



COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY - 2017/2018



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INTRODUCTION

Umkhanyakude District is situated in the North---Eastern part of KwaZulu Natal, extending from the uMfolozi River up to the Mozambique border, being bordered on the east by the Isimangaliso Wetland Park which encompasses the entire coastline onto the Indian Ocean. The Umkhanyakude District Municipality operates in an environment that is influenced by different interests in which daily personal needs play a significant role in how the public view, approach and respond to certain issues. The District Municipality is made up of the following local municipalities: Umhlabuyalingana, Jozini, Big Hlabisa, and Mtubatuba.

It is important to read and understand the public mood so that the communications strategy and messages are relevant for the target groups of the five different municipalities. What is also important is for different spheres of government to communicate with one voice and avoid sending conflicting messages to the public. According to chapter three of the constitution section 41 (1) (h) "All spheres of government and all organs of state within each sphere must co---operate with one another in mutual trust and good faith by:

1. fostering friendly relations;
2. assisting and supporting one another
3. informing one another of, and consulting one another on matters of common interest;
4. co---ordinating their actions and legislation with one another.

Strategising for communication should therefore be taken seriously and these strategies should translate to concrete programmes that are supported by all including the highest office of the Municipality.

VISION

"A model District Municipality in service delivery excellence by 2035"

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a community centred organisation diligently acquiring skilled and competent personnel, committed to providing good governance, socio-economic development programmes and implementation of quality infrastructure in order to eradicate poverty, stimulate economic growth and develop our people.

1. BACKGROUND

Developmental local government as prescribed by national legislation, seeks to forge a partnership between government and the citizenry for effective service delivery. Communication therefore becomes central to the work of local government, the sphere of government closest to the people.

Communication within the Umkhanyakude District has a significant impact on how local municipalities and residents judge their local council. Research shows that well informed residents are more likely to be satisfied with council services and to be supportive of its work. Furthermore, people are unlikely to participate actively in the development agenda unless they:

- have been provided with information timeously;
- can access information and their local municipalities via a range of mediums; and
- are provided with opportunities which have been created by the district and local municipalities for people to receive information, give feedback and know how they can get involved.

Research also shows a direct link between good internal communication and the high performance and motivation of staff. Effective communication is therefore vital to the successful implementation of the Municipalities Vision and Mission.

This communications strategy provides a framework for communication to all audiences of the Umkhanyakude District Municipality as guided by the Local Government Municipal Systems Act in Section 18(1) where it states that “a municipality must communicate to its community, information concerning:

- the available mechanisms, processes and procedures to encourage and facilitate community participation”.

THE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK:

- Is the basis for work action plans and communication from the Municipality;
- Lays the framework for the work of the Communications Department;
- Provides a basis for communication to advance Council's development agenda;
- Lays the basis for the promotion of the political leadership of the Council;
- Requires all employees and representatives of the municipality to communicate the strategy, vision and action plans of the Municipality; within the district.
- Is a set of “rules” by which all employees of the municipality will abide;
- The communications strategy will be updated annually to ensure it is relevant, and that it promotes the Council's Strategic Direction and therefore the Executive Committees priorities each year.

2. COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

To promote, enhance public awareness, and understanding of Municipal programmes, services and achievements.

LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

Encourage their participation by establishing clear channels of communication by being responsive to local community needs through the local municipalities.

1. Communicate to the local municipalities the importance of ensuring that municipal services are provided to the local community in an equitable, financially and environmentally sustainable manner
2. Promote and create understanding of Municipal Finance Management Act to all local municipalities.
3. Promote development in the municipality
4. To establish a more interactive local governance structure
5. To promote and market the opportunities which exist within the municipality.
6. To create a more transparent organisation.
7. Contribute to the progressive realisation of the fundamental rights contained in the Constitution.
8. Empowering Citizens
9. Profile Umkhanyakude District Municipality.
 - a. Promote the Municipality's skills development programme to both internal and external stakeholders.
10. Good Governance
11. Promote and market corporate identity and image of Umkhanyakude District Municipality.
12. To forge a partnership between the District Municipality and its stakeholders for effective service delivery.
13. To establish Umkhanyakude Municipality as a tourist destination of choice and a brand above the rest together with the other local municipalities.

3. COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT

Umkhanyakude District Municipality has the potential to be a very successful area with great promise for development and financial sustainability for all citizens. It is rich in arable land and natural fauna and flora. It is in close proximity to some of SA's most prized tourist destinations and is a relatively safe and clean environment. In order to be able to reach the above objectives the district needs to have a coherent strategy that will be communicated and understood by all stakeholders.

The mood of communities we are talking to may be negative or positive.

POSITIVE

- Economic opportunities
- Business opportunities – agriculture
- Tourism Opportunities
- Service Delivery – new projects

NEGATIVE

- Unrealistic service delivery expectations
- Crime and unsafe environment (road accidents)
- Unemployment and poverty
- Media
- Perception by communities about poor consultation and involvement
- Perception that there is slow development in Rural areas
- Political instability

4. COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

- Getting buy-in from Civil Society Organisations, other local municipalities, staff, media and political principals
- Reaching all communities through conventional communication methods
- Communicating mainly in Zulu
- Creating ownership by various stakeholders
- Mobilising Resources
- Working through other local municipalities and receiving correct information about public participation.
- Synergising messages
- Municipality does not have editorial control over news reports
- The message of Municipality does not get same amount of media coverage.

5. MESSAGES AND THEMES

1. **A PROGRESSIVE MUNICIPALITY**
2. **A TOURIST FRIENDLY MUNICIPALITY**
3. **AN EQUAL AND DEMOCRATIC MUNICIPALITY**

6. COMMUNICATION MESSENGERS, AUDIENCES, CHANNELS AND TYPE OF EVENTS

6.1 COMMUNICATION MESSENGERS

PRIMARY MESSENGERS

- Mayor
- Municipal Manager
- EXCO
- MANCO
- Councillors

SECONDARY MESSENGERS

- All municipal officials and communicators

6.2 COMMUNICATION AUDIENCES

PRIMARY AUDIENCE

- Communities / Ratepayers
- Tourists
- Investors
- Municipal employees
- Stakeholders
- Media

SECONDARY AUDIENCE

- District Municipal and local municipal employees

COMMUNICATIONS DELIVERABLES FOR LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

- Pamphlets
- Adverts
- Banners
- Posters
- Newsletters
- Memos

6.3 COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

LANGUAGE

All communications tools should reflect the area and its people, therefore all staff and investor communications should be in English whilst communication to the community through the 5 local municipalities should be in isiZulu.

CRISIS PR PLAN

A separate Crisis PR plan to develop in the case of emergencies and unforeseen events.

AUDIENCE	TOOLS
Staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Intranet2. Internet newsletter3. Administrator4. Structured induction programme5. Notice boards6. Workshops
Community	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. communiqués from the Mayor and MM, Council vacancies, tenders and notices.2. A quarterly newsletter promoting municipal activities and people of the area.3. Interactive website4. road shows, Imbizos and regular briefings5. Annual Report and Five---Year Report6. Use of local, commercial and community media both print and radio.7. An in---house communication tool at a customer care centre.
Media	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Press release2. Media briefings3. Media tours
Local organisations and other spheres of government	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Municipal newsletter2. Website3. Stakeholder Forums4. Government communications forum
External stakeholders with regards to tourism and economic development	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Advertising programme as part of the investment marketing and tourism marketing strategies2. Website3. Regular communications tools such as brochures and annual reports.

6.4 COMMUNICATION EVENTS FOR DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

- Mayoral Izimbizo
- Ward Committee meetings
- Editors' Forum
- Mayors Service Delivery Awards
- Annual Mayor's Journalists' Izimbizo
- Council meetings
- Staff Excellence Awards
- Internal Briefing sessions with the MM/Mayors
- Budget Speech and the passing thereof
- First Council meeting of the year – street parade

EVENTS FOR THE 5 LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

- Pamphlets
- Mayoral Awards – rewarding worthy community leaders
- Staff Awards
- Batho Pele Service Week
- Long Service Awards
- Senior Citizens
- Matric Awards
- Grant-in-Aid events

7. A PHASED COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME

PHASE 1 --- PRE---LAUNCH

- Circulating the draft to EXCO and MANCO
- Table the draft to EXCO and MANCO
- Council for adoption

PHASE 2 --- LAUNCH OF THE STRATEGY

- Communicate key messages about the Strategy to internal employees

PHASE 3 --- IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

OUTPUT	ACTIVITIES	METHOD	TIME	BUDGE
Internal communication	Publish Programme articles in online staff newsletter	Write article about the programme and its various projects	Monthly	Nil
	Website page	Regularly bring up to date the information on Intra/Internet.		Nil
	Bulk e---mails	Sending out e---mails to all staff members	As required	Nil
	Notice boards		As required	Nil
V	V	V	V	V

OUTPUT	ACTIVITIES	METHOD	TIME	BUDGE
Communicating and marketing the Council externally	Develop and implement communication plans for Council programmes		As required	Nil
	Develop materials for information dissemination	Distribute through Call Center, Municipality offices & events, izimbizos	On regular basis	Nil
	Website	Regularly update and develop new information on Intra/Internet.	On regular basis	Nil
	Adverts	Place ads in print & radio to inform the public of Municipality programmes	As per communication plans	Nil
	Publications	Produce newsletter	quarterly	Nil
	Send out media statements on various issues		As required	Nil
Media	Media Monitoring	Coordinate media responses to media articles	On regular basis	Nil
	Radio Interviews	Interviews on Regional current affairs programme		Nil
	Roadshows	Mayoral road shows to communities	As required	Nil

8. STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

8.1 EXCO AND COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Good communication needs everyone to play their part but there must also be a clear understanding of particular roles and responsibilities.
- Better communication skills are needed across the organisation and this must be given priority. Some responsibilities of groups are set out below:
- The Mayor and the Executive Committee set the tone for Council and are the ultimate spokespeople and role models for Council.
- EXCO with ward Councillors have the key role in setting the overall goals for the Council and leading communication and consultation internally and externally.
- The Municipal Manager and his management team have to engage with the other local municipalities MMs, listen to their views and comments, propose and explain ideas; explain decisions and the reasons why those decisions have been made and ensure opportunities exist for two-way communications.
- Staff has to engage with the public to listen to enquiries, help decide how needs can best be met, explain about options or limits to services, refer to partners or other agencies. Members of staff also have to communicate with each other as colleagues, managers, team members, customers and suppliers.
- Everyone has to promote the Council to support the creation of a positive image at regional, national and international level.

8.2 SPOKESPERSONS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

- In the spirit of being a transparent organisation the municipality should not seek to prevent people from speaking to the media but should give clear guidance on areas for comments. Council will have spokespeople who can give comment at varying levels, for example:

ENTITY	RESPOSIBILITIES
Mayor	All aspects of Council policy and programmes
	Matters of policy yet to be adopted/enacted
	All political comment must come from the Mayor
	Is key person for all public participation unless he delegates otherwise
Municipal Manager	Any area of the municipal administration
	Matters of policy yet to be adopted/enacted
	Information around any legal processes the City might be engaged in
	Any matter that relates to the running of the city as a whole and is not specific to existing policy, programme or activity of a specific department

ENTITY	RESPONSIBILITIES
EXCO members	All aspects of Council policy and programmes in their portfolio
	May be delegated spokespersons on an issue by the Mayor
Speaker	All comment relating to Council “housekeeping” must come from the Speaker
Councillors	Comment on all activity in their ward except for matters that are policy still to be adopted/enacted
Heads	Any area of business in their department
	May be delegated spokespersons on an issue by the MM
	On all aspects of their service areas
	Queries from journalists will be referred to Heads for comment/clarification/information. Comment will then go out in the name of the Unit Head unless that Head decides otherwise. Heads therefore will carry the can for comment from any person in their Unit.
Municipal Spokesperson or Communications Director	Co-ordination of media communication
	Media conferences
	Media statements and handling media queries
	Writing Mayor's speeches.

8.3 RULES FOR COMMENT

The rule is that no employee or elected official of the Municipality will ever respond with “no comment” to a media enquiry. They must refer issues to the correct and authorized person.

Where possible, the Mayor and delegated spokespersons will be the ultimate spokes people, having been briefed and supported by the Communications Director and EXCO.

Each Communications Co-ordinator from the 5 local municipalities when approached for media comment will approach the Communications Director who will in turn approach the official concerned and the Executive Committee member in whose portfolio the issue resides. This will ensure that both an administrative and a political response is covered. When approached for comment please ask for requests in writing and, in turn, send responses in writing.

9. PROCESSES

PHASE 1 --- PRE---LAUNCH

- Radio, posters, etc – mobilising people to the launch
- Circulating the draft to all Heads
- Table the draft to EXCO and to Council for adoption.

PHASE 2 --- LAUNCH OF THE STRATEGY

- Communicate key messages about the Strategy to internal employees.

10. VALUES AND ETHICS

- Communication should be needs driven
- Consistency – in themes, messages, tone and style – to ensure an instantly recognisable look and feel to all communications from the Council to all audiences
- To communicate with integrity and honesty
- Communications to be timely and accurate
- To use ‘plain English’ and not jargon
- Embrace a genuine desire for people to feel good about dealing with the Council
- Staff and Members should be told about Council initiatives first or simultaneously with outside audience. Staff need to buy into the process as much as other stakeholders.

11. GENERAL

- Communications should form part of the agenda items (EXCO and management meetings) as a standing item.
- Commit Council to allocate sufficient budget for communications.

12. IMPLEMENTATION

Communications implementation plans will be developed annually in line with the municipal broad objectives.

13. PROPOSED COMMUNICATIONS STRUCTURE

BACKGROUND

In order for any district municipality to achieve all of its communication goals, there has to be a synergy between the local municipalities and itself. There is a need for a transparent and effective communications plan to excel in service delivery as well as maintain a beneficial relationship that will benefit the needs of the entire district.

PROPOSED STRUCTURE

The Proposed communications structure is based on the need to consolidate and drive publicity around what is happening in the local municipalities as well as up skill staff to ensure a smoother communications channel. This structure is also aimed at fostering good relations between the District Municipality and the Local Municipalities.

The approach to this structure would be to have a communications unit within Umkhanyakude District Municipality which will drive the communication plans for the district municipality. Part of this plan will include setting up a sub structure that will Second individuals as Communications Co-ordinators from each local municipality to form a sub-committee which will allow Umkhanyakude to keep abreast of what's happening in the entire district. This process will allow the Umkhanyakude District Municipality to keep abreast of and know exactly what challenges the local municipalities are facing in terms of communications.

It will allow for the easy dissemination of information to stakeholders and address challenges immediately. This structure will ensure that there is no GAPS in the communication process between the District Municipality and the Local Municipalities. This structure will relate to matters of communication that is limited to the local municipalities and not affect the day to day communications needs of the District Municipality.

Staff within this structure will be accountable to their respective municipalities and will require that all local municipalities buy into this process.

13.1 ORGANOGRAM OF PROPOSED COMMUNICATIONS STRUCTURE

