

Tell us in the chat...

**As we close out 2023, what are you most excited about?**



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How to Build Your 2024 Communications Plan

# How to Build Your 2024 Communications Plan

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# Brianna Martin

- Director of Brand Marketing, Mighty Citizen
- 15 years in marketing

## Strength:

Marketing strategy

## Weakness:

#allthefallthings



# Nicole Araujo

- Director of Client Engagement, Mighty Citizen
- 25+ years of associations

## **Strength:**

Communication

## **Weakness:**

Communication



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# Branding and digital transformation for mission-driven organizations.

- Research & Analytics
- Branding & Strategy
- UX Design & Content
- Web Development
- Marketing, Media & Search



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# Why plans are a must-have?

- Ensures your mission and brand are communicated faithfully every time
  - Reminder: Your brand is your organization's reputation
- Controls the narrative
  - Tells your story with consistency across the right channels at the right time for the right audiences
  - Prevents confusion
- Building trust & establishes buy-in
  - Elevating your brand as the expert
  - Drives action when you want and need it
- Solidifies goal setting to ladder up to the organization's strategic goals.
  - Focused on Strategy versus Tactics

# The challenges we face

- Current events
- Workstyles have changed
- Staffing changes/shortages
- Audiences
- Governance
- Artificial Intelligence
- Data security and privacy
- Technology



**Emails**

Live Chat

**Direct Mail**

FAQs

**Organic Social**

SEO

**Meetings/Events**

Paid Social

**Paid Media**

Illustrations

**Website**

Print Ads

**Magazine**

Promotions

**Podcasts**

Annual Report

**Trade Shows**

Sponsorships

**Webinars**

Memes

**Text Messaging**

GIFs

**Videos**

Q&As

**Surveys**

Games

**Testimonials**

Mobile Ads

**Press Releases**

Customer Stories



**Newsletters**

Blogs

**Community Forums**

Chat Bot

**Referrals**

Word of Mouth



# By the end of this webinar, you'll:

- Understand the importance of an effective communications plan
- Identify what should be included in your 2024 communications plan including goals, activities, and tactics
- Learn how to manage and communicate your plan so it remains relevant
- Hear an example of how one organization positively changed its image through thoughtful, strategic, and planned communications



**Do you follow a written annual  
marketing/communications  
plan?**



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# Having a documented plan increases marketing effectiveness

Organizations who follow a documented communications plan see an overall marketing maturity score that's **19 points higher** than those who don't.





#SchittsCreek

Get excited!

Everyone  
gets a plan  
today!



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# Download and Go

- Editable Word Doc
- Can be opened in Google Docs for editing
- Completely customizable

## Annual Communications Plan Template



# Preparation tips

- Schedule time to strategize, draft, revise, and review
  - Before budgeting
- Have an understanding of your organizational strategic goals
- Reflect on the wins and challenges from the previous year(s)
- Collect ideas in advance from your team and other departments
- Assess how effective your marketing currently is to help you plan for the future



# 2024 Marketing Ideas

| Idea  | Yes     | Maybe | No   |
|---|---------|-------|------|
| Once a quarter, revise our thinking on an old blog post | B       | J     | N    |
| Release the 2024 Mighty GPS Benchmark Report            | J, N, B |       |      |
| Account-based marketing (ABM) campaign                  | B, J    | N     |      |
| Geofence digital targeting for conference attendees     | B       | J, N  |      |
| Quarterly AMA roundtable for associations               |         | N     | B, J |



*A 10-minute self-assessment to measure your organization's marketing maturity.*

**Get started at:**  
**[themightygps.com](https://themightygps.com)**

# The Mighty GPS

- An overall marketing maturity score and stage for your organization.
- Scores across six categories to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.
- A customized report with next steps for each category to help you move into the next stage of marketing maturity.



# Elements of a successful communications plan



# Parts of the plan



1. **Organizational summary**
2. **Market analysis**
3. **Audiences**
4. **Goals**

# 1. Organizational summary



- Executive Summary of the communications plan
  - Write this last
- Vision statement
- Mission statement
- Organization's strategic goals
- List of products/services
- Personnel
- Budget

# Products/Services

| <b>Product/Service</b> | <b>Deliverables</b>                    |
|------------------------|--|
| Membership             | Access to member content and community |
| Certifications         | Certificates, accreditation            |
| Education              | Sessions, publications, journals       |
| Events / Meetings      | Conferences, webinars, networking      |
| Advocacy               | Legislative support, reporting         |
| Foundation             | Research, scholarships                 |

# Marketing Personnel

| <b>Title</b>              | <b>Responsibilities</b>                               |
|---------------------------|---|
| VP of Communications      | Strategic leadership, oversee budget and plan, PR     |
| Director of Marketing     | Oversee campaigns and ad spend, report data, strategy |
| Marketing Manager         | Marketing operations, content, and campaign creation  |
| Digital Marketing Manager | Digital, content, campaign creation, SEO & SEM        |
| Event Coordinator         | Coordinate events and event content                   |

“

The business enterprise has two—  
and only two—basic functions:  
**marketing and innovation.**

Marketing and innovation produce  
results; all the rest are costs.

Marketing is the distinguishing,  
unique function of the business.

—PETER DRUCKER



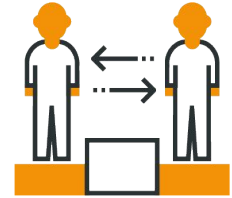
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Do you spend 5 -10% of your  
annual revenue on marketing?



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# 2. Market analysis



- Industry research and trends
  - What will your industry look like in 2 years? 5 years? 10 years?
- Market position
  - Where do you sit? What metrics do you use?
- Unique value proposition
  - What do you do better than anyone else and why?
- Competitors
  - What are they doing well? What are they not doing well?





# 3. Audiences



## Nonprofits

- Donors
- Funders
- Clients
- Volunteers
- Community Leaders

## Associations

- Members
- Chapters
- Legislators
- Volunteers
- Community Leaders

## Universities

- Students
- Parents
- Alumni
- Donors
- Faculty & Staff
- Community Leaders

## Government

- Citizens
- Leadership
- Agencies
- State Leaders
- Employees
- Contractors



# 3. Audiences



- Research is often needed to understand:
  - Needs
  - Perceptions
  - Preferred channels of communication
    - Website
    - Digital: emails, social media, texts, newsletters
    - Direct mail: invoices, bill inserts, postcards
    - Public: billboards, radio, TV

PERSONA #2

## Annette Homan, CAE

### Chief Operating Officer

Active Mighty Citizen | RIMS – The Risk Management Society



“Investing in a new membership organization is a risk. I trust that Mighty Citizen’s resources can help my team to produce better results.”

#### BACKGROUND

RIMS has been a member of IAMC since 2020. Annette has been RIMS for over 10 years. She manages a staff of 58 employees. ASAE Member.

| MOTIVATIONS   | TASKS & SITE USAGE  | PAIN POINTS   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knows what it’s like not to have colleagues to bounce ideas off of</li> <li>Wants to further her profession and support her staff</li> <li>Has a real need to increase results (and quickly!)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intermittent as a prospect; a few times a week since joining</li> <li>Desktop / laptop</li> <li>Downloads resources and forwards to her marketing team</li> <li>Event registration for her team</li> <li>Frequently clicks through and forwards specific articles</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding the tool available and how her use them</li> <li>How to make the most membership</li> <li>Not a ton of time to e</li> <li>ROI</li> </ul> |

| WISH LIST   | TOUCHPOINTS  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear direction on how to increase renewals and retention (new tool or resource)</li> <li>Networking and social events. She is social and likes to hear how others are using the resources, tools, and membership</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member Onboarding</li> <li>Emails</li> <li>Newsletters</li> <li>Events</li> </ul> |

PERSONA #1

## Steven Stout, FSAE, CAE

### Executive Director

Active Mighty Citizen | Texas Society of Association Executives



“With the support of the International Association of Mighty Citizens, TSAE offers a stronger digital presence, which empowers our members to do better work.”

#### BACKGROUND

TSAE has been a member of IAMC since 2012. Stephen joined TSAE in 2016 after over 9 years at another association. He manages a staff of seven. ASAE Member.

| MOTIVATIONS   | TASKS & SITE USAGE   | PAIN POINTS   |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make a difference in his community and with his team</li> <li>Find new and innovative ways to provide resources and networking for their members to enhance their profession</li> <li>Represent members in state and federal government</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly</li> <li>Desktop / laptop</li> <li>Loves Mighty Citizen Insights, reads and shares with his team</li> <li>Doesn’t attend many events due to his schedule, but sends his team</li> <li>Checks new education opportunities every few months</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small staff with everyone wearing multiple hats</li> <li>How to get all staff involved at all levels</li> <li>Needs solutions for his meetings team</li> </ul> |

| WISH LIST  | TOUCHPOINTS  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More courses and additional topics for his team</li> <li>A certificate program for his staff to showcase the skills they have learned and put them on a track that’s easily managed.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emails</li> <li>Newsletters</li> <li>Conferences</li> <li>Webinars</li> </ul> |

I'M FEELING THIS, LIKE, DEEP  
ACHING SENSE OF DREAD



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# 3. Audiences



- Key current members, donors, or customers
  - How can you grow them?
- Key target prospective members, donors, or customers
  - How can you engage them?
- Channels
  - What are my audiences using?

# 4. Goals

- 3 communications goals
  - Don't overcommit
- Listed in order of priority
- Broad and strategic
- Ladder up to organizational goals
- Establish KPIs



# 4. Goals



- **Goal**

- **Activities:** For each goal, what activities will you undertake to reach it?
  - **Metrics:** How will you measure whether your activities are successful?
  - **Tactics:** What tactics must you complete for each activity?

## **Goal #1: Retain membership**

- **Activity #1: Improve the new member onboarding experience**
  - **Metric:** 80% renewal in Year 1
  - **Stretch Metric:** 90% renewal in Year 1
  - **Tactics:**
    - Welcome kit (digital and print options) with clear directions on how to register online and access members-only content, Mighty Citizen badge, and benefit reminder document.
    - Monthly social, emails & postcards showcasing a single benefit with easy steps on how to use it.
    - Welcome call from the local Mighty Citizen Chapter and social media shoutout from National.
    - Review new member activity stats and identify trends / contact points for inactive members.
- **Activity #2: Increase annual meeting attendance**
  - **Metric:** 50% of members attend
  - **Stretch Metric:** 60% of members attend
  - **Tactics:**
    - Offer a hybrid event option





# Last Step: Go Back to Step 1



## Executive Summary

We'll know we've been successful if we reach these goals (see measurable metrics of success in the [Goals](#) section):

1. Retain membership
2. Increase revenue through the usage of products and services
3. Increase brand awareness



# How to manage the plan

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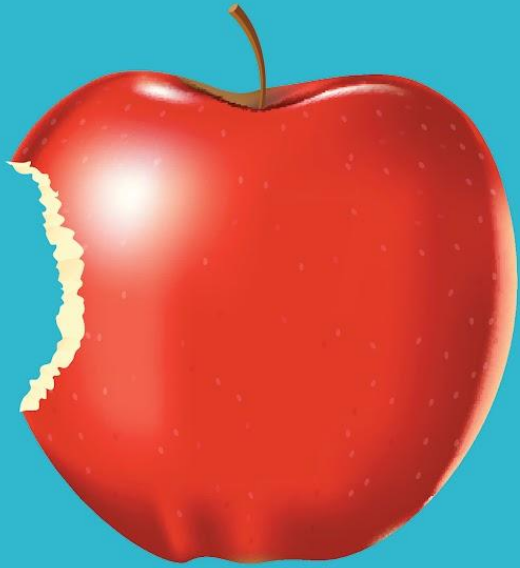
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# Ownership of the plan

- Led by most senior communications staff member
- Solicit ideas from other team members
- Share it with full communications team for feedback
- Share it with leadership and other departments
- Check progress monthly
  - Are you where you should be?
  - Make any necessary strategic updates
- Update status quarterly
  - Add updates on metrics
  - Share with the communications team



**Bite**



**Full Staff**

**Snack**



**Executives**

**Meal**



**Communications**

# Put in practice: North Fort Bend Water Authority



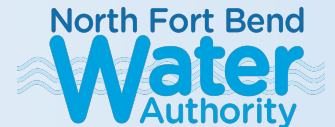
# Research

1. Audiences don't know what NFBWA does, nor why it exists.
2. Most resident aren't motivated to conserve water.
3. Residents take a reactive—rather than proactive—approach to monitoring and reducing water use.
4. Communicating directly with residents is challenging.
5. Larry's Toolbox contains valuable resources, but Larry the Talking Sprinkler isn't the right messenger.



# Digital marketing audit

- Invisible in organic search results for all keywords researched
  - All sites have relatively low online authority
- Few instances of any Texas water authority ranking in Google's top-10 for any term
  - Google doesn't consider search location as important
- Long form content is performing well
- Other similar organizations websites seem to perform well



# Audiences

- MUDs (Municipal Utility Districts)
- Consumers
- Utility operators
- Housing developers/builders/engineers
- Neighborhood organizations (e.g. HOAs)





# Marketing plan goals

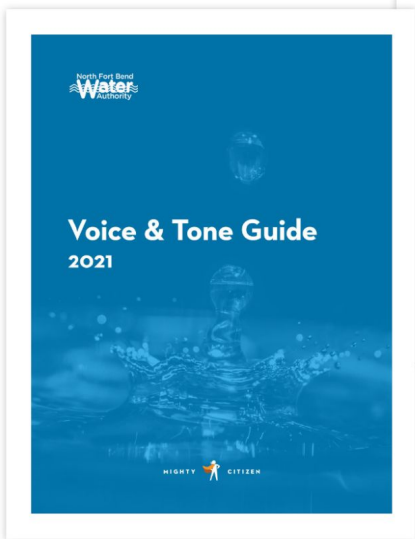
1. **Primary:** Increase brand awareness, trust and understanding of the NFBWA.
2. Educate NFBWA's audiences on its mission, purpose, and conservation efforts.
3. Build a stronger digital marketing presence for NFBWA.



# Activity 1: Website update



# Activity 2: Messaging



North Fort Bend Water Authority

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North Fort Bend Water Authority

## Goals and Principles

### Our Goal and Value Moving Forward

The North Fort Bend Water Authority protects our most valuable resource, water. In 2016, the NFBWA was created by the Texas Legislature and tasked with facing an incredible water resource for our country's 360,000 residents. In its years, we have created a strategy that will reduce groundwater use by 40%, keep the northern portion of Texas, and protect our water flowing, and build back the dangers of subsidence, all while maintaining government.

We also work to educate and collaborate within the local community. Thanks to years of local sources for local information regarding water, irrigation, and conservation. We are your partner.

### We Prove Our Value Through . . .

**Education.** We do more reports. Our job is to give every resident the knowledge they need to do information as simple as possible.

**Building Trust.** We are a government organization paid for by the public. Trust is paramount we help provide, will always remain constant. Transparency is key. Heavy lifting must have the other way to our community.

**Empowerment.** "You can lead a horse to water" is how the age old saying goes. Our difference is that we do. We give our community the knowledge and resources they need to conserve water. Through our engineering, residents to conserve, responses from us to save time.

**Empathy.** Our team might be able to volunteer, but on the end of the day, if a water bill is high a one solution can only help to stretch. Since we're all humans here and humans have feelings, understanding. We need to say regularly and explicitly, that we understand that a large water bill

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North Fort Bend Water Authority

## Tone Overview

Your tone decisions will set your message. Think about it like this - you have the same voice all the time, just your own changes. You might see one voice when you're talking to a friend and another when you're talking to a boss. Your tone is what we say. Tone is how we say it.

### When We Create Content, We Sound . . .

**Business.** We say what we mean and we mean what we say. We think deeply about what we really want to communicate to our audience and partners, instead of simply creating content because we think we have to.

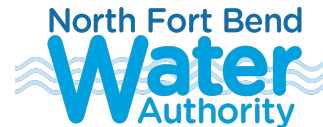
**Public.** The danger of water changes, subsidence, and flooding are very real stories. The work we do is serious, but it's also exciting and high on fire. We don't believe in the goal of our language to the community. We are all in together, but we like to remain hopeful.

**Confident.** We are the experts in the room. Our plans are backed by science and engineers. We worked with Texas' best to develop these strategies and we feel great about it.

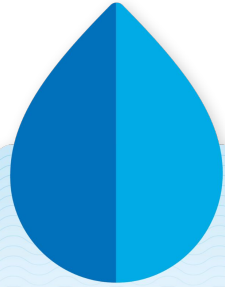
**Empathy.** The NFBWA is a team. We are putting our funding to good use by building master pipelines across the region. We are collaborating with elected officials and home builders. We are in your neighborhood, on the ground, helping you. There is a lot of work to be done and we are right there with you every step of the way.

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April 2021



# Activity 3: Collateral

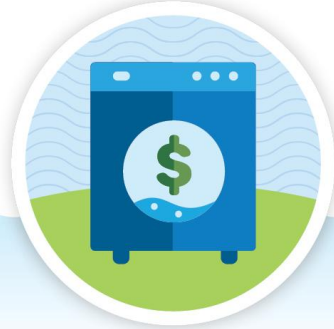


## Provide. Conserve. Educate.

The NFBWA's mission is to provide a plentiful supply of water, promote programs to conserve, and educate the community about the precious resource of water. Saving water helps prevent subsidence—the sinking of the land due to overpumping groundwater.

The NFBWA's plan to keep clean water flowing includes investing in surface water infrastructure that will support our growing community for generations to come.

**Together, infrastructure and conservation prevent subsidence from damaging our community.**



## Get Paid to Upgrade

Are your appliances or sprinkler system out-of-date and wasting water?

If so, it's time for an upgrade. You may be eligible for a rebate on a portion of your expenses towards an approved repair or replacement of your irrigation system or household appliances.

Let's get started on those upgrades.



To learn more and sign up, visit: [nfbwa.com/resident-rebate](https://nfbwa.com/resident-rebate)



## Free Sprinkler System Evaluation

Sign up today for our W.I.S.E. Guys Program

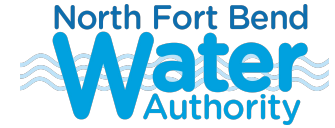
After the evaluation is complete, you'll receive an online report with recommended repairs or adjustments. You are NOT obligated to make any of the recommended changes, but you might save some water (and money) if you do.

You will be automatically entered into a monthly drawing for a prize.



To learn more and sign up, visit: [nfbwa.com/wise-guys](https://nfbwa.com/wise-guys)

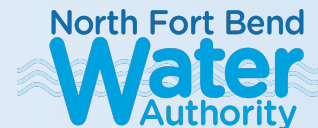
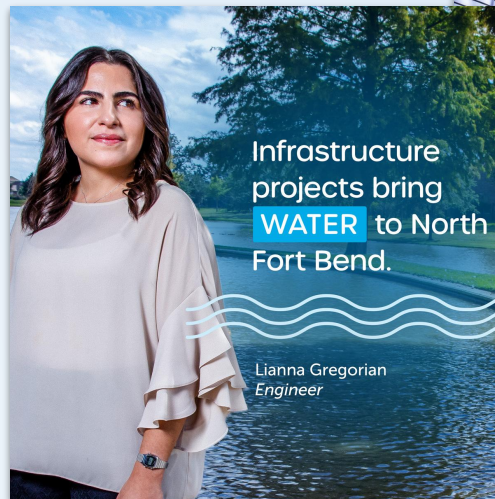
# Activity 4: Campaigns



| NFBWA                      | Season    | Funnel Placement | Audience  |      |           | CTA         |               |                        |                   |                  |                          | Channel        |                     |                  |         |              |         |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|------|-----------|-------------|---------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------|---------------------|------------------|---------|--------------|---------|
|                            |           |                  | Providers | HOAs | Residents | Watch video | Visit website | Sign up for newsletter | Download artifact | CP interest form | Sign up/install/purchase | Organic social | Ads (social, print) | NFBWA Newsletter | Website | Landing Page | Webinar |
| <b>Water Force</b>         |           |                  |           |      |           |             |               |                        |                   |                  |                          |                |                     |                  |         |              |         |
| Awareness                  | Q1        | Awareness        | x         | x    | x         | x           |               |                        |                   |                  |                          |                | x                   | x                | x       |              | x       |
| Promo                      | Q2        | Awareness        | x         | x    | x         | x           |               |                        |                   |                  |                          |                | x                   | x                | x       |              | x       |
| Promo                      | Q3        | Awareness        | x         | x    | x         | x           |               |                        |                   |                  |                          |                | x                   |                  | x       |              | x       |
| Promo                      | Q4        | Awareness        | x         | x    | x         | x           |               |                        |                   |                  |                          |                | x                   |                  | x       |              | x       |
| <b>About NFBWA</b>         |           |                  |           |      |           |             |               |                        |                   |                  |                          |                |                     |                  |         |              |         |
| NFBWA Mission/Purpose      | Q1        | Consideration    | x         | x    | x         |             | x             |                        |                   |                  |                          |                | x                   |                  | x       |              | x       |
| NFBWA/RWA fee              | Q2        | Consideration    | x         | x    | x         | x           | x             |                        |                   |                  |                          |                | x                   |                  | x       |              | x       |
| Infrastructure             | Q3        | Consideration    | x         | x    | x         | x           | x             |                        |                   |                  |                          |                | x                   |                  | x       |              | x       |
| Groundwater reduction plan | Q4        | Consideration    | x         | x    | x         |             | x             |                        |                   |                  |                          |                | x                   |                  | x       |              | x       |
| <b>Conservation</b>        |           |                  |           |      |           |             |               |                        |                   |                  |                          |                |                     |                  |         |              |         |
| Home water use             | Q1        | Conversion       |           | -    | x         | x           |               |                        |                   |                  |                          |                | x                   | x                | x       | x            | x       |
| Irrigation                 | Q2        | Conversion       |           | -    | x         | x           |               |                        |                   |                  |                          |                | x                   | x                | x       | x            | x       |
| Native and adaptive        | Q3        | Conversion       |           | -    | x         | x           |               |                        |                   | x                |                          |                | x                   | x                | x       | x            | x       |
| Subsidence                 | Q4        | Conversion       |           | -    | x         | x           |               |                        |                   |                  |                          |                | x                   | x                | x       | x            | x       |
| <b>Initiatives</b>         |           |                  |           |      |           |             |               |                        |                   |                  |                          |                |                     |                  |         |              |         |
| W.I.S.E. Guys              | Q2        | Loyalty          |           | -    | x         |             |               |                        |                   |                  |                          |                | x                   | x                | x       | x            | x       |
| Water My Yard/Rain         | Q3        | Loyalty          |           | -    | x         |             |               |                        |                   |                  |                          |                | x                   | x                | x       |              | x       |
| High-efficiency appliances | Q4        | Loyalty          |           | -    | x         |             |               |                        |                   |                  |                          |                | x                   | x                | x       |              | x       |
| Larry? / Learning lab      | 1/quarter | Loyalty          | X         | -    |           |             |               |                        |                   |                  |                          |                | x                   | x                | x       |              | x       |

# Water Force

- Cornerstone of the 2022 marketing strategy
- Foundation of all activities and creative assets
- Puts a “face” to the brand, connecting work with people who live or work in the community



# W.I.S.E. Guys ads

SAVE WATER, SAVE MONEY

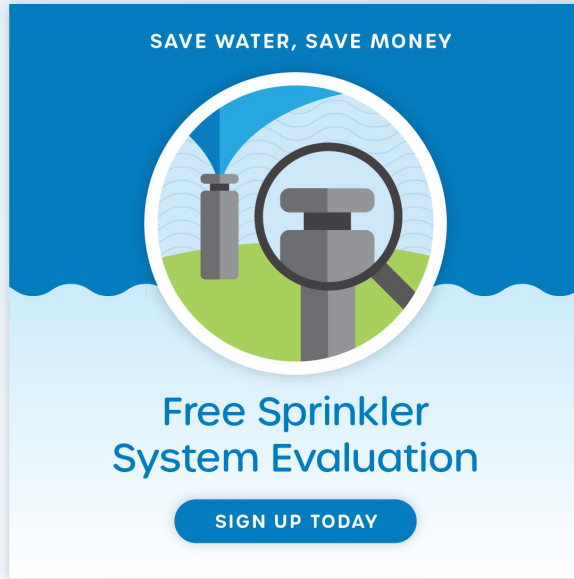
## Free Sprinkler System Evaluation

SIGN UP TODAY



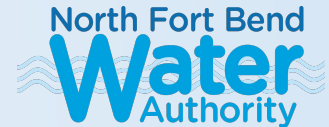
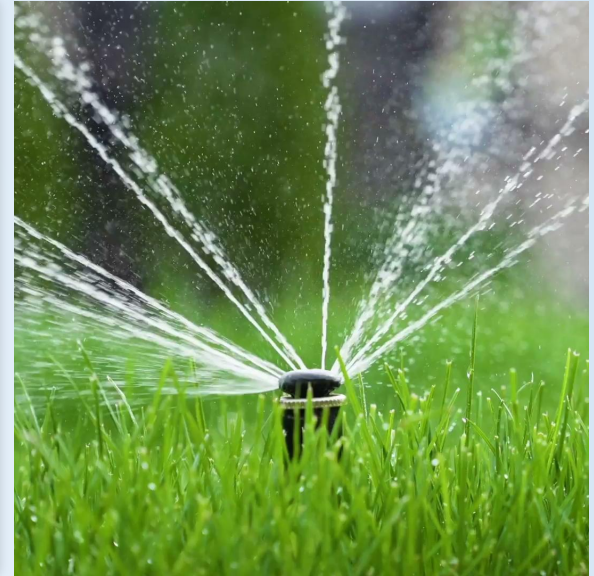
North Fort Bend  
**Water**  
Authority

SAVE WATER, SAVE MONEY



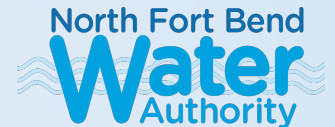
## Free Sprinkler System Evaluation

SIGN UP TODAY



# Highlights/Results

- Strategy that has consistent messaging + supports NFBWA's goals
- Water Force photos and videos humanize the brand
- Social audience growth grew 108.3%
- Overall website traffic from new users up 89% over previous year
- Average session duration on website up 14% over previous year
- Website engagement rate is over 55% with downloads, videos, CTAs!
- Organic search impressions up 1,979.0% (not a typo!)
- # of search queries up 362.8%
- More positive commentary on social





# Summing it all up

- You *need* a written communications plan
- Don't overcommit on your goals, but think big
- Get buy-in from the team
- Set clear metrics
- Track metrics and report on it quarterly



# Thank you!

Today's slides, the communications plan template, end-of-year toolkit and more:

[mightycitizen.com/commsplan](https://mightycitizen.com/commsplan)

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