

IN THEIR OWN VOICES: HOW TO IMPROVE THE IMPACT OF YOUR OUTREACH



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....01

Focus on Your Community Resources.....02

Think Outside the (Mail) Box.....03-04

Make it Easy for Residents.....05-06

Conclusion.....07

INTRODUCTION

Whether you're publicizing an event, campaign or initiative, it's crucial that you connect effectively with your target audience. It can be difficult to accomplish this when faced with hard-to-reach populations and limited internal resources.

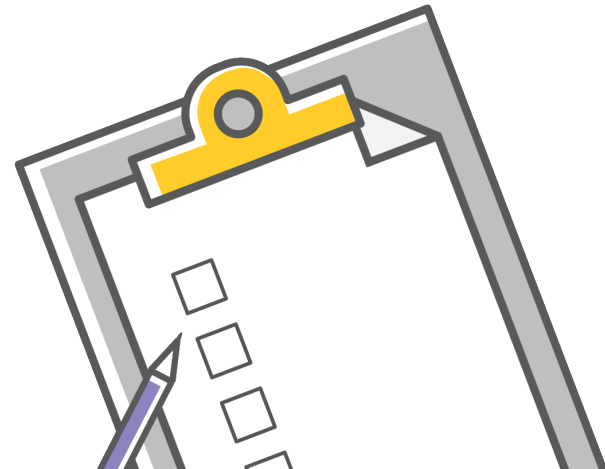
We want to help improve community outreach by sharing the wisdom of leaders who have been there and overcome these obstacles. So we asked local government leaders from across North America:

What's the best piece of advice you would share with a local government agency trying to make an impact with their outreach efforts?

This book contains their compiled answers, full of best practices, strategic approaches and new ideas.

Interestingly, we found several key themes emerging:

- Focus on your community resources
- Think outside the (mail) box
- Make it easy for residents



FOCUS ON YOUR COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Your community holds a wealth of resources, and a successful outreach plan should include strategies to identify and leverage them. Think about where, how and to whom your residents turn to when they need information.

“ Know your audience. Determine where they are and go there to reach them.

– Community Manager ”

“ Partner with other organizations.

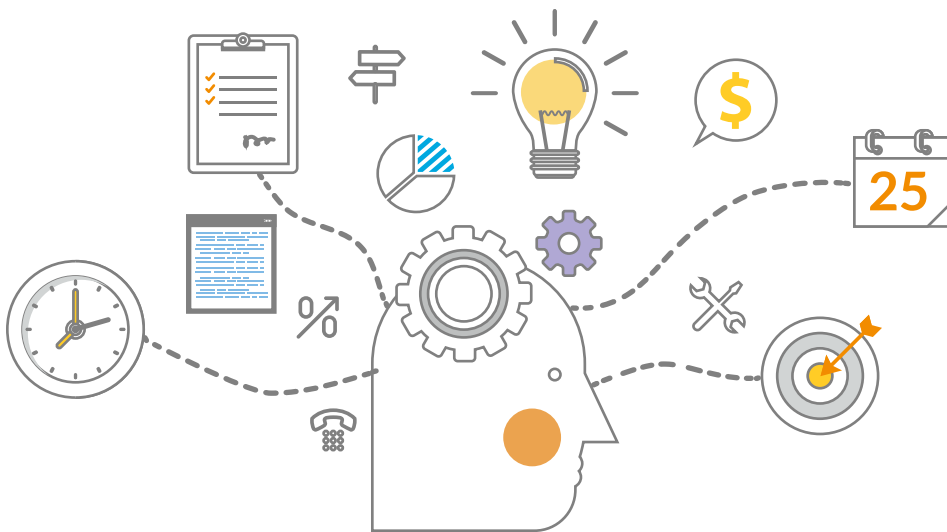
– Communications Manager ”

“ Keep it local! Hard to reach populations are often very connected to their local community. Community schools, markets, churches and charitable gathering locations are great places to distribute information. It is also important that you make sure that the information you are distributing is printed in the languages that are relevant to the area population. In addition, neighborhood associations are often strong in these areas and the word of mouth factor that can be attained by distributing information at these events is substantial.

– Management Fellow ”

THINK OUTSIDE THE (MAIL) BOX

Your audience is diverse and your outreach plan should be as well, both online and offline. Take the time to research where each segment of your audience is most likely to interact with your communication – that’s where you should be.



“ Don’t limit outreach to just digital media. You need messaging in a wide variety of formats to meet the needs of a community. And place more emphasis on the ‘listening’ side of outreach rather than just focusing on what messages you’re putting out there.

– **Communications, Marketing & Recreation Director**

“
Brand it! Then look across all internal platforms available and tailor message for specific channels to maximize your push to reach diverse audiences.

– **Communications Manager**
”

“
Think outside the box and not only focus on government of today but also government of tomorrow. Reach out to your youth!

– **IT Trainer/Social Media Coordinator**
”

“
Don't limit the avenues you take to sharing your message. To reach a large audience, you have to use ALL the available tools – website, social media, email blasts, printed flyers, press releases, the list goes on. A frustrating reality.

– **Director, Integrated
Multi-Media & Marketing**
”

“

Understand the audience you're trying to reach and adjust your messaging and communication methods accordingly.

- **Digital Media Coordinator**

”

“

Use the principles of organizational development expert Peter Senge and data driven high performance organizations and communities.

- **HHS Director**

”

“

Make your information accurate, include images, use all social media outlets available to your organization. Pique their interest with attention-grabbing 'lead' information, then direct them to detailed information on your website.

- **Communications Specialist**

”



ABOUT VISION

Headquartered in El Segundo, Calif., Vision is a national leader in government website development with more than 700 government, non-profit and education clients in U.S. and Canadian communities with populations that range from less than 1,000 residents to more than 5 million. For more than 20 years, Vision has created cost-effective solutions that increase government efficiency, transparency and interactive communications with citizens. The company's powerful, easy-to-use visionLive™ content management system continues to evolve with feedback from hundreds of municipal clients. In 2016, Vision was named to Government Technology magazine's GovTech 100, a listing of leading companies developing innovative or disruptive offerings to improve or transform government. For more information please call 888.263.8847 or visit visioninternet.com/inforequest

info@visioninternet.com
www.visioninternet.com

© 2016 Vision. All Rights Reserved.

