

6.1 Communications Policy/Protocol

Policy Statement

The Government of Nova Scotia recognizes that a central agency for the management and delivery of communication services will ensure issues are thoroughly reviewed, communication goals are met, and the policies and actions of government are clearly communicated to Nova Scotians. As the central agency for communication services, Communications Nova Scotia (CNS) provides well-managed and coordinated communications.

Definition

COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

Communication services include communications planning, media relations, event planning, distribution of news releases, media monitoring, advertising, graphic design, Internet, website design, multimedia services, video production, photography, editorial services, writing, printing, publishing, and related services.

Policy Objectives

- link all communications initiatives to the corporate government direction
- coordinate government communications activities through a corporate communications calendar
- develop strategic communications plans
- provide central delivery and knowledgeable procurement of communications services

Application

All departments and agencies are covered by this policy. Independent or arm's-length agencies are not covered under this policy but are encouraged to share information and may consult with, participate in professional development, and request communications support from Communications Nova Scotia.

Policy Directives

All departments and agencies must

- distribute all government news releases through CNS
- receive approval of communications plans and related materials from their minister, deputy minister and the appropriate managing director
- acquire approval from the Premier's Office through the managing director at CNS for communications plans involving the premier
- coordinate advertising, print, publishing, graphic design, editorial, website design, and related communications services through CNS
- ensure that government website design, layout, and plans are in accordance with the government's Internet Policy and Guideline
- ensure that government printing (including stationery), video, photography, graphic design follow the guidelines for the Visual Identity Program, Legal Deposit, intellectual property, and Catalogue in Publication (CIP) where applicable

Policy Guidelines

Communications Nova Scotia provides

- knowledgeable procurement and contract management for media monitoring, publications, graphic design, editorial services, video, and photography
- consultation to government departments and agencies for all communications services
- research and consultation to government departments and agencies for specialty items and events planning
- research, development, and management of communications-related policies and guidelines for government

Accountability

See *Intranet or Government of Nova Scotia Communications Policies and Procedures Manual* for details.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Senior Officials are accountable for

- their department/agency's communications efforts and results
- providing accurate and timely information to their communications specialists to optimize and efficiently manage their communications opportunities and challenges

Communications Directors must

- meet performance expectations, as defined in Appendix 6-A
- work closely with managing directors, Communications Nova Scotia
- work directly with the Premier's Office for events in which the premier is participating

COMMUNICATIONS NOVA SCOTIA

Assistant Deputy Minister

- manages all aspects of Communications Nova Scotia's activities
- works with the Premier's Office and Treasury and Policy Board to collectively communicate overall government themes and policy directions

Managing Directors

- works with departments in planning communications for major initiatives
- approves all communications plans and supporting materials

Media Services

- distributes all media advisories, news releases and related materials to the news media
- provides media monitoring for government
- coordinates or provides the logistical communications support for media and special events
- provides communications support to departments, as necessary, and for corporate policies and initiatives
- coordinates all advertising for government under the authority of the Advertising Policy
- manages the standing offer for public opinion polling, focus testing, advertising, marketing, and public relations services

Creative Services

- provides central service delivery and contracting of graphic design, editorial, video, photographic, multimedia, and Internet and electronic publication services for government
- manages the intellectual property issues for government, Internet Content Policy and Guideline, Visual Identity Program and Guideline, and Creative Credit Policy

Publication Services (includes the Queen's Printer)

- provides all government printing services through in-house print and contracted print capabilities
- manages the Co-publishing Policy and Print Quality Program

Monitoring

The Assistant Deputy Minister and senior management of Communications Nova Scotia implement, monitor, and update this policy.

References

Communications and Information Act, R.S., c.79, s. 1
Communications Policy and Procedure Manual, September 2003
Internet Policy and Guideline
Visual Identity Program and Guideline
Creative Credit Policy
Advertising Policy

Enquiries

Assistant Deputy Minister, Communications Nova Scotia (902) 424-5243

Appendix

Appendix 6-A Professional Expectations for Communications Directors

Approval date: September 28, 2000

Manual release date: January 9, 2003

Approved by: Executive Council

Most recent review: October 20, 2004

APPENDIX 6-A Professional Expectations for Communications Directors

A communications director is a proactive, self-starting professional who advances communications advice to senior managers and ministers.

Position Description

Accountable for planning, development, and implementation of communications strategies and initiatives for client departments and agencies, consistent with the corporate objectives and policies of the Government of Nova Scotia. Where applicable, manages and supervises department communications staff. Reports to one of three managing directors at Communications Nova Scotia and, on a day-to-day basis, to the deputy minister of the client department. Leads communications efforts in co-operation with the deputy minister and with the support of department senior staff.

Scope of duties/responsibilities

The primary responsibility of the communications director is to provide strategic communications planning and advice on communications, advertising, and public relations matters to the minister, deputy minister, and senior management team of the client department.

As a member of the senior management team, the director identifies public and departmental issues and provides issues management advice and support, including crisis management.

The director prepares or supervises the preparation and implementation of communications plans for cabinet documents. Working closely with central agencies and other departments, the director develops corporate communications strategies on behalf of government.

On behalf of the client department, the communications director must be actively involved in media relations, including contact with reporters, writing of news releases, planning and execution of news conferences, participation in editorial boards, and other media-related functions.

Working closely with senior department staff, the communications director writes or supervises the writing of program- or policy-related speeches for the minister and deputy minister.

The communications director provides communications input and advice for preparation of the House of Assembly briefing book for ministers, as well as for briefing notes on key issues.

As a senior communications professional, the director also provides internal communications advice to senior management and shares responsibility with them for internal communication efforts of the client department.

The director coordinates communications budgets on behalf of client departments. The director also provides communications advice in the preparation and delivery of department business plans, annual reports, and program and policy publications.

On behalf of the client department, the director arranges and may participate in media training for the minister and senior members of staff when required. The director is also responsible for the content of the department Web site, must play a lead role in coordination of public opinion research, and is responsible for liaison with (but does not serve as) the department's FOIPOP administrator.

The communications director may write or draft correspondence on behalf of a minister or deputy when it is part of a communications strategy or required in the management of an issue. Routine and/or constituency correspondence should not be seen as a function requiring the support of the communications director or team. Materials written by department staff, such as responses to written questions and House Orders should be reviewed by the director, who may offer suggestions or advice from a communications perspective.