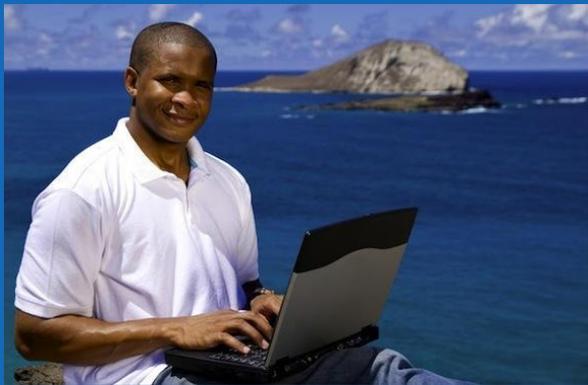




**WATER WORDS
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Communication Checkup Report
Prepared For Ridge to Reefs, Lori A. Lilly Environmental Solutions,
and the City of Baltimore
Maryland SSO Outreach Project
October 2015

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Overview

As part of your contract with Water Words That Work LLC, we have conducted a “Communications Checkup” for your organization. This process helps us quickly assess your organization’s strengths and weaknesses, so we can recommend appropriate investments, trainings, and procedures.

The checkup included an interview with key staff about the tools you use for communications and outreach. The memo summarizes and synthesizes the findings and our initial recommendations.

Next Steps

- First, please review the summary observation and recommendations
- Second, please review our detailed observations from the staff interview to ensure we have captured everything correctly
- Third, provide us with any additional information we need from you and request any clarifications or elaborations on this document.

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Summary of Observations

Ridge to Reefs and Lori A. Lilly Environmental Solutions, in partnership with the City of Baltimore, is working to design an outreach campaign to encourage proper disposal of household waste. The ultimate goal of the campaign is to reduce dry weather sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) caused by disposal of materials such as oil, grease or rags into sinks, commodes and drains. With respect to communications, there were two main takeaways from the interview:

1. We observed that the City of Baltimore has a wealth of communications channels available. The next step is to design the campaign. Once the campaign elements are created, the city is in good shape to distribute the information to city residents.
2. While there are communications options available, one element that is not in place yet is a way to track the outreach efforts and follow up with citizens. We recommend setting up a database or some other system to track outreach and follow-up efforts.

Top Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Ensure that the messaging of the campaign comes from the city, while the partners are in a junior role.

- The City of Baltimore has many of the communication channels available that are needed for conducting an outreach campaign. Some of the tools available include GovDelivery, Facebook, Twitter, the city website. The expertise of the city's communications staff is also available.
- Water Words has found time and again that residents are more responsive to messages they perceive as coming from the city or county where they live. Specifically, this means featuring the city or county logo in the lead position and any nonprofit partners in supporting positions.

Recommendation #2: Develop an outreach program to encourage citizens to not put things down the drain, and develop ways to follow up and keep in touch with them.

- An outreach program that includes something like a pledge will help citizens make a commitment to not put things down the drain that can clog pipes and sewers. A pledge drive or similar type of campaign will get residents thinking about their actions and could help them change some habits.
- The city has tried an outreach campaign in the past with residents but not in a concentrated way. The catch phrase they used was "from the pan to the can", and they gave out lids for grease cans. Businesses that have inspections know about it but it was not promoted heavily to residents.
- A key element of this type of campaign is contacting residents multiple times in multiple ways. Providing a mechanism for them to respond will help measure if a citizen has seen the campaign, as well as following up with citizens after they respond.

Recommendation #3: Use the information from the Target Audience Profile to create a strategy of ways to reach out to the residents in the sewersheds.

- WWTW is conducting Target Audience Profile (TAP) research as part of this project. The TAP will give us information to help identify the best ways to reach residents. The number of citizens that reside in the neighborhoods, their demographic information, and identifying social groups

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available are pieces of information to help inform mechanisms for the campaign.

Recommendation #4: Identify individual residents to target for personal outreach.

- WWTW is also conducting Reverse Target Audience Profile (RTAP) research for this project. The results of the RTAP will help identify individual residents that can be targeted for more personal outreach, such as face to face or phone calls. Research shows that while personal outreach methods can take more time and effort, they are more effective at getting residents to change behavior.
- The role of the city's "community liaisons" should also be explored and utilized as part of the outreach campaign. Citizens that are willing to go into the community and talk to other citizens are an important asset for this type of outreach.

Basic Considerations

Staff Roles

- Lori Lilly is the project manager and primary point of contact
- Paul Sturm from Ridge to Reefs is the fiscal agent and partnering with Lori on this project. Paul has communications staff that will be participating, Ruby Rivera has experience with the website and social media.
- Jeff Raymond is the Chief of the Division of Communications and Community Affairs at Baltimore City Department of Public Works. He will be the primary person working on this from the City of Baltimore, aside from any staff that might be helping actually manage any storm sewer overflows (SSOs).
- The City of Baltimore also has "community liaisons" that give presentations in the community.

Brand Guidelines

- The City of Baltimore DPW has a logo, as well as the city logo. These run together on official documents.
- Ridge to Reefs (RTR), the Chesapeake Bay Trust, and Lori Lilly each have a logo. However, any other logos used on outreach pieces should be smaller. It should be clear that the message is from the city.

Board Meetings & Oversight

- RTR has a board but Paul doesn't think the board would be engaged in the process. He will be making the decisions on the project for the organization with Lori's help and oversight.
- Jeff reports to the Deputy Director and Director at the same time. He told them about the project and let them know he was brought into it by Senior Engineer. The city is aware of Lori and Paul's work and organizations and there is credibility with these organizations.

Multimedia Resources

- Jeff says the city has some pictures of SSOs as they occur, and he can get more. The commercial FOG program also has pictures of the inspections. They don't have pictures of the behavior that causes the SSO, we would have to stage the behavior photos.
- The city does have pictures of the no contact with the water signs.
- Lori has a Flickr page with IDDE images.

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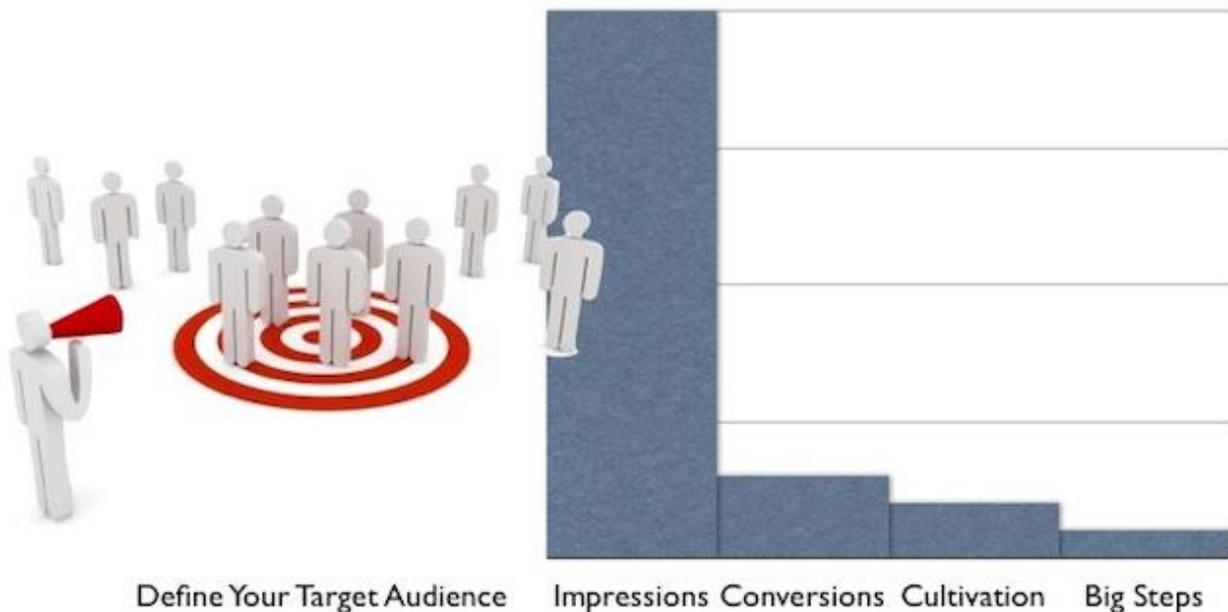
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- Paul says he can find local fish kill picture.

Website

- The city's DPW has its own website. However, it was discussed that it is Not always easy to get information posted to it. The website is not controlled by DPW, but the Mayor's office IT staff. The DPW tends to put a lot of water related information on a website called www.cleanwaterbaltimore.org under the Waste Water tab. This is a good place to share information with the public.
- We discussed creating a "micro-site" separate from the city's website, but would be linked to the city. Jeff said he'd prefer to post water related information at the cleanbaltimore site.

The Slope



Target Audiences

- This project is focused on reaching out to residents about dry weather SSOs. The project team suspects that it is people within the sewershed drainage area of particular manholes and outfalls that are causing the backups.
- They have identified neighborhood hot spots based on sewersheds. There are eight neighborhoods the city has already identified of concern in the residential sector. One additional concern is about baby wipes and paper towels going down the drain.

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Impressions

Mail

- The city has capacity to do resident mailings, probably as bill inserts. They have used mail as one part of the outreach for the water meter upgrade project, and city meter mailings are ongoing.

Phone

- The city has a 311 call center for non-emergency city services.
- There is reverse 311 capability to get landline numbers, but they are not sure how they would pinpoint cell phones. A robo call goes out to those numbers.
- The city also uses GovDelivery, which is a system that sends a bulk SMS message to subscribers only.
- Jeff will have to check into what the city uses for emergency notifications.

Email

- The Mayor, the city council president, and the city council members each have email lists. Jeff was not sure if they would let us use the list or if they could narrow by geographic areas. It is possible we might be able to get the list from council members for their area. The priority neighborhood maps could help us track back to certain city council members.
- The city does have email addresses of most if not all of the HOAs in the city. Some neighborhood associations do have the ability to reach people in the community with their lists. We are likely to try this but keep in mind that the results are slow and inconsistent.
- The project team does not currently have an email blast tool set up for use.

Social Media Groups and Advertising

- The city uses a service called NextDoor, and they also have a Twitter and Facebook presence. Twitter has a bigger audience, but it's unclear if the target audience for this project uses Twitter or not.
- Jeff has some experience placing Facebook ads but not frequently.

Traditional Public Relations

- The city uses GovDelivery to reach their media contacts. These notices also go to city council members, government leaders and citizens. There is a chance we could use the Mayor's GovDelivery service so press releases would have more of an impact than coming right from the DPW.
- Lori and Paul have some experience putting out press releases, but feel that the local government partner (like the city) would be able to more efficiently and effectively get the word out.

Advertising

- The city has done some print ads, but it's rare and not a regular practice. Ads may be used to advertise events but not really for anything else.
- The city has the potential to put up additional signs at outfalls, but there was a question as to how visible they are or if people would see them. Citizens might notice them for the first week or two but then they may ignore them.
- Paul mentioned community groups that do art projects with storm drains. Blue Water Baltimore does the storm drain stenciling projects.

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Face-to-Face

- Jeff says the city has a lot of history of going out into the community. The city has “community liaisons” that present at meetings about various messages and topics. This is a very valuable resource, and he said that it would not be difficult to add a new message to their list of topics.
- The Office of Promotion and the Arts could also tell us where farmers markets and festivals are at. We could show them the priority neighborhood sewerhed maps and have them tell us what events happen in those neighborhoods.
- Lori and Paul would be willing to help with presentations at farmers markets and community events.

Word of Mouth

- It was discussed that awareness sewer overflows by the community is dependent on where it happens. If it occurs in a less visible location, like into creeks or nearby vegetation, then often it is not well known. This also makes it harder to locate the overflows. However, if the overflow leaks into the street where it is more visible, then it is well known. Reports on overflows are funneled through 311.
- At this point there is not much distress in the community about this. Making the connection with citizens of how this will help prevent sewer backups in their basement and plumbing problems will prevent overflows and hopefully resonate with residents and inspire behavior change.

Conversions

Event Registration

- RSVPs are not typically collected for city events.

Pledges

- They don't have any direct experience with a pledge drive, but the city has considered the idea, such as a pledge drive to can the grease.

Subscriptions

- The city encourages people to sign up for GovDelivery to receive the city newsletter, and like their Facebook and Twitter pages.
- RTR also has Facebook and Twitter pages.

Cultivation

Database

- The DPW does not have a database or access to anything that the city uses.
- Lori knows how to use Microsoft Access but does not have anything set up at this point.

Social Media Connections

- The city and RTR have Facebook pages
- The city and RTR have Twitter pages

