

Communications Nova Scotia
Accountability Report 2010-11

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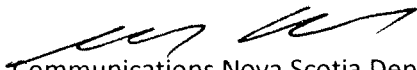
Accountability Statement

The accountability report of Communications Nova Scotia for the year ended March 31, 2011 is prepared pursuant to the Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Communications Nova Scotia Statement of Mandate for the fiscal year 2010-2011. The reporting of Communications Nova Scotia outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments, and opinions by the agency's management.

We acknowledge that this accountability report is the responsibility of Communications Nova Scotia management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Communications Nova Scotia 2010-2011 Statement of Mandate.



Communications Nova Scotia Minister



Communications Nova Scotia Deputy Minister

Message from the Minister

Over the last fiscal year, Communications Nova Scotia (CNS) worked hard to ensure government initiatives and decisions were communicated quickly and accurately to Nova Scotians in every region of the province.

Through expanded use of non-traditional communication tools and outreach, CNS provided many options for citizens to engage with government and to understand the programs and services available to them. The agency embraced new and innovative ways of communicating government initiatives to Nova Scotian audiences, including live webcasts, sharing testimonials on video clip during major announcements, and launching the provincial government's first online bulletin board as part of Back to Balance consultations.

This year CNS was pleased to develop one of the first provincial government policies and guidelines on the corporate use of social media. This policy is guiding all government staff as they effectively incorporate the use of new web-based methods and tools in their work.

Communications Nova Scotia was integral to the timely and successful release of major corporate initiatives this past year, such as: jobsHere, the plan to grow our economy; Better Care Sooner, the plan to improve emergency care; and the annual provincial budget, part of government's four-year plan to get back to balance. Each project was delivered with creativity, care for the environment, and the highest professional quality.

While expanding its creative endeavors, CNS was able to continue to provide an array of regular, core services to government. This includes the delivery of media training, the issuing of over 1,700 news releases, the production of more than 4,600 individual print and promotional jobs through the Queens Printer, and support for the House of Assembly activities, including the tabling of more than 70 new and amended pieces of legislation.

Communications Nova Scotia welcomes the opportunity to further demonstrate excellence in quality, value, sustainability and service to our clients and the citizens of Nova Scotia.

Sincerely,

Hon. Frank Corbett

Financial Results

In 2010–2011, Communications Nova Scotia had an approved budget allocation of \$8,779,000. Actual net 2010–2011 expenditures totaled \$8,406,000 (95% spent to budget). The following table provides a breakdown of authority versus actual 2010–2011 CNS expenditures.

Communications Nova Scotia				
	2010-2011 Estimate	2010-2011 Actual	Variance	Note #
Program & Service Area	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)	
Gross Expenses:				
Office of the Assistant Deputy Minister	\$1,064	\$1,292	\$228	1
Client Services	\$212	\$252	\$40	2
Communications Planning	\$7,276	\$7,913	\$637	3
Communications Services	\$8,847	\$7,974	(\$873)	4
Communications Technology	\$607	\$847	\$240	5
Marketing	\$5,952	\$3,686	(\$2,266)	6
Total Gross Expenses	\$23,958	\$21,964	(\$1,994)	
Net Program Expenses	\$8,779	\$6860	(\$1,919)	7
Salaries and Employee Benefits	\$9,713	\$11,223	\$1,510	8
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	123.0	132.9	9.8	9

Variance Reference Notes

1. Expenditures are over budget due to an increase in general operating expenses and salary costs.
2. Expenditures are over budget due to an increase in salary costs.
3. Expenditures are over budget due to an increase in salary costs as the result of additional Communication Services hired at the request of other Departments.
4. Decrease is due to lowered demand for, in particular, externally-sourced printing, and cost reductions through increased use of our standing offer for colour printing.
5. Expenditures are over budget due to an increase in demand for service from other departments, which was partially offset by recoveries from the departments.
6. The decrease is attributed to delays in implementing some programs.
7. The decrease is attributed to savings in professional services, mainly in Marketing.
8. Expenditures are over budget due to an increase in salary costs as the result of additional Communication Services hired at the request of other Departments.
9. The FTE increase is due to additional Communication Services requested by other Departments (FTEs provided by other Departments), partially offset by vacant positions throughout the Agency.

Measuring Our Performance

1.1 Quantitative and qualitative assessments of media coverage, including the percentage of stories in which government messages accurately appear; stakeholder feedback; hits to web sites; polling data of communications programs for significant government initiatives.

What does the measure tell us?

This measure helps us to assess the impact of media coverage, advertising, and other promotion of initiatives and decisions made by government. It helps us to assess how well we are doing in reaching intended audiences.

Where are we now?

Every communication plan that comes forward is required to identify evaluation measures. Our standards include assessing the accuracy of messaging and the quantity and quality of stakeholder feedback. Each Director is responsible for ensuring these measures are used, assessed, and addressed, as appropriate. As part of our communications planning, government issued 1,741 news releases in 2010-2011, 226 French releases, and 59 social media releases.

Over the last fiscal year we had over 120 million hits from almost 8 million unique visitors for all government of Nova Scotia websites under the domain "gov.ns.ca." Government's main home page alone accounted for over 8 million hits.

Where do we want to be?

CNS has assigned a director to establish a research and evaluation program for government. A plan will be developed to begin implementation in 2011-2012. CNS has also established a marketing unit that will implement an integrated marketing strategy to support improved communication of government core priorities to key audiences.

1.2 Number of posts by staff on government-hosted and outside originator blogs and other social media vehicles.

What does the measure tell us?

This measure helps us to assess the impact of media coverage, advertising, and other promotion of initiatives and decisions made by government. It helps us to assess how well we are doing in reaching intended audiences.

Where are we now?

Use of social media by communications staff increased dramatically in 2010 - 11. NSGov, the main government account, sent 763 tweets and made more frequent and effective use of Facebook, including the posting of 381 photos in 58 albums, 40 videos and innumerable updates on government news.

NSGov established a YouTube channel, on which podcasts and videos from social media releases, government events and campaigns are posted.

Novascotialife attracted about 2000 new Twitter followers in 2010 - 11, with 1100 tweets. On Facebook, novascotialife averaged 35 posts per month, attracting 1,393 new fans and 791,605 post views.

In October, CNS photography began posting a series of albums, consisting of a series of photographs from a specific location, to the Tourism Facebook page. The 21 albums posted by fiscal year end registered an average 30,000 views.

New, ongoing social media initiatives were launched during 2010-11, including an Emergency Management Office Twitter account, which started with Hurricane Earl, tweeting 72 times to 286 followers that weekend alone – dozens of whom tweeted thank-you in return.

Finance used Twitter to promote events and capture the discussion at a series of budget-related workshops held around the province that were led by the Minister. Communications staff then created an online Back to Balance forum, where anyone with access to a computer could learn about specific cost-reduction or revenue-generating ideas that arose in the public meetings and provide their own comments and ideas.

@royaltour was created for the visit to Nova Scotia of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip: 169 tweets provided progress reports and 63 photos – one of which triggered 920 views. And Communications Nova Scotia contributed to a prolific and hugely successful use of social media for Team Nova Scotia during the Canada Winter Games.

Where do we want to be?

CNS will continue to stretch and expand its use of social media as an integral component of communication strategies.

1.3 Number and quality of responses to government initiated social media ventures.

What does the measure tell us?

This measure helps us to assess the impact of media coverage, advertising, and other promotion of initiatives and decisions made by government. It helps us to assess how well we are doing in reaching intended audiences.

Where are we now?

Government issued 59 social media releases in 2010-2011. The number of comments and other user-generated actions of government social media increased during the 2010 - 11 fiscal year in line with our overall activity. Relatively passive responses – retweets on Twitter and “Likes” on Facebook – were the most plentiful: novascotialife received 5408 Likes and 600 retweets; NSGov was retweeted at close to the same level. But the NovaScotiaLife Facebook site also received 364 user-generated posts, which varied from a one-line comment to lengthy and thoughtful commentaries, and 1352 comments on host and user

posts. The main government Facebook page received (and often responded to) about 25 comments per month.

Where do we want to be?

CNS aims to have positive responses to social media ventures, where audiences indicate understanding of the initiatives being communicated. Ideally we will stimulate interesting and useful engagement with citizens on corporate priorities.

2.1 Overall customer satisfaction survey

What does the measure tell us?

The client satisfaction survey is designed to ensure the services we provide are meeting the needs of clients and government with the goal to strengthen our relationships with clients and improve our level of service. The Customer Satisfaction Survey tracks frequency and types of services accessed, service delivery satisfaction, and level of client communication. Survey results and client comments highlight areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

The survey allows us to assess client satisfaction regarding the quality, value, and environmental sustainability of communication products and services. The baseline score for overall customer satisfaction is 4.4 out of 5.

Where are we now?

The 2006 Customer Satisfaction Survey established a baseline score for overall customer satisfaction of 4.4 out of 5. The result of the 2009 Survey was 4.2 out of 5.

Establishing Agency service standards that address areas of opportunity to increase Client Satisfaction as highlighted in the most recent Survey; implementing a Job Completion Satisfaction Survey to track ongoing client satisfaction in advance of the overall Customer Satisfaction Survey scheduled for 2012; Client Services presentation to government departments and agencies educating on the services provided by CNS.

Where do we want to be?

Our target for this measure for 2011-2012 is to maintain an Overall Satisfaction of 4.4 or higher.

3.1 Nova Scotia government has an integrated marketing strategy which reflects the priority areas of government.

What does this measure tell us?

A strategic marketing plan was created for the last quarter of the fiscal year that delivered campaigns focused on the key priorities of government, as well as identifying other activities happening around government to show the whole picture in market activity.

Where are we now?

As no strategy previously existed, the goal was to create a baseline strategy which would direct efforts and provide outcomes against which we could audit our success. This goal was met. One of the first activities of the newly established marketing division was the development of the Q1 2011 Marketing Plan in support of government priorities.

Where do we want to be?

Build on this approach to create the annual integrated marketing strategy to have sustained messaging in the marketplace for the key priorities of government, while coordinating other government activity for optimal share of voice and impact.

4.1 Percentage of Cabinet documents accompanied by a communications plan

What does this measure tell us?

This measure helps us to ensure that communications is an integral part of all government business.

Where are we now?

Our goal is for more than 95% of all Cabinet documents to be accompanied by a communications plan. Currently, government policies require all Cabinet to include a communications plan, so our success is 100%.

Where do we want to be?

CNS will shift its measure in 2011-2012 to focus on ensuring and improving the quality of communication plans, including that they are effectively implemented and evaluated.

4.2 Deputy Minister confidence in the benefit of early involvement of CNS in departmental or corporate initiatives.

What does this measure tell us?

This measure helps us to assess if deputies have an understanding of and commitment to the importance of early and appropriate involvement of communications in their departmental or corporate initiatives.

Where are we now?

Our goal is for CNS to maintain a rating of at least 4.5 out of 5. The last survey in 2009-2010 scored 4.9.

Where do we want to be?

Our target is to maintain a rating of at least 4.4 out of 5 .

5.1 Follow up perception research for Ottawa, Toronto, Boston, and other Atlantic Provinces from 2007.

What does this measure tell us?

The purpose of this measure is to educate target audiences on the province's key attributes and successes, resulting in a more positive perception of Nova Scotia.

Where are we now?

Follow up perception research about Nova Scotia was conducted in Nova Scotia (general population), Toronto, Boston, Ottawa and other Atlantic provinces in 2010. These findings were compared to previous findings in 2004 and 2007. In each survey, with the exception of Nova Scotia, business leaders or senior civil servants were interviewed.

Here are some key highlights of that research:

General Population – Nova Scotia

- Ratings for the Nova Scotia Education System continue to climb. Ratings for a high quality education system are up 19% over 2004 (59% versus 40%)
- Ratings for Nova Scotia as a great place to conduct business remain above 2004 levels although they did pull back slightly compared to 2007.
- Unaided recall of advertising trended upwards in 2010 to 11% (8% in 2007).
- Ratings for business opportunities outside resource-based industries and businesses being successful have seen double digit drops since 2004.
- A number of other business climate related elements that saw positive movement in 2007 pulled back in 2010 (not surprising given the economic climate in the region over the past two years.)

Ottawa Civil Servants

- NS remains the best place in Atlantic Canada to conduct business. (While the gap narrowed with New Brunswick in 2010)
- NS also remains the top province in Atlantic Canada for being the most dynamic place to do business & having the most well established entrepreneurial community
- Ad recall was added to the Civil Servants questionnaire in 2010 / 19% (unaided) of Civil Servants correctly recalled some form of advertising.
- Nova Scotia continues to trail New Brunswick when it comes telecommunications infrastructure however the gap does seem to be narrowing
- The perception remains that New Brunswick has the best transportation connections to Canadian and US markets

Boston, Toronto, Other Atlantic Provinces

- Nova Scotia saw gains in its rating as a place to do business in both Toronto and Boston.
- There was a slight decrease in the confidence of Nova Scotia's labour resource.
- Toronto and Boston respondents were more likely to visit Nova Scotia for vacation than business.
- Overall, there was little change in ratings of the Nova Scotia economy in 2010. Scores trended downward among Other Atlantic business people and saw a big drop in Toronto, but this was offset by upward movement in Boston.
- Gains were seen in terms of businesses ability to succeed, air accessibility, Halifax being a dynamic National City, and Nova Scotia being a good place to live and work.

Where do we want to be?

In the next year, we will evolve away from the Come to Life brand to focus more specifically on supporting the priorities of government and the Nova Scotia brand. Therefore, we do not expect to conduct this specific research again at this time, although it will be considered as we assess our future research requirements.

5.2 Usage of brand by government departments and agencies.

What does this measure tell us?

This measure tells us how much support the brand is receiving from departments through their external use of the concept and logo.

Where are we now?

Our goal for 2010-11 was to develop benchmark data for use of brand. A brand audit was conducted in 2010 to help determine the strength of the Come to life brand and determine brand usage by other government departments and agencies. The audit (Revolve 360 branding) determined there was significant equity in the brand. But while some government departments and agencies have embraced the brand, as Film Nova Scotia and the Office of Immigration have, others have not. The brand audit identified the need to have one unified voice and brand for all of government, one that was directed by the Premier's Office and strictly enforced.

Where do we want to be?

We are taking the learnings from the brand audit and moving towards the evolution of one brand for the Province that will be embraced and supported by all departments. As we develop new direction for the VIP and Nova Scotia brand, new evaluation measures will be established.

5.3 Number of charter members supporting Nova Scotia Come to Life.

What does this measure tell us?

This measure is a way of evaluating private sector support for the Come to Life initiatives and for the promotion of the province in general in target markets.

Where are we now?

In 2009-2010 there were 370 charter members. This number grew to 400 in 2010-2011. In September 2010, the Government of Nova Scotia distributed an online survey to its Come to life charter members. The overall objective of this study was to better understand members' involvement and perceived value associated with being a Come to life charter member. A total of 83 surveys were completed, representing a response rate of 23%. Some of the key finds were:

- The decision to become a charter was based on a desire to contribute to Nova Scotia – to its future, to an important initiative and to the provincial economy.
- Charter membership provided the member with networking opportunities.
- Many charter members saw their role as a silent supporter rather than an active ambassador. In line with that, member involvement tends to be low key – moderate or minimal as opposed to active.
- There is interest among members to be more active, and interest in participating
- As a Come to life spokesperson is notable. In fact, charter members are likely to see themselves in the future in roles such as promoter, reference/resource person, or spokesperson.
- Many charter members were unaware of the resources available to them, like the photo library.
- Results suggest there is a need to establish a greater relevance of charter membership to businesses involving and engaging members more fully.

Where do we want to be?

CNS had a goal of increasing charter membership by 10% or 37 members in 2010-2011. We came close to achieving our target with an increase of 30 new members. A number of other businesses have expressed interest in becoming charter members, but CNS decided not to bring on these additional members until a plan is established, as part of the brand evolution activity, to better engage the members.