

**Manawatu District Council**

# **Communication Strategy**

## **2019**

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# Contents

<b>1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2 Communication Leadership.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3 Positioning, and Key Themes/Messages .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Manawatū District Council positioning statement:.....	3
Key themes/messages.....	3
<b>4 Strategic Communication Goals .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Communication objectives .....	4
Goals .....	4
Goal 1: About us – Getting the message out .....	4
Goal 2: Our Culture – Support and Grow .....	4
Goal 3: Our Reputation – Enhance and Protect .....	5
Goal 4: Community Success Celebration .....	5
<b>5 Strategy Scope.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6 Duration of this Strategy.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>7 Delivering the strategy: Talking the talk .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Our People.....	6
Identity / Brand .....	6
How we communicate.....	6
Community / Stakeholder Engagement .....	8
<b>8 Strategy in action .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Initiatives and Actions.....	9
Channel uses and initiatives .....	11
<b>9 Measuring success .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>10 Appendix: PRINZ Communication Principles .....</b>	<b>14</b>



# 1 Introduction

The purpose of the Manawātū District Council Communication Strategy is to embed the overall Council vision:

***Connected, vibrant, thriving Manawātū District - the best lifestyle in New Zealand***

and to assist the Council build the operational vision of:

***Manawātū District Council is a customer-focussed and efficient organisation***

The communication strategy sets out the Council's communication approach to create and maintain a positive image that protects and enhances its reputation and increases its functional effectiveness.

Communication is a strategic enabler for delivery of the Council's operational vision.

This document identifies strategic communication goals and actions that will focus communication activities across all areas of Council endeavour.

## 2 Communication Leadership

Communication is both a supporting and an overarching function that facilitates and disseminates:

- Council strategies,
- intentions,
- actions,
- and initiatives

It is not by itself a solution.

Communication is what we say, and equally what we do. Communication informs and enables conversations about what the Council does, it cannot change the facts, nor should it be used to hide them.

Having the trust and confidence of the public is essential. Local Government operates within a ratepayer-funded environment that cannot be sustained without the support of an engaged society. Positive public perception is critical to the maintenance of society's support for the Council.

There are three key principles which shape this strategy:

- **Placing our customers at the heart of our activities**
  - *We listen not just tell, we provide feedback opportunities, we research, we understand who they are.*
- **Communication is an integrated activity**
  - *What we do, what we say, who we tell, who needs to know*
  - *Media and communication activity is channelled through the communication team.*
  - *Our brand is actively managed.*
- **Communication activities add value to the Council and the community**
  - *Communication plans for all activities, reporting on media activity, risks identified*

Four primary communication goals have been identified that will enable Council to meet its vision.

Support – increase knowledge of Council activities

- Culture – support and grow
- Reputation – protect and enhance
- Celebrate - community success, events and activities in Manawātū

### 3 Positioning, and Key Themes/Messages

#### Manawātū District Council positioning statement:

*The Manawātū District Council works to ensure that the District can be a thriving, vibrant, connected community. The Council is customer-focussed and efficient, employing modern practices to deliver great service through professionalism, expertise, and values.*

This position is stated to underscore the unique role that the Manawātū District Council has in the District.

The Council needs to deliver, and be seen to deliver, the services that the community expects, and be able to respond to the changing needs of the community and region.

#### Key themes/messages

The positioning statement articulates key themes and messages that are to be used in communication activity.

They describe the end result: what the Council wants people to think, feel and understand about it as an organisation. They are key ideas the Council wants people to take away about it after interacting, reading, hearing or seeing something about the Council.

##### **We are connected, vibrant and thriving**

- We enable economic development
- We are technology aware
- We provide places for people to relax or do things
- We are the best place to live and work
- We have strength through our heritage and diversity

##### **We have the best lifestyle**

- We balance rural and urban needs
- We are a great place to live and work
- We have great recreational and leisure facilities
- We work hard to ensure our environment is protected

##### **We are supportive of business**

- We enable active agribusiness
- We provide effective infrastructure
- We enable business and industry
- We have productive farms

##### **We have the expertise**

- We have people who are professionals in their fields
- We are community and regional leaders

##### **We provide cost effective services for the community and businesses**

- We are fiscally responsible
- We are efficient: we deliver value for money
- We plan ahead for the community future

##### **We are customer-focussed and efficient and can meet any challenge**

- We hear what the residents say
- We have the right people in the right jobs
- We are a Council that gets things done
- We are responsive to the needs of residents and businesses
- We provide effective emergency management

## 4 Strategic Communication Goals

### Communication objectives

*To promote two way information exchange, inform and engage our people and our communities, increase their knowledge and understanding about Council activities.*

### Goals

Three strategic communication goals have been identified to enable Manawatū District Council priorities to be met. Each goal will be achieved through a set of outcomes delivered through a work plan, which will be regularly reviewed.

A fourth communication goal has been identified to enable the Communications Team to provide support to help ensure Council's vision of a connected, vibrant and thriving District is achieved.

#### Goal 1: About us – Getting the message out

Our community needs to hear our stories in order to have a positive perception of Council.

Actions:

- Tell the stories about what we do
- Support staff to proactively tell Council's stories
- Build consistent, powerful language and visual communication
- Build and manage Council's communication channels
- Assist business units to effectively communicate
- Support Council leaders/managers/staff in their communication.
- Media management and engagement.
- Measure, research and report on Council's reputation/perception.

#### Outcome 1: Our message is received

*Council tells our stories and uses the best communication channels to ensure that its audiences and stakeholders can be informed, find out what Council is doing, tell us something or get something done.*

#### Goal 2: Our Culture – Support and Grow

Supporting the Manawatū District Council culture enables the Council to carry out its role and tasks effectively and to retain quality staff.

Actions:

- Celebrate employee success and recognise the value of actions that support organisational goals.
- Enhance the organisation's communication culture.
- Promote an environment in which information flows through the organisation

#### Outcome 2: Our Culture – Supported & Grown

*Staff who are proud to represent Council and understand their role as ambassadors and engage in communicating information about projects, successes and issues.*

### **Goal 3: Our Reputation – Enhance and Protect**

Providing effective communication that helps Manawātū District Council manage, enhance and protect its reputation.

Actions:

- Ensure Council’s brand use is clear and consistent.
- Increase situational awareness and risk monitoring.
- Increase awareness of Council’s decision making process.
- Build and promote understanding of Council’s role in managing, developing and growing Manawātū
- Support stakeholders to engage and ‘have their say’
- Effective activity communication
- Effective emergency management.

#### *Outcome 3: Our Reputation – enhanced and protected*

*The community and businesses understand the Council’s role in growing the District, have confidence that the decision making process is visible and transparent, which will enable informed input to the decision making process*

### **Goal 4: Community Success Celebration**

Support and help celebrate community success, events and activities in Manawātū

Actions:

- Help promote local events of significance, mostly Council funded, via Council communication channels
- Identify ways to work with the cultures within Manawātū.

#### *Outcome 4: Community Success Celebrated*

*The Manawātū District Council is associated with the best lifestyle, attracting and retaining business and residents.*

## **5 Strategy Scope**

This is an initial strategy to embed communication as a core enabling function within Council.

Rather than focus on dedicated internal or external communications this strategy treats communication as a unified concept. Individual plans will be developed for specific internal projects.

## **6 Duration of this Strategy**

It is envisaged this strategy will have a duration of three years during which time the Priority Actions will be reviewed annually to build on the successes, or to include areas of concern.

## 7 Delivering the strategy: Talking the talk

As a Council, it is important to get our story and information out to our residents, staff and stakeholders. At the same time Council needs to enable engagement to ensure that our community's views are heard and that they know that those views are valued.

At the heart of all communication is the creation and maintenance of relationships which directly affect the perception and reputation of an organisation or individual.

### Our People

People are interested in people. Our people have stories that should be told about the work they do, their professionalism, their achievements, and their routine but often invisible work. These can be used to illustrate the projects and initiatives Council is involved with for both internal and external audiences.

***All staff and elected members have a role to play in identifying suitable information and opportunities that can be used to enhance understanding and knowledge of Council activities***

Organisational culture defines the communication that is received by the stakeholder. It may not be a verbal or written communication, rather it is how things get done, how quickly, and the displayed attitude and empathy. Culture is one of the most difficult communications channels to manage and is difficult to change quickly, as it is heavily dependent on the leadership.

### Identity / Brand

A brand is more than just a logo, it's a unique promise of value; *"Thriving, vibrant, connected Manawatū District - the best lifestyle in New Zealand"* with the additional operational promise *"Manawatū District Council is a customer-focussed and efficient organisation"*.

It's about being clear, consistent and constant in what we do. Brand is what you say, reputation is what others say. The logo unifies the value promise, and by extension it must be consistent and used appropriately.

### How we communicate

Effective channel management ensures our stories get to the right audiences. Audience expectation ranges from human interest to physical works, economic development, or issues management at a range of intellectual levels. This provides the opportunity for the Council to own the narrative using its own channels (paid pages, newsletters, web site, and social media) and providing print-ready copy for specialty and interest group magazines.

#### The media

The media provide a broadcast capability that is very useful for reaching mass or traditional audiences, the two principal media are newspaper and radio.

The prime print media in the Manawatū District is the free weekly community paper. The community paper is now largely reprints of stories that have previously appeared on Stuff or the Manawatū Standard. The publication provides the ability to incorporate paid pages or inserts with our own messaging. This publication is also useful, in the statutory sense, that our required classified advertising is able to reach the majority of District mailboxes.



*MDC will continue to use the community paper as a means of reaching part of our community and to meet our statutory requirements.*

Radio media is useful for events and limited mass messaging for significant campaigns. For best coverage several stations need to be engaged to reach a diverse demographic. This channel can be effective, but is also expensive. This channel is of most use in a significant civil defence incident, where regular commercial programming can be interrupted for extended items. Recent perception survey results shows only about 2% of responders view radio as a viable channel.

Changing media consumption through adoption of dedicated news feeds and online music by the community, means that the importance of these media is diminishing.

*MDC will only use Radio for communication of Civil Defence incidents or if the Communication Plan for a special event indicates that Radio is an important channel*

### Social Media

Social media<sup>1</sup> provides quick access to a range of the community members and stakeholders. The audience reached is variable and is dependent on connectivity and preference. Social media has significant impact on reputation given the reach and immediacy. It is a good and sometimes blunt 'lens' into stakeholder perceptions and issues. This is a growing channel, encompassing many platforms and attracting differing, but not unique, demographics. Facebook remains the dominant social channel (average user spends 50 minutes per day).

*MDC will work to grow its social media reach*

### Website

Websites are the prime organisational communication channel and are the core repository for organisational information, communicating and increasingly for transactions. They are the voice of the organisation. User expectation is that it will be mobile friendly, up to date, use plain concise and consistent language, and be easy to navigate. It is important that it is kept current and has a unified look and feel.

The website should enable a high level of Council transparency with access to Council policies, decisions, meeting minutes, property information, information sheets, and hold longer versions of material referred to in newsletters.

It should focus the user on what Council does through news and project updates, provide for social interactivity e.g. what is on in Manawatū, or feedback about Council interactions, and transactions e.g. dog registration, information requests, rate payments etc.

*MDC will upgrade its website and continue to use it as the primary source of trusted information about Council*

### Face-to-face

Face-to-face communications is the strongest communication channel providing for a range of non-verbal cues often missing in electronic or printed material. It is a relationship and trust building channel ideal for targeted stakeholder groups or individuals, as well as an effective information exchange

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<sup>1</sup> 89% of New Zealand online, 74% use social media (73% on Facebook, 35% Instagram, 21% Twitter), 3 million access information on mobile device, 160,000 active users across Manawatū. Source: Collab digital 2018

Facebook, has an overall skew towards female users (54% vs 46%). However, there are more males in the two largest segments, 18-24 year olds and 25-34 year olds. And although these segments are the largest, they don't actually use Facebook the most often, there has been an increasing trend for mothers to check Facebook daily, (now 82%). Source: First Digital NZ 2018



platform. As the community and stakeholders become increasingly time-poor this channel requires significant effort from all parties to make it work.

*MDC will continue to encourage face to face communications, especially from our community committee liaison Councillors*

#### Newsletter / email

Using known contact details, newsletters provide reliable delivery to stakeholders. The content is generated against key priorities or activity. Councils are limited by the privacy act, which requires us to only use information such as email addresses for the purpose they were collected.

*MDC will use newsletters and emails where they are a practical and legal option*

## **Community / Stakeholder Engagement**

A stakeholder is taken to mean any entity (organisation, group or individual) with a legitimate interest or stake in the outcomes of what the Council is trying to deliver. These are the people and groups who can champion Council activities, or influence the outcomes of Council endeavours.

It is important that we understand who our audiences/stakeholders are. They broadly fall into four categories:

- **General:** Ratepayers, residents, other Territorial Authorities, business, industry, Central Government.
- **Dedicated Groups:** Neighbouring Territorial Authorities, industry groups – businesses, developers, builders and trades people, special interest community groups/organisations, farmers, environmental organisations, Tangata whenua.
- **Customers:** captive customers – compliance - animal owners, rubbish and recycling, property owners, builders and developers.
- **Internal:** Mayor, Councillors, Staff, Contractors.

A stakeholder engagement framework enables Council to understand each of the individual stakeholders, or groups, at the various levels they interact with Council, and that the specific stakeholders (groups, sub groups and individuals) have the opportunity to engage with Council.

Each activity's communication plan will identify in detail the specific audiences / stakeholders that may be impacted, have an interest, or be able to influence of the outcome.



## 8 Strategy in action

The communications strategy provides direction and the framework for delivering communications across all Manawātū District Council activities, by all of the organisation.

Each goal has a number of initiatives and actions. A number of the initiatives / actions can relate to more than one objective.

### Initiatives and Actions

Goal	Initiative	Actions
<b>Goal 1: About us - getting the message out</b>  Our community needs to hear our stories in order to have a positive perception of Council.	1.1 Telling our stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Everyone actively identifies story opportunities               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff aware of the need to storytell and provide images</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	1.2 Build and manage Council's communication channels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure public facing content fit for purpose</li> <li>Rebuild Council website</li> <li>Review/refresh current channels</li> <li>Grow and manage Council's online channels</li> <li>Long range content plan</li> <li>Implement story hierarchy for channels</li> </ul>
	1.3 Build consistent, powerful language and visual communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDC Brand and Identity guide               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Image styles, signage, text, font, etc</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	1.4 Increase awareness of Council's decision-making process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular items about Council decisions, media engagement</li> <li>Online Council decision database</li> </ul>
	1.5 Increase audience awareness of Council activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stories: our people doing what they do, what we do, how we do it, why we do it, projects.</li> <li>Utilising Council's agreed themes / messages</li> <li>Identify marketing and promotional opportunities</li> <li>Open days / events</li> </ul>
	1.6 Build and promote understanding of Council's role in managing, developing and growing Manawātū	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stories: economic opportunities, District performance, etc</li> <li>Highlight stakeholder success</li> <li>Stakeholder engagement events (all levels)</li> </ul>
	1.7 Media management / engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build/strengthen relationships</li> <li>Media attendance at events and activities</li> <li>Manage enquiries</li> </ul>
	1.8 Effective activity communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication strategies and plans are used for all activities               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify best ways to engage (print, electronic, video, face-to-face)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Consider who needs to know - <i>#WHOELSE</i></li> <li>Electronic news for subscribers (create database)</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 2: Our Culture – Support &amp; Grow</b>  Supporting the Manawātū District Council culture, enabling the Council to carry out its role and tasks effectively	2.1 Celebrate our team success and recognise the value of actions that support organisational goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise professional and personal successes in an appropriate manner               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gift, story, media item</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	2.2 Enhance Council's communication culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empower/educate officers to communicate positively and with empathy to colleagues, external audiences and customers</li> </ul>

Goal	Initiative	Actions
and to attract and retain quality staff.	2.3 Promote an environment in which information flows across the organisation and up and down the organisation's hierarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who needs to know - #WHOELSE</li> <li>• Inclusion of communications at leadership, management and activity meetings</li> <li>• Activity managers actively provide regular updates on projects (progress, issues, risks, photos)</li> <li>• Media interactions advised to communications team</li> </ul>
	2.4 Assist managers and business units to effectively communicate and engage with stakeholders, customers and audiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication planning tools /templates</li> <li>• Communications team review of plans</li> <li>• Custom plans for complex or high risk activities</li> </ul>
	2.5 Support the team to tell Council's stories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Item editing and imagery creation</li> <li>• Channel selection</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 3: Our Reputation – Enhance and Protect</b> Providing effective communication that helps MDC manage and protect its reputation.	3.1 Council's brand use is clear and consistent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logo is used properly on collateral and at events</li> <li>• Councils Vision and Values are well known and are 'lived'</li> </ul>
	3.2 Situational awareness and risk monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of internal and external risks</li> <li>• No surprises for teams or management</li> <li>• Critical review of activities and public facing material – 'Facebook test'</li> </ul>
	3.3 Support Councillors, leaders, managers and staff to be skilled communicators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proofing / readability checks prior to publishing</li> <li>• Critical review of activities (<i>Front page / Facebook test</i>)</li> <li>• Imagery and graphic support</li> </ul>
	3.4 Adopt and use effective research, monitoring and evaluation systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual survey to report on reputation and perception of Council</li> <li>• Media monitoring</li> <li>• Specialised surveys for specific actions e.g. how do people wish to engage?</li> </ul>
	3.5 Build and promote understanding of Council's role in managing, developing and growing Manawatū	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stories: economic opportunities, District performance, etc</li> <li>• Highlight stakeholder success</li> <li>• Stakeholder engagement events (all levels)</li> </ul>
	3.6 Stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular stakeholder events (Governance, management, activity)</li> <li>• Promote engagement opportunities in a way that works for the target audience</li> <li>• All consultations listed on 'Haveyoursay' site for general dissemination</li> <li>• Use additional targeted two way channels for engagement / feedback</li> </ul>
	3.7 Effective emergency management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of resilience and CDEM initiatives</li> <li>• Communication management during an event</li> </ul>

Goal	Initiative	Actions
<b>Goal 4: Community Success Celebration</b>  Support and help celebrate community events and activities in Manawātū District.	4.1 Community events and stakeholder success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrate and share successes of our community and stakeholders (with their permission)</li> <li>• Support and promote appropriate events or campaigns</li> </ul>
	4.2 Cultures within Manawātū	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify ways to appropriately engage with Tangata Whenua and other cultures.</li> </ul>

### Channel uses and initiatives

Focus	Audience	Channels	Initiatives	Action
Newsletters	Ratepayers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rates mail-out</li> <li>• social</li> <li>• email</li> </ul>	Reinforce key items of interest to Council and stakeholders  Deliver electronically where possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-introduce ratepayer newsletter</li> <li>• Create e-mail newsletter – generate lists from Ozone data and any other contact databases</li> </ul>
Print	Rate-payers, residents, stakeholders, customers	Feilding Rangitikei Herald	Tell Council stories, encourage participation in consultations  Advertising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• run of paper</li> <li>• classified</li> </ul> Mayoral column.	Representative articles that meet communication objectives.  Review / increase print advertising to account for non-digital audiences.
		Our District News	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freshen look</li> <li>• define item styles</li> <li>• pre-plan content</li> </ul>	Redesign page to freshen look and maximise print content, include Council meeting report (main content on website)
		Other newspapers	Tell Council stories, that where possible reflect local flavour e.g. local people / issues	Liaise with reporters/editors etc for opportunities that match the paper's vision.
Social media	Residents, rate-payers, stakeholders, customers, future employees.	Online (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Neighbourly)	Make social media relevant to the intended audiences, increase engagement levels (move from inform to engage)	Refine range of subjects – aim for 3rds rule: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1/3 Council activities /news,</li> <li>• 1/3 Community Shares (events, weather etc.),</li> <li>• 1/3 light-hearted – pics of gardens / vids etc.</li> </ul> Share positive employee (with their approval) project stories.
			Research new/other channels and their audiences	Increase visual appeal with increased use of imagery, graphics, and video.  Encourage staff to provide imagery and video of their activities (people centric)



Focus	Audience	Channels	Initiatives	Action
			Customer service staff have access to MDC Facebook to handle requests for services/routine information.	Create guidelines for CS staff to enable them to contribute effectively.
Online	All	Website	Improve accessibility, feel and reliability / currency of content	Rebuild website; style and navigation content to be customer focussed. Include contracts, LGOIMA, decision database, transactional functionality, strategies and policies projects and progress, reports, feedback section etc. Combine MAC and Library web sites into the MDC site (existing links continue to operate) Functionality can be added later as these are identified and funded e.g. payment gateways, dog registration etc
Industry-specific media	Stakeholders and neighbours	External interest magazines	Engage with magazines for Interest Groups: LGNZ, Engineers, community, finance, etc.	Provide print ready content including imagery for their channels
Media – local & regional	All	Print Radio TV	Maintain and build relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively encourage and facilitate media to write about major activities with useable quotes and imagery.</li> <li>Regular phone contact and continue to send media releases, advisories etc.</li> </ul>
Internal engagement	Elected members and staff	Jarvis face to face e-mail posters	Increase overall awareness of Council decisions and activities	Regular staff meetings, Council updates, timely posting of information on JARVIS (chat / announcements etc)
Stakeholder engagement	Community and stakeholders	Stakeholder engagements	Increase overall awareness of Council, consultations, decisions and activities	Consultations Hosted events Attending events

***Effective communication relies on having the right people,  
providing the right information, at the right time.***



## 9 Measuring success

Measuring the effectiveness of a strategy provides validation of its content and establishes what amendments need to be made either as result of internal or external environmental changes.

Strategic Outcome	Indicator	Measure
<u>Outcome 1: Our message received</u>  Council tells its stories and uses the best communication channels to ensure that its audiences and stakeholders can be informed, find out what Council is doing, tell us something or get something done.	Accessing information	Reducing comments about difficulties in getting information
	Customer requests for information that is on the website	
	Website content is current and fit for purpose	Website is updated / refreshed and no occurrences of outdated material (information, forms etc.) being used or quoted
	Channel engagement	Overall channel following increases
<u>Outcome 2: Our Culture – Supported and Grown</u>  Staff who are proud to represent Council and understand their role as ambassadors and engage in communicating information about projects, successes and issues.	Staff engagement in promoting Council	Staff actively seek to be involved
	Staff attendance at events	Staff members volunteer to be involved (in or out of hours)
	Staff offer up personal stories	Proactive provision of stories
	Project progress or issues	Provision of useful meeting minutes, invited attendance at meetings, communications plans included.
	Inclusion of communications at all levels of Council activity	
<u>Outcome 3: Our Reputation – Enhanced and Protected</u>  The community and businesses understand the Council role in growing the District, have confidence that the decision making process is visible and transparent, which will enable informed input to the decision making process.	Council is trusted source of information	Increase in approaches to Council for information either directly or online
	Council services complaints	Reduction in complaints about services
		Reducing comments /complaints about obtaining information
	Informed conversations about Council activity	Conversations, even if not in agreement, are accurate
	Public comments about Council decisions	Reduction in negative comments about process
	Quality of submissions received for consultations	Increase in number of submissions
		Submissions are factually accurate
<u>Outcome 4: Our Community Success Celebrated</u>  The Manawatū District Council is associated with the best lifestyle, attracting and retaining business and residents.	Involvement with community	Community / stakeholder activities attended, created or supported
		Number of businesses that advise Council of their success
	Enquiries from business or residential development that include positive comment about Council and its activities	Increase in enquiries to establish in the District

Note: Baseline metrics will need to be identified or developed for many of these indicators.

## **10 Appendix: PRINZ Communication Principles**

Communications is not an end in itself. It is an 'enabler' or 'success multiplier' for an organisation to achieve its strategic aims. It does this by helping create the conditions necessary for organisational success – most often, when people understand the goals of, and have trust and confidence in, the organisation.

### **Building public trust and confidence**

Having the trust and confidence of the public is essential. Local Government operations within a ratepayer funded environment cannot be sustained without the support of an engaged society, and critical to the maintenance of society's support for the Council is a healthy public perception.

### **Building the conditions for organisational success**

With around 160 employees the Council is a small but complex organisation with a large range of activities. Effective communications help individuals understand what is going on and their role in making the Council successful and telling the community about this success.

### **Helping leaders lead**

Effective communication is a critical part of leadership, it enables leaders to communicate the organisation's priorities effectively and to hear from all of its internal and external stakeholders.

### **Total communication**

Unprecedented public access to communication technologies and channels presents new challenges and opportunities for organisations – and for the global society.

Establishing and maintaining trust and legitimacy will remain an enduring requirement of all Manawātū District Council operations and activities. Increasingly, situations involving effectiveness, trust and competency will be played out publicly and under scrutiny.

The Manawātū District Council must own the narrative, to achieve this it must build a culture of listening and engagement with both internal and external stakeholders and the wider community.

### **Right people, shaping the right information, at the right time**

Effective communication relies on having the right people, providing the right information, at the right time.

All staff and elected members have a role to play in identifying and providing suitable information and opportunities that can be used to enhance understanding and knowledge of Council activities.

### **Innovation expected**

Manawātū District Council communication, like everything the Council does, must be innovative in seeking new ways to connect with audiences to maximise outcomes, while getting the most from its inputs.

### **Communication assistance**

The communications team is able to assist and facilitate in many areas including:

- brand and channel management
- communications support
- design and print facilitation
- content production (print and web)
- imagery services
- media relations
- events
- publicity
- internal communication support
- editorial services
- reputation management
- issues and crisis information management
- stakeholder framework management

**Communication activities will adhere to the Public Relations Institute of New Zealand (PRINZ) code of ethics which are built on truth, honesty and openness**