

Case Study: Enterprise Message Mapping System

Building a Scalable Communications Operating Model at Piedmont Natural Gas

Prepared by: Jennifer Sharpe | +1 704 616 2013 | Jennifer.sharpe.nc@gmail.com

Position: Senior Consultant, Communications | Piedmont Natural Gas | Charlotte, NC (Oct 2008 - Oct 2016)

Executive Summary

When I joined Piedmont Natural Gas, the organization lacked a unified communications structure. Messaging was inconsistent across departments, audiences, and timelines, limiting effectiveness and alignment with business priorities.

I designed and implemented an Annual Message Mapping System, using a simple Excel based tool to create visibility, structure, and accountability across the organization.

What began as a lightweight solution evolved into an enterprise-wide communications operating model, aligning multiple functions, introducing a disciplined planning cadence, and establishing a repeatable system that remains in use today.

The Opportunity

- Build foundational communications processes from the ground up
 - Improve consistency and coordination across departments
 - Align communications with business priorities and stakeholder expectations
 - Establish visibility and accountability across all external messaging
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The Challenge

- No centralized view of communications across the organization
- Inconsistent messaging across media, customers, and regulators
- Limited coordination between departments responsible for external communications
- Absence of a structured planning cadence

Communications operated in silos rather than as a coordinated, strategic function.

My Role, Enterprise Communications Leadership

I was responsible for building both the communications function and the systems to support it.

Key responsibilities:

- Designed and implemented an enterprise-wide communications framework

- Aligned stakeholders across multiple departments and functions
- Introduced process discipline while maintaining simplicity and usability
- Established a scalable system for long term adoption

Strategic Approach

1. Centralized Message Mapping System

- Developed an Excel based planning tool organized by month
- Mapped key messages to audiences, timing, and business priorities
- Created a single source of truth for communications across the organization

2. Cross Functional Integration

- Integrated all major communications stakeholders, including
 - Corporate communications
 - Regulatory
 - Customer sales and marketing
 - Safety and operations
- Defined clear roles within a unified communications ecosystem

3. Governance and Operating Cadence

- Established a monthly cross functional alignment meeting
- Created an annual planning and refresh cycle
- Introduced accountability and consistency without adding complexity

Execution Highlights

- Built and deployed an enterprise-wide communications system from scratch
- Achieved adoption across multiple departments with diverse priorities
- Established a consistent, predictable cadence for planning and alignment
- Transformed communications from reactive activity into a structured function

Communications Impact

- Enterprise-wide adoption across multiple departments and functions
- Centralized source of truth for all communications planning and messaging
- Monthly alignment cadence implemented across the organization
- Improved consistency of messaging across media, customers, and regulatory audiences
- Increased visibility into communications activity across the business
- Sustained long term usage, with the system still in place today

Strategic Business Impact

- Elevated communications from a reactive function to a proactive, planned discipline
- Strengthened alignment between communications and business objectives
- Improved cross functional collaboration and coordination
- Established a scalable model for enterprise communications planning

Key Takeaways

- Process innovation - created a scalable system from a simple tool
- Enterprise alignment - unified messaging across multiple functions
- System durability - built a model still in use today
- Operational leadership - introduced structure without adding complexity
- Strategic elevation - transformed communications into a coordinated business function

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