

Strategic Marketing & Communications

Led by: Director of Customer Service & Communications

Service Description

Strategic Marketing & Communications (SMC) provides marketing and communications consulting, strategy and tactics that align with The City's brand. It strengthens The City's reputation and supports business objectives by providing communications, marketing, media planning, social media, corporate communications, creative services and media relations. This service informs, influences and motivates Calgarians, customers and employees. It is focused on building public trust and confidence, achieving business outcomes, and demonstrating the value of City services in making life better every day in Calgary.

Service Updates

Highlights

1. Award for No Average Calgarian Campaign – Climate Change

The No Average Calgarian campaign has received a Gold Quill Award of Merit from the International Association of Business Communicators for its storytelling approach to discussing climate change. By using video to share how one Calgary family incorporated energy efficiency into their new home, the campaign encouraged viewers to engage with the message and visit No Average Calgarian (Calgary.ca) for useful information on combatting climate change.

2. Topic-Based Web Navigation

Calgary.ca has transitioned from departmental and business unit-focused navigation to a more user-centric, topic-based approach. Tied to initiative eight, which focuses on accessibility, this shift makes it easier for site visitors to find relevant content, supports more efficient social media monitoring and will make it faster and less costly to update the website to reflect future changes in The City's organizational structure.

Challenges

Having a recognizable City brand and visual identity helps ensure Calgarians can identify City services and the value provided for tax dollars. Strategic Marketing & Communications is experiencing compliance issues with the Corporate Brand Identity and Identifiers policy due in part to a rise in new suppliers and staff being onboarded throughout The City. With this shift in personnel and contractors, the need for education and oversight of The City's brand has grown, placing additional pressure on staff with brand expertise. Failure to protect The City's brand by not complying with the policy could impact The City's reputation and threaten investment and public support for City services and initiatives.



Measuring Our Performance

Legend

— Actuals

■ Expected Future Performance

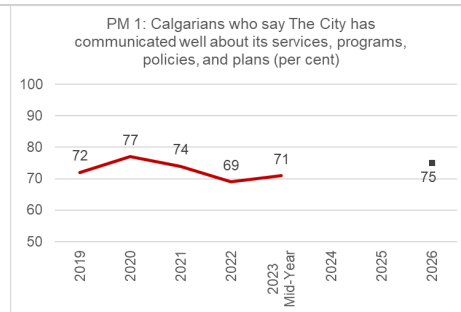
➡ Progressing as planned

⬅ Not progressing as planned

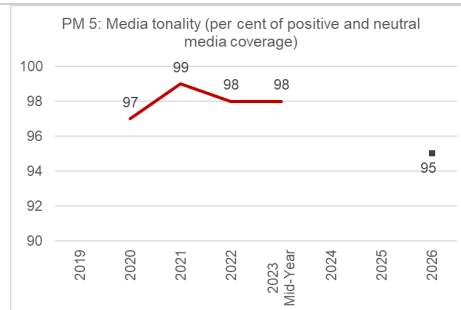
Performance Measures

Story behind the numbers

Status



The increase in communication effectiveness in 2020 was primarily due to frequent news conferences and updates regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, which addressed major concerns for Calgarians. Currently, communication efforts have returned to a normal pace, almost on par with 2019. Also contributing to the present score are the polarization of public discourse and divisions regarding social issues, which can further impact the effectiveness of City communications.



Media coverage in the first half of 2023 has been mainly positive or neutral, which is reflected in the service's high media tonality score. The score also reflects the non-controversial nature of the majority of City decisions and information picked up by the media in the early part of 2023. With the implementation of a new communications issue/risk identification process to help create awareness, mitigate risks, and support Council decisions, it is anticipated that tonality scores will remain in the high 90s.



Note: Not all performance measures were reported on for this report. To see the 2022 data for performance measures, please visit [Service plans and budgets \(calgary.ca\)](#). Additional measures that will be included in the 2023 year-end performance report include:

PM 2: Calgarians who say they trust the information that The City provides on Calgary.ca (per cent)

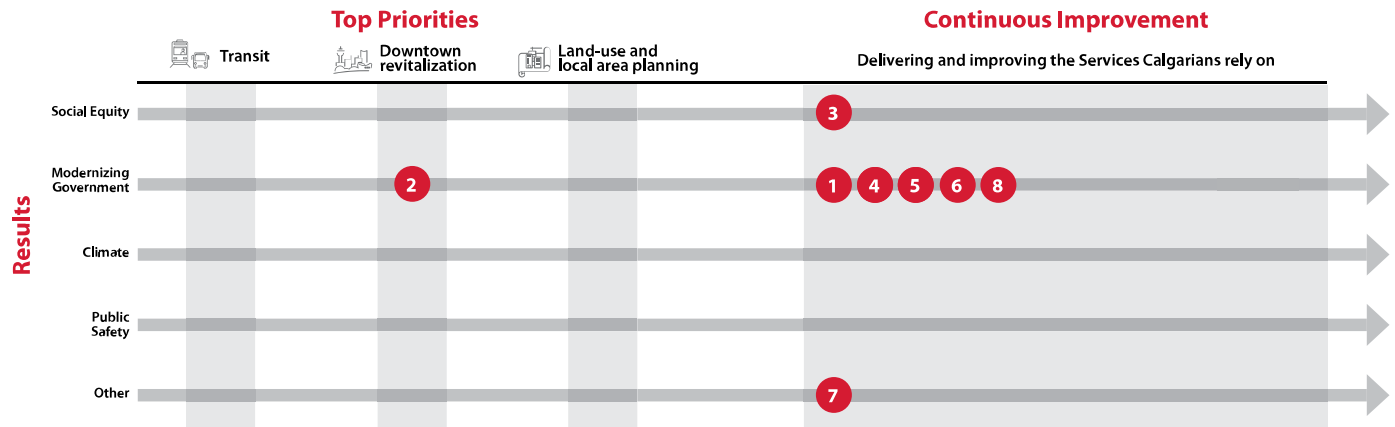
PM 3: Paid investment from overall spend allocated to multicultural communications and marketing advertising (per cent)

PM 4: Customers that are satisfied with their overall experience working with external communications to achieve business objectives (per cent)



Progress on Service Delivery

Alignment with Council Refined Priorities and Result Areas



Legend



Completed



Progressing as planned








Not progressing as planned



1 Initiative number

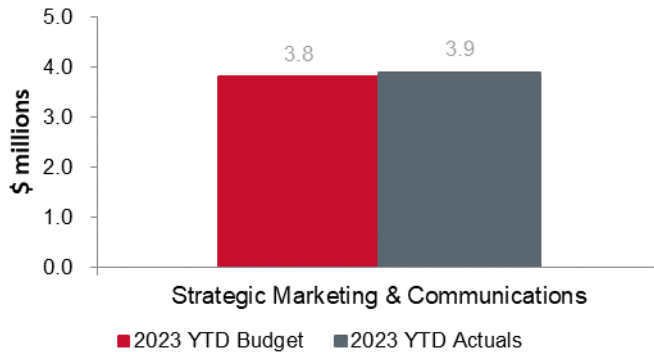
Initiative	Initiative Update	Status
1 Maintain The City's relationship and reputation with the public and media by focusing on the effectiveness and responsiveness of The City's social media and media relations efforts. This requires the service to manage of increased demand for timely, two-way communication within the existing budget, while also ensuring The City is able to adapt to the changing media and social media preferences of Calgarians.	The service has seen a rise in negative/hateful comments versus misinformation on City social media channels. Typically, the team sees up to 10,000 comments a month, but March saw over 20,000 comments. The Social Media team corrected misinformation contained in those comments 60 times. Media Relations received 432 media inquiries in the first quarter of 2023. Both areas are trending up from the previous year.	
2 Support economic recovery and resilience priorities such as the Downtown Strategy, investment in Calgary and revenue generation for City services through the development and implementation of marketing and communication strategies. This includes leveraging data and analytics to better target audiences and partnering with Citizen & Information Services to implement e-commerce solutions to make doing business with The City faster and easier.	Strategic Marketing & Communications completed a search engine optimization project for recreation programs that increased leads generated to program registration pages by 147 per cent. The service implemented advanced analytics software on multiple applications (i.e. Live and Play, Assessment Search, Engage Portal, myID). This ensures that Calgarians looking to enroll in recreation programs are better able to find the class best suited for them, and register easily.	
3 Advance social equity through communications and marketing support to City services. This includes continuing to champion inclusive and accessible City communications through the Multicultural Communications & Engagement Strategy and Equitable Standards for Communications.	The service continues to support vendor management and language service requests on behalf of all business units. All marketing recommendations continue to include multicultural recommendations to further support social equity by reducing language barriers. With the release of the 2021 census data, the focus is to update the multicultural insights and tools, providing information in the languages most commonly spoken in Calgarian homes.	

Initiative	Initiative Update	Status
4 Improve the effectiveness and level of trust in City communications by addressing the growth of misinformation about The City. This includes providing staff with tools and training to identify, monitor, and correct misinformation when responding to Calgarian and media inquiries, and address increased demand within existing budget.	<p>Strategic Marketing & Communications is actively correcting all misinformation where The City has been @mentioned or tagged on social media using its social media management tool. Media Relations reaches out to any media outlet that publishes incorrect information to ask for a correction.</p> <p>Trust in City communications is being enhanced by creating a process to internally elevate reputational risks associated with programs and projects where mitigation strategies can be applied to reduce the risk.</p>	
5 Protect and enhance The City's visual identity and brand by educating staff on the related policy and conducting regular reviews of City communication and marketing materials for brand compliance.	Oversight and provision of Creative Services continues on City campaigns to ensure alignment with the Corporate Brand Identity and Identifiers (GN-023) policy. The service is exploring opportunities to further educate leaders on The City's brand in 2023 to reduce non-compliance within departments and business units. Customer Service & Communications will present on brand at a future session of the Corporate Management Team to refresh understanding of the role The City's brand has in informing Calgarians of The City's services and programs.	
6 Ensure staff are connected, informed, equipped and engaged as ambassadors of The City by providing coordinated messaging to employees in support of The City's goals to modernize government and improve organizational culture. This includes maintaining core employee communications activities and channels, while also providing communication strategy and tactics for large corporate initiatives such as the Rethink to Thrive Strategy within the existing budget.	New initiatives to connect staff (City's Got Talent, new polling tool with more information) have been added. These initiatives are very popular and great tools to connect City staff to the great work they do on behalf of The City. Other initiatives (video feature on interesting jobs/skills and return of News Flash in a Dash video) are being explored for the future.	
7 Uphold public trust and confidence in The City by delivering ongoing communications and campaigns to raise Calgarians' awareness and understanding of The City's services, financial position, and the value Calgarians receive for their taxes and fees.	The Customer Review Period campaign achieved 60 million media impressions and over 50,000 visits to The City's online tax calculator, a 57 per cent improvement from 2022. With a 12 per cent increase in property assessments, inquiries surged in January and in June (12 per cent) when tax bills were mailed. Despite the influx of 311 calls, requests for the Tax Instalment Payment Program (TIPP) increased over 15 per cent, reaching 300,000 participants for the first time, providing a valued service for many Calgary homeowners.	
8 Improve the accessibility of Calgary.ca by making the content and services provided online easier to find and understand. This will help streamline the process of communicating with The City and help to manage high demand for in-person and telephone support.	<p>Improvements have been made to the site structure and organization of Calgary.ca. This update transitioned the previous department and business unit format to a new user-tested topic structure. This change will make it easier for Calgarians to find information and complete tasks.</p> <p>Content improvement projects related to taxi, livery, and ridesharing have recently been completed, offering more relevant and up-to-date information to Calgarians.</p> <p>Content improvement projects for City bylaw information, city-wide growth strategy, and local area planning are now underway.</p>	



Service Updates on Financial Performance

Net Operating Budget and Actuals as of June 30, 2023



Operating Budget Updates - 2023 YTD net operating budget vs actuals:

Strategic Marketing & Communications has an unfavourable year to date operating variance of \$0.11 million primarily due to timing differences between salary and wages and recoveries.

Capital Budget and Spend as of June 30, 2023



Capital Budget Updates - 2023 total capital budget vs 2023 YTD spend:

Strategic Marketing & Communications has spent 12 per cent of the 2023 approved capital budget to date. Delays in capital expenditure are attributed to the research and assessment of technology replacement. The research phase is complete, and commitments will be realized in the second half of 2023 for a new email marketing tool and the replacement of aged audio/visual equipment, which will improve the capital spend rate by the end of the year.