Review of WASCO’s Marketing and Communication Plan 2019

1. Introduction

As part of the project Institutional and Organizational Strengthening of WASCO, Saint Lucia, and Regional Water Utilities, the consultant is expected to carry out a Review of WASCO’s Communication Strategy (activity A.2.4 of the ToR). This note serves as a preliminary report on this activity, which will be completed in November 2019.

In 2018, WASCO’s Communication and Marketing Officer prepared the WASCO Marketing and Communication Plan 2019, including budget estimates for the various activities. The Marketing and Communication Plan has been reviewed by the Consultant and was discussed with the Communication and Marketing Officer in July 2019. This note contains the most important comments and suggestions.

2. Objectives

WASCO’s objectives are key to the formulation of its communication strategy. They should ensure that the communications strategy is driven by the organization, rather than communications’ driven. The communications activity is not an end in itself but should serve and hence be aligned with WASCO’s organizational objectives.

Aligning WASCO’s communications and organizational objectives will also help to reinforce the importance and relevance of communications and thereby make a convincing case for the proper resourcing of communications within WASCO.

WASCO’s Strategic Initiatives 2019-2023 are defined in WASCO’s Strategic Plan, as follows:

- SI 1. Reduce Non-Revenue Water
- SI 2. Ensure the Resilience of all Infrastructure
- SI 3. Enhance Customer Service Delivery
- SI 4. Enhance Operational Efficiency
- SI 5. Develop a High-Performing Workforce

 Recommendation 1: Align WASCO’s Communication Plan with the Strategic Initiatives, which represent WASCO’s strategic objectives for the next 5 years.

3. Audiences

WASCO needs to identify those audiences with whom it needs to communicate to achieve its organizational objectives. The best audiences to target in order to achieve an objective may not always be the most obvious ones and targeting audiences such as the media may not always help achieve the objectives. Everyone would like a higher media and political profile, yet activities aiming towards this may ultimately be self-serving and only communications driven, with no wider impact.

 Recommendation 2: It is recommended to systematically identify the various target audiences for each strategic initiative.
4. **Messages**

Strategic targeting and consistency should be key to WASCO’s messages. For each Strategic Initiative a comprehensive story needs to be developed covering the key messages. Subsequently the different elements of the story can be emphasized for different audiences.

To maximize impact, it is useful if the story or case can be summarized in 3-4 key points which can be constantly repeated. Communicating is all about storytelling: use interesting narrative, human interest stories and arresting imagery.

**Recommendation 3:** It is recommended to develop a “story” or “case” for each strategic initiative, parts of which can be used as messages for different target audiences.

5. **Communication tools and activities**

WASCO’s current communication plan identifies a range of tools and activities which appear appropriate to communicating the key messages of WASCO to its audiences. The tools will be selected based on the audiences, messages, or a combination of the two. For example, an annual report is a useful tool in corporate communications whereas an email newsletter lends itself well to certain internal communications. Also, management must play an important role in communication with staff, whereas staff in turn are important in their communication with WASCO’s customers.

**Recommendation 4:** It is recommended that management plays a more important role, especially in communicating with their staff and also that staff is made aware of the important role they (can) play in defining the image of WASCO.

6. **Resources and timescales**

Tools and activities need to be adapted to the level of time and human and financial resources available. Use the resources and timescales to set legitimate levels of expectations and outline the case for more dedicated resources.

**Recommendation 5:** It is recommended to systematically identify the audiences, messages, tools and resources for each Strategic Initiative as defined in WASCO’s Strategic Plan. Examples of this are provided in the table attached to this note.

7. **Communication on Water Disturbances**

One aspect of WASCO’s communications is communicating with (groups of) customers on water disturbances which affect the supply of water in the network. The procedure for this type of communication is defined in the draft Standard Operating Procedure on Management and Communications on Water Disturbances. It is recommended to develop guidelines for this type of communication to ensure transparent, open and reliable information to the customers concerned.
WASCO Strategic Initiative 1: Reduce NRW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Audience</th>
<th>Key Message</th>
<th>Communication Tools and Activities</th>
<th>Resources and time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| General Public  | • WASCO is implementing a NRW Strategy to reduce physical leaks and illegal connections.  
• NRW is a waste: costs money and causes contamination of water.  
• Please report leaks and don’t tamper with WASCO Network. | • TV  
• Newspapers  
• Public Events  
• Social Media | |
| Customers       | • Please report any leakages  
• Please report in case you observe or suspect illegal connections  
• Please watch for in-house leakages | • As above  
• Communications with staff, meters readers  
• Flyers  
• As part of branding | |
| businesses      | • As for customers | • As for customers  
• CoC meetings | |
| Farmers         | • Be careful with WASCO’s network | • Through MoA  
• Townhall meetings | |
| Government      | | | |
| NURC MoA        | • NURC to be aware of WASCO’s Strategy  
• MoA to be aware of WASCO’s Strategy and inform farmers  
• To be aware of WASCO’s network during construction and maintenance of works on roads, drains, etc. | • Through meetings and documentation  
• Through meetings by the Board and GM  
• Monthly meetings to provide information on network and establish protocol | |
| Min of Infrastructure | | | |
| WASCO Management| • To be informed about progress of NRWR strategy and action plan and to contribute to its implementation | • MT meetings  
• Plenary sessions on NRW strategy  
• Management Reports (special section on NRW) | |
| WASCO Staff     | • To be informed and aware of the Strategy and its progress and to communicate to public and customers | • Communication and information through managers  
• Meetings with supervisors | |

1 This table was developed as an example together with WASCO’s Marketing and Communication Officer
| International Financing Institutions (IFI) | • To be informed and aware of the NRW strategy and to contribute with funding | • Newsletter (interviews with key people)  
• Staff meetings  
• Inform the relevant government agency  
• Contact individual IFI's like CATS,/GIZ and CBD and others and keep them informed |