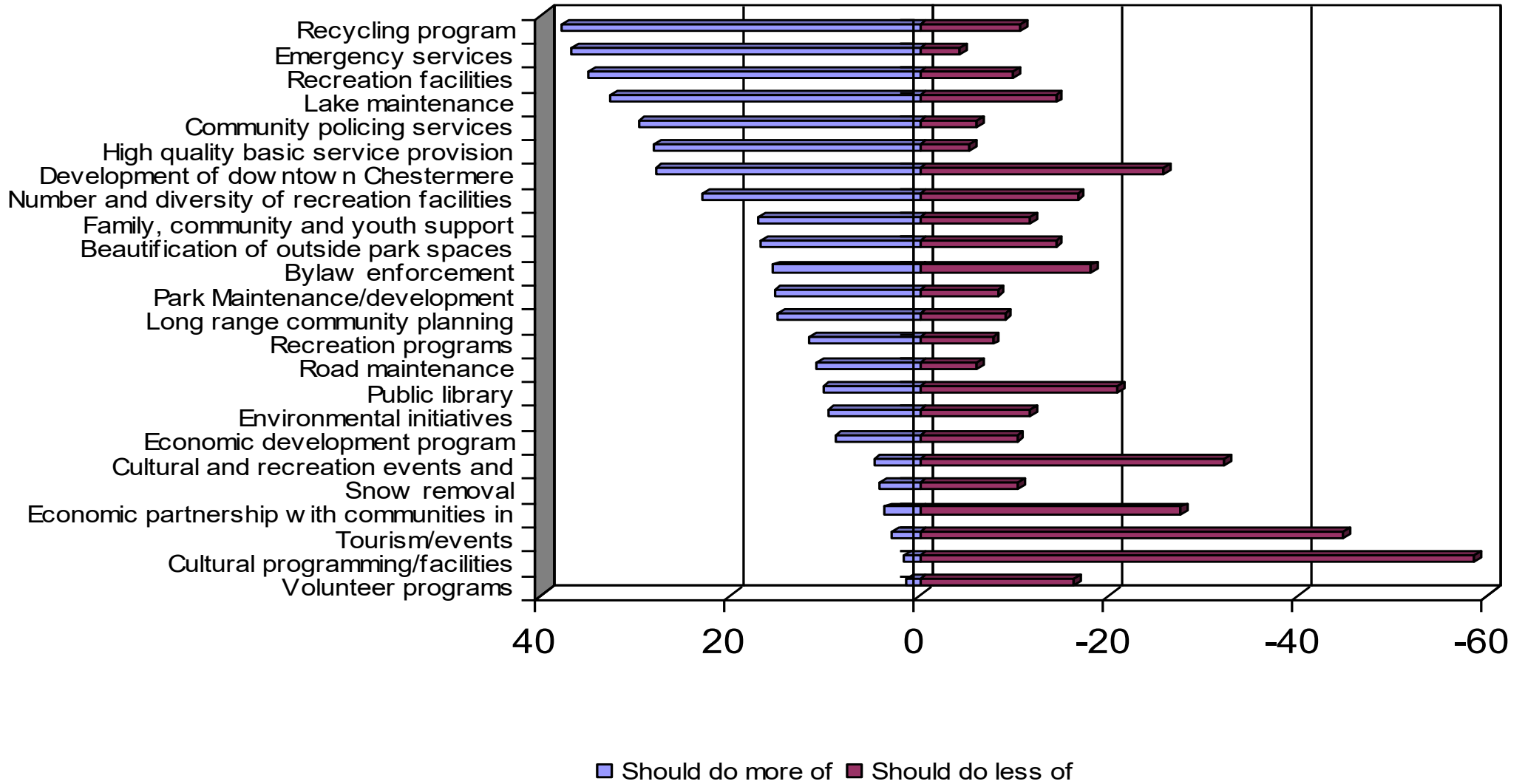
Our previous memory and experiences (i.e. all residents) fundamentally influence our relationship and decisions. We only use rational cognition when we don't have previous memory or experience. This is distinct from the old funnel-based linear behavioural decision-making model.



Asking residents to be part of solution-seeking is a powerful way to pivot away from “problem-identification” that is prevalent online in most municipalities.

Are we the place with  
5 problems for every  
solution, or the place  
with 5 solutions for  
every problem?

## Town of Chestermere Community Survey, 2008



Celebrate basic services excellence. When surveyed, residents (all communities) will most strongly desire basic services, with more subjective considerations further down the list. Some content that addresses basic services aligns with top of mind resident issues.

# Engagement Ground Rules

## Engagement Spirit

Open Mind

Honesty

Listen

Ideas

“Us”

Big picture

Don't stick to the past for the sake of it

No wrong answer

Don't dominate

*Getting the  
people piece  
right is  
everything*

## Rule of 7 Engagement Principles

- Be Bold with the Business – transformation comes from a process unafraid of tackling and creatively resolving longstanding issues, emergent trends, or community pain points. Educate first around key issues.
- Strategize Concisely – SWOT, vision/mission, a single umbrella development strategy – linked to build out and prioritization of 3-5 sub-strategies (SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) with corresponding actions, target audiences, and performance metrics. Create simple directional choices (two alternatives works well).
- Tell a Story - all great stories have setup (character and plot), a key conflict, and resolution. Tell a compelling story of the future of your community, and what you are doing to get there.
- Produce a Plan on a Page – force yourself to visualize your plan on a single page in a graphic. Connect the dots for people.
- Measure – a handful of well-chosen quantitative measures allow people to use their cognitive brain to measure progress. Take people along for the ride. Produce an annual Progress Report Card.
- Brand – use creativity in naming of the plan, lighter and simpler writing style, bolding of colours, and use of infographics, photos, and illustrations. Use emotive language in the storytelling. Use powerful words like “legacy” to build implementation commitments.
- Simplify - DaVinci said “simplicity is the ultimate form of sophistication.” From strategy to messaging to marketing execution, simpler is always more effective. People don't rally around complexity; they rally around easily communicated solutions.



In the human eye was a digital camera, it would have 576 megapixels. The best cell phone cameras today: 12 megapixels.

## IMAGE MATTERS

Seek image needles in haystacks – people-based, exude personality, artful, connected to strategy / value proposition.





# BC SEAFOOD

F E S T I V A L

Comox Valley, BC

## BC Seafood Festival Signature Weekend

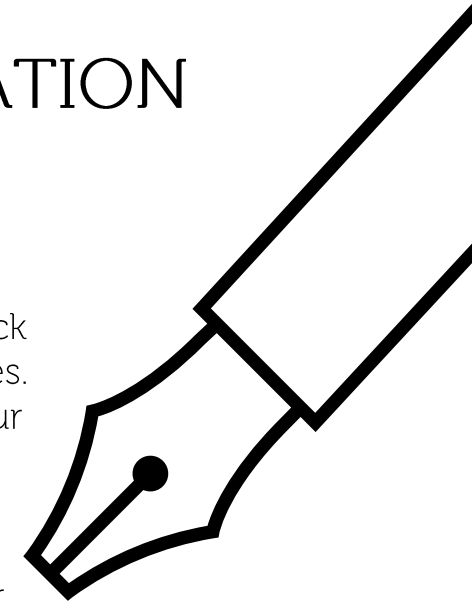
Don't miss the largest seafood and ocean celebration on the West Coast of Canada! The Signature Weekend will feature the Shucked! Canada's Largest Oyster Bar Happy Hour (June 15), BC Shellfish Growers Assn. Gala Dinner (June 15), Baked 'n Boiled Kitchen Party (June 16) and Bounty! A Brunch Seafood Cookout (June 17) plus the Signature Weekend Day Events (June 16 & 17) showcasing the biggest line-up of renowned guest Chefs and Chef Demonstrations, new and enhanced competitions, incredible seafood & beverage tasting stations, live entertainment and interactive sea-life touch tanks. Each event will be outlined below in more detail.

## CREATIVE WRITING INSPIRATION

Replaced With:

BC Seafood Festival Signature Weekend

How much shell could a shellchuck shuck if a shellchuck could shuck shell? We know – it's a mystery for the ages. Feed your desire to solve life mysteries by dragging your appetite to our **Shucking Competition**, just one of a variety of **Signature Weekend** throat tickling deliciousnesses (we invented a word) that will descend on Comox June 15-17 at Canada's rising star of premier seafood festivals. **Our various tasty shindigs are outlined below.**



**Outcome: 25% of all event sales generated by email marketing content – double previous year.**

## WORDS MATTER

Storytell (all stories have plot/character, conflict, and conflict resolution at their heart) vs provide purely descriptive/dry information. Stories are emotive, and creative writing is central to story. Artful writing connects better with people, which motivates positive outcomes – like resident satisfaction and contribution to community-building.

# “Investment”

Customer

VS

Two sets of word choices are fundamental to communications success. Residents are investors and customers. They own what they see. If we can pivot to “ownership”, we get more seeking of awareness, knowledge, and engagement in a community’s future.



# “Taxes”

Taxpayer

# WHEN IMAGE, WORD AND TOOL COME TOGETHER -CITY OF CASTLEGAR NEWSLETTER-

COUNCIL BRIEF - OCTOBER 15, 2018

CASTLEGAR  Connects

  
CASTLEGAR  
happily ever after

## THE *Fine* LINE MUNICIPAL TICKET INFORMATION BYLAW AMENDED

"Peace, Order and Good Government" are words that find a home in our Canadian Constitution. They happen to also characterize the role of bylaws where society thrives on peace among residents, social structure that defines our values, and government's role in nurturing peace and order – including...gulp...[fines for bylaw infraction](#).

Council has enacted an amendment to:

- 1) Municipal Ticket Information Bylaw 1280 to implement graduated fines for infractions related to Wildlife Attractant Bylaw 1198,
- 2) Business License Bylaw 627, and
- 3) Smoking Bylaw 1239.

FINE AMOUNTS WILL BE  
**50% LOWER**  
IF PAID WITHIN 30 DAYS.

Incentive to pay earlier benefits all residents by reducing administrative cost of processing fines, and has potential to reduce use of collection agencies – which is a last resort action the City would like to avoid.

Especially of note:

[Smoking cannabis in public can attract a \\$250 fine.](#)

## PROGRESS BY THE NUMBERS



These numbers are important to all residents given new residents contribute to our economic and social vibrancy, and new tax revenue helps pay for services and amenities.

## CASTLEGAR HAS AWARD-WINNING FLOWER POWER

*"Where flowers bloom, So does hope."*

Lady Bird Johnson

Kudos to an amazing group of volunteers in Castlegar who have sprung colourful life from the soil. Their hard work and inspiration has resulted in the City's receipt of the Communities in Bloom Class of Champions (Small) award that recognizes volunteer involvement. Key locations: Columbia Avenue, Millennium Park, community entrance signs. Castlegar is a previous award winner. Consider volunteering in 2019. Let's all support our City beautiful.



Castlegar Communities in Bloom Facebook page -

<https://www.facebook.com/Castlegar-Communities-In-Bloom-1451056848444411/>

## From the Mechanics File ...

"Crossing i's and dotting t's" is rather dry, but the quiet, largely unseen workings of government smooth waters so that we as a community can get on with making a living and enjoying life.

This week, Council processed the following related to **recreational cannabis**:

- Public hearing, third reading, and adoption for Zoning Amendment Bylaw 1276 to allow the sale of recreational cannabis in commercial zones, and light industrial zone.
- Adoption – Business License Amendment Bylaw 1277 - add a definition for cannabis retail, require submission of a business plan that addresses potential impacts, and require an application fee.
- Adoption – Smoking Amendment Bylaw 1278 - incorporate BC Bill 30-2018 Cannabis Control and Licensing Act definitions of places that cannabis can't be smoked or vaped.
- First, second, third readings - Municipal Ticket Information Amendment Bylaw 1280 - incorporate infractions/fines related to recreational cannabis.

This week, Council processed the following related to **Columbia Avenue improvements**:

- As a next step in the borrowing process, in the amount previously authorized by City of Castlegar Columbia Avenue Infrastructure Redevelopment Project Loan Authorization Bylaw 1242, the Regional District of Central Kootenay has been requested to borrow \$3,066,300 in funds from the Municipal Finance Authority of BC on behalf of the City, over a 25-year term.

COUNCIL BRIEF - OCTOBER 15, 2018

  
CASTLEGAR  
happily ever after

# Canal Flats Calling

## -Village Newsletter-

### Water Wonder - a Big Idea Comes to Life

What if we could link the Kootenay River and Columbia Lake with a paved, multi-use trail? It would be the only thing of its kind in the Columbia Valley. Something residents would enjoy, and would also attract tourists and tourism spending in local businesses. An idea...IS becoming a reality. Design is ongoing. The Village is seeking grant funding. We believe we can make it happen in the short term.

### Industrial Happenings

We know job creation is a #1 priority since the mill closed. We've been working hard with the private sector. Lots of green power and water. Fibre broadband. The biggest holding of employment centre lands in Columbia Valley. It will translate to businesses and jobs. It does take time. Progress of late: a 36 lot industrial subdivision is proposed, and Iris Energy has boosted employment to 21 people as it adds two more pods (6 MW) to what will be a 30 MW data centre).

### Signs of the Times

Good things are happening in Canal Flats. We want to celebrate them. We also want to advertise progress to potential new investors and residents. We have created a construction sign program to do this. Look for 4 signs coming soon.



## Templating Example

