



### **Research/Background:**

In late 2018, the Michigan Legislature approved a measure requiring all state agencies to adopt five-year strategic plans. The Michigan Department of Technology, Management & Budget (DTMB) has long embraced strategic planning. However, the agency decided to use the opportunity presented by the Legislature's action to not only introduce new strategic goals to employees, but also develop new mission, vision, and values statements to reflect a change in overall focus and philosophy being promoted by Michigan's newly elected governor and her cabinet, which included DTMB's director.

Since the overall response to a previous town-hall style event focused on strategic planning was positive, feedback from that event, coupled with the results of three other employee-focused surveys, were taken into account at the very beginning of the planning process.

- An internal communications survey conducted in May 2019 by the DTMB Communications Office showed that employees wanted more visibility from senior leaders, including DTMB's director. In addition, survey results indicated that employees wanted more information about the director's vision and direction for the department.
- An employee survey, conducted for DTMB by PricewaterhouseCoopers in March 2018, revealed that 61% of survey respondents said agency leaders give employees a clear picture of the direction DTMB was headed in, the first year the question showed a decrease since 2012.
- Survey data from a 2018 town-hall style event for DTMB managers that was focused on strategic planning revealed that participants were receptive to an in-person event. Respondents also liked that the event was structured as a late-night talk show. However, respondents felt the event was too long.

In addition to survey data, the internet was used to gather a wide array of information, including strategic plans from Wayne State University and other organizations and articles from publications like the Harvard Business Review, Forbes, Fast Company and others on such topics as the keys to successfully launching strategic plans, employee engagement, and organizational culture change.

### **Planning:**

Since the executive team had already drafted the mission, vision, values, and strategic goals, which were then submitted to the governor for approval, the communications office was charged with developing a plan to rollout the strategic plan to DTMB's 2,800 employees focused on achieving the following goals and objectives.

- Goal 1 | Introduce the new strategic plan to DTMB employees.
  - Provide the agency's 2,800 employees with a clear picture of senior leaders' short- and long-term goals and vision for DTMB.
  - Provide employees with the opportunity to get to know the director and learn more about her goals and vision for DTMB.
  - Create a series of rollout events that give employees the opportunity to hear from and interact with the director and senior leaders without making employees feel like they are hearing another boring PowerPoint presentation. Invite managers only to the first event to help them prepare to answer questions and encourage their teams to attend subsequent sessions.
- Goal 2 | Encourage employees to embrace DTMB's new mission, vision, values, and goals in their day-to-day work.
  - Develop a look and feel for strategic plan print and digital communications that is eye catching, visual appealing, professional, and generates pride and excitement. Materials should not look like the typical state government issue collateral.



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- Focus initial informational efforts on the mission, vision and values; provide a deeper dive into the strategic goals through visioning sessions to be held in 2020 and led by the senior leaders of each division within DTMB.
- Create messaging that is conversational and personal in tone (i.e., uses you, we, us) and invokes a sense of pride in the organization and personal ownership when it comes to each individual's role in the overall success of DTMB.

The communications office worked with the director and senior management team, as well as DTMB's Office of Performance Management, to refine the initial plan and garner support from internal stakeholders. Since DTMB is funded with taxpayer dollars, the budget for the effort played a huge role in decision-making. Design work was coordinated through an internal design team, and printing was also handled in-house for a cost of \$4,400. Since DTMB offices are scattered throughout Michigan, a Skype broadcast was made available to those employees working in areas outside of Lansing and Detroit. The venue costs for the 10 scheduled live events, including refreshments and American Sign Language interpreters, came to approximately \$5,000.

#### **Execution/Creative Quality:**

To help employees recognize strategic plan information and create some internal "buzz" around the new set of core values, a strategic plan sub-brand was developed. Design work centered on a hand-drawn, scripted font inspired by vintage baseball posters to appeal to the broad array of employees working at DTMB, which ranges from computer programmers and CPAs to auto mechanics and steeplejacks. The script was featured in a series of six posters highlighting the mission, vision, and values, as well as "laptop" stickers that were handed out at each session and also provided to managers to give to employees as a reward for putting the values into action. A microsite on the employee intranet site provided detailed information about the strategic plan and also featured the sub-brand, which was carried through in email and newsletter communications about the event.

Execution of the strategic plan rollout was built around a series of 10 in-person events in Lansing and Detroit that were dubbed the *Help. Connect. Solve. Tour*. The event included a very personal interview with the director, where she talked about being adopted, growing up with a parent dealing with a chronic illness, and her career and how it shaped who she is today and her vision for DTMB. The event also included the presentation of the DTMB strategic goals via a riff off Wheel of Fortune. Audience contestants competed during each session to solve a word puzzle describing each of the five strategic goals. Once the puzzle was solved, goal "owners," members of the senior management team, were invited to briefly talk about their goal. Each session also included three videos highlighting DTMB employees' community involvement and volunteer work to highlight the core values in action.

#### **Evaluation:**

Nearly 90% of DTMB's 2,800 employees attended a session of the *Help. Connect. Solve. Tour*, either in person or via a Skype broadcast made available to DTMB offices in northern Michigan, Grand Rapids, and the Upper Peninsula. In a post-event survey, 72% of event attendees indicated that they found the *Help. Connect. Solve. Tours* informative and valuable. In the same survey, when asked which segment of the presentation was the most informative, 60% of respondents indicated that the mission/vision/values segment was the most informative segment, while 52% indicated that the meet-the-director segment was the most informative (respondents could check as many categories as applied). In comments, respondents urged DTMB to "keep the momentum going" when it comes to continuing the strategic plan conversation. Articles in employee newsletters and a new round of visioning sessions focused on the strategic goals are currently in development. The six "laptop" stickers highlighting DTMB's core values became such a hot commodity among employees that they had to be kept in a locked closet. They remain popular, even four months after they were initially handed out. The impact of the strategic plan rollout on employee engagement remains to be seen, as PricewaterhouseCoopers will be conducting an employee survey on behalf of DTMB March 2 – 23, 2020, results of which will be available in May.