

City of Dover Communications

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Obstacles

Strengths

- Administrative support for communications initiatives.
- Comprehensive and expansive availability of public information online.
- Dedicated resources to Media Services for improved communications initiatives, including digital communications and work produced for broadcast.
- City updates public information frequently over a variety of platforms, including the City's website, access channels, electronic newsletters, social media, and news releases.
- Responsive to public and media.
- Provides important information about specific projects.
- City staff participate in many civic and community events.

Weaknesses

- The City's website is among the most comprehensive in the state, but the depth and amount of information can make navigation and access difficult.
- The website is difficult to search, which is complicated by two independent search engines (the website search engine and Treeno) that are not linked.
- Not all departments leverage the City of Dover's available communications resources, including Media Services, or adhere to a consistent communications strategy. This can lead to inefficient and mixed messages from departments.
- Communications protocol is not consistent across departments.
- The City of Dover boasts many public bodies, including numerous boards and commissions. These groups often discuss complex and singular issues that can be difficult to communicate consistently and timely. This can lead to inconsistent and independent communications originating from board, commission or committee members.

- Some community populations, such as younger people, are not engaged in civic affairs.
- Little to no development of mobile applications for e-government.
- The City of Dover does not have a Public Information Officer (PIO).

Opportunities

- Continue to pursue, develop and upgrade technology for the City's website, email and broadcast communications.
- Improve and develop additional tools that allow residents to receive tailored alerts and notifications, including mobile-specific applications.
- Improve online tools that provide a better end-user access to local government, including better and consolidated search results for city documents and staff contact information.
- Gather additional and more comprehensive feedback for how people use the City's website.
- Better and consistent use of branding to emphasize the City's role and value to the community.
- Provide training to staff to better utilize the City's communications resources.
- Look for new ways to communicate the City's work to the community, and promote the tools available to citizens.
- Create a public engagement plan.
- Assess existing data on the effectiveness of current communications tools and look for new data.
- Develop internal communication strategies and tools to better educate staff about current issues and efforts.

Obstacles

- Technological advances in communications can be costly.
- Internal resistance to change.

- Support for innovation is complicated by cost and available resources.
- Creating a “culture” of communications.