

Case Study:

Southeast Hydrogen Hub Coalition

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Position: Lead Communications Manager | Duke Energy | Charlotte, NC (Oct 2016 - Nov 2024)

Executive Summary

In response to the U.S. Department of Energy's 8-billion-dollar hydrogen hub program, a coalition of leading Southeast utilities, including Duke Energy, Dominion Energy, Southern Company, Tennessee Valley Authority, and LG&E and KU Energy, mobilized to compete for a six-state clean energy initiative.

I was entrusted to architect and lead the entire communications function from the ground up, aligning multiple Fortune 500 utilities, building a unified brand, and positioning the coalition at a national level under a compressed federal timeline.

While the coalition was not selected, the communications platform was recognized by executive leadership as a best-in-class model for cross-country alignment and strategic communications at scale.

The Opportunity

- Compete for 8 billion dollars in federal hydrogen infrastructure funding
 - Position a multi-state, six state regional coalition as a national clean energy leader
 - Influence federal, regulatory, and stakeholder perception in a high visibility environment
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The Challenge

- Align five major utilities and multi state stakeholders with competing priorities
 - Operate with no preexisting governance or communications structure
 - Translate complex hydrogen and infrastructure concepts into a compelling narrative
 - Deliver a fully integrated platform under compressed federal timelines
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My Role, Enterprise Communications Leadership

I led end-to-end communications strategy and execution across the coalition.

Key responsibilities:

- Built and led a 10-person cross company communications team
- Established governance, decision making frameworks, and alignment processes
- Served as the central communications lead interfacing with executive leadership
- Unified messaging across five utilities and a six-state regional initiative

Strategic Approach

1. Unified Brand Creation

- Developed a distinct identity for a multi company, multi state coalition
- Balanced individual utility brands with a shared regional narrative
- Positioned the coalition as a clean energy and economic development catalyst

2. Integrated Communications Platform

- Built a full communications system from scratch, including
 - Executive messaging
 - Media and announcement strategy
 - Government and stakeholder communications
 - Internal alignment tools

3. Cross Company Operating Model

- Designed a scalable alignment model across utilities
- Enabled rapid decision making across multiple organizations
- Maintained message consistency despite competing priorities

Execution Highlights

- Built a multi company communications function from zero to fully operational
- Delivered a complete communications platform under federal proposal timelines
- Ensured consistent messaging across five utilities and multiple stakeholder groups
- Elevated the coalition's positioning at both regional and national levels

Communications Impact

- Five utility communications alignment across Duke Energy, Dominion Energy, Southern Company, TVA, and LG&E and KU
- Six state coalition positioning, establishing a unified regional narrative
- Ten-person cross company team built and operationalized under compressed timelines
- End-to-end communications infrastructure created from scratch, including governance, messaging, and execution systems
- Executive validated model recognized across participating companies as a benchmark for collaboration
- Consistent narrative adoption across all partner organizations and stakeholder communications

Strategic Business Impact

- Established a repeatable communications model for multi company energy initiatives
- Strengthened alignment among major Southeast utilities for future collaboration
- Demonstrated the ability to operate effectively in high stakes, federal level competitive environments
- Positioned communications as a core strategic function in large scale energy initiatives

Selected Media and Stakeholder Visibility

- Coverage and engagement across leading energy and infrastructure publications, including Utility Dive, E&E News by Politico, S&P Global Commodity Insights, and Power Engineering
- Visibility among federal stakeholders and Department of Energy audiences during the hydrogen hub selection process
- Reinforced positioning of the Southeast as a viable hydrogen hub region in national energy discussions

Key Takeaways

- Enterprise leadership - led communications across five major utilities and a six-state coalition
- Team building, built and managed a ten-person cross company communications team

- System creation - designed a scalable communications and governance model from scratch
- Execution under pressure - delivered a full platform within compressed federal timelines
- Lasting impact - created a repeatable model for future multi organization initiatives

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