



Saddle Creek Community Services District

www.saddlecreekcsd.org
1000 Saddle Creek Drive
Copperopolis, CA 95228



COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 2016

Saddle Creek Community Services District

ABSTRACT

The District collects thousands of dollars annually from taxpayers in the community. Where is this tax money spent? Who maintains the facilities surrounding my home? Who takes care of the roads I drive daily? Who controls the gate that secures my property? The Saddle Creek CSD has determined that the time is now to increase public awareness of the critical public service it provides. This Communication Plan describes the means to accomplish the goal of the District Board of Directors to increase public awareness of the District and improve public understanding.

Administrator

Chalyse Drake, Director of
Administrative Services, Kampa
Community Solutions, LLC

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GOALS

This Communications Plan has two major goals:

- To provide SCCSD customers with a clear understanding of the District's operation, management and finances.
- To ensure that SCCSD customers are aware of the high level of customer service and high quality of services provided by the District.



TARGET AUDIENCES

- SCCSD Customers
 - Customers with homes in the service area
 - Vacant land owners
- Internal Communications
 - Customer service
 - Field operations
 - Training and advancement
- Media Relations
 - Local print/radio
 - Regional print/radio/broadcast/cable
 - Legislative Outreach
 - Local elected/appointed officials
 - Regional associations
- Public Agency Outreach
 - County/communities
 - Surrounding special districts and service providers
 - Service clubs and civic organizations



RESEARCH

DOCUMENT REVIEW

Staff reviewed the following documents and/or programs to prepare this Communications Plan:

- Saddle Creek Community Services District 2015 Management Objectives
- Website content at www.SCCSD.org
- SCCSD Board meetings/agendas/minutes

OPPORTUNITIES

- To increase positive customer perception of SCCSD customer service and quality of overall services provided
- Knowledgeable and dedicated staff willing to support new communications initiatives.
- To assist the District in explaining any needs for new or increased funding sources to provide critical services.

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- To help the CSD understand the service needs of the community.

STRATEGIES

1. Engage SCCSD staff to support and implement communications efforts.
2. Focus branding and outreach efforts on programs that connect SCCSD staff *directly* with high-quality service and programs.
3. Incorporate fact-based outreach for all major SCCSD programs, plans and initiatives to help educate rate payers.
4. Better utilize Web-based outreach.

TACTICS

Tactics are the specific efforts and actions used to implement the Communications Plan. Each strategy has a unique set of tactics to be carried out by either SCCSD or outside consultants as noted. Not all tactics will be feasible for implementation based on funding and/or staff availability; however, they should be considered when appropriate.

1. ENGAGE SCCSD STAFF TO SUPPORT AND IMPLEMENT COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS.

Currently communications efforts are planned, managed and implemented by General Manager Pete Kampa. It is critical to engage a wider cross section of staff to develop materials, information and content for communications efforts.

Develop Internal Pool of Writers (SCCSD Staff)

SCCSD has identified the following individuals to serve, along with Manager Pete Kampa, as conduits for information regarding their particular job function:

Staff Member	Expertise
Greg Hebard Site Manager and McGrorge, Superintendent	Oversee Maintenance, Day-to-day Operations, community needs, customer service
Board Members	Overall Service Goals
Chalyse Drake Administrative Director, Kampa Community Solutions	Web Presence

It is anticipated the majority of these individuals will commit to at least one to two hours every month to support this effort.

These staff members will:

- Prepare brief summaries of activities, news, programs and initiatives within their areas of expertise on a monthly basis.
- Prepare brief stories that focus on staff or Board members and/or service-driven actions as appropriate.

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- Provide updates regarding progress/milestones achieved within their departments and with major projects funded with taxpayer dollars

This information will be used to populate newsletters, the SCCSD website, news releases and advertising efforts described in this Plan. We anticipate that overall management of these activities will be supervised by General Manager Pete Kampa. A detailed description of the frequency of these efforts is included in the timeline section of this Plan, however the majority of these efforts will take place on a monthly basis.

Develop Internal SCCSD Briefing (SCCSD Staff and Board of Directors)

SCCSD's employees and directors are not only the District's greatest asset for operations and maintenance; they can also serve a critical role in communications efforts. The vast majority are in fact customers of the agency they serve. They are the family, friends and neighbors of SCCSD customers. Their ability to speak knowledgeably about basic programs and services is critical to the overall positive perception of SCCSD's management. Uninformed employees and directors can inadvertently contribute to misconceptions about operations, resulting in negative perceptions of the District.

Staff recommends that a simple, straightforward summary of key projects, programs, milestones and initiatives be shared with staff and the Board on a bi-monthly basis via email. This should be a simple standard email compiled by Staff based on items received from the internal writer pool. As some staff members do not utilize e-mail, hard copies should be provided when appropriate.

2. FOCUS BRANDING AND OUTREACH EFFORTS ON PROGRAMS THAT CONNECT SCCSD STAFF *DIRECTLY* WITH HIGH-QUALITY SERVICE AND PROGRAMS.

One of SCCSD's largest operating expenses is its personnel. It is important for the District to demonstrate that the number of employees is appropriate to deliver the level of service expected by SCCSD customers. Consistent reinforcement of this message is extremely important.

Our recommendations are as follows:

Focus on Employees and Projects (SCCSD)

All forms of advertising and education programs should use images and copy that link SCCSD employees with specific projects/programs and/or initiatives.

Staff members who appear in advertising or collateral materials should be asked in advance to give SCCSD permission to use their images for educational purposes.

Promote Both Department and Individual Achievement

When possible, SCCSD should promote individual and/or department accomplishments or services. This reinforces the concept that staff members are ready to meet any challenge whether it's responding to a mosquito problem or a clogged storm drain. Real stories about real experiences with real customers are a great way to connect the public with SCCSD operations. These stories should be generated as part of the bi-monthly reports prepared by the writing pool. Appropriate stories will be chosen for inclusion in the eNewsletters and/or considered for news releases as appropriate. This is a call for a type of story to be included in outreach materials.

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3. BETTER UTILIZE WEB-BASED OUTREACH.

Revamp Website (SCCSD and KCS Staff)

It has become clear that the residents of SCCSD are interested in more information to be accessible at the click of a mouse. Through continuing efforts, we are changing our outdated website platform with a more user friendly and publicly transparent one. The goal of this site is to make it a data base for customers to easily access public information that they would normally have to submit a Public Records Request for and make District information transparent. Based on our review, we believe that a simple reorganization of the materials with a few additions would improve its functionality and earn the CSDA Certificate of Excellency for Transparency.

Consistently Update Site (SCCSD and KCS Staff)

The SCCSD site can and should serve as a primary source for up-to-date information regarding SCCSD operations. It is important to update the site at least weekly with new information to keep website traffic coming back.

Staff members at all levels should be reminded of the importance and usefulness of the website and encouraged to promote the site to customers. This is especially important for any document being sent out by the CSD, and administrative staff should ensure that all letterhead, materials, bills and emails include the proper web address.

Annual Customer Surveys (SCCSD via SurveyMonkey)

SCCSD has a very active community of customers who are willing to provide feedback to the District. Staff will actively collect emails to create a data base with which to send email blasts to our customers, leading them to a web-based survey intended to gather input on customer opinion of District services. This information will be used to measure customer interaction, satisfaction, and website traffic.

E-Newsletters for Customers (SCCSD and KCS)

Postage and printing is expensive — e-mail is not. Using the briefs submitted by District representatives, SCCSD could populate an e-mail template and send semi-annual news updates to customers. Ideally, eNewsletters would be distributed every 6 months and contain material/stories generated by the writers pool.

EVALUATION

It is important to measure the impact of any public education program in a meaningful way. The success of this program should be measured as follows:

- Increase in traffic to the District's website. We are seeking to double the number of visits to the site over the next 24 months.
- Increase in rate payer knowledge regarding key District programs and projects. This should be tested via survey as described above. Additional indicators include increase in public comments and active participation in Board meetings.
- Decrease in the number of respondents who believe the website needs more information. This will be measured via email survey

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- Increase in the percentage of rate payers who know where their special taxes are spent. This information will be collected via email survey.

BUDGET

SURVEY SOFTWARE	4 MONTHS	\$120
MAILING TO RECEIVE CURRENT CONTACT AND EMAILS	ONE MAILING	\$2,000
		TOTAL: \$2,100