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Bord Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Chorcaí

*Cork Education and
Training Board*

CORK EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

A PATHWAY FOR EVERY LEARNER

Supporting Strategy Statement 2022-2026

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Cork Education and Training Board's Communications Strategy. This strategy was developed to support the delivery and communication of the Strategic Priorities, Goals and Objectives as set out in the Strategy Statement 2022-2026.

The main focus of the overall organisation's Strategy Statement is to act in the best interests of learners and provide high quality education in a responsive and inclusive manner.

The purpose of this strategy is to build strong relationships with key stakeholders, including learners, staff, media and employers whilst also creating a cohesive message across the organisation. This Strategy will promote brand recognition in local communities and increase awareness of the organisation as a whole. The strategy will consider the activities undertaken by the organisation to promote the brand.

The intention of this Communications Strategy is to ensure that the Cork Education and Training Board brand is widely endorsed both internally and externally.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Our Strategic Priorities, Goals and Objectives

Strategic Priorities

Our strategic plan contains five primary pillars:



Cork Education and Training Boards overall Strategy Statement 2022-2026 sets out the following priorities, with clear goals and objectives for delivery.

- ▶ Learning and Teaching
- ▶ Our Team and Organisation
- ▶ Communicating and Connecting
- ▶ Supporting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- ▶ Infrastructure

This Communications Strategy will primarily focus on how it can support the delivery of the following objectives set out in the Strategy Statement 2022-2026.

1. LEARNING AND TEACHING

- ▶ Actively pursuing opportunities to:
 - Increase the number of Community National Schools.
 - Support progression between Cork ETB areas of provision.
- ▶ Positioning Cork ETB as the “partner of choice” for PLC, adult & community education, apprenticeships and further education and training.
- ▶ Placing Cork ETB’s schools as the “schools of choice” for parents in meeting the educational and developmental needs of their children.

2. OUR TEAM AND ORGANISATON

- ▶ Establishing Cork ETB as an employer of choice.
- ▶ Attracting and retaining high calibre candidates for all positions.

3. COMMUNICATING AND CONNECTING

- ▶ Communicating Cork ETB’s Values.
- ▶ Ensuring learner engagement is central to what we do.

- ▶ Reviewing, developing and enhancing our systems, policies and protocols to ensure the effectiveness of our internal communication.
- ▶ Developing an integrated marketing and promotional strategy which defines clear learning pathways and highlights associated value for all learners.
- ▶ Developing a resource pack to support all staff in the promotion of our identity, pathways and approach to offering life-long learning opportunities.
- ▶ Continuing to develop capacity to mainstream the use of Irish as a working language across the organisation.

4. SUPPORTING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

- ▶ Sharing a common understanding of inclusion and diversity within the Cork ETB community.
- ▶ Leading and working collaboratively, across communities, to support educational participation, increase student completion and ensure that we offer a pathway for every learner.
- ▶ Working to support and increase diversity amongst and across our staff and learner population.

5. INFRASTRUCTURE

- ▶ Incorporating and applying sustainability principles and initiatives.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives have been specifically developed from a communications perspective, to enable Cork ETB to deliver on its commitments to learners, staff and stakeholders, as set out in the Strategy Statement.

GOAL 1

Promote and communicate Cork Education and Training Board's course provision and services in an effort to increase learner enrolment and engagement.

OBJECTIVES

- Actively raise awareness of the Cork Education and Training Board's schools, colleges, centres and the variety of courses and services available.
- Promote the supports that being part of an Education and Training Board can offer potential learners.
- Improve communication channels and information available to learners and their parents, where applicable.
- Develop a single point of access for learners and stakeholders to obtain information.
- Continue to promote and develop awareness and use of the Irish language through a variety of mediums and interactive settings.

GOAL 2

Enhance and increase brand awareness with learners, stakeholders, staff and the general public to build an influential identity.

OBJECTIVES

- Connect and communicate with the organisation's stakeholders through traditional and digital media channels.
- Actively communicate our organisational values and value proposition with our existing and potential stakeholders.
- Encourage engagement with the organisation by positively and proactively utilising social media channels.
- Develop a resource pack to support the promotion of our identity, pathways and approach to learning.
- Enhance engagement with MyCETB to promote open communication across the organisation and encourage collaboration with colleagues and teams in schools, campuses, centres and services.

GOAL 3

Position Cork Education and Training Board's schools, colleges, centres and services as the "partner of choice" for learners, potential employees and industry engagement.

OBJECTIVES

- Actively communicate and define the clear learning pathways that are available to potential and existing learners.
- Promote the organisations increased use of technology to offer blended learning options.
- Proactively engage with potential learners, employees and industry to showcase the benefits of becoming part of the Cork Education and Training Board community.
- Promote and support access for all.

- Foster relationships with external stakeholders to raise Cork ETB's profile as the partner of choice with event management locally, nationally and internationally.

Traditionally, measures and indicators follow under each goal and objective, however communication, by its nature, permeates across multiple disciplines and areas, therefore, the following are relevant to the delivery of the three goals and associated objectives.

MEASURE: TRADITIONAL ADVERTISING – INDIRECT CHANNEL

Indicator:

- Develop a traditional media buying plan which will incorporate print media, radio and outdoor advertising
- Ensure messaging is cohesive and unified across the organisation and across various channels
- Ensure “calls to actions” are incorporated to ensure insights and data can be gathered and reviewed.

MEASURE: WEBSITE – DIRECT CHANNEL

Indicator:

- Conduct website audits including an SEO audit and user experience feedback.
- Devise a sitemap and plan for the website update.
- Implement initial SEO and continue on an ongoing basis.
- Implement website changes to improve user experience.
- Develop the FET element of the website to ensure the user can find all relevant information with very few clicks.
- Evaluate changes side by side with initial goals and objectives.

MEASURE: SOCIAL MEDIA – ORGANIC – FACEBOOK, TWITTER, LINKEDIN, INSTAGRAM, YOUTUBE.

Indicator:

- Conduct an audit of existing online channels.
- Devise a best practice document for all channels.

- Devise a brand book specific to the digital offering including, but not limited to; templates for profile pictures, cover pictures, static image posts, videos and hashtags; for implementation across all channels.
- Devise an organic content plan.
- Implement best practices and branding across all channels.
- Implement an organic content plan.
- Gather reports, insights, and data on organic activity on an ongoing basis and at the end of each campaign.
- Evaluate reports to feed into the next phase of the plan whilst looking at results side-by-side with initial goals and objectives.

MEASURE: PAID SOCIAL CAMPAIGNS - FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER, LINKEDIN, INSTAGRAM, YOUTUBE, SNAPCHAT, TIKTOK

Indicator:

- Devise the paid social plan.
- Implement the paid social plan.
- Run video campaigns across channels when required
- Gather reports, insights, and data on paid activity on an ongoing basis and at the end of each campaign.
- Evaluate reports to feed into next phase of the plan whilst looking at results side-by-side with initial goals and objectives.

MEASURE: PROGRAMMATIC DISPLAY ADVERTISING & REGTARGETING

Indicator:

- Build a retargeting campaign on programmatic.
- After driving traffic via other channels, there will be a highly engaged and specific audience to retarget adverts to.
- Retargeting is a chance to bring a learner or stakeholder , who has previously engaged with adverts, back to the website.
- The team will target this audience with more urgent messaging directing them to specific pages to apply for courses.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN

To implement this Communications Strategy, communication of the plan to the wider organisation is crucial. This is a key step to ensuring buy in and cohesion across the various services that exist. Responsibility for ensuring the implementation of this strategy lies primarily with the Executive in Head Office.

The messaging of any and all communications activity conducted will be consistent with Cork Education and Training Board's vision, mission, strategic priorities, guiding principles and values, goals and objectives.

The Communications Strategy will inform an Integrated Marketing Communications Plan, incorporating a mix of both traditional and digital media across the owned, earned, shared and paid channels. These activities include:

- Public Relations
- Events and promotional marketing
- Press advertising
- Radio advertising
- Outdoor advertising (including billboards, buses and Adshels)
- Web development
- MyCETB (powered by Workvivo)
- Digital marketing and advertising

Internal communication will also feature in the plan. Internal communication relates to the flow of information within the organisation, including the sharing of information about, and relating to, the organisation with its employees, to ensure they are kept informed and can perform their roles efficiently and to the best of their ability. Effective internal communication will keep all employees informed of organisational developments and any important policy changes and facilitate dialogue and sharing of information within the organisation. An effective flow of communication between all parts of the organisation is crucial to the success of the organisation.

Information Communications shared on MyCETB will include the following:

- Policies, Procedures and Protocols
- Governance and Compliance
- Organisational Information
- Colleague and Team Information

- Organisational News
- Training tools and Content
- Surveys and collation of feedback from staff on relevant issues and developments

This Integrated Marketing Communications Plan will combine the different elements of the promotion mix, across various channels, whilst all the time ensuring that there is a unified, cohesive and consistent message being communicated to existing and potential customers. This is the plan the organisation will use to ensure the various marketing channels reinforce one another and the message being communicated out to learners and stakeholders is the same, albeit the methods may differ. By developing an integrated plan, it will reap benefits for the organisation and indeed for the learners and stakeholders.

Each communication channel will have its own tailored design collateral as well as messages to its audiences, whilst drawing from, and feeding into, an overall consistent message and campaign.

MONITORING AND RESOURCES

The actions that have been outlined will be managed and co-ordinated by the Communications Team within the Corporate Services Department in Head Office, in consultation with internal management, and in partnership with the organisation's PR and Communications agency. The knowledge that the in-house team has of the organisation, coupled with the expertise of the PR and Communications agency, will ensure efficient and effective campaigns will be executed. Any required training will be provided to upskill the in-house team and ensure they are supported.

An annual operational plan will be developed to support the delivery of this strategy which will be incorporated into Cork ETB's Annual Service Plan.

Progress made each year will be monitored continuously and will be reported on at the end of each year in the Annual Report for the organisation, which is adopted by the Board and submitted to the Department of Education.

The Communications Team, with appropriate external expertise, will monitor the performance and measure success through the use of appropriate analytics, website traffic and the increase to same. The organisation's website and the development of same will be crucial throughout the lifespan of this Communications Strategy to ensure learners and stakeholders find the relevant information and have a positive experience with Cork ETB services

REVIEW AND LIFE CYCLE

The roll out of the Communications Strategy will be in line with the Strategy Statement 2022-2026.

In order to ensure that we continuously adapt to our changing environments, this strategy will be reviewed in 2024, with a view to publishing a new Communications Strategy to bring us to the end of Cork ETB's Strategy Statement 2022-2026.

CONCLUSION

The appetite for change exists in Cork Education and Training Board as evidenced by the continuous development of the organisation, in an environment that evolves to the needs of our learners and stakeholders. The opportunities for the organisation are endless.

When developing the Strategy Statement 2022-2026, it became evident that the organisation needs to grow and develop its profile across potential learners, communities and other target markets. The changing external environment demonstrates that Cork Education and Training Board needs to put the learner to the forefront. Communication needs to be embedded in the culture of the organisation as a whole and the services and offerings should be adapted and aligned to the learners' and stakeholders' needs and wants. This will increase the value of what they will receive from choosing Cork Education and Training Board as the provider of choice.

Cork Education and Training Board will continue to explore new ways of communicating with its stakeholders, learners and local communities and ensure that the goals and objectives of this strategy are implemented.

This Communications Strategy provides the organisation with a platform to ensure cohesion across its services is achievable and that communication is recognised as an integral resource to make Cork Education and Training Board the learners first choice.





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