

# BUFFALO CITY MUNICIPALITY

## MEDIA STRATEGY

### 1. BACKGROUND

The Buffalo City Municipality mandate is to provide the public with information to ensure that they become active participants both in changing their lives for the better and in governing the country. The media plays a significant role in being the vehicle through which information is communicated and shared with the public and hence it is essential that good working relationships with the media be built.

Realising that we need to improve media relations, Buffalo City Municipality in its Communication Strategy identified improved media liaison as a necessity and that a media liaison strategy be formulated to address ways and means to improve relationships with the media.

Furthermore, National government, especially The Office of the President is also serious about improving these relationships, and realising the importance of good media relations the President himself said the following to the SANEF:

**“It seems clear to me in that context, that as government we have not done really what we ought to have been doing more effectively, which is to communicate about what the Government is doing and thinking. I think the message has come across very strongly, that this has been a very serious failure on the part of the Government. Clearly it is something that we need to correct.”**

- **President Thabo Mbeki addressing the South African National Editors’ Forum (SANEF)**

The corrective measure for Buffalo City in this regard is about enhancing the ability of the Communications Department to handle and manage the media effectively. This can only happen if sound and professional relationships with members of the media are built.

## 2. CURRENT SITUATION

The Communications Strategy identified the following with the media environment:

### **CURRENT MEDIA ENVIRONMENT**

- The media (print) are seen as selective and biased in reporting issues concerning the municipality.
- Journalists do not understand some municipal issues and therefore report incorrectly.
- When there is interest from the media it is usually something related to sensationalism type issues. The media also tends to report what they think is important and fail to report on “feel good” issues.
- Media promotes rivalry /competition amongst municipalities
- Limited community media channels.

In order to overcome the above problems Buffalo City has taken the following stance:

- Submission of at least two press releases per week on issues relating to the municipality.
- Weekly bulletins to all media informing them of upcoming municipal functions, workshops and events.
- Invitation to journalists to attend press conferences, launches, events, workshops and other municipal functions.
- Responding to press queries at least within a day, but this is largely dependent on responses from the various Directorates.
- Utilising radio stations more regularly as compared to previously, this is due to the majority of the public utilising this medium to access information.
- Advertisements in the print and electronic media are more regularly taken due to the need to market and position Buffalo City in relation to the rest of the country and the world.

### 3. MEDIA PLAN

Information consumption and segmentation:

The South African population is ethnically, socially and economically highly diversified. However, a ‘Living Standards Measure (LSM)’, can adequately assist in understanding the pattern of information consumption in the country.

**LSM GROUPINGS %**

#### BEST MEDIA CONSUMPTION ENVIRONMENTS

Media type	LSM1	LSM2	LSM3	LSM4	LSM5	LSM6	LSM7	LSM8
Television	16	30	36	43	49	51	41	48
Radio	81	77	72	68	58	51	35	29
Demos	16	8	5	8	10	7	8	4
Billboards	4	5	5	4	6	9	10	8
Minibus/ Train/bus	0	0	2	0	1	3	5	2
Newspaper	0	6	13	16	24	34	58	69
Local shops,schools,etc	14	14	11	7	7	10	19	14
Direct mail letters	0	3	2	2	4	8	13	12
Pamphlets/	3	3	9	9	10	14	7	15

For Buffalo City Municipality there is a need to find a combination of media that will enable the city to communicate its information message to “the right people in the right place at the right time in the most effective manner possible at the minimum cost.”

In order to determine the media to be utilised the following media mix for needs to identified:

#### IDENTIFYING THE MEDIA MIX

##### **FIVE M’S OF THE MEDIA MIX**

- Markets – the various target audiences of the media plan.

- Money – how much to budget and how to allocate or distribute it among the various media vehicles that will be used.
- Media – a selection of media vehicles (a combination of broadcast, print and other media) that will be integrated to convey the advertising messages.
- Mechanics – presentation of the message by selecting time slots, print styles, music and special effects.
- Methodology – selecting and scheduling the mix of media vehicles to achieve the desired message coverage, reach and frequency objectives.

Each campaign will need a media plan in order to ensure that it targets the right audience, at the right time, with the right message as cost effectively as possible by utilising the different media vehicles.

## **THE MEDIA VEHICLES**

### **The Broadcast Media**

Television and radio are probably the most known and most utilised mediums. For Buffalo City the following was identified in the Communications Strategy:-

#### ***TELEVISION***

- SABC TV 1, TV2, TV3
- ETV
- MNET

#### ***Strengths***

- Creativity & Impact
- Captivity and attention

### *Weaknesses*

- Costs – Very high
- Lack of selectivity
- Fleeting message
- Limited viewer attention

Depending on the nature of the event or function this medium will be utilised to reach a wider target audience outside the boundaries of Buffalo City.

### ***RADIO***

- UMhlobo we Nene
- Radio CKI
- Imonti FM – Partnerships to try to revive community radio station
- Radio Metro
- Algoa FM
- Link FM
- None Established Radio Stations

### Strengths

- Cost & Efficiency
- Selectivity
- Flexibility
- Potential for mental imagery
- Integrated marketing opportunities
- The ability to reach segmented audiences

### Weaknesses

- Creative limitations
- Audience fragmentation
- Limited listener attention
- Time classifications

## ***BIG SCREEN***

- Big Screen in Mdantsane
- Other Big Screens

### *Strengths*

- Accessibility to audience
- Uses sound and image to communicate message
- Currently lighting of still image is free.

### *Weaknesses*

- Once image includes sound and moving images it gets more costly.
- Limited listener/viewer attention
- Audience is fragmented.

## INTERNET /WEBSITE

- [WWW.buffalocity.gov.za](http://WWW.buffalocity.gov.za)
- Links to other websites from BCM website

### *Strengths*

- Technological advancement.
- Excellent promotion & marketing tool.
- Cost Effective.
- Massive audience reach including across the globe.

### *Weaknesses*

- Limited access - Not all people have access to the internet especially our communities.

## PRINT

The printed media is divided into the following:

### *Local newspapers*

- Daily Dispatch
- Indabezethu
- The Bugle

### *Regional newspapers*

- Weekend Post
- The Herald

### *National Newspapers*

- The Sowetan
- The Daily Sun
- This Day
- Sunday Times
- Other main stream newspapers

## PUBLICATIONS

- Tourism & Investment publications
- Business publications
- Architecture & Planning publications
- Engineering publications
- Bua News (GCIS publication)
- SALGA Magazine (VOICE)

#### 4. **MEDIA ACTION PLAN**

The following actions will be implemented in order to further improve media relations:-

- Compiling a database of all media.
- Keeping media representatives updated with a regular flow of information on municipal programmes, events and happenings.
- Increase response times to the media.

- Develop a working relationship with media - advance notice of upcoming programmes
- Hosting of Media Breakfasts.
- Holding Quarterly Media Briefings.
- Holding of Press Conferences.
- Issuing of Media Releases.
- Off the Record Suggestions
- Site Visits
- Hosting open days
- Media Liaison during events.
- Annual Report Submissions.
- Radio Slots/ Talk Shows on Radio Stations.
- Media Roadshows

Furthermore a media plan to be compiled for every Buffalo City Municipality campaign in order to ensure that :

- Market factors that may impact on campaigns are identified.
- Proper media objectives are set.
- The most appropriate media mix has been selected.
- There is a proper measurement of results.
- Follow – up procedures are put into place to rectify any problems that may have arisen.

## 5. **MEDIA CRISIS**

### **Handling a media crisis**

The potential for a media crisis will always exist, and since we will not be able to a prevent crisis all the time, there are a few things one can do once a crisis has arisen:

- Do not lie
- Do not issue statements if the Directorate or department has not made decisions about what to say.
- If the crisis is going to impact on government as a whole, develop an interdepartmental or government-wide approach.

- Have a central point from which statements will be issued and coordinated.
- Develop a parallel process for managing the parties who will be directly affected by the process.

## **6. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Ensuring good media relations is everyone's business. It is however essential that in order to maintain and improve relations with the media the following responsibilities be for all Directorates and Departments so that it does not have a negative impact on the municipality.

- Ensure timeous response to media queries so that the Communications Department is able to respond timeously to media queries.
- Ensure that the information supplied to the Communications Department is accurate and answers the questions put forward by the journalist.
- Not to make inconsistent statements.
- The Manager Communications is the official spokesperson for the media, however the City Manager, Directors and General Managers will from time to time communicate directly with the media, and to copy the Manager Communications.

