

Communications Nova Scotia

Business Plan 2003-4

March 4, 2003

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Message from the Minister

As Minister responsible for Communications Nova Scotia, I am pleased to present the CNS Business Plan for the fiscal year 2003-2004.

Our government is proud of the calibre of work done by the agency and of the communications services it provides to all government departments, agencies and commissions.

The management and staff at CNS provide a consistently high quality service. During a time when government must be diligent in controlling costs, CNS has maintained the highest of standards at a reasonable cost.

The primary role of CNS is to keep the people of Nova Scotia informed about the activities, policies, initiatives and achievements of their government.

As demonstrated in this business plan, Communications Nova Scotia will continue to fulfill that role and maintain its commitment service at a reasonable cost to taxpayers.

Honourable Michael G. Baker, QC

March 4, 2003

Message from Executive Director

Effective communication between public institutions - government - and the people who own and are served by those institutions, has never been more important, or more challenging.

Every day, Nova Scotians are bombarded with information from multiple channels and a host of media.

Research shows that, increasingly, people feel out of touch with their governments. Better communication is clearly part of the answer to help reverse that disturbing trend.

Better communication means clear, focussed, useful information and messages delivered with the imagination and precision to cut through the clutter. Better communication demands an open flow of information and ideas both ways - listening as well as talking.

I believe the government is fortunate to have, at CNS, a group of communications professionals as talented and dedicated as you will find anywhere. We are committed to providing these professionals with the range of experiences and developmental opportunities they need and deserve in order to excel in this complex communications environment. In the year ahead, professional development activities will again be a priority.

CNS looks forward to continuing to serve Nova Scotians and their government, through quality communications activities delivered by highly-motivated and well-trained professionals.

Jim Vibert
Executive Director

March 4, 2003

Communications Nova Scotia

Communications Nova Scotia is government's full-service, central communications agency. Formed in April 1996, the agency employs 95 people, 41 in central office for planning and production of communications and communications-related materials, and another 54 as communications directors, advisors, and officers assigned to government departments and agencies. CNS is made up of four divisions—Communications Planning, Creative Services, Media Services, and Publication Services.

Mission

To provide communications leadership and excellence, using the highest standards of accuracy, clarity, consistency, and reliability, to help Nova Scotians understand government's plan, initiatives, and achievements.

Planning Context

After a full year of operations, the corporate re-configuration of Communications Nova Scotia, in which all of the communications directors, advisors and officers in government became employees of the agency, is now well established. The structure has enabled CNS to respond to the demands of client departments with relative alacrity and to assign resources – particularly human resources – where they are needed most. Communicators who work in government departments have a greater sense of belonging to a broader communications community. They are benefiting from more professional development opportunities than ever before and all CNS employees now receive annual performance appraisals.

At the same time, filling vacancies and holding onto top performers have become more difficult. Salary levels for provincial communicators are significantly lower than comparable jobs in private firms and the federal government, and in many cases the job classifications and ratings of our employees are out of step with expectations and performance.

Expectations continue to grow for CNS to support initiatives for which no budget is available. This presents human resource and financial challenges in managing the CNS budget.

Likewise clients are looking to CNS for ever-more technology-rich communications products. Video and audio streaming are the new media for information delivery, but they are also labour-intensive and demanding of technological infrastructure. Partners and suppliers are using more technology for more activities. CNS needs to keep up or face higher operating costs and compromised quality.

Results of client surveys coupled with staff suggestions have led to the creation of three new co-ordinator positions in Creative Services – most notably, Client Services. This co-ordinator is responsible for addressing any problems that arise and looking for opportunities to add value to production – print, multi-media, video or Internet-based – that is developed on behalf of clients.

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The rationalization of production printing in government is nearing completion. CNS has assumed control of all major print facilities and is in the process of making more efficient use of assets and reducing an over-capacity of printing resources. Major changes in technology are enabling the agency to find efficiencies.

Strategic Goals

1. Through quality communications leadership and practices, help Nova Scotians understand the actions of their government.
2. Obtain the highest quality and best-value communications products and services for government.
3. Expand and strengthen internal and external communications by making communications an integral part of all business in government.
4. Enhance opportunities for economic growth in related private-sector communications fields

Core Business Areas

Communications Planning: provides strategic communications planning and advice as government's central communications agency ; long term communications planning for departments and agencies; provides issues management support; internal communication advice; media relations and training; and supports corporate communication needs

Creative Services: provides in-house services, subcontracting, and project management for video and audio production, graphic design for conventional and new media projects, photography, editorial services; multimedia production, and Internet and electronic publishing; acts as government's Web master; is responsible for administration of the provincial Visual Identity Policy and Internet Content Policy

Media Services: acts as the government agency of record providing creative and administrative services for the preparation and placement of advertising; provides media monitoring; logistical support; communications support, including editing/rewriting of news releases, feature stories, speeches, and ad copy; and, distributes all government news releases to Nova Scotia news media.

Publication Services: meets government's print requirements (including forms, stationery, brochures, books, specialty items, and security printing) through in-house resources and by providing print procurement, print production management and quality control for vendor-supplied and in-house projects. It also manages the provincial Co-publishing Program

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Priorities

Major initiatives or planned accomplishments that are fundamental to the success of each core business area.

Communications Planning:

- C Build on corporate communication planning efforts. Continue long term strategic communication planning for each department and agency that appropriately supports government's corporate plan.
- C Broaden the agency's professional development strategy to strengthen general communication skills, and further identify and develop areas of specific expertise in communication.
- C Enhance the communication effort through the use of technologies that further advance effective engagement with Nova Scotians.

Creative Services:

- C Establish a focal point for CNS client service.
- C Foster relationships among the departments and agencies that can lead to efficiencies and economies through co-operative communications projects.
- C Research and implement technological changes to maintain compatibility with communications industry sectors and information delivery.

Media Services:

- C Focus on improving service through better use of technology and through private sector contracts.
- C Continue to work with the media outlets throughout the province to accelerate delivery of news releases and advertising.
- C Build on our service to government through our use of electronic clipping for Media Monitoring.
- C Play a key role in the research and organization of professional development for the Agency to equip our staff to better inform Nova Scotians of the government's services, initiatives and goals.

Publication Services:

- C Continue the rationalization of production printing assets and technology upgrade to meet government's print needs and to achieve currency with rapidly changing print technology.
- C Review with Procurement, government print buying policies as they relate to vendor qualification and geographical locations.
- C Complete review of departments' documents with a view to expanding the co-publishing policy to involve commercial publishers in "turnkey" contract publishing.

Budget Context

Communications Nova Scotia		
Estimated Budget Expenditures by Core Business		
	Forecast 2002\03 (Per 2003\04 Estimates Book)	Budget 2003\04 (Per 2003\04 Estimates Book)
	\$Thousands	\$Thousands
Total Program Expenses - Gross Current	\$13,533.4	\$13,893.1
Net Program Expenses - Net of Recoveries	\$3,419.0	\$3,602.0
Salaries and Benefits	\$5,404.5	\$5,539.3
Funded Staff (FTEs)	94.1	95.1

Outcome/Performance Measures

Core Business Area: Communications Planning					
Outcome <small>(immediate or intermediate)</small>	Measure	Data <small>(2000/01)</small>	Target-2 2003/04 <small>(optional)</small>	Target- 2004/05	Strategies to Achieve Target
Communications Plans are easily understood by the clients	80% compliance by departments using the standard communications plan and process resulting in a reduced frequency of requests sent to departments for clarification.	3-4 templates in use	one template developed introduced for use by all government entities	one template in use	Define goals, assess needs, develop tools and process. Incorporate compliance to the standard as a performance measure in communications personnel performance.
Communications plans are prepared within the corporate context	Number of departments & agencies with plans linked to the corporate communications context.	no corporate plan as a result weak linkage to corporate agenda	75% to 80% departmental plans linked with the corporate plan and corporate agenda	85% - 90% departmental plans linked with the corporate plan and corporate agenda	Corporate agenda shared with and understood by communications personnel. Provide support in engaging decision makers within departments. Refresh communications plans as required to maintain consistency with the corporate context.

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Core Business Area: Creative Services					
Outcome (immediate or inter-mediate)	Measure	Data (2000/01)	Target-2 2003/04 (optional)	Target-2004/05	Strategies to Achieve Target
A strong awareness of communications network available to government in all aspects of information support	Improved interaction between communication staff and business delivery entities within departments and agency.	One client survey.	Analysis of 02/03 client survey Institute client services coordinator position	Include guide to communication services as part of the government and departmental orientation programs.	Work in partnership with the communication professionals in each department/agency to promote and make our clients aware of the services available to them internally. Work with PSC to develop a communications component as part of their orientation module for the Leadership Development streams.

Core Business Area: Media Services and Communications Planning					
Outcome (immediate or intermediate)	Measure	Data (2000/01)	Target-2 2003/04 (optional)	Target-2004/05	Strategies to Achieve Target
More effective communication of government information to Nova Scotians	Strengthening skills of generalists giving a stronger capacity for diversity in assignments.	Provide professional development sessions available to all staff.	Provide professional development sessions in areas identified as priority performance areas for generalists.	Continue to provide development sessions for all maintaining 90% of staff with strong generalist skills.	Research and organize professional development sessions based on the staff performance appraisals needs assessment and corporate communications requirements.
More capacity to offer specialised communication response in specific areas.	A deeper pool of communication specialists to assist with training and development of communication generalists/ and to offer expert communication advice in key areas.	Identify at least 2 communication professionals to receive specialist training in key performance area.	Provide specialist training for 2 as identified. Identify at least 2 other staff members for specialty training.	Provide specialist training for 2-5 employees.	Research and organize specialist training based on staff performance appraisals, corporate needs, succession planning and management development considerations.

Core Business Area: Media Services and Communications Planning					
Outcome (immediate or intermediate)	Measure	Data (2000/01)	Target-2 2003/04 (optional)	Target-2004/05	Strategies to Achieve Target
Improved and consistent communications planning for emergency situations	Accurate contact list and best practices report	1 meeting	Compile best practices and share information with group.	Maintain communications plans and roles relevant with technology and global information needs during a crisis	Building on the initial meeting in 2002, establish a method of maintaining an accurate list of emergency contacts. Research and define the best practices and crisis communications plans and roles during emergency situations

Core Business Area: Publication Services					
Outcome (immediate or intermediate)	Measure	Data (2000/01)	Target-2 2003/04 (optional)	Target-2004/05	Strategies to Achieve Target
Efficient, productive use of government printing assets.	Improvement in expense to recovery ratio.	1::1.02	1::0.78	1::0.87	Needs assessment in larger departments. Remove production machines where appropriate. Through technology upgrade and increased service level, migrate production printing in departments to central facility (QP) in line with targets.
Increased support for local commercial publishing companies.	The number of publications being considered for co-publication.	4 co-publishing partnerships.		Increase the number of co-publishing partnerships by up to 50%.	Review of departments' documents with commercial publishers to establish viability of co-publishing possibilities.