



## Corporate Communication Policy

### Policy No. 2013 - 01

**DEPARTMENT:** Corporate

**POLICY:** Corporate Communications

**ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE:** Adopted by Council on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of April, 2013

**POLICY LAST UPDATED:** December, 2015

**POSTED ON INTRANET:** January, 2016

**PURPOSE:** To implement a Corporate Communications Policy for King Township to ensure that the distribution of all Corporate Communications is accurate, consistent, and reaches the intended target audience.

The Corporate Communications Policy will establish communication standards, as defined within the Corporate Style Guide.

This policy shall apply to all internal and external corporate news, events, notices, materials, publications and communications.



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## **OBJECTIVE**

To ensure that all communication across the Township is centrally coordinated, effective, and responsive to the information needs of Council, Township employees, and the general public.

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND**

Municipalities are the most accessible and accountable level of government. It is King Township's responsibility to keep the public informed of municipal matters and to provide timely and relevant notice. Effective external communication with the public is a major component of the customer service experience. Effective internal communication is necessary to ensure information is shared appropriately and done so in a clear, timely and, efficient manner.

King Township's corporate identity is communicated through its staff, and digital and printed documentation. King's identity is most effectively demonstrated when all information is provided in a format consistently and accurately across the organization.

A Communications Committee, comprised of internal staff, was created, recognizing the Township is focused on strengthening communications with its constituents/residents. This focus recognizes the evolving technologies and communication tools that are constantly emerging, and the Township's intent to keep current with these emerging trends. The objective of the Committee was to draft a policy to establish guidelines for the Committee and Township staff to use in the evaluation of content intended for communication internally and externally. This policy would ensure that all communications conform to endorsed, corporate standards.

The Communications Committee has developed this Policy to enhance King's professional image, and provides a foundation for uniformity and efficiency in verbal and written communications. This Policy, and the standards and guidelines established herein, shall be applied to all King communications content.

### **2.0 ROLE OF THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

The Communications Committee meets regularly to review material / information submitted by all Departments for public dissemination to ensure that it is accurate, relevant and conforms with the corporate standards (Corporate Style Guide). The Committee consists of staff representatives from each department.



Prior to information being provided to the Committee, Department staff shall ensure it has been proofread for accuracy (grammatically, spelling, etc.). Information must also be “camera ready” where required, and include any required logos, graphics and borders. It must also be timely, accurate, legal, relevant and not biased or objectionable in nature.

Placement of information within the Township Page (newspaper ad)/ Township Homepage of the website is subject to review of the Committee, with consideration to timing and space limitations. If, in certain circumstances, information is of an urgent nature and if time constraints prevent review by the Communications Committee, the information will be published/released at the discretion of the Chief Administrative Officer or designate. Responsibility for content within the departmental pages of the website is the responsibility of the individual departments, subject to compliance with the Corporate Style Guide.

The Committee’s role includes the responsibility of ongoing monitoring, measuring, evaluating and auditing of the effectiveness of Corporate Communications.

### **3.0 SUSTAINABILITY MESSAGE**

King Township’s Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (“ICSP”) is an overarching guiding document that is based upon common values, priorities and community aspiration with the following vision:

*“King Township is an idyllic countryside community of communities, proud of its rural, cultural and agricultural heritage. We are respected for treasuring nature, encouraging a responsible local economy and celebrating our vibrant quality of life.”*

The Communications Policy will contribute to the development of effective and consistent messaging on materials and information distributed throughout the organization, including potential action items identified in the Township’s Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (“ICSP”), such as materials providing information on local businesses, tourism, and Township programs, activities and events.

### **4.0 CORPORATE VISION, MISSION & VALUE STATEMENTS**

King Township’s Vision, Mission and Value statements, created by staff and endorsed by Council on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013, clearly identifies the underlying principles of providing programs and services to the residents of King.

The Communications Policy aligns with these statements, ensuring a consistent, established level of standards and values that staff and Council wish to aspire to. Staff and council will



apply the principles and strategic direction of these statements in all future methods of communications.

The statements will also be promoted and published on an internal level, as often as possible, to ensure they are integrated into everyday work and activities within King.

## **5.0 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

Effective internal communication ensures that employees are better able to understand, appreciate and support Council's goals and objectives, motivating a higher level of customer service. Internal communication also helps to foster a workplace with enhanced communication among employees, thereby continuing to motivate.

To inform and engage employees, a variety of different forms of communication will be used to reach the diverse audience across the Corporation. These include:

- the Township Intranet
- a mix of published materials including, but not limited to: memoranda, notices, electronic bulletins
- Township staff meetings
- Maintaining an up to date directory of staff members who do not have access to electronic information – to recognize alternative communications' needs
- telecommunications (voicemail and email)
- new employee orientation and introduction program
- provision of document templates
- customer service training programs for all employees
- annual communication surveys and evaluations

## **6.0 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

As a practice of good government, open and proactive communication ensures that the public receives clear, relevant and accurate information from the municipality regarding what must be known (e.g. by-laws), what should be known (e.g. contact information, election information), and what is nice to know (e.g. community events).



To inform and engage the general public, a variety of forms of communication will be used as appropriate and as resources permit, to reach the diverse audience across the Township. This may include:

- Township website
- Township newspaper page
- Media releases
- Business and Community Directory
- Waste Collection Calendar
- Community Guide
- Annual Budget & Business Plan
- Annual Progress Reports
- Voicemail
- Telephone
- Written Communications
- External signage
- Email
- Social Media (Facebook / Twitter / web-based blogs)
- Personal Customer Interaction (inside/outside office)
- Public events and announcements
- Promotional Giveaways

## **6.1 Website**

The website is our premiere communication tool for all external communication, and has been developed and designed in accordance with our Sustainable King objectives. The website provides:

- widespread instant access to information and services 24/7
- emergency communications, when required
- easy to understand, accessible information

Each Department shall assign staff with the responsibility of updating content on the website in a timely, when needed, basis. The updating of web pages is an important function in order to ensure that all communication on our website is relevant, current and in compliance with the Corporate Style Guide.

Any information published in the newspaper or posted at our Township facilities should also appear on our Township website.



## **6.2 Emergency Communication**

The Township Emergency Response Plan details the protocol for Emergency Media Communications. These communications will be carried out in accordance with this Policy, whenever possible.

## **6.3 Newspaper Communication**

All content published on the Township page in the King Weekly Sentinel (or other publication so contracted) shall be published in accordance with applicable statutory requirements (i.e. *Planning Act, Municipal Act*). Every effort shall be made, subject to “legal notice formats”, to include a summary of the information in “plain English language” to help make the content understandable. All ads/notices shall be guided by the suggested publication schedule as identified within APPENDIX “D” Corporate Communications Schedule.

Information to be published on the Township page shall be reviewed by the Communications Committee on the Thursday prior to newspaper publication. All information shall be provided to the Communications Committee by noon on the Wednesday prior to publication.

All Township page publications will also be posted on the Township Website.

## **6.4 Third Party Communication**

All external communication pieces contracted to a third party consultant shall ensure that the form is consistent with and conforms to this Policy and its standards.

## **6.5 Social Media**

The Communications Committee recognize that there is both value and public interest in the participation by King Township in social media. To ensure that proper guidelines as followed, the Communications Committee will assist in the drafting of a new Social Media Policy, whose purpose will be to give employees direction for the use of social media for official and unofficial purposes.

## 7.0 CORPORATE IDENTITY AND BRANDING GUIDELINES

With the launch of the Township's new website and Sustainability Plan initiative, new variations of King's image emerged. These updated King designs, logos and their applications, has substantiated the creation of the Corporate Branding Program, to establish guidelines for a consistent and professional image. The Corporate Branding program encompasses website, social media, vehicles, equipment, signage, employee uniforms, advertisements, correspondence, publications, business cards and letterhead.

As a result of this exercise, the use of the Township crest and Township logos shall be in accordance with this Policy and the Corporate Style Guide (Appendix 'A').

### **The History of the Township Crest and Background of the Logo**

The Logo and Crest promote civic pride and spirit, while bringing about uniformity of how the Corporation is identified by both staff, and the public alike.

Use of the new Logo does not revoke use of the Township Crest, however use of both will help strengthen our identity. The application of the logo and the crest are to be Used as outlined in the Style Guide (Appendix 'A').

The Township Crest was designed to represent the historic elements within our rural community, signifying the following:



- Water symbol - representing the abundance of fresh water;
- Sheaf - representing the extensive farmland and rich agricultural history extending far into the past;
- Beaver - representing nature, and national symbol of Canada;



- Crown – also used as a national symbol of Canada, symbolized within crests and flags, honoring the monarchy, and signifying the term “King”

The new KING logo was initially established in association with our “Sustainable King” initiative. The Logo represents the elements of our modern, but rural municipality. The design and colour scheme is representative of King Township’s natural habitat:



- Green and the leaf motif represents our strong agricultural roots, our natural preservation and pride of our abundant, natural areas, being within the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Greenbelt, green and growing, and the importance of sustainability within our urban and rural communities;
- Blue and the break in the “K” represents the significance of the two watersheds running within King and our relationships with the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority;
- The gradient of the blue, indicating water, its importance to the health and well-being of our existence today and for our future, as well as King being host of the important headwaters for rivers that flow both to the north to Lake Simcoe and to Lake Ontario in the south;
- “KING” and its design, signifies our values (integrity, responsibility, strength) and sense of place, the collective name of our communities, reflecting “where we are” and “who we are”, resulting in our modernized branding design.

The consistent use of our crest and logo, becoming instantly recognizable, will ensure that the public is aware that our activities and messages belong to the Township.



Variations of logo and crest versions, along with multiple templates for key pieces of communication materials have been developed in accordance with the established branding guidelines, and should be utilized to communicate information, whenever possible. All information and materials reviewed by the Communications Committee will be assessed in the context of the established corporate identity and branding guidelines outlined in the Corporate Style Guide (Appendix 'A').

## 8.0 IMAGES

The use of images plays an important role in effectively communicating information to internal and external audiences. Images help to convey a message quickly and accurately to the intended, targeted audience.

Wherever possible, images should be of actual Township people or locations, and must be of acceptable quality to reproduce effectively both in electronic and high-resolution printed materials (ie. "camera ready"). The Township will continue to explore ways of creating image stock, including hiring professional photographers to create a copyright approved photo library, and/or enlisting our residents to submit their photos via a photo contest.

## 9.0 GUIDELINES FOR MEDIA COVERAGE

Only the Mayor, Chief Administrative Officer, Department Heads and Township Solicitor are authorized to discuss or provide information to the media. The exception to this rule will occur when staff members or media consultants are authorized by a Department Head to correspond with the media, or in accordance with the Township's Emergency Response Plan.

Employees are prohibited from discussing with members of the media, any of the following:

- Any matter that is pending a direction of Council, or information that should be brought before Council;
- Any discussion that would imply personal opinion or criticism of any Corporate matter relating to the Township;
- Any information that relates to any property, individual taxpayer or resident of the Township. Information of this nature must be provided by the Records Manager (FOI Officer) in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*;



- Any matter that involves ongoing or potential litigation may require review by the Township Solicitor prior to the release of information;

The Chief Administrative Officer, or designate, will provide clarification and interpretation on any matters not specifically mentioned in this Policy. Media releases shall be coordinated through the Chief Administrative Officer's office, and will be distributed to all Members of Council and Department Heads, who in turn, will distribute to all staff where required.

All media releases must be formatted in the template style as referenced in the Corporate Style Guide (Appendix "A").

## **10.0 REVIEW DATE**

This Policy will be reviewed by the Communications Committee on an annual basis, no later than December of each year. This review will include measuring/monitoring the effectiveness of all communication tools/mediums.