



Mariposa County
Strategic Communications Plan
2023 – 2028

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Introduction:

Mariposa County adopted its first Strategic Plan in 2019 which outlined focus areas, objectives, initiatives, and more in an effort to drive County goals while expressing the community's vision and the values, goals, and objectives that are desirable for the community and County staff to achieve. This is Mariposa County's first ever Strategic Communications Plan which will aim to guide the County in a similar manner, with an emphasis on both internal and external communication practices.

In an effort to form our first ever Strategic Communications Plan, meetings were held with County leaders, and feedback was requested from specific County employees with communications insights. Following the initial feedback request, a draft plan was sent to all County Leaders for additional feedback and direction.

Feedback from Department Heads, County leaders, and staff was filled with requests for increased information sharing. "Transparent", "proactive" and "educate" were repeated regularly in meetings and feedback request forms. These three terms, and other related items, helped to identify the focus areas for Mariposa County's Strategic Communications Plan.

Why Create a Strategic Communications Plan:

Having a strategic communications plan allows Mariposa County to communicate proactively and effectively to employees, our community, and all stakeholders. Internally, a strategic communications plan improves employee awareness, with the potential to improve morale. Externally, it provides Mariposa County the opportunity to inform, educate, and communicate with our community successfully.

Having a purposeful spotlight on communications can help improve community understanding, save money, increase impact, and support the County Strategic Plan. By providing a framework to Mariposa County communications, the strategic communications plan provides the capacity for leadership, departments, and County communicators to create focused, effective messaging. The plan is adaptable for each department and team, allowing them to develop their own communications or gain support from the County Public Information Officer (PIO). This will ensure not only that accurate information is reaching fellow employees and the public, but also that communications are coordinated and unified.

Vision, Mission, and Values:

Mariposa County Vision Statement – Mariposa County is a thriving, scenic, historic, and culturally vibrant rural community where residents, businesses, and visitors enjoy opportunity, security, engagement, prosperity, and wellness.

Mariposa County Mission Statement – We improve the quality of life in Mariposa County through active community engagement and the efficient delivery of outstanding public services.

Mariposa County Guiding Values –

- Collaboration – Partner with our community and lead in our state.
- Integrity – Do what is moral, ethical, legal, honest, fair, transparent, equitable, and humane.
- Sustainability – Meet the needs of the present without compromising the future.
- Transparency – Open, accountable, and accessible to the public. We explain how and why decisions are made.
- Excellence – Effective, efficient, equitable, and citizen-focused services with a focus on constant improvement.

Mariposa County Communication Guiding Principles:

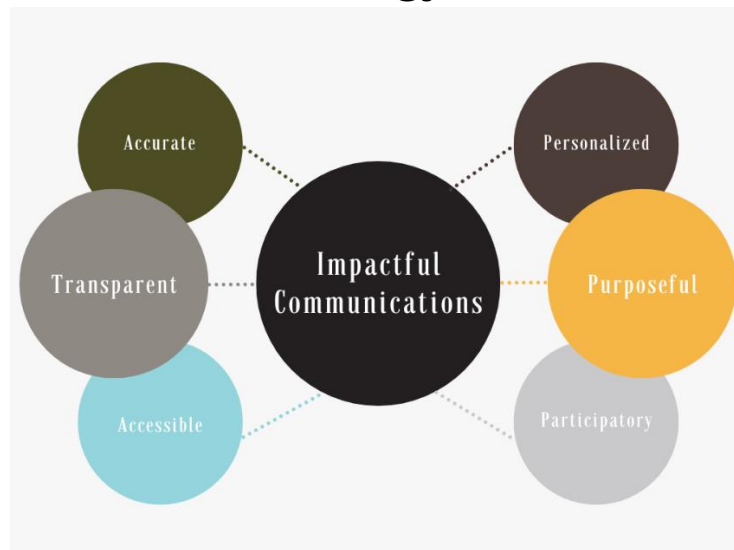
Timely – We will communicate what we know when we know it.

Openly – We will provide honest information in a way that is easy to access and understand.



Proactively – We will engage before being asked to provide information and anticipate hot-button topics.

Kindly – We will interact with others in a kind and respectful manner.

Impactful Communication Strategy:



Focus Areas:

Communication Focus Areas	
	Information – Ensure vital and informative information is available and easily accessible to employees and the community.
	Education – Provide quality information, background, and education to the community regarding County programs, policies, and offerings.
	Appreciation – Acknowledge the unique, strong community we serve and the hard-working, dedicated staff we have.

1. Information:

Ensure vital and informative information is available and easily accessible to employees and the community.

1.1 Objective: Maintain the Mariposa County website to reflect current information.

Initiative	Timeline for Completion
Designate an individual in each department to maintain their webpage(s).	6 - 12 months
Designate a backup for each department to maintain their webpage(s).	12 - 18 months
Complete a quarterly assessment of all webpages.	Ongoing

1.2 Objective: Ensure social media is used appropriately to share vital information with the community.

Initiative	Timeline for Completion
Identify all currently active social media platforms.	3 months
Identify gaps in social media use, either departments without a presence or departments with limited capacity for creating posts.	6 months
Develop plan to include information on all county departments on the Mariposa County social media platforms to ensure equitable promotions.	12 months
Ensure all departments using social media have the County social media policy in place. Review and update current countywide policy.	6 - 12 months
Develop a social media guide and templates to support best practices across County social media.	12 - 24 months

1.3 Objective: Engage community partners to expand information reach.

Initiative	Timeline for Completion
Develop a resource guide identifying community partners.	12 months
Identify topics and programs that could benefit from advertisement and support from community partners.	Ongoing
Build and maintain relationships with community partners.	Ongoing

2. Education:

Provide quality information, background, and education to the community regarding County programs, policies, and offerings.

2.1 Objective: Provide information on various County services to local media resources on a regular basis.

Initiative	Timeline for Completion
Develop a resource guide identifying local media partners.	6 - 12 months
Explore the opportunity to develop a monthly column in the Mariposa Gazette and Yosemite Express to highlight County departments, services, and resources.	12 - 24 months
Build and maintain relationships with local media partners.	Ongoing

2.2 Objective: Ensure all County employees have a general understanding of departments, services, and resources.

Initiative	Timeline for Completion
Develop a communications tool to provide regular updates on vital topics to all County employees.	6 - 12 months
Develop a county communications resource to be shared at employee onboarding, reviewing County branding, best practices, and resources.	12 - 24 months

2.3 Objective: Emphasize the value in County programs, services, and offerings in helping the community thrive.

Initiative	Timeline for Completion
Develop a schedule to highlight various County departments on social media.	12 - 24 months
Ensure webpages clearly reflect what each department does and how it impacts and serves the community.	12 - 24 months
Develop a training for County communicators to highlight best practices, resources, and opportunities to emphasize their value to the community in their messaging.	24 - 36 months

3. Appreciation

Acknowledge the unique, strong community we serve and the hard-working, dedicated staff we have.

3.1 Objective: Ensure communications reflect the community accurately.

Initiative	Timeline for Completion
Develop a communication guide highlighting the intricacies of and best practices for Mariposa County communications.	12 - 24 months
Provide updated reports to County communicators on Census data, demographics, and resources for various populations in Mariposa County.	12 - 24 months

3.2 Objective: Call out County efforts to best serve our community.

Initiative	Timeline for Completion
Develop a schedule to highlight various County departments on social media.	12 - 24 months
Develop a tool to provide recognition amongst County employees.	24 - 36 months
Educate Department Heads and County leaders on opportunities to call out strong work by employees.	Ongoing

3.3 Objective: Focus on person-led communication and avoid one-size-fits-all interactions.

Initiative	Timeline for Completion
Develop a county guide with tools and resources on developing targeted messaging.	12 - 24 months
Review the need for general customer service trainings for County employees. If needed, identify a simple opportunity for all employees.	24 - 36 months
Instill a culture of using person-led communication styles and emphasize the practice of considering each person's life experience, age, gender, culture, heritage, language, beliefs, and identity when communicating.	Ongoing

Reach Methods:

The following reach methods have been identified to advance communication goals and objectives and reach target audiences. County communications should implement a targeted combination of methods for the best reach.

ONLINE

Website: www.mariposacounty.org

The Mariposa County website will reflect the branding, mission, and vision of the County. It will be organized in a manner that allows the public to easily find services and information. It should also serve as a resource for County employees.

- Best Practices: Designate at least two (2) individuals in each department to review and maintain their specific page(s); Complete quarterly assessments checking information, links, contact information, and removing outdated materials.

Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TikTok

Social media outlets are used to promote a thriving, scenic, historic, and culturally vibrant rural community. Important information, services, and programs are messaged to the community. Social media posting should illustrate how Mariposa County impacts and benefits the community.

- Best Practices: Post on a consistent schedule; Notify other county PIOs/communicators if you want to share content to expand reach; Avoid acronyms or technical jargon; Provide non-internet options (phone numbers, in-person); Use an archiving platform; Utilize storytelling.

Newsletters:

Internal and external newsletters may be designed to promote Mariposa County services, programs, and offerings as well as provide organizational and/or programmatic information and resources.

- Best Practices: Ensure each newsletter has a clear purpose; Schedule based on need and/or information flow; Keep things short with links or contact information for more details; Utilize storytelling; Keep the design simple; Ensure the content is reader focused; Include a call to action.

COMMUNITY

Local Media: Mariposa Gazette, Yosemite Express, KRYZ Radio, and more

Local media such as newspapers, radio stations, and television stations are effective ways to reach the community, including specific communities of interest. Investing in ongoing relationships with local media will help increase reach, improve understanding of what we do, and help in sharing critical information. Strategies to reach local news media include news releases, community alerts, individual outreach to promote a story idea or content expert for interview, press conferences, etc.

- **Best Practices:** Maintain a positive relationship with all media outlets; Maintain an updated contact list of media outlets; Craft your own message as often as possible and share with local media outlets.

Print Material: Flyers, mailers, brochures, etc.

Print materials can take many forms and can be an effective strategy for outreach. It is the intention that in the process of creating and reviewing publications, materials are purposefully made and comply with cultural, linguistic, and literacy needs. Having print materials at County locations as well as other community-favorite locations will increase the message reach.

- **Best Practices:** Prior to finalization, present items to one (1) coworker familiar with the program/service/information and one (1) County employee who is not familiar with the program/service/information for feedback.

Partnerships:

Building and maintaining partnerships with community groups and organizations is instrumental in ensuring messages are consistent throughout the County and across organizations. Sharing information and announcements with all stakeholders increases transparency, accuracy, and reach.

- **Best Practices:** Maintain positive relationships with all partners; Identify opportunities for cross-promotion; Establish regular check-ins with partners.

Outreach Events:

A focus on strategically attending community outreach events can increase the opportunity for face-to-face messaging and interactions with our community. Individual departments are encouraged to attend and/or host outreach events.

- **Best Practices:** Identify the key audience attending the outreach event and focus materials on that demographic; Have a business card ready with general contact information for any question that cannot be handled at the event.

INTERNAL

Emails:

Emails are an effective form of communication for employees, partners, and the general public. An emphasis should be on providing clear, concise messages with appropriate tone and context for the specific recipient(s). Emails can provide useful documentation of interactions.

- Best Practices: Use short, but descriptive subject lines; Check spelling and grammar before sending; Include a standard signature line with your name, title, department, and appropriate contact information; Only reply-all when needed; Be mindful of who needs to be on the email (direct action/request, situational awareness, etc.); Always be professional and appropriate; Limit back and forth by setting up a meeting or phone call as needed.

Meetings:

Public, all-staff, program, and other in-person or virtual meetings are a method of relaying information related to agency and programmatic changes and updates. Minutes are kept at all appropriate meetings and will be accessible to the needed parties to ensure consistent and reinforced messaging.

- Best Practices: Develop and share an agenda ahead of time so participants can prepare ahead of time; set aside 10-15 minutes prior to a meeting to review the agenda, prepare items, use the restroom, refill your water, etc.; Use the Microsoft Teams option for virtual options as needed.

Training Sessions:

Professional development opportunities provide channels for communicating with staff related to County updates and changes, organizational plan, implementation and processes, and other critical information as necessary.

- Best Practices: Ensure trainings are purposeful and effective; Limit participants to those who need the training.



Mariposa County Strategic Communications Plan

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