

**CalDesal Outreach Communications Committee Meeting Notes**

**Tuesday, February 4, 2020**

**3:00-4:00 p.m.**

**Members present:**

Stacy Taylor (Chair), Mesa Water District

Sonja Morgan (Vice-Chair), South Coast Water District

Gina Ayala, Orange County Water District

Roxanne Rountree, Eastern Municipal Water District

**Guests:** Wendy Ridderbusch, Executive Director

Chair Stacy Taylor asked ED Wendy Ridderbusch to report to the larger Committee on the status of both Subcommittee meetings – Social Media and Website – that were held last week.

**Social Media Subcommittee** – Tiffany Baca (Chair), Lorraine Garcia, Jessica Jones, and Wendy Ridderbusch.

Tiffany set up the schedule of Subcommittee meetings for the rest of the year. We talked about recommendations to the current CalDesal social media platforms. Feedback from the Subcommittee was that our platform look and feel were dated, they have not been kept up to current trends. There are not very many followers, or a large amount of engagement from folks coming to our sites.

To be effective, content needs to be added to the page and we need to actively manage and prune these sites. The Subcommittee agreed that CalDesal should start small and focused with **Facebook** as the primary site. Currently only 59 people like our FB page, 67 people follow us, the last official post was March of 2019 with 555 views and zero likes. Lots of room to begin adding value.

Tiffany noted that the logo and its many variations becomes more pixelated as you move down the page so getting these cleaned up was also a priority to help keep the branding intact. FB is for storytelling and education and is well placed to serve the needs of CalDesal and its members for telling the story of desal as well as the multiple ongoing and recently completed projects.

With respect to **Twitter**, our last post was November of 2019. 406 tweets total, 348 followers, only 408 are following us. We have only had 81 likes. Twitter does not have as broad of an audience and while the Subcommittee felt that CalDesal should utilize its Twitter feed to provide quick updates, it should use FB first.

**LinkedIn** is the preferred second choice for social media platforms for CalDesal. It is business-focused but people are using it like it is a FB for work purposes. It is easy to tag people, and give shout outs to members.

MWDOC is going to allow CalDesal to use their consultant through Tiffany Baca, to create a video banner that allows for movement and attracts interest to our **website homepage**. The Subcommittee has been tasked to come up with language that will overlay the water video imagery. Tiffany also suggested that we add a section entitled, “Our Story” block that sits on the right-hand side of business pages. It would provide more graphic options and an opportunity to provide a short narrative of what we are all about.

We need to also focus on building a true network. Wendy Ridderbusch has been tasked with going in to FB and inviting others to follow CalDesal, share items from our members, and like other people’s pages that connect with us. We decided to target legislators and their staff too.

The order of preference for social media platforms: (1) FB, (2)LinkedIn, and then (3)Twitter. Wendy will be responsible for adding and keeping relevant content up to date in the short term. The main overarching goal is to grow our audience.

Sonja pointed out that while the original plan was to focus on one social media platform, we should also focus on LinkedIn. A shift has been made from FB to LinkedIn. LinkedIn is more male-dominated versus FB which is women-dominated. She urged the Subcommittee to use both especially since engineering companies, etc. are on LinkedIn. She gets the most activity from LinkedIn.

Gina agrees that LinkedIn is big with businesses and concurs with Sonja with regards to using LinkedIn. Stacy felt that we should not just go with the social media platform that is up and running, which for CalDesal is FB. The larger committee is asking that the Social Media Subcommittee focus on getting a LinkedIn page up and running and reconsider the order of the social media platforms. Roxanne told the group that their agency has not used LinkedIn, but instead use Twitter that houses their vendors, fellow agencies, etc.

**Actions/Next Steps**

* Continue using FB at the current activity level and improve CalDesal logo throughout the page
* Develop the CalDesal LinkedIn page and beta test its use
* Continue using Twitter at the current activity level
* Work with MWDOC’s consultant to:
* create a video banner for CalDesal.org homepage
* add an “Our Story” section to CalDesal.org website

**Website Subcommittee** – Jessica Jones, Poseidon, Chair, Maritza Fairfield (Metropolitan WD), Tiffany Baca (MWDOC), and Lorraine Garcia (Coachella Valley WD).

Some overlap between social media and website committees. We will have a mission statement that we can put on the website. We have a few different “faux” mission statements.

We plan on adding drone shots, a short bio and photo of the Chair, and showcase projects. Ones that are already completed, and those being built now.

We also want to add testimonials from our members that we can feature on the website. We are going to build an FAQ page. Agencies are going to contribute graphics to us.

We talked about posting an electronic membership kit so you could click on it and get more information if you were thinking about joining the association. We plan to work the “members only” section of the website with a password and login.

We also want to link with other entities like MSSC, or the Multi-State Salinity Coalition. We also plan to create a newsroom to post recent news stories or op-eds in one section on the site to be updated regularly.

CalDesal has a hard-coded website. We don’t have a content manager, only their web team can post. We have to make many changes to even get functional. Stacy asked the website Subcommittee to come back to the Committee with a schedule and timeline. What we need to do first, second, third, etc. It will most likely take a year to get all of this done.

Stacy led the committee through a “go around” for input from the members on the call to respond to both the Social Media Subcommittee and Website Subcommittee reports. The one recurrent theme through discussion was consensus that **WordPress** was the best, easiest platform to utilize for the CalDesal website being run with the ED and member volunteers.

**Actions/Next Steps**

* Explore consultant/vendor to move CalDesal.org to WordPress platform for better content management, members only section, navigation, etc.
* Connect w MSSC
* Continue brainstorming key words for CalDesal’s mission statement
* Request content for CalDesal.org including:
* Chair bio and portrait
* Member project graphics, images, and video
* Member testimonials re: CalDesal

**Recent communication activity**

Wendy informed the committee that CalDesal worked with two of its members, Poseidon and SDCWA, to place an op-ed refuting misleading information about the Carlsbad Desalination Plant. CalMatters ended up running the op-ed and that was also printed in the Visalia Times, the Desert Sun, and the Ventura Star.

Wendy is also going to be a guest speaker at the Orange County Cities’ ACCOC Environment and Water Committee Meeting on March 2, 2020 to take place in Mesa Water District’s boardroom as a result of a request made by Stacy Taylor about CalDesal presenting to highlight recent changes in the organization and for membership recruitment.

**Vetting content through Outreach Communications Committee lens**

The four officers from CalDesal’s Executive Committee edited the draft op-ed which was placed in CalMatters. Now that the Outreach Communications Committee has been formed, these op-eds will be run through the lens of this committee as an additional filter after the Executive Committee officers give their input. This will lead to a more thorough editing to prevent missteps from being printed.

Stacy then led a discussion about these items with the committee:

**Draft Communications Plan (attached)**

Stacy included the draft CalDesal Communications Plan in the packet and kept it short at two pages. She is asking the committee to take a look at the draft plan within the context of the fact that everyone is very busy with other permanent full-time jobs so we want to make sure that we are being smart – SMART: Strategic/Specific, Measurable, Actionable/Achievable, Realistic/Relevant, and Targeted/Time-Bound when utilizing the committee’s valuable time. She would like the committee to be prepared to comment on this draft plan in order to approve a final plan at the March meeting.

Please e-mail any redlined edits to the Draft Communications Plan to StacyT@MesaWater.org by/before our next Outreach Communications Committee call on March 3rd when this item will be agendized for discussion.

**Upcoming communication activity**

* Annual CalDesal Conference – We are going to utilize the existing social media during or shortly after the conference.
* Other Issues? – Chair Taylor asked if there were any additional items that should be placed on the March meeting agenda? Feel free to e-mail Wendy at WendyR@CalDesal.org

Next Outreach Communications Committee Meeting: **Tuesday, March 3, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.**

**Adjourned by Chair Taylor at 3:53 p.m.**