



Communicating the Value of Research Workshop and Peer Exchange

November 2 – 4, 2009

Final Report



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Acronyms

AASHTO – American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials
ConnDOT – Connecticut Department of Transportation
CTS – Center for Transportation Studies
DOT – Department of Transportation
FHWA – Federal Highway Administration
LTRC – Louisiana Transportation Research Center
Mn/DOT – Minnesota Department of Transportation
NCHRP – National Cooperative Highway Research Program
NETC – New England Transportation Consortium
PARI – Office of Policy Analysis, Research & Innovation
RAC – Research Advisory Committee
RFP – Request for Proposal
RSS – Research Services Section
SAFETEA-LU – Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
SP&R – State Planning and Research
TERRA – Transportation Engineering and Road Research Alliance
TXDOT – Texas Department of Transportation
UTC – University Transportation Center
WSDOT – Washington State Department of Transportation



Communicating the Value of Research Workshop and Peer Exchange

November 2 – 4, 2009

Introduction

The Minnesota Department of Transportation Research Services Section hosted a workshop and peer exchange November 2 – 4, 2009 in Shoreview, Minnesota. Representatives from eight state DOTs, two Minnesota universities, and FHWA-Minnesota joined representatives from Mn/DOT to learn about effective strategies for communicating the value of transportation research and to share best practices with each other. A number of Mn/DOT program areas participated, including Traffic, Materials, State Aid, Research Services, Maintenance, Market Research, Communications, the Office of Policy Analysis, Research and Innovation and the Local Road Research Board. This report highlights the key observations and takeaways that came out of the workshop and peer exchange.

Theme and Content

The overall theme for the peer exchange was Communicating the Value of Research. The first day consisted of a workshop facilitated by NuStats LLC and the Texas Transportation Institute. The workshop on Tuesday included presentations and group exercises based on NCHRP Report 610, *Communication Matters: Communicating the Value of Transportation Research Guidebook*. The peer exchange followed all day Wednesday and half of Thursday. Participants presented on their communication strategies and successes and worked together to discuss common communication challenges.



Participants

Visiting team members

- Susan Barker, Kansas Department of Transportation
- Rebecca Boyer, California Department of Transportation
- Mara Campbell, Missouri Department of Transportation
- Michael Fazio, Utah Department of Transportation
- Mark Morvant, Louisiana Transportation Research Center
- Dionysia Oliveira, Connecticut Department of Transportation
- Leni Oman, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Amy Schutzbach, Illinois Department of Transportation

Peer exchange planning team

- Jake Akervik, Mn/DOT – RSS Communications
- Deb Fick, Mn/DOT – RSS SP& R
- Sheila Hatchell, Mn/DOT – Library
- Bruce Holdhusen, Mn/DOT – RSS Research
- Cory Johnson, Mn/DOT – RSS Research
- Sandy McCully, Mn/DOT – RSS Communications
- Linda Taylor, Mn/DOT – RSS

Other peer exchange participants

- Brad Estochen, Mn/DOT – Traffic
- Kevin Gutknecht, Mn/DOT – Communications
- Maureen Jensen, Mn/DOT – Materials
- Sue Lodahl, Mn/DOT – Maintenance
- Tom Peters, Mn/DOT – Maintenance
- Karla Rains, Mn/DOT – Marketing & Customer Service
- Nick Thompson, Mn/DOT – PARI
- Ben Worel , Mn/DOT – Materials
- Deb Bloom, City of Roseville
- Kimberly Hilsenbeck, NuStats
- Tim Lomax, Texas Transportation Institute
- Mia Zmud, NuStats
- Phil Forst, FHWA - Minnesota
- Linda Preisen, Center for Transportation Studies
- Eil Kwon, University of MN-Duluth
- Kim Linsenmayer, CTC & Associates LLC

Communication Matters Workshop Communicating the Value of Transportation Research

November 2, 2009

Representatives from NuStats LLC and the Texas Transportation Institute facilitated this half-day workshop on Communicating the Value of Transportation Research. The workshop highlighted the tools available in *Communication Matters: Communicating the Value of Transportation Research Guidebook*, NCHRP Report 610, 2009.

See http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_610.pdf.

The workshop included presentations on the Signs of Good Communication, the Communication Process and developing Targeted Communications Plans. Attendees also participated in several group exercises to develop communication strategies and evaluate the effectiveness of communication products. In one exercise, the group reviewed three products and were asked to identify the audience and message. The exercise reinforced the importance of prescreening your materials before going to press.

Below is a very brief summary of the content presented. Refer to the Guidebook for detailed information.

7 Signs of Good Communication Practices

See page 5 of the Guidebook.

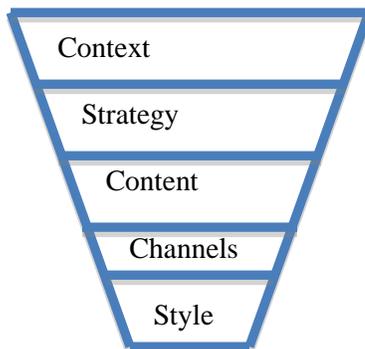
- Involve communication professionals.
- Understand the audience.
- Demonstrate a tangible benefit t.
- Recognize that timing is relevant.
- Build coalitions.
- Build two-way relationships.
- Tailor packaging.

Research Communications Process

See page 9 of the Guidebook.

Research Investment = Value + Benefit

Communication Process



Communications Plan Template

See page 27 of the Guidebook.

TITLE

Executive Summary

[Write this summary first, and then develop detailed pages as appropriate. Come back to the summary each time you edit or add to the document to ensure it remains accurate.]

Research/Situation Analysis

[Briefly cover any supporting research, historical background, and the current situation from which the communication need arises.]

Goal

[Describe the overall goals for this communication plan. If part of a broader initiative, indicate that.]

Target Audiences

[List whom you want to reach, their primary interests, and your call to action (your objective in reaching them). Group people if they will be regarded as the same and segment into separate groups if you will differentiate the objective, communication activities, and collateral materials. Typical target markets include other researchers, decision makers, the news media, current and prospective donors, and the public at large.]

Key Messages and Key Message Testing

[List key messages to be delivered in this communication effort and indicate when and how the messages will be tested.]

Strategies and Tactics

[Briefly list the activities to be undertaken in delivering the messages to the target audiences. Include the channels, people involved, materials required, and other assets that you need to have for this effort.]

Implementation

[Indicate the lead person/group and other people involved in planning and carrying out the plan, including champions. Define their roles and responsibilities.]

Evaluation

[Identify how and when the communication efforts will be measured.]

Timeline

[Create a schedule for each discrete strategy or tactic.]

Budget

[Outline every element requiring funding, including evaluation, development of materials, media placement, and staffing resources.]

Plan Authorship

Planning process started: [m/d/yy] Plan authored by: [Name(s)]

Peer Exchange Communicating the Value of Transportation Research

November 3, 2009

Common Challenges

- Providing resource level justification to management for a research program.
- Quantifying the outcomes of research implementation for the public and policy makers.
- Demonstrating the state's return on investment for transportation research.
- Timing communications to more effectively relay message and tie to media event.
- Targeting specific decision makers.
- Agency resistance to change.
- Lack of resources.
- Lack of time—our own and our partners.
- Staffing changes.
- Demonstrating a direct return on investment from communications efforts.
- Keeping up with changing communication technologies.
- Avoiding communications overload.
- Communicating to the public that there is a transportation funding crisis.

Lessons Learned

- Start tracking the implementation process early and often. This allows for communicating early successes and saves time in demonstrating full benefits at the end of implementation.
- Engage a project review committee to provide implementation expertise.
- Market projects with quantifiable implementation benefits. Look at the three-year implementation history and consider projecting implementation savings.
- Develop an implementation strategy early, formalize it and track it.
- Recognize the DOT staff commitment needed to support research projects and implementation and the amount of time this takes from their other responsibilities.

Best Practices

Program Communications Planning

- Missouri DOT creates a communication plan for every project as part of the scope of project. It's completed by an in-house project administrator or the principal investigator.
- Washington State DOT has a communication plan for the research program as a whole.
- Connecticut DOT created a chart for tracking all intended audiences of research communications and the formats used to reach them.
- Have an implementation sponsor sign off on research proposals. When the project is done give a presentation to the sponsor and hold a closeout meeting to start the implementation process.

- Work collaboratively with your DOT communications or public affairs office to identify key issues for your audiences and the best timing to reach out to them. They may also be able to provide assistance in developing or distributing communication materials. (Utah DOT, Washington State DOT, Missouri DOT)
- Focus research on projects that matter to senior managers.
- Link research success to your external audiences. Provide internal experts information and talking points so that they can be the spokespeople for the research program. Making the key experts look good builds a foundation of support for the research program. Use news releases, legislative committees and partnering meetings.
- Support your DOT staff in communicating research results. The Research office can create and package materials that other DOT offices can use to promote what they're doing to save money, lives, etc.
- Use the best researchers you can for a project to ensure successful, implementable results. Missouri DOT uses a competitive process—any researcher in the U.S. can propose on the research.
- Missouri DOT requires investigators to take video and photos throughout a project so that these materials are available for promoting the results.
- Strong project champions and project monitors are key to effective communication.
- One size does not fit all in communication. Use different formats and approaches for different audiences.

Print and electronic materials

- Research capsules published when a study begins. (Louisiana DOT)
http://www.ltrc.lsu.edu/pubs_projectcapsules.html
- Technical summaries or briefs – two- to four-page project summaries published at the end of a project.
Connecticut DOT: <http://www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?a=1387&q=259640>
Louisiana DOT: http://www.ltrc.lsu.edu/pubs_techsummaries.html
Minnesota DOT: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/research/2009-technical-summaries.html>
Washington State DOT: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Research/Working/Notes.htm>
- Trading cards. (Connecticut DOT, Kansas DOT, Utah DOT)
Suggestions and templates for doing trading cards on RAC Web site:
<http://research.transportation.org/?siteid=55&pageid=1442>
- Research implementation status report (Louisiana DOT) – summarizes the implementation status of the most important projects and goes to executive staff in the department once a year. Presented at half-day meeting that includes the secretary of the department.

- Implementation Update: Research in Practice. (Louisiana DOT)
Technical four-page foldout that describes a project's implementation history and tries to quantify the outcomes. Modeled after the Research Pays Off articles in *TR News*.
See http://www.ltrc.lsu.edu/pubs_riu.html.
- Quarterly or monthly newsletters.
LTRC: http://www.ltrc.lsu.edu/pubs_technology_today.html
Missouri DOT: <http://library.modot.mo.gov/RDT/FastFwd/FastFwdv05i01.pdf>
NETC: <http://www.netc.umassd.edu/newsletter.html>
TERRA: <http://www.terroroadalliance.org/publications/enews/2009/04/>
Utah DOT: <http://udot.utah.gov/main/f?p=100:pg:0:::T,V:1399>
- Illinois DOT publishes project dashboards online at <http://ict.illinois.edu/IDOTprojects.asp>. Traffic lights indicate if projects are on track or not. Data gets updated when quarterly report information is entered online.
- Illinois DOT is considering a briefing booklet for upper management that talks about TRB, AASHTO, and other national research activities and their benefit to the department.
- Several states are now publishing and distributing their final reports in electronic format only.

Videos highlighting research results. (Connecticut DOT, Louisiana DOT, Kansas DOT, NETC, Utah DOT)

Connecticut DOT: <http://www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?a=1617&q=273484>

Louisiana DOT: http://www.ltrc.lsu.edu/ltrc_video.html

NETC: <http://www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?a=1617&q=273484>

- Develop articles for technical magazines such as *TR News*. (Kansas DOT, Illinois DOT)
- Research program brochures/folios. (Kansas DOT, Utah DOT, Washington State DOT)
Washington State DOT: http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/BD6A75F8-70D5-45BD-84B7-9B74C8A21F1A/0/Transportation_Research_FINAL4.pdf
- Annual/biennial research program reports.
Connecticut DOT: <http://www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?a=1387&q=259648>
Illinois DOT: <http://ict.illinois.edu/news/ProgressReport2009.pdf>
Louisiana DOT: http://www.ltrc.lsu.edu/pdf/2009/ar_08_09.pdf
Minnesota DOT: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/research/annual-reports.html>
NETC: http://www.netc.umassd.edu/reports_listing.html#annual
Washington Transportation Center: http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/04144475-ACCB-4FBF-AC5C-8C51BC107489/0/layout_finaltext2.pdf
- Press releases and video clips. (Connecticut DOT, Kansas DOT, Washington State DOT, Utah DOT)
Connecticut DOT: <http://www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?a=1617&q=273484>
- Missouri creates “staff summaries” (Cliff Notes version of reports) and “advancements” (new piece highlighting cool things already found out at the beginning of a project—teaser).

- California DOT is exploring new communication formats:
Social media presence (Linkedin, Twitter, Facebook, Ning).
Revitalized Web presence (dynamic content, RSS feeds).
Brown bag lunches to share what's going on with research projects.
- Utah DOT created an Efficiency Report to capture the value and payoff of implemented projects.
- Washington State DOT's research program is included in the department's Gray Notebook Annual Summary (measures document). See page 115 at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/1DCF9725-14D1-4341-A091-43E7A73A4298/0/GrayNotebookJun09.pdf>
- Washington State DOT uses viral messaging—news clips from library, notes as part of signature lines—to communicate regularly about the benefits of research and the services available.
- At-A-Glance project progress foldout chart (Minnesota DOT):
http://www.dot.state.mn.us/research/documents/Mn-DOT_RSS_At-a-Glance_1-08_online_version.pdf
- Minnesota DOT is developing a new, two-page Quarterly Management Update.
- The Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies produces multiple communication products for policy research projects to reach different audiences: the full research report, a shorter 30- to 40-page summary and a folio for policy makers.
See <http://www.cts.umn.edu/Research/Featured/ValueCapture/index.html>
- CTS performance measures document to track knowledge creation (articles, reports, conference proceedings, etc.), number of students educated, as well as implementation of research results (new technologies, policies, procedures, design practices). Data sources: annual survey to be completed by university researchers, quarterly status reports, Mn/DOT project closeout memos, word of mouth and follow-up inquiries.
- TERRA is planning to distribute flash drives at TRB with sample data and program information.
- Fact sheets on projects or the program. (TERRA).

Outreach meetings, workshops and conferences

- Louisiana DOT holds a conference every other year to present research projects. It includes concurrent sessions and has 1800 internal and external participants.
- Louisiana DOT's quarterly seminar series focuses on one research result/technology that they're trying to implement. Industry attends, and it's open to anyone. They move the seminar around the state.

- Illinois DOT holds annual conferences at the University of Illinois on transportation research topics. Examples include the Transportation and Highway Engineering Conference, Traffic Engineering and Safety Conference and Bituminous Paving Conference.
- Illinois DOT conducts semi annual evaluations of projects: the Technical Review Panel (TRP) chair evaluates the Principal Investigator(s), and the Principal Investigator(s) evaluate the Technical Review Panel chair. In addition, the Illinois DOT evaluates the administration of the Illinois Center for Transportation on a semi annual basis. Standard reports are used to present the findings.
- Illinois DOT conducts closeout evaluation at the end of a project. Send out to technical panel review chairs to rate the success of project. Did you get results you needed?
- Kansas DOT presents on research projects at the Kansas State University engineering conference.
- Kansas DOT encourages engineers to publish in professional publications and do presentations on their research projects. The Research office will draft articles for them to review, edit and submit to publish.
- Kansas State University has presented at conferences on the value of libraries and librarians to engineers.
- California DOT holds a monthly Research Connection webinar to present research activities and findings. See <http://www.dot.ca.gov/researchconn/>.
- Utah DOT holds scan tours with industry and project managers to support broader implementation of successful practices/tools/technologies. Utah DOT sends people (example maintenance director and construction director) to places where something has already been implemented to learn and gain confidence in broader implementation.
- Washington DOT's Research Open House is very popular. They hold it in lobby of the building with a companion webinar. Includes speakers, videos, handouts and interactive opportunities.
- Washington DOT is starting a quarterly forum in 2010 – subject area research focus presented in a two-hour webinar.
- Minnesota DOT holds a Lunch with Research – Research & Innovation Presentation Series (RIPS) every other month. The Research team talks about project results and implementation efforts.
- E-Magination Jam at the Minnesota DOT is a solicitation of ideas or needed innovations from staff on any topic, not just research. Research staff will categorize and prioritize the ideas and may be able to fund the next step.
- Research Jam is a tool used by Minnesota DOT to get feedback on research ideas. They're hoping to increase district participation in the research process. This is a collaborative effort between the Office of Policy Analysis, Research & Innovation and

the Mn/DOT communications office. They're using the tool uservice available at www.uservice.com.

- CTS holds seminars/webinars streamed live and recorded. Professional development credit is offered for participation. See <http://www.cts.umn.edu/Events/SeminarSeries/2009/>.
- CTS holds an annual research conference that features research results and real world project happening throughout the state. See <http://www.cts.umn.edu/Events/ResearchConf/>.
- TERRA holds an annual Innovation Series to feature research. A recent such field trip to Mn/Road had 300 attendees.
- Minnesota DOT's Market Research office is starting an online community of Minnesotans to help gather feedback on transportation issues. The first sample will include 600 Minnesotans in two areas of the state. This new format will allow for traditional information gathering methods as well as more immediate feedback and two-way communication.

Communication Exercise

On Wednesday, November 4, the peer exchange attendees broke up into three groups to brainstorm strategies for addressing communication challenges provided by participants. The groups used a worksheet based on the Seven Signs to Good Communication from the *Guidebook*. See the worksheet in Appendix B. Below are the results from this exercise.

Group #1: Caltrans Deployable Products

Communication Challenge: Caltrans has exciting research results and deployable products that will be of great interest to federal and state partners as well as to Caltrans staff. How does the research office effectively communicate these results so that they can be used by others both internally and externally?

Audience

The group focused on rapid rehabilitation technology. Need to tailor messages to each group and make sure the messages are specific to them. Get a champion in each district to talk to staff. Don't rely on the research division to deliver the message. Consider a podcast with staff who want to use the new technology. Have key technical experts explain what it is and why it's great.

Benefits

Each audience/message would have different benefit. Example: Saving commuters time.

Timing

Right now is good right now given Bay Bridge problems. Use research results as a pilot and then document the benefits.

Build coalitions

Go to each district or meet with district champions to figure out what staff doesn't like about the product/program. Why aren't they using it? What do they like? Do a two-pager on concerns and how they would be addressed with rapid rehabilitation.

Two-way relationships

Have research personnel go to new employee orientations and seek out employees who would benefit from services and use them the most. Make research a core message.

Tailor packaging

Develop an all-in-one media package to go to the districts to help them learn about the products. Press packets working with PIO office.

Group #2: The Effects of Implements of Husbandry on Pavement Performance

Communication Challenge: This pooled fund research project has interim results indicating that increased sizes and weights of farm equipment may significantly speed pavement degradation. Mn/DOT needs to communicate these results to legislators and county engineers to raise awareness of apparent problems and impacts while not overstating them. This is a politically charged, sensitive topic with involvement by farmers and industry.

Audience

County engineers who will talk to their legislators.

Messages

Make sure it's clear we're talking about loads in general. Don't just focus on farm equipment. Talk about how we need to have a sustainable system of roadways for everyone to use including the farmers. We don't have money to rebuild, so let's take care of what we have. There's a history of particular interest groups getting exemptions for their vehicles, so there needs to be a message that these exemptions are costly and difficult to manage and enforce.

Benefits

The project in particular has good participation from industry (Professional Nutrient Applicators of Wisconsin). They want to understand impacts and make equipment that won't cause as much damage.

Timing

Get it out to county engineers by first of year.

Coalitions

We worked hard to maintain partners at the table and any information that goes out needs to be approved by that project technical advisory panel. The problem is we just have interim results. We need to raise awareness, but we don't have final answers. County engineers are powerful and are a primary audience. They have statewide associations, and we need to work with them.

Two-way relationships

Manure haulers are great example of this. They are involved, so we want the project panel and industry there to approve what's said about the project.

Packaging

We need good information that's not packaged to look too expensive. Washington state has great information on roads and loads that could be distributed. We'll update the technical summary that's already done. We want to create briefing packet for county engineers to take to legislators. Remove any negative photos of deterioration and focus on methodology and credibility of the research approach.

Group #3: Louisiana DOT Research Program

Communication Challenge: Communicate the value and outcomes of a Louisiana's research program to state policy makers to avoid program budget reductions, increase awareness and increase support. What is the state's return on the research investment? Can the department point to specific improvements in efficiencies, materials, methodology or other factors that merit these expenditures? If so, what are the savings brought to the state by them?

Objective

Communicate the value of the research program and what the state gets from it.

Audience

Legislative budget committees and their staffers. Internal DOT budget people. Division administrators who have to present the program.

Communications team

Internal budget director (have to educate him because he testifies in front of legislature), LTRC communications staff, internal legislative liaison who knows the people well, researchers that can talk about results related to hot topics like congestion.

Benefits

Quantify benefits of past successes related to hot topics in the state. Talk of previous successes like on evacuation. Promote involvement with successes.

Timing

How fast can we get this out and affect decisions that are happening as we speak?

Coalitions

LTRC and research program has strong an supportive relationship with industry organizations (funding and committees). Need to make sure that when they talk to legislators that they include research in their message (give and get support).

Two-way relationships

Know committee chairs, how they got elected, their background, what interests them. Involve people in DOT who know them and tell us how we can impact them.

Packaging

Need to get into DOT strategic plan as a performance measure so that administration and legislature sees it as important. Develop fact sheets on hot topics to send out quickly. Make sure we get recognized in presentations by administrators (that the information they present comes from us).

Takeaways

Tuesday, November 3: Morning Takeaways

- Research open house (WSDOT idea).
- Incorporating two-pagers and executive summaries into research contracts.
- Louisiana idea of writing a project capsule before project gets started.
- Involve economics expert involved in research activities. Look at cost benefits versus from an engineering perspective.
- Project dashboard with traffic lights to signal problem projects. Dashboard is tied to online quarterly reports.
- Briefing booklet for upper management to help them better understand state, federal and national research programs.
- Receiving online quarterly reports from PIs.
- Project management online.
- Implementation forms for each project.
- Using social networking tools (i.e. Twitter).
- Research communication planning sheet.
- Implementation pie chart as a simple visual to illustrate percent of projects implemented, not implemented, and in need of further study before results can be implemented.
- MODOT's communication guidance questions.
- Using TR News Research Pays Off.
- Librarians presenting at annual transportation conference. Presenting on difference between Google search and TRIS/RIP search.
- Using quotes from external users of research in publications.
- Feeding sound bites to other offices to promote value of research to them.
- Doing workshops to present research findings for each project.
- Linking research projects to department strategic goals.
- Louisiana's approach to implementation sponsors and implementation reports.
- Annual presentation of research benefits to senior staff.
- Quantifying value of research in publications. Putting dollar value on research investment.
- WSDOT's program level communication plan.
- Finding internal champion to help share the results.
- Trading cards to share research results.
- Cultivating media relationships (Utah model).
- WSDOT folio on research program.
- Have engineer review librarian's lit search for accuracy and applicability to user's needs.
- Leave long-term research to national programs and focus on short-term projects with more immediate return on investment and benefits.
- WSDOT Research program's relationships with others throughout the department. Effective marketing of program's services.
- Briefing booklet (Florida's) for senior management audience.
- UDOT's scan tours with industry and their project managers to bring innovations into the state
- Research open house and marketing it with top 10 reasons.
- Promoting library services and interlibrary loan.
- News clips – what the library did for you.
- Offering assistance and reaching out to those with research needs.

Tuesday, November 3: Morning Takeaways cont.

- Prompting staff for elevator speeches on the program.
- Feeding information to technical experts and public relations groups instead of claiming the credit for research impact on agency and public.
- Asking researchers to take videos and photos throughout project for use later.
- Video capabilities.
- Louisiana technical summaries.
- Semiannual evaluation of ongoing projects.
- Do research that matters.
- Integrating communications into process that's already there. Add to RFP, contract, implementation plan.
- Remind champions of their role.
- Being on distribution for top managers to keep pulse on what's important to them.
- Use every opportunity to show value of the research.
- Use library services more often.
- Lasting change takes support from top levels. Turn research inward to support this change.
- Value of library services in putting together research proposals. Don't rely on Google only.
- Value of cataloguing research reports with library.
- Research bulletin board strategically placed within building.

Tuesday, November 3: Afternoon Takeaways

- Policy summaries done by CTS.
- Electronic newsletters.
- Identifying audiences that need to be included in the research and implementation processes. Project champion needs to understand and be aware of potential issues.
- Market research contribution. Think about how public will perceive what we do.
- Linking research to "so what?" question. How will it be used and why does it matter?
- Get your partners, such as industry, involved in promoting and talking about your program. Adds value and credibility.
- Mn/DOT Market Research online community pilot tool.
- Three levels of reporting at CTS for big policy studies—full report, 30-40 page summary, policy summary/folio.
- Connection between what we're doing and what public understands (market research).
- Marketing plan used by MnROAD and encouraging people to use it.
- Mn/DOT Projects At-A-Glance foldout.
- Mn/DOT two-page quarterly management update.
- CTS performance measures.
- Using flash drive to distribute data, project and program information.
- TERRA's partnering activities and collaboration.
- Need a project champion so that colleagues will embrace research results.
- Having budget for a project come from those who need it (as in Mn/DOT Market Research group). The "skin's in the game."
- Emagination Jam (crowdsourcing).
- CTS partnering activities with universities.
- MnROAD benefiting from partnership efforts established.

Tuesday, November 3: Afternoon Takeaways cont.

- Potential for resistance from other practitioners within own organization when trying to implement research.
- CTS working relationships with others (public and private sectors).
- Mn/DOT RSS annual report including all research briefs – good use of resources and dual purpose for summaries.
- Pretesting with online community (Mn/DOT Market Research).
- Challenge to reach non traditional audience.
- Don't strive to be the best kept secret.
- Don't just throw the report over the cubicle wall.
- ConnDOT's chart of outreach activities.
- Mn/DOT RIPS (information lunches via video conferencing).
- Dealing with people's level of misperception about transportation funding problems.
- Mobile millennium (use of cell phones to track traffic data).
- Fieldtrips done by MnROAD.
- Scan tours done by Utah.

Wednesday, November 4: Takeaways

- Communication exercise format with Guidebook references.
- Applying communication model to real-life situations.
- Technical people need a lot of help from communication professionals.
- Do a few things really well. Play to your strengths.
- Standardize communication efforts in your program without trying to do everything.
- Management update concept.
- Worksheet used to capture key communication points.
- Common challenges among DOTs.
- Take advantage of peers in reacting to communication products developed.
- Focus in on communication team.
- Make management more a part of our research team.
- Look to internal communication professionals for their feedback on communication materials developed. They may take the information and develop additional pieces (such as news releases) with it.
- Send research highlights to department newsletters (photo and brief info).
- Louisiana's communication pieces to justify benefits of research (what have you done for us lately).
- Just do it! Do what you can as well as you can with what you have.
- Guidebook can be used as valuable reference.
- Can't underestimate importance of pretesting.
- Engage outside people to promote your message.
- Tie into department strategic plan.
- Engage communication professionals within department to help.
- Lot of work required to make communication piece as good as it can be.

Mn/DOT Next Steps

As a result of this peer exchange, Mn/DOT's Research Services Section plans to take the following steps to expand and improve communication of research services, activities and benefits with both internal and external audiences.

- Develop a Communication Plan.
 - Look for ways to leverage CTS and/or repurpose/co-brand materials CTS has already produced.
 - Market projects with quantifiable benefits.
 - Pretest communication pieces prior to distribution.
 - Engage and involve communication staff in our marketing efforts.
- Develop a Management Update and Program Brochure that explains Research programs at the national and local levels.
- Explore opportunities for using social media tools for application within library and research.
- Hold a Library Open House to showcase services and materials available.
- Utilize Google presentation (used by Kansas) at conferences and at meetings with stakeholders to explain the value of library literature searches.
- Explore options for getting the pool fund quarterly reports filled out on-line.

Appendix A

2009 Value of Research Peer Exchange/Workshop Agenda

Monday, November 2, 2009

Communicating the Value of Research Workshop

- 10:30 – 10:45** **Welcome & Introductions**
- 10:45 – 12:00** **Background about pilot workshop, why we're here, goals**
- Describe the 7 Signs
 - Breakout groups: Exercise #1
 - Report back to larger group
- 12:00 – 12:45** **Lunch**
- 12:45 – 3:30** **Communication Process and Funnel**
- Discuss developing a solid communication plan
 - Incorporate evaluation and feedback
 - Applying communications plan to specific audiences
 - Breakout groups
 - Exercise #2
 - Exercise #3
 - Wrap up
 - Q&A
- 3:30 – 4:00** **Evaluations & Feedback**
- 5:45** **Dinner Reservations**
Chianti Grill- Roseville
2050 Snelling Ave. North
Roseville, Mn 55113
(651) 644-2808

Tuesday, November 3, 2009 Peer Exchange

- 7:30 – 8:00** **Breakfast**
- 8:00 – 8:15** **Welcome** – Linda Taylor
- 8:15 – 11:30** **Roundtable presentations and discussions (visiting DOTs)**
- 8:15 – 10:15 Region 1
 Dionysia Oliveira, Connecticut DOT
- Region 2
 Mark Morvant, Louisiana DOT
- Region 3
 Amy Schutzbach, Illinois DOT
 Susan Barker, Kansas DOT
 Mara Campbell, Missouri DOT
- 10:15 – 10:30 Break
- 10:30 – 11:30 Region 4
 Rebecca Boyer, California DOT
 Michael Fazio, Utah DOT
 Leni Oman, Washington State DOT
- 11:30 – Noon** **Discuss highlights and takeaways of morning presentations**
- Noon – 12:45** **Lunch**
- 12:45 – 4:00** **Roundtable presentations (Minnesota participants)**
- 12:45 – 1:30 Region 3 Universities
 University of Minnesota- CTS
 University of Minnesota – Duluth
- 1:30 – 2:30 Minnesota Program Offices
 Bridge
 Maintenance
 Materials
 Traffic
- 2:30 – 2:45 **Break**
- 2:45 – 3:30 Communications
 Research Services
 Market Research
- 3:30 – 4:00** **Discuss highlights and takeaways of afternoon presentations**
- Dinner on your own**

Wednesday, November 4, 2009 Peer Exchange

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 7:30 – 8:00 | Breakfast |
| 8:00 – 9:15 | Workshop exercise |
| 9:15 – 10:20 | Group presentations of exercise results |
| 10:20 – 10:30 | Break |
| 10:30 – 10:50 | Presentation and feedback on Mn/DOT RSS Quarterly Management Update |
| 10:50 – 12:00 | Discuss peer exchange takeaways |

Have a safe trip home.....

Appendix B

2009 Mn/DOT Value of Research Peer Exchange Communication Exercise

Project:

Communication Challenge:

Discuss and answer the following:

Establish the communication objective. What do you want to accomplish with the communication and why?

Identify the communication team. Who should be involved in developing the materials? What communication professionals are available to help?

Determine the audience: Who specifically makes up your audience? How will you determine this? What key messages will resonate with them?

Identify benefits. What tangible benefits of the project should you promote?

Determine timing. When is the best time to communicate with your audience about this topic? Do you have an opportunity to affect their decision making?

Build coalitions. Is there an opportunity to get others involved in promoting your message? Who can you team up with that has credibility with your audience?

Build two-way relationships. How would you go about consulting with one or more representatives from your audience to make sure you understand their values and needs? Is there an opportunity to lay the foundation for your communication?

Tailor packaging. What format(s) will your communication take? What visual style will be effective with your audience? What should you avoid?

Appendix C

2009 Mn/DOT Value of Research Peer Exchange Communication Exercise

Guidebook Reference Sheet

What is your Research Value to Sell and the Communication Objective?

Guidebook Reference Page 28, Table 1: communications Objectives & Quick Tip Crafting Communications Objectives

Describe the research team.

Guidebook References: Page 6, Signs of Good Practice (Involve Communication Professional); Page 25, Communications Planning.

Determine the audience.

Guidebook References: Page 6, Signs of Good Practice (Understand the Audience); Page 13; Strategy; Page 25, Communications Planning; Page 34, Table 2, Key Audiences for Transportation Research.

Identify benefits.

Guidebook References: Page 6, Signs of Good Practice (Demonstrate a Tangible Benefit); Page 11, Context; Page 15, Content; Page 51, Case Study on Missouri Statewide Installation of Median Cable Barriers.

Determine timing.

Guidebook References: Page 6, Signs of Good Practice (Timing is Relevant)); Page 12, Context.

Build coalitions.

Guidebook References: Page 6, Signs of Good Practice (Build Coalitions); Page 31, Quick Tip Using Evaluation Effectively (bullet #4); Page 33, Case Study on California Seismic Bridge Retrofit Program.

Build two-way relationships.

Guidebook References: Page 7, Signs of Good Practice (Build Two-way Relationships); Page 37, Quick Tip Communicating with Congress (bullet #1); Page 59, Case study on Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

Tailor packaging.

Guidebook References: Page 7, Signs of Good Practice (Tailor Packaging); Page 17, Communication Channels; Page 21, How are Communication Channels used Effectively; Page 22, Style.

Appendix D

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