Advancement on Construction Project Administration

ODOT District 2

Communicating Major Highway Improvements

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Mission

- Artfully apply the full spectrum of communication assets and capabilities to keep the public informed about how the largest construction program in NW Ohio history was going to affect their daily lives.
Objectives

• Evolve ODOT public information from a reactive to proactive activity in responding to the media

• Create partnerships where the media carried the ODOT message because of their dependence on accurate and timely information
The ODOT D2 / Media Relationship (circa 2013) was one of independence.

Oftentimes ODOT spent time reacting to negative publicity and/or news stories.
Overview

• Multiple regional safety and capacity improvement projects

• Multi-year effort to expand & reconstruct Interstate 75
  • Findlay to Perrysburg
  • Toledo urban interstate
Key Messages

• Safety
  • Pay attention to the road – avoid distractions
  • Adhere to posted speed limits
  • Plan ahead to minimize delay and frustration

• Commerce
  • Essential for economic expansion
  • Supports new development

• Value
  • Additional lanes increase safety
  • Additional lanes minimize congestion
Strategy

• Use traditional and social media to increase awareness to a diverse audience

• Explore non-traditional approaches to communicate public construction projects & workzone safety

• Modify communication methods & message through an adaptive cycle
Strategy

• Educate the public on what ODOT does

• Allow ODOT’s Engineers to speak directly with media – the projects become more genuine

• Celebrating the intermediate milestones – advises the public/media of progress
Communication Vehicles

- Partnering Meeting
- Billboards
- Animation
- Community Outreach
- Message Boards

- PSAs
- Social Media
- ODOT Project Page
- OHGO
- Media Relations
Communication Themes

• “Eyes on The Road” – June 2014

• “Respect The Road and Its Workers” – Oct. 2014

• “Don’t Be That Driver” – June 2015

• “Be a Better Driver” – Oct. 2015

• “Don’t Drive Distracted” – Dec. 2015
Partnering Meeting (WOO-75)

• Four independent construction contracts
• One seamless construction project
• Teamwork and coordination required
Billboards

- Positioned at project entry points
- Nearly 13,000,000 impressions in 6 months
- Media attention
Billboards – “Eyes on The Road”

HEY YOU TEXTING YOUR BFF, EYES ON THE ROAD.
CONSTRUCTION AHEAD.

HEY YOU APPLYING MASCARA, EYES ON THE ROAD.
CONSTRUCTION AHEAD.

HEY YOU EATING A BURGER, EYES ON THE ROAD.
CONSTRUCTION AHEAD.

HEY YOU CHECKING EMAIL, EYES ON THE ROAD.
CONSTRUCTION AHEAD.
Animation

• Complicated and unsafe existing traffic pattern

• Educate Toledo regional motorists on upcoming traffic pattern changes

• Change difficult to visualize
Animation

I-75 to I-280 INTERCHANGE CORRECTION
Community Outreach

• Public meetings

• Event communication

• Stakeholder support

10 Tips for Driving in Highway Improvement Zones

1. Focus. Staying at road work in progress can cause accidents.
2. Obey speed limits: Driving too fast or too slow can cause accidents or create an unsafe driving environment.
3. Keep your distance: Driving too close to vehicles in front of you raises the chance for a rear-end collision in work zones by 30 percent.
4. Respect work crews and warning signs: Construction zones are there for a reason - to inform drivers of potential road hazards and road work in progress.
5. Avoid distractions while driving: Don’t text. Limit cell phone talk. Don’t get distracted by electronic devices (CD players, radio stations, MP3s, DVDs, etc.).
6. Pace yourself: Driving at a consistent speed while abiding to speed limits where road work is present lowers the chance for accidents.
7. Plan your pathway: Awareness of weather conditions and possible road work prior to taking a road trip helps prevent accidents.
8. Patience is a virtue: Take your time riding through road work zones. It’s better to reach your destination late and safely, than not at all.
9. Click it or ticket: Wearing a seatbelt is a proven lifesaver. It’s also the law.
10. Final thought: Road work is done by people, so be aware of the lives of others on the road.
Message Boards

- Event communications
- Dynamic messaging
- High-quality displays
PSAs

• Recognize and value the workers and the risks they face during construction

• Identify common activities that put workers and motorists at risk

• Produce with social media distribution in mind

• Comedic to serious approach
Respect The Road. And Its Workers

October 2014
Don’t Be That Driver

DON’T BE THAT DRIVER.

June 2015
Don’t Be That Driver
Don’t Be That Driver

DON’T BE THAT DRIVER.
Be A Better Driver
BE A BETTER DRIVER.
BE A BETTER DRIVER.
Don’t Drive Distracted

December 2015
Don’t Drive Distracted

December 2015
Don’t Drive Distracted

DON’T DRIVE DISTRACTED.

December 2015
Social Media

- Monthly distribution calendar
- Strategic and diverse message content
- Supporting communication themes
- Facebook, Twitter & YouTube Channel
Social Media

Driver’s Exposed: Highway Crashes

Driver’s Exposed: Central Avenue
Social Media

Modesto
Kenny
Truck Fire Clean-up
I-75 Timed Detour
Results

- Facebook
- YouTube
- OHGO
- Twitter
ODOT Project Page

- Central information source
- Regularly updated
- Email alerts sign up
• Real-time alerts
• Weather conditions
• Live video streaming
Media Relations

- Educate the media on what ODOT does
- Bring the reporters out on the jobsite
- Be proactive with news worthy content and predict when it will be appreciated
- Provide access to the Engineers to make story real
- The Reporter wants to tell an accurate story – the Engineer needs to communicate/educate to them
Media Relations

- Conklin & Company (ABC)
- Leading Edge with Jerry Anderson (CBS)
- Better Living (NBC)
- The Business Blackboard (WSPD and WRVF)
- IHeart Media & Cumulus (Radio Outlets)
- Toledo Blade
I-75 REOPENED FOLLOWING CRASH
BREAKING NEWS UPDATE
BREAKING NEWS
Conclusion

• Communication is a Dynamic Process

• Media Relationships are key to developing a successful and efficient communication plan

• Target your audience and adjust your message accordingly

• The Public can tolerate disruption – they need to see progress and understand the purpose
Questions

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Credit: We wish to recognize Hart Associates for their creative work product implemented through this program.
Proposed Diverging Diamond Interchange
Mike Gramza (ODOT) and Rick McGuckin (DGL)
Wednesday, October 26 11-11:30 am