

1. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR BUSHBUCKRIDGE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

2. BUSHBUCKRIDGE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

2.1 OVERALL APPROACH OF THE STRATEGY

- a. Guided by the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, the strategy seeks to address the communication needs of the municipality by ensuring that information dissemination is encouraged and promoted.
- b. Highlight the significance of communicating government programmes to communities in and around Bushbuckridge, District, Province, National and international stakeholders.
- c. Make available mechanisms, processes and procedures to encourage and facilitate community participation and
- d. Encourage and create conditions for internal stakeholders to participate in the affairs of the Municipality.

2.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY

2.2.1 Research has proven that communication has in modern times become a fundamental tool used by organizations to remain in touch with their clientele. In this light, the objective of this strategy is to ensure that the municipality does not lose touch with its constituency by ensuring that the principles of Batho-pele is advanced and promoted at all times.

The objectives of the strategy will take the following key tunes:

- a. Fulfill constitutional and legal mandate and obligation of deepening democracy
- b. Encourage public participation in government process and policies
- c. Encourage communication between the municipality and sector departments including amongst others community based organizations, the Traditional Authorities and other important stakeholders.
- d. Co-ordination of government programmes National, Provincial, Local and parastatals through Inter-Governmental Relation's framework communications.
- e. To develop and maintain correct public perception on Government services.
- f. To maintain good relations with the media by forging good relations
- g. To publicize the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality's programme of action (POA) as advised by the Executive Mayor

- h. To promote Economic opportunities to all potential local, Provincial, National and international investors.

2.2.2 This communication strategy is based on the following guidelines:

- a. Section 32(1) of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act of 108 of 1996
- b. The National Government Information System (GCIS) framework, amongst others
 - (i) Government Communicators' handbook
 - (ii) Communications 2000 " A vision for government communications in South Africa final report" (COMTASK)
 - (iii) Research guidelines for government communicators.
- c. The state of the Nation Address (SONA) by the president
- d. The state of the Province Address (SOPA) by the Premier
- e. The state of the Municipal Address (SOMA) by the Executive Mayor.
- f. Provincial communication conference co-ordinated by South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and Provincial Government in 2002.
- g. Promotion of access to information Act of 2000 (Act 2 of 2000) and
- h. Any other guideline as may be provided by the government from time to time.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

3.1 The fact that the municipality is among the 14 nodal municipalities means that, the municipality is operating in a rurally based part of Mpumalanga Province. However the flow of information is not badly impacted as the municipality can easily reach the targeted audience as and when needed through the community papers, Radio and both the National Print and electronic media. It is however important to note that the environment is affected by the following factors:

- Cultural diversity
- Political landscape
- Economic
- Social Environment
- Geographical location
- Media analysis

3.2 CULTURAL DIVERSITY

3.2.1 Bushbuckridge Local Municipality comprises of different languages that are under Traditional Authorities. To that effect, The Council has a good working relationship with the Traditional Authorities around the Municipality. The following Ethnic groups exist in Bushbuckridge:

- Amaswati
- Mapulana (Sepedi)
- Va-Tsonga

3.2.2 The above Groups are demarcated according to the three regions of the Municipality, namely, Bushbuckridge South, Midlands and East. It must be noted that in all these regions the three languages are spoken equally.

3.3 POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT / LANDSCAPE

Different Political Organizations exist within the Municipality which are:

- ANC
- APC
- UDM
- ACDP
- INDEPENDENTS

It should be noted that the Political landscape remain favorable to the ANC with out of 68 Councilors in the council, 62 coming from the ANC.

3.4 ECONOMIC DYNAMICS

The municipality has little Economic Activity, however the following sectors dominate the Municipality:

- Tourism
- Agriculture

3.5 SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

3.5.1 The Municipality's Social Environment remains a challenge to the institution, as a large number of people are unemployed and illiterate. The communication Unit remains hard at work to shape the public perception with regards to how Government operates and service delivery. One of the crucial factors affecting the Municipality is the prevalence of HIV/ AIDS which affects many families, but the current women and local Council, will weather all the solutions to the

pandemic. The Municipality Newsletter “Bushbuckridge Newsletter” which is produced quarterly will hopefully be used to communicate Municipal’s interventions to the public regarding their social well beings. The Municipality has placed suggestion boxes across all the Regional Offices to allow community members to communicate.

In addition to the suggestion boxes, the Municipality will introduce an SMS line that will further strengthen the Municipal efforts to encouraging and promoting Public Participation. An email address “Complaints@bushbuckridge.gov.za” will be created to achieve the goal of encouraging and promoting Public Participation.

3.6 MEDIA ANALYSIS

3.6.1 Despite being a Nodal Point and Demographically aloof from the headquarters of medical houses, This is not a challenge to the Municipality as the Communication Unit has developed a good working relationship with the media from as far as National Media Houses.

The Local Media also plays a pivotal role as they manage to reach the entire region. The Municipality also utilizes the following two Mechanisms of communication to compliment information dissemination, namely internal and external communication.

3.6.2 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Information is disseminated internally through workshops, POT meetings, Senior Management meeting, website and internal Newsletter. An improvement can be made to consolidate the way information is disseminated internally by establishing intranet (Budget constraints).

3.6.3 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

To externally disseminate information, the Municipality will make use of the website, External Newsletter, Izimbizo, Ward Committee meetings, Traditional Authorities, Print and Electronic Media.

3.6.4 The Identified Newspapers in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality are:

- Daily sun (National)
- Sowetan (Mpumalanga Edition)
- African Eye News (National News Agency)
- Mpumalanga News
- The Mirror (Mpumalanga Province)

- The Lowvelder (Mpumalanga Province)
- City Press (National)
- The Bush Voice (Local)
- Bushbuckridge News (Local)

3.6.5 Information dissemination through Electronic Media:

- Ligwalagwala Fm (Siswati SABC Radio)
- Munghana Lonene Fm (Xitsonga SABC Radio)
- Jacaranda Fm (Commercial National Radio)
- SA Fm (SABC Talk Radio)
- Thobela Fm (Sepedi SABC Radio)
- Capricorn Fm(Commercial Regional Radio)
- Mpower (Commercial Regional Radio)
- Bushbuckridge Community Radio

4. COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

4.1 Given the fact that the Communication Unit is very new, with its fully fledged establishment owing its origin to July 1st, 2008. The challenge is that it is not been acknowledged by all Directorates and Units in the Municipality. This has resulted in the Municipality sending different messages to the public in the past. However the Unit has forged good working relationship with all municipal directorates and Units, consequently the municipality is now managing to speak in one voice.

4.2 Both the local Communicator's Forum and the District Communicator's forum will assist to identify the involvement of sector departments and parastatals communicators to avoid parallel planning and fiscal dumping.

This will be done through ensuring continuous attendance of the District and local communicator's forum.

5. MESSAGES AND THEMES

5.1 Core Message

- Working together we can do more.

5.2 LOCAL MESSAGE

- Unity in Action to do more as we advance towards the Millennium Target

6. MESSENGERS, AUDIENCE AND CHANNELS

| PRIMARY MESSENGERS | SECONDARY MESSENGERS | AUDIENCES | CHANNELS |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| - The President | - Municipal Manager | - Communities | - Izimbizo |
| - The Premier | - Spokesperson | - Sector Departments | - Faith based organization |
| - The Ministers/MEC's | - Directors | - Local Businesses | - Thusong service centre |
| - District Executive Mayor | - Managers | - Youth | - Print and electronic media |
| - Local Municipality Executive Mayor | - Churches | - People with Disability | - Media briefings |
| - Councilors | - Civic Organizations | - Women | - Inter-departmental forum |
| - Traditional leaders | - CDW's | - Media | - Internal and external Newsletter. |
| - Media | - Ward Committees | | |
| - Communities | | | |

7. A PHASED COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME

7.1 PRE – COMMUNICATION PHASE

- This is the Phase in which internal staff members are informed of the programme of Action (POA) of the municipality for the year. All programmes of the Municipality needs to be available to the staff members and ensures that all employees have an understanding of the function of the Municipality. During this phase emphasis on Batho – Pele Principles will be intensified.

7.2 IMPLEMENTATION COMMUNICATION PHASE

The implementation phase will suffice once the officials have fully understood the Municipal programme of Action. To that end, the information will be disseminated to the members of the public and stakeholders at large. The thinking is that during this stage the directly involved employees should keep track of progress on actions taken.

7.3 POST COMMUNICATION PHASE

In this stage, Senior Managers and Communicators will play a crucial role in ensuring that the information received is analysed and attended to in order for the Municipality to be a people centered Municipality. The analyzed feedback will then be forwarded to the Municipal Manager who may table the matter to the Executive Mayor, members of the Mayoral committee and to the entire Council with the recommendation attached.

8. STRUCTURES AND PROCESS

The Strategy will be submitted for noting and recommendations by the District Communicators Forum, it will then be forwarded to members of the Mayoral Committee thereby paving a way to the District council for final approval. The strategy will be forwarded to the National Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs for noting by the Chief Director: Communication and the Provincial Government Communications and Information Systems (GCIS) for noting.

9. MUNICIPAL STAKEHOLDERS

- Traditional authorities
- Municipal Employees
- Business Community
- Youth and youth organizations
- People with disabilities
- Vulnerable groups
- Religious leaders
- Political leaders
- Non Government Organizations
- Sector Departments
- Media
- Women Organizations and,
- The public at large

10. ACTION PLAN

This action plan is informed by the programme of Action based on the adopted Council IDP and budget. The plan talks of activities that the BLM Communication Unit will perform during different events. This plan will also follow a monthly advisory as guided by the National Communication cycle for Local Government. The cash flow will be determined by the nature of the event.



