

CHAPTER 5 – STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN

5.1 Introduction

The WRMP strategic communication plan is a critical component of the WRMP as it establishes the process to solicit and convey information to and from the community and GWA employees.

Since research was necessary to develop a strategic communication plan, an immediate action plan was developed first. The immediate action plan included fundamental strategies and tactics that would begin communication between GWA and its customers and employees about the master plan. The immediate action plan allowed the outreach program to begin before the research component was completed.

The research was completed in July 2005. This strategic communication plan includes the fundamental components of the immediate action plan, but puts them in an overall strategic framework based on research.

5.2 Plan Components

Successful implementation of a communication plan requires trained, empowered, dedicated staff knowledgeable about the community and the public outreach process. Adequate resources, both human and fiscal, are necessary to ensure the communication efforts will accomplish the goals and objectives of the communication program.

A communication plan typically includes specific components:

- Communication goals and objectives: Why do you want to communicate?
- Messages: What do you want to say?
- Audiences: With whom do you want to communicate?
- Strategies: How will you accomplish your communication goals?
- Outreach tactics: How will the strategies be implemented; what will you do?

The strategic communication plan follows this basic format and includes both internal audience and public outreach tactics to communicate about GWA's WRMP.

5.3 Research

Research was conducted in three phases. In October 2004, 17 one-on-one interviews were conducted with community leaders to discuss the WRMP. In April 2005 three focus groups were held with residents of Guam to discuss the master plan. In June 2005 a telephone survey was conducted with 400 Guam residents. This research identified levels of awareness of the master plan and related issues, perceptions about water and wastewater service, terminology used by local residents to discuss water and wastewater issues, and other issues that would help guide the communication program.

Key research findings include:

- Water and wastewater management ranks second only to education in terms of importance for Guam residents.

- Although about a third of Guam residents have heard of the master plan, most are not aware of what the master plan is.
- The EPA, engineering consultants, and military representatives are the most trustworthy sources of information about water and wastewater issues on Guam. Elected officials, radio talk show hosts, and GWA representatives are among the least trustworthy sources.
- Newspapers are by far the most common source of information about water and wastewater issues, followed by KUAM-TV and talk radio. Only 10% of Guam residents see GWA as a source of information.

5.4 Communication Goals

- Raise public awareness about the WRMP.
- Foster internal awareness and buy-in for the WRMP.
- Present clear and concise information about the benefits to GWA customers of long-range planning.
- Foster support for specific future projects that may be identified in the WRMP.
- Pursue accurate and balanced media coverage for the master plan.
- Solicit community and GWA staff input regarding issues to be addressed in the WRMP.

5.5 Short Term Objectives

The immediate action plan included the following short-term objectives:

- Identify an initial list of stakeholders.
- Initiate public opinion research.
- Expand lines of communication between GWA staff and stakeholders.
- Begin to inform stakeholders and the media of the purpose and need for the WRMP.
- Obtain input about what stakeholders would like to see included in the WRMP.
- Develop basic tools for outreach, including general information materials, a rapid response system for distributing information to stakeholders and the media, and a database that categorizes stakeholders.
- Prepare spokespeople to effectively deliver messages about the master plan.
- Establish a media monitoring program to identify and respond to media coverage, including on talk radio programs.

5.6 Long Term Objectives

The objectives of the strategic communication plan are to:

- Finalize actions identified in the short-term objectives.
- Build understanding and support for the WRMP.

5.7 Public Outreach Strategies

- Use the WRMP as a platform to inform audiences of GWA's mission to be a reliable, efficient and effective utility for its customers.
- Inform stakeholders about what the Master Plan includes.
- Seek opportunities for engineering consultants to serve as spokespeople about the WRMP.
- Establish GWA as a source of information about water and wastewater issues by increasing the frequency and variety of communication to residents.

5.8 Key Messages

Research identified messages about the WRMP that the public felt were most important. These include:

- This planning for water resources is imperative to ensure that our children and their children will have this important resource available to them.
- GWA wants to provide water that Guam residents will be confident is safe to drink.
- The WRMP will ensure the water and wastewater system works for everyone on Guam.
- It is vital to the future of Guam that we restore and protect the natural beauty and the quality of life on Guam.
- We need to be able to focus on routine maintenance and prevention of problems instead of needing to always focus on emergency repairs.

5.9 Audiences

The communication plan seeks to reach the following audiences:

- GWA employees
- CCU
- Mayors, Mayors' Council
- Governor, Lt. Governor and legislators
- Business community
- Village residents
- Interest groups (health, academic, environmental)
- Cultural groups
- Media
- Regulators (e.g., EPA, GEPA).

5.10 Communication Methods

Following are the recommended communication methods to reach out to target audiences with information about the WRMP.

5.10.1 Employee Communication

A key audience for the WRMP is the employees of GWA. An effective public outreach strategy ensures that internal communication about the WRMP is accurate and all GWA staff members are informed about the WRMP goals and progress, as well as about the public outreach activities and information materials. In order to keep GWA staff informed and involved, the following communication activities are recommended:

- **Staff Meetings** – Update management staff about WRMP progress and activities at each staff meeting and request that they update the employees who report to them at regularly scheduled meetings. Seek input from GWA staff. Commit to informing employees about WRMP activities and news items before they are available to the public.
- **“All Hands” Meetings** – Conduct periodic “all hands” meetings for staff in the main office and in the field to ensure that they are up-to-date on the public outreach efforts, as well as the technical progress for the WRMP. Schedule at least two “all hands” meetings per year when members of the Brown and Caldwell team are in Guam so that GWA staff has an opportunity to ask questions of the consultant team and continue to build on the open dialogue that began at the meetings in early June 2004.
- **Materials** – Distribute a copy of the information materials produced for the public outreach efforts prior to their being made available to the public. Notify GWA staff of the location of WRMP information materials so they can obtain additional copies for friends and neighbors. Include periodic updates about the WRMP project in the internal newsletter (see “Pipeline” below). Develop an index of materials and keep updated.
- **Customer Service Staff Briefings** – Make the index and outreach materials available to GWA customer service staff to provide to customers as needed/requested. Brief staff as each piece is published. Hold meetings with customer service staff monthly to hear the questions they are being asked and to discuss how to answer difficult questions.
- **Small Group Meetings** – As appropriate, schedule meetings with small groups of employees to answer specific questions about aspects of the WRMP development, data gathering, outreach efforts and other issues. If possible, include one of the Brown and Caldwell team members (on site or conference call) in these meetings to enhance the relationship between the consulting team and the staff.
- **Pipeline** – Enhance internal biweekly *Pipeline* fliers. These biweekly updates included with paychecks are a good method to provide information to employees.
- **Feedback Forms** – Create forms employees can fill out regarding their opinions about the WRMP and other information about which they would like to hear. Make these forms available at various site locations, lunchrooms and bulletin boards.

5.10.2 Public Outreach

An ongoing effort must be made to communicate with external audiences about the WRMP. Following are recommended public outreach activities.

- **Database** – To distribute information about the WRMP, a mailing list database will be needed. Review any existing mailing list databases and expand or enhance them to reflect key stakeholders, elected officials, media and representatives of key interest groups on Guam. This database should be updated throughout the project by adding names of individuals who attend village or other public events or request information from GWA. The database should be coded so information can be tailored to different audiences.
- **Information Materials** – A variety of information materials must be produced to provide various audiences with information in formats they prefer. Recommended information pieces include a WRMP fact sheet and frequently asked questions (FAQ) written for the layperson, a WRMP project newsletter that will be distributed to external audiences (and internal) quarterly, and a “pocket brochure” that field personnel can easily carry and distribute when asked questions while conducting their work. To enhance the opportunities for two-way communication, all information materials should include GWA contact numbers and each newsletter should include a coupon that can be mailed or faxed to GWA to provide input or request additional information. In addition, a general presentation, which includes a description of the WRMP and infrastructure improvements already completed by GWA, should be developed for use at community meetings or presentations to community organizations. Because there may be meeting settings where use of a PowerPoint presentation will not be possible, develop poster boards to convey basic information to the lay person.
- **Web Site** – Ensure that copies of all information materials are posted on the GWA Web site. Update the Web site to include a specific section about the WRMP and invite users to comment and/or request information; include GWA contact numbers and e-mail addresses. The URL should be prominently included on all information materials, as well.
- **Communication with Local Organizations** – Provide template articles for local organizations to publish in their newsletters. Offer to make presentations for local organizations about the WRMP.
- **Communication with the Military** – Provide monthly updates to military. Urgent information could be put on the commanders’ television channel or disseminated via mass e-mail. Investigate and comply with protocols for conveying information to and through the military. PAO staff can then convey information through this process to military, civilian employees and on- and off-base residents who need to be aware of basic information about such things as outages, traffic impacts, repairs, etc.
- **Public Official Outreach** – To ensure that elected officials are aware of the WRMP project process and schedule, contact each of them to offer an individual briefing. Use the fact sheet and FAQ as a “leave behind” for these meetings, or

provide them to officials who may be interested but do not want to meet. Ensure that each elected official has contact information for the WRMP team so that they may refer constituent calls to GWA or contact GWA themselves if they need additional information. Inform GWA board members about the schedule for public official briefings in case they want to attend.

- **Community Meetings/Presentations** – Several types of community meetings or presentations should be conducted to foster awareness of the master plan and programs at GWA.
 - The first of these are meetings to obtain comments about the draft master plan. Schedule a meeting with the Mayors’ Council to get advice about the best way to obtain feedback from residents in their villages regarding the draft WRMP. Depending on the advice received, schedule and conduct regional community or individual village meetings, similar to the meetings conducted to gather input about what to include in the WRMP. Each of these meetings should be conducted by a neutral facilitator; a GWA staff member and WRMP consultant should make a presentation about what is contained in the draft WRMP before opening the meeting to comments from members of the public. Summaries should be provided to the WRMP consultant team. GWA board members should be informed of the meeting schedule so at least one member can attend each meeting. Prepare a summary of the input received and questions asked at each meeting.
 - Schedule open house format meetings as appropriate to provide updates to residents or businesses about improvements to the water and wastewater system on Guam. Use informational poster boards that describe the project to lay audiences, ensure that staff who can discuss the project will participate in the open house and answer questions in a one-on-one setting, and distribute informational materials about GWA and the master planning process. The open house meetings should be held at a convenient community location and be well publicized in advance (both by invitation and a display advertisement). Add information from the sign in sheets to the database mailing list.
 - Contact organizations on Guam and ask to make a presentation about the Master Plan or specific improvements GWA has made. Use the general PowerPoint presentation or information boards as visual aids. Distribute informational materials at each presentation.
- Schedule a meeting with the Mayors’ Council to get advice about the best way to obtain feedback from residents in their villages regarding the draft WRMP. Depending on the advice received, schedule and conduct regional community or individual village meetings, similar to the meetings conducted to gather input about what to include in the WRMP. Each of these meetings should be conducted by a neutral facilitator; a GWA staff member and WRMP consultant should make a presentation about what is contained in the draft WRMP before opening the meeting to comments from members of the public. Summaries should be provided to the WRMP consultant team and posted on the project

Web site. GWA board members should be informed of the meeting schedule so at least one member can attend each meeting. Prepare a summary of the input received and questions asked at each meeting.

- **Media Relations** – Schedule editorial briefings with *Pacific Daily News* and meet with reporters who cover GWA issues to explain the WRMP purpose, process and schedule. Provide bimonthly articles for direct publication. This would provide a hyperlink to the GWA Web site even when no emergencies are in effect. Respond to misinformation about GWA and the WRMP as appropriate (see Rapid Response below).

Meet with radio talk show hosts to provide similar information. Schedule a trained GWA spokesperson for radio talk show appearances to discuss the WRMP and public input opportunities (see Speaker/Media Training below). Respond to radio talk show misinformation about GWA and the WRMP as appropriate (see Rapid Response below).

- **Speaker/Media Training** – To ensure that GWA’s messages are communicated effectively, spokespersons from GWA staff and board should be identified as soon as possible. Each of these individuals should participate in speaker/media training to ensure spokespeople are comfortable presenting information about the WRMP, familiar with the project messages and well versed in the plan for obtaining community input. This training should be conducted by the Brown and Caldwell communication team as soon as possible. As new representatives join GWA, they should be trained and refreshers held regularly.
- **Rapid Response** –To correct any misinformation about the WRMP in the media, a rapid response program should be developed so that GWA will be able to respond promptly. This program might include writing letters to the editor, placing opinion editorials in the newspaper or on the air, and monitoring and calling into radio talk shows to correct information or take calls from residents.
- **Advertorials** – To ensure GWA’s messages get out, purchase quarterly advertorials in the *PDN* and village newsletters with updates about the WRMP.
- **Communication with Mayors Council** –The Mayors Council has offered to assist GWA by sending out information and announcements about the WRMP and other news to all 19 districts directly through its office. Council meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month and provide time for a 30-minute presentation. Requests must be made one month in advance to allow for consideration and agenda planning. However, the council welcomes and encourages a regular WRMP status update each month.
- **Feedback Forms** –Create forms residents can fill out and return to GWA regarding their opinions about the WRMP and to request additional information. Distribute these forms in the WRMP newsletter, at the GWA customer service office, during outreach presentations and through the GWA Web site. Add contact information to project database.

5.11 Timeline

Several of these communication activities are already under way as part of the immediate action outreach plan. The proposed timeline in Table 5-1 shows recommended target dates for each activity for the 2005 calendar year.

5.12 Implementation

The communication program has been implemented in a variety of ways throughout the WRMP development, including:

- Two fact sheets were prepared for GWA staff during the project kick off meetings in June 2004, one addressed the WRMP and the other, frequently asked questions are included in Appendix 1F.
- All hands meetings with GWA staff in the administrative office and field were conducted in June 2004. GWA management and the WRMP consulting team met with employees to describe the WRMP process, distribute the fact sheet and FAQ, and respond to employee questions about the next steps.
- Research that would form the basis for recommended communication activities was conducted over a period of several months (see section 5.3 of this Chapter). The stakeholder interviews provided an opportunity for one-on-one meetings with Guam community leaders to inform them about the WRMP as well as to obtain their input on GWA programs and practices.
- The village meeting process was initiated with a presentation about the WRMP to the Mayors' Council and a discussion of their preferred community meeting format and schedule. GWA management and the consulting team project manager attended the Mayors' Council meeting.
- Village meetings were conducted throughout Guam. A PowerPoint presentation about the WRMP formed the core of the presentation by GWA staff, and a court reporter was present at all meetings to record comments and questions (included in Appendix 1F) about the WRMP or GWA in general, posed by village residents.
- An editorial calendar for future issues of the newsletter was developed and will guide GWA staff to prepare future newsletters, which are planned for quarterly distribution. The second edition of the external audience newsletter is in production at this writing and includes a description of various improvements under construction or that have been completed during the WRMP process. It also outlines ways community members can provide comments on the draft WRMP, as well as includes a mail-back coupon.

Table 5-1 - 2005 WRMP Communication Timeline

Communication Activities	Week Ending																
	Apr 15	May 1	May 15	Jun 1	Jun 15	Jul 1	Jul 15	Aug 1	Aug 15	Sept 1	Sept 15	Oct 1	Oct 15	Nov 1	Nov 15	Dec 1	Dec 15
Research																	
Complete focus groups																	
Complete telephone survey																	
Finalize messages																	
Informational Materials																	
Develop master plan fact sheet																	
Develop FAQ																	
Newsletter																	
GWA to solicit sign ups for newsletter list through bills and Web																	
Develop first newsletter																	
GWA to finalize list																	
Mail first newsletter																	
Develop story ideas for future newsletters																	
Provide graphic template for newsletter for future issues																	
Edit second newsletter written by GWA staff																	
GWA to update mailing list																	
Mail second newsletter																	
Template Articles																	
GWA to research local organizations with newsletters																	
Write template article for local newsletters																	
GWA to submit articles to organizations and follow up																	
Media																	
Draft op-ed article/letters to the editor																	
GWA to identify signatories and submit prior to next round of village mtgs																	
Village Meetings																	
Develop presentation for second round																	
Calls to prepare for meetings																	
GWA to attend meetings																	

- A WRMP fact sheet and frequently asked questions document have been developed and will be available for distribution to community members at the GWA office or at presentations, village meetings and similar gatherings.
- The first GWA external audience newsletter, the Water Resources Master Plan Update, Figure 5-1, GWA Newsletter, was developed and distributed to all Guam residents in September 2005. The newsletter explained the WRMP process and provided

information about the status of the planning process, as well as included a mail-back coupon so that residents who desired additional information could request it.

Figure 5-1 – GWA Newsletter



5.13 Conclusions

A multifaceted communications plan was developed to inform both the citizens served by GWA and GWA's internal staff. The major elements are listed below:

- Researched community and GWA needs to establish basis for the communication task
- Established communication goals based on research findings
- Established short term and long term objectives
- Developed public outreach strategies
- Identified key messages for targeted audiences
- Developed multiple communication methods
- Implemented multiple public outreach avenues

5.14 Recommendations

Ongoing activities were identified to keep the public informed during and after the WRMP project and into the implementation phase resulting from master plan recommendations. Major recommendations are:

- Use the master plan as a tool to inform public of GWA's mission
- Establish GWA as the initial source of information for positive actions in system improvements
- Maintain a database for primary contacts as information recipients
- Continue to produce and distribute information materials to keep the public informed on GWA activities
- Continue to maintain up-to-date information on the GWA website
- Maintain good communications with the Mayors Council