

Communications Nova Scotia

Business Plan 2009–10

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Message from the Minister

It gives me pleasure to present the Communications Nova Scotia business plan for the fiscal year 2009-2010.

Communications Nova Scotia's mandate is to help Nova Scotians understand what their government is doing and why. This year, the agency will continue to look for ways to improve and enhance how this is achieved. Nova Scotians want to understand and learn about government's initiatives using various methods of communication. This year, we will continue to look at advancements in technology and social media and how these may enhance the way government engages Nova Scotians. In addition to this, CNS will continue to be involved with private sector partners in marketing Nova Scotia here, in Canada and around the world through the Come to life initiative.

Communications Nova Scotia will continue to offer government a wide variety of high-quality services with value to the taxpayer as a priority. I have confidence in the ability of the people at Communications Nova Scotia, to support and realize the goals and opportunities in this business plan.

Honourable Frank Corbett

Introduction

Communications Nova Scotia (CNS) is the central communications agency for the government of Nova Scotia. CNS was formed in 1996 and includes communications planning and support as well as production services. CNS employs 124 full time equivalent staff (FTEs), some located in the central office (for communications planning and production) and some directly within government departments and agencies as communications directors, advisors, and officers.

Mission

To help the citizens of Nova Scotia understand what their government is doing and why.

Link to the Government's Priorities

As the central communication agency for the Government of Nova Scotia, CNS supports the efforts of all departments as they work toward the goals established by government. Specifically, the Agency utilizes a myriad of communication approaches, tools and technologies to articulate the government's progress under two key frameworks: sustainable prosperity and social prosperity. Immediate government priorities are also key drivers of all communication activities and include creating secure jobs for Nova Scotia's economy, increasing accessibility to health care, ensuring more young people stay and build a life in Nova Scotia, making life more affordable, living within our means and building strong communities. Additionally, CNS has the privilege of leading the Come to life initiative which is an area of priority in marketing the province.

The CNS business plan articulates a path forward that is sustainable in terms of providing the highest quality service available and excellent value for money while maintaining a commitment to conducting business in an environmentally sustainable fashion. Further, this document reflects the agency's commitment to forward-thinking and progressive communications which will help all government departments to better connect with the citizens of Nova Scotia. CNS will continue to be a leader in the communication sector by attracting, mentoring and retaining high caliber employees, and through the utilization of innovative technologies, such as social media, which will engage more Nova Scotians in the work of government.

Planning Context

Email is yesterday.

Blogging and social-network sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, are now more widely used than email, and their use is growing twice as fast as any other on-line activity, including search. Two thirds of internet users now make use of social networking.

And it isn't just youth who are chatting with their fingers and poking their friends. A March, 2009, research report by Nielsen Online says the largest increase to "member community," or social networks, is among 35-to-49-year-olds.

The corporate world has been making ever-more use of social media and governments are getting into the act as well.

The White House is inviting Americans to share their experiences with, and opinions about, the federal government's economic stimulus package through Recovery.gov. This move builds on the pervasive and relentless use the Obama team made of social media in the period leading up to the swearing-in of the new President – inviting anyone with internet access to comment on policies, comment on other peoples' comments, or to apply for White House jobs.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown is earnestly answering questions on YouTube that are posed, on YouTube, by British citizens. Number10.gov.uk boasts videos and webchats. They blog, they Tweet, and they've got a page on Facebook.

Closer to home, both Stephen Harper and Mayor David Miller of Toronto are on Twitter and many of Nova Scotia's elected officials are using Facebook and other social media applications.

Communications Nova Scotia continues to work at improving electronic, web-based communications, most recently by adding social media releases to our repertoire. These social media releases – which are not currently provided by any other provincial government east of Ontario – are easier for web-users to find and share and provide a richer, multi-media experience, including audio, photos and sometimes video segments. Over the coming year, we will continue to improve direct communication with citizens and service to media through social media news releases and other techniques.

We will maintain our determined and innovative efforts to make provincial government web sites accessible to people with disabilities, so that all Nova Scotians are able to avail themselves of government programs, services and information. Our progress in this area puts us in the ranks of the most progressive government communications organizations in the world.

CNS also continues to support the province's efforts to advance the goals of sustainable prosperity and a clean environment, with Second Nature and associated communications activities.

We will continue to contribute to a stronger economy by changing perceptions of this province among Nova Scotians who are still at home, those who have moved away and those who might, if better informed, choose to visit, move to or invest here. Nova Scotia Come to life is now mobilizing more than 300 private, public and not-for-profit sector charter members in its campaign to influence the perceptions of influential people, at home and in our target markets, about the opportunities that exist in the province. This year, Come to life is collaborating with the province's universities to encourage university-bound students, and their parents, to consider Nova Scotia: Canada's university capital. This Come to life initiative marks the first time the province's universities have worked together to market higher-education in the province, as opposed to their own institutions.

Of course, the way we do things will, as always, be as important as the things we do.

A newly formed Senior Communications Council, composed of departmental directors and other leaders within the agency, will work together and with senior policy staff to support the agenda of government, advise senior tables of government and develop strategies and tools to engage Nova Scotians.

Communications Nova Scotia continues to review and, where necessary, revise standard operating procedures to ensure they provide good value from both economic and environmental perspectives. From support for forest stewardship certification at the Queen's Printer to principles that ensure the use of local products and talent first, Communications Nova Scotia is committed to using measures that help manage the economy and the environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

Strategic Goals

Communicate government initiatives and decisions to Nova Scotian audiences.

Provide the highest-quality, best-value and environmentally sustainable communications products and services to government.

Make communications an integral part of all business in government.

Promote Nova Scotia and its many success stories and attributes within the province and throughout the world through Nova Scotia Come to life.

Core Business Areas

Communications Planning

Provide staff to work directly in departments providing advice and assistance with issues management, media relations, event management, social marketing, writing, editing, promotion, and public education.

Production

Provide various communications services to government departments in the areas of advertising, graphic design, multimedia, photography, printing, production management, video, and internet technology.

Priorities

Communicate government actions to Nova Scotian audiences.

- Develop and carry out communications plans for all significant government initiatives, so that the people who have an interest in those initiatives know about them.
- Co-ordinate communications planning, so that Nova Scotians continue to hear coherent and consistent messages from government.
- Continue to develop French language capacity so that government can speak to Francophone audiences in their preferred language.
- Finalize and test various components of the business continuity plan.
- Concentrate additional effort on exploring and developing technology – especially internet-based – to improve communication with Nova Scotians.

Provide the highest-quality, best-value, and environmentally sustainable communications products and services to government.

- Continue to support a healthy and productive staff through the Agency's comprehensive wellness program.
- Demonstrate the value of staff through continued professional development opportunities.
- Continue to promote diversity to staff and community through goals and initiatives identified in the 2009-2010 CNS Diversity Plan.
- Continue to promote procedures and policies that encourage environmental awareness and responsibility among staff and in the way we conduct our business.
- Continue development of government's intranet site to improve collaboration and sharing of information among government employees.

Make communications an integral part of all business in government.

- Continue to participate in senior management teams of all government departments.
- Continue to participate in corporate forums (e.g., Legislative Committee)

Promote Nova Scotia and its many success stories and attributes within the province and throughout the world through Nova Scotia Come to life.

- Build on the current initiative and its success, focusing on key markets external to Nova Scotia.
- Keep government departments and agencies informed about the initiative and its goals so that they can help communicate Nova Scotia's many attributes to key arenas.
- Continue to build private sector support in Nova Scotia Come to life and encourage our charter members to embrace the look and feel of Come to life in all of their messaging and marketing.
- Ensure government agencies, departments and charter members think of Nova Scotia Come to life and the impact decisions will have on the way people perceive Nova Scotia.
- Encourage government departments and agencies to support the Nova Scotia Come to life team and apply the brand in marketing and communications; understand the impact on the brand when making policy and program decisions; and partner with Come to life when applicable.

Budget Context

COMMUNICATIONS NOVA SCOTIA			
	2008-2009 Estimate	2008-2009 Actual	2009-2010 Estimate
Program and Service Area	\$thousands	\$thousands	\$thousands
Total Program Expenses:			
Office of the Assistant Deputy Minister	\$1,045	\$1,045	\$1,053
Client Services	\$3,146	\$2,837	\$2,864
Communications Planning	\$1,973	\$2,163	\$2,277
Communications Services	\$2,197	\$1,875	\$2,137
Communications Technology	\$503	\$496	\$513
Total Program Expenses	\$8,864	\$8,416	\$8,843
Provincial Funded Staff (FTE's)	124.0	131.0	123.0

Outcomes and Measures

Strategic Goal 1:

Communicate government initiatives to Nova Scotian audiences

Outcome	Measure	Data	Target 2009–10	Strategies to Achieve Target
<p>Target audiences will be aware of the initiatives undertaken and decisions made by government.</p>	<p>Quantitative and qualitative assessments of media coverage, including the percentage of stories in which government messages accurately appear; stakeholder feedback; hits to web sites; polling data of communications programs for significant government initiatives.</p>	<p>Technical obstacles, which appear to have been resolved, have prevented gathering of web benchmark data</p>	<p>From a sample of communications programs, maintain or improve upon current levels: - 70% media coverage which contain accurate government messages - 30% increase in hits to relevant government web site(s) following an announcement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and implement communications plans for all significant government initiatives • schedule and co-ordinate communications initiatives to ensure the greatest impact • finalize and test various components of the business continuity plan • complete development of guidelines around accessible websites in collaboration with the Disabled Persons Commission. • visit news organizations around the province to assess and enhance service delivery and further develop relationships • develop and implement technical and editorial processes for social media releases to enhance service to media and the public • make fuller and more frequent use of social media in order to broaden and better serve audiences and enhance service delivery to media

Strategic Goal 2:

Provide the highest-quality, best-value, and environmentally sustainable communications products and services to government.

Outcome	Measure	Data	Target 2009-10	Strategies to Achieve Target
Government departments and agencies receive high quality communications products at the best possible value	Overall customer satisfaction survey	Customer Satisfaction Survey conducted in 2006 by the Marketing Clinic established a baseline of 4.4 out of a possible 5	maintain a satisfaction level of 4.4 or higher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to support managers and facilitate effective internal communications within departments and across government • continue to increase awareness of CNS as a career option among under-represented groups • continue to provide strategic and timely advice to ministers and senior management • continue to apply in-house expertise to evaluation of communications products and services contracted from freelance suppliers • conduct client service survey • continue to support staff through ongoing professional development, wellness and staff recognition programs • expand environmental sustainability practices at Queen’s Printer • raise awareness of environmentally friendly products and solutions with clients and encourage their selection

Strategic Goal 3:

Make communications an integral part of all business in government

Outcome	Measure	Data	Target 2009-10	Strategies to Achieve Target
All government initiatives benefit from early communications support made by government.	<p>Percentage of cabinet documents accompanied by a communications plan</p> <p>Deputy Minister confidence in the benefit of early involvement of CNS in departmental or corporate initiatives</p>	<p>95% + in 2007</p> <p>last survey scored 4.96 in 2007</p>	<p>greater than 95%</p> <p>Score of at least 4.5 out of 5 in a survey of deputies on their understanding of and commitment to the importance of early involvement of CNS in departmental or corporate initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to provide timely and strategic advice to Ministers and senior managers • continue participation in department senior management teams • continue participation in corporate forums, such as Focus, the weekly Planning Meeting, Legislative Committee etc. • improve client education program • continue presentations to the Management Orientation Program and other corporate audiences

Strategic Goal 4:

Promote Nova Scotia and its many success stories and attributes within the province and throughout the world through *Nova Scotia Come to life*.

Outcome	Measure	Data	Target 2009-10	Strategies to Achieve Target
<p>Target audiences will have a more positive perception of Nova Scotia and will recognize the province’s key attributes and many successes.</p> <p>The Nova Scotia Come to life brand will continue to grow, reaching more markets and inevitably changing outdated perceptions of the province improving our image</p>	<p>Follow up perception research was completed for Ottawa, Toronto, Boston and other Atlantic Provinces in 2007 and that research showed improvements in many areas.</p> <p>Follow up perception research will be carried out again in 2010.</p>	<p>Perception research was carried out in 2004 and 2007.</p>	<p>An overall improvement of 3% greater than the 2007 results.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted media campaigns and communications in the target markets for Nova Scotia <i>Come to life</i> (Toronto, Calgary, Boston, Ottawa, Houston and Nova Scotia). • Build a stronger relationship with department representatives that currently sit on the brand liaison committee. Continue to do senior management presentations and find ways to partner with departments and agencies.