



Communications Plan
Town of Stellarton

Approved in principle: December 14, 2020

Table of Contents

Situation Analysis3
SWOT Analysis5
Target Audience6
Communications Goals6
Strategies & Tactics7
Anticipated Costs10
Schedule & Benchmarks10
Measure of Success12
Simplified Recommendations13
Sample Material14
Research Sources16
Quotes17

Situation Analysis

External

The Town of Stellarton is represented in many ways. Externally, there are obvious features like landmarks and signage (parks, sports fields, boundary lines). Stellarton also has accounts on several social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, and newly on Instagram. These are more of the most obvious ways that the Town is represented to the public.

Stellarton also has a website linked to all the social media accounts that holds more formal information regarding the Town – for example, agendas and minutes from Council meetings, as well as Town by-laws. The website is a beneficial directory to help the public navigate more of Stellarton faster. Whereas the social media accounts are a more informal way to communicate and are easier to interact with. The website has a relatively easy format for users to navigate with little-to-no help, and gives the public access to documents like financials, meeting minutes and agendas, Town contacts, by-laws, etc. It is extremely informative and gives the public independence to find information about the Town without immediately needing to contact Town Hall.

The Town of Stellarton has multiple parks, facilities, and boundary lines that require signs to mark them. Currently, the colour of most of the signage around town is burgundy. There has been no definitive reason behind the previous decision to have burgundy signage. Around the Town, there are (or should be) signs at the following locations:

1. Welcome to Stellarton (5) – Riverton, Bridge St., New Glasgow, Auburn St., Acadia Ave.
2. Fields & Parks (14)
 - Dorrington Ball Field
 - Evansville Oldtimers Field
 - Rick Crowe Memorial Field
 - William Sobey Soccer Complex
 - Sample Baseball Complex
 - River St. Park
 - Allan Park
 - Albion Ball Field
 - Horseshoe Pitts
 - Olympic Park
 - Kensington Ave. Park
 - Tennis Courts
 - Auburn Park

There are also several *staples* to the Town's infrastructure that are recognizable by many individuals. These include: The clock tower on Town Hall and the clock in Allan Park, as well as the stonework Stellarton sign/monument at the Town Square, and the newly placed Stellarton sign near the roundabout.

The Town has multiple committees and groups that stem from the Town as a whole. Examples include: Fire Department, Police Department, Communities in Bloom, Accessibility Committee, Heritage Committee, Planning Advisory Committee, Police Commission, etc. These groups presently function rather independently with little to no set communication with one another or with the public. While information and updates for these groups are readily available within the Town, they are not openly offered on a public forum like our website.

Stellarton regularly issues mail outs to Stellarton residents with important information or notices that may not reach everyone with only a digital format. The Stellar News is the quarterly newsletter that is mailed out with water bills to all Stellarton residents. This newsletter offers residents a hard copy of updates within Town Hall, different departments and committees, as well as contact information for all department heads. This newsletter is also available online permanently.

There is a decent working relationship between the Town and the local media outlets (radio, newspapers, etc.). Information and updates shared with these media contacts tend to be picked up and shared almost immediately. This information sharing has been extremely beneficial, especially to those that do not use internet or various forms of social media.

Internal

Internally, the Town holds monthly management meetings to provide updates between the different departments. These meetings offer insight on how each department is doing, where they may be lacking, and how other departments may be able to help. Having staff aware and up-to-date on the goings on of different departments allows for staff to answer public questions that may not pertain to their specific department – at the very least, they are not completely unaware of what is going on within the Town and can point the public in the right direction to find an answer.

Employees also have the ability to communicate with all staff and departments through email. Information that may pertain to all departments or any issues that may arise and affect staff or the public can quickly be shared through this platform. This resource has proven to be incredibly important – especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Town developed a strategic plan to effectively reach three goals between 2019 and 2024. One of the goals is to increase communication and promotion/marketing; being more transparent and inclusive for the whole community. This strategic plan will act as a reference point for this communications plan moving forward.

For communications purposes, the Town of Stellarton currently utilizes both a Town Crest as well as a Town Logo on Town-issued documents (*Figure 1*). The Town Crest represents Stellarton's rich history with officially being incorporated in 1889, the changing of farmlands to focusing on coal mining, and the railroad. While the logo is representative of Stellarton's historic Town Hall with the clock tower featured – that is still a prominent staple of the building today.

The Town Crest also has two prominent colours, yellow and blue. The following are the colour codes that make up these specific yellows and blue:

Colour Codes

Yellow:

HTML #FBF209

CMYK C0 M4 Y96 K2

RGB R251 G242 B9

Pantone 803C

Blue:

HTML #1A31B3

CMYK C85 M73 Y0 K30

RGB R26 G49 B179

Pantone 2736C

Presently, the Town tends to mostly utilize the Town Crest on formal documents like by-laws, policies, and press releases. The clock tower logo has been utilized on all other material from the Town (like on social media, event posters, etc.).

While the Town Logo is commonly in black, it is able to be featured in other colours. The Town Crest is only available in black and white (greyscale) or its traditional yellow and blue.

Figure 1.



Town Crest:



Town Logo:

SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-existing logo/crest with established theme and colours - Ripe history of railroad & coal mine; Trending theme in Stellarton - Strong community support - Strong support from Council to make communications changes - Established base to build from - Existing social media channels with strong following - Existing website with information from previous years 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finances required elsewhere - Fear of change (however, these changes should not be drastic) - Aversion to division of some communications roles - Priority may not be communications changes - Website developing program (Joomla) is one of the more difficult platforms to use - Time constraints: Many jobs that need to be done and not always enough time
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasize Stellarton’s history; Educate newcomers and current residents - Increase recognition of Town services, infrastructure, etc. - Strengthen relationships between committees and community groups - Even more transparency between the Town and the public 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Similar ideas and plans may begin in other areas of the County - Financial limitations preventing full execution of plan – especially given restraints from COVID-19 - Development of too many resources can become overwhelming

Target Audience

Current Community

The population of Stellarton is approximately 4,200 residents. Many of these residents have strong desires to give back to their community and to celebrate the town that they live in.

Having stronger and more diverse methods of communication within the Town will allow the public to have a better sense of community. It will also allow them to find committees or opportunities within the Town that they may not have been aware of in the past.

New Residents

A remodelled brand and updates with the Town's communication will help encourage new residents to choose Stellarton as their home in Pictou County.

The willingness to make updates and strengthen relationships with the public highlights that Stellarton is a dynamic town with ample opportunity for new residents to become involved.

As with the current community, new residents will be able to feel confident that Stellarton cares about its community and shows that the Town is progressive.

Tourists

Stellarton is a unique town that has an extremely diverse history – and present. Making communications adjustments to increase awareness and highlight the Town should encourage tourists to make Stellarton a stop on their travels.

With stronger communications tactics between the Town and local businesses, there will be more opportunities to create tourism packages or things like town-wide themed specials that can draw more tourists.

Communications Goals

Brand Recognition

While Stellarton is not a brand specifically, the key elements like colours, the theme of mining, and the crest and logo help us to create a semblance of a brand. Keeping these in mind with projects moving forward will help to tie all aspects of the town together.

In time, the public will be able to recognize these features and will be able to determine the spaces, committees, staff, and updates that are from the Town.

Additional Transparency

With livestreamed council meetings and easily accessible digital minutes and agendas, the Town does well with being open and transparent with the public. Council, Committee of the Whole, and special public meetings are all presently available online. While minutes and updates from

other committee meetings are readily available to the public (i.e. Heritage, Accessibility, Homecoming, etc.), these updates are not all in a public online format.

Having a page dedicated to committee updates will provide even more transparency to the public.

Streamlined Social Media Pages

Although there are several social media channels dedicated to Stellarton services (i.e. Fire Dept., Police Service, Communities in Bloom), these pages are not always connected with one another or with the Town as a whole.

Updates to page information, templates, and standard formats will help to align all these pages back with one another and to the Town.

Increased Opportunity for Town and Committees

Increasing awareness around what is happening within the Town and within the sub-committees will allow for more individuals to get involved and offer more diversity to these groups. Fresh faces and ideas are extremely beneficial to making improvements within the Town.

Increased Opportunity with Local Businesses

Stellarton has a strong business community with passionate business owners. Developing stronger communications between the Town and our local businesses will help to strengthen the community. It would also increase the likelihood of businesses being able to bounce ideas off one another.

We will be able to know how we can better support our local businesses and entice others to consider Stellarton for their own shops.

Strategies & Tactics

Replacement Signage

As noted in the situational analysis, the signs for the Town that welcome people to Stellarton or indicate significant places within the Town are burgundy. Replacing those to match the branding strategy will tie these important landmarks back to the Town.

These signs will include the use of the Town logo and colours. Although there will be differences in design based on the use of the sign, they will all be on the same theme. The concept for the “Welcome” sign having the notches in the top left corner represent the steps that Stellarton is taking to step up and move forward with changing times.

The signs for the ball fields are a similar shape to the welcome signs, but these ones lack the steps. These are established fields and have been consistent staples within the town; not needing to change with the times as sports tend to be more static.

The signs for individual parks are smaller than the other signs but follow the same design as the others. We have several small parks within our neighbourhoods that many people are unaware of. We are proud of the amount of greenspace we have to offer; adding signage with names (and with the inclusion of civic numbers) will allow the public to utilize more municipal recreation spaces and have an element of safety while at the parks.

In conjunction with the Heritage Committee, there is potential to highlight and recognize buildings, monuments, and other heritage sites in the Town. If recommended and approved, signage noting these specific areas will follow the theme and concept developed for the new signs – with some differences to distinguish the historic significance.

Committee Updates

There are a handful of Stellarton Committees that play crucial roles in making recommendations to Town Council. These committees are essential in the success of the Town, but there are a lot of unknown elements to those outside of the committees. Each committee keeps minutes and plans from each meeting for themselves, sharing these documents with not only the public, but also with staff and other committees opens up a wide variety of opportunities.

The skillsets of the individuals involved in these committees are extremely diverse. There are many ideas and opinions that have been key to making change within the Town. Although someone may sit on one committee, their skills may be helpful to another group or to partner on another project. If we can have committee updates regularly (via email and/or via in person meetings), we would be able to involve other individuals, gain more well-rounded information, and strengthen these committees even further.

Business Development Group

Establishing a group of local business owners/employees/etc. will give us an opportunity to better hear the concerns and needs of the business community. Monthly meetings (or less, depending on need) would help to understand how businesses are doing on a regular basis. They would also allow business owners to better plan any specials or sales for the month to coincide with one another – making the Town a hot spot for a particular weekend or week etc..

Having these plans and updates will allow for the Town to better promote local business ahead of time, hopefully increasing traffic throughout the Town.

Website Updates

Implementing two new pages on the Town's website will be helpful in continuing to be transparent and could help to increase public awareness of what is going on in the Town more regularly.

Updates from our various committees should have a space on our website where they can be easily accessed. Having these documents in a central location will make it easy for the public to find on their own, as well as helping staff direct the public where they can go or answering questions themselves.

With the implementation of the Business Development Group, we would also have more information and opportunity to include our local businesses on the “Business” portion of our site. We have been asked several times if we have some form of business directory for new residents; these are often difficult to keep up to date, but with the monthly updates from the BDG, it may be an achievable goal. We have the opportunity to work with Nova Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI) to help develop this listing. In addition to the business directory, we will look at adding a database that highlights commercial real estate and available spaces for new or relocating businesses looking to set up in Stellarton.

Document Templates/Re-Formatting

There are many older versions of documents that we send out that have commonly just been edited with updated dates or information. Some examples of these documents would be: Tax Sale Ad, permits, job ads, etc. Some of these items also utilize an older version of the Town Crest that is not widely used today.

Taking these existing out-dated versions of these documents and developing a template that follows strict standards would strengthen our visibility as a brand, consistency throughout departments, increase accessibility, and remove any confusion or concern that documents may not be fully associated with the Town.

Differentiation of Logos

While committees are associated with the Town and need approval from Council for projects, they do hold their own voices and do a large majority of planning and executing with just committee members. Specifically, for groups like the Homecoming Committee and Communities in Bloom, there are a lot of public displays or appearances.

Separating these committees with a different logo than the Town will emphasize that although they are associated, they have their own bodies that make them up. This would be important for materials used during these events like Homecoming t-shirts or CIB signs.

Social Media Moderating

As mentioned in the situation analysis, there are several Facebook pages that exist with association to the Town; The official Town of Stellarton page, Fire Department, Police Department, and Communities in Bloom, specifically. Currently these pages function completely separate from one another and are managed by different individuals.

To keep consistency between all of these pages, it would be helpful to have a moderator from the Town and support from the departments on each of these pages. This moderator would not be responsible for making all new content and posts, however, they would have access to edit posts for consistent messaging, be able to engage with the public through the inbox if needed or direct the public to the proper outlet, and help to relate all of the pages back to one another.

Branded Materials

Branded items (like the face masks and water bottles) have proven to be noticed by the public when used by staff. Stellarton *swag* helps to identify staff when working outside of Town Hall whether at a special event, an off-site meeting, or elsewhere.

Given the pride that Stellarton residents have for their community, there have been many requests for Stellarton branded items. There is potential for success in a virtual “Pro Shop” to sell branded items (different from staff swag) so that those with a love of Stellarton can get *official* gear to show off their pride.

A survey can be conducted to determine which items people would be interested in purchasing. Once we know the interest, we can work on developing these products and the shop.

Anticipated Costs

New Town Signs

Quotes received from Auto Trim and Advocate; attached with this document.

Branded Items

Depending on item, quality, and quantity, this could be an extremely wide range. Quotes can be obtained for specific items, as needed.

*The largest cost for this plan is the staff time that it will take to complete.

Schedule & Benchmarks

Timeline:

Generally speaking, the timeline of this plan should coincide with Stellarton’s Strategic Plan implemented in January of 2019. The Strategic Plan was designed to begin in 2019 and end in 2024 – this plan for communications and branding strategy will strive to be finished (or fully implemented) by 2024. Any revisions or new developments to the Town’s Strategic Plan can be adapted into this present timeline.

Given the current climate with the COVID-19 pandemic, some of these tactics will have limitations on them for the foreseeable future.

2021:

Establish the permanent position of a Marketing & Communications Coordinator.

Establish a working document to explain the Business Development Group, invite members of the Stellarton business community to attend.

Committee updates can be sent (as early as end of 2020) and will be shared with a database of committee chairs, as well as placed on an online format.

Installation of five signs; priority will be the five “Welcome to” signs.

New web pages (likely unpublished) to be designed and maintained.

Media moderator status given on Town pages.

Creation of new logos, discussions, and approval from committees.

Brainstorm of branded items that may be needed or wanted; creation of a priority list and inclusion of top three priorities in budget.

Develop the format standards for documents; begin preliminary updates of the oldest/most out of date documents within the Town.

2022:

Installation of six signs; ball/sports fields signs would be installed.

Fully active web pages for Businesses and Town Committees on the Town’s website.

Review of the branded materials priority list, purchase and distribute an additional three branded item based on the updated priority list.

Continuation of reformatting documents to fit brand standard.

2023: (8 Parks)

Installation of eight signs; smaller signs to designate parks/green spaces to be installed.

Purchase of remaining priority list of branded items.

Reformatting of any additional documents.

2024:

Installation of additional signs, as needed, from recommendations of the Planning Advisory Committee. This may include signs that depict “Historic Stellarton” marking the names of old neighbourhoods (Bull Pen and Red Row, for example).

Discussion of additional branded items that may be required moving forward, incorporate this into budget.

Review of all reformatted documents, any additions as needed.

Measure of Success

We will know that we have achieved:

Brand Recognition

... when all Town signs coordinate with one another and our municipal spaces are marked with branded signage.

And all town-issued documents follow one format and adhere to brand standards.

And Town employees are recognizable at all events/gatherings when required for work.

Additional Transparency

... when all committee updates are more easily accessible by the public.

And Town employees are well-equipped to answer and/or direct the public to questions or concerns they may have.

Streamlined Social Media Pages

... when all messaging on these platforms is clear and consistent, following brand standards when applicable.

And all social media channels have one moderator.

And all Stellarton social media pages are linked to one another.

Increased Opportunity for Town and Committees

... when all committees have an accurate update publicly available on the Town's website.

And committees see an increase in members and/or have shared members with desired skillsets.

And more local residents are involved with Stellarton committees and/or groups.

Increased Opportunity with Local Businesses

... when the Business Development Group is officially formed and operating with monthly meetings/updates.

And the business section of the website is updated with local businesses and opportunities.

And local businesses are developing specials or deals in collaboration with one another to optimize visitation to the Town.

To help have an accurate understanding of if we have met the communications goals, a survey will be developed to circulate with residents and business owners for feedback.

Simplified Recommendations

- Replace signs throughout the Town with rebranded designs, add signs to all other municipal areas that do not presently have one.
- Have Town committees provide updates through email and/or via monthly meetings; updates will be made public.
- Formation of Business Development Group with monthly meetings to update and plan for upcoming promotions throughout the Town.
- Website maintenance to include page for Town committees, businesses, and editing for accessibility, branding, and formatting.
- Reformatting documents to adhere to one brand format and create uniform memos, forms, bills, etc., moving forward.
- Development of different logos for groups like the Homecoming Committee and Communities in Bloom to distinguish them from the Town.
- The addition of one moderator to all Town affiliated social media pages to maintain consistent messaging and allow for any public questions/inquiries to be directed where they need to be faster.
- An increase in Stellarton branded materials (like stickers for hard hats, winter toques, etc.)

Sample Brand Material





Stellarton Swag (Would have our logo, but this general colour scheme)





Sample Logo for Homecoming



Research Sources

[New Market Corporate Crest & Logo](#)

[Hearst Coat of Arms & Logo Policy](#)

[City of Windsor - Logo Policy](#)

