

**TRIP: GRIMES
COUNTY**

**TIFFANY HOCK
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**

COMMISSIONER'S COURT





FAMOUS GRIMES COUNTY COURTHOUSE





OFFICES

- Ag Extension Office
- County Attorney
- County Auditor
- County Clerk
- County Judge
- County Tax Collector
- County Treasurer
- Sheriff
- District Attorney
- Elections
- Permits
- 911
- Road and Bridge
- Emc
- Meetings, Briefings, Prison/ Jail tours



Grimes County Communication Proposal

Introduction

Business communication is the sharing of information between people within and outside the organization that is performed for the benefit of the organization. Without good business communication, the internal and external structure of a business can face numerous challenges. It has been brought to light that the employees of Grimes County face

Communication strategy



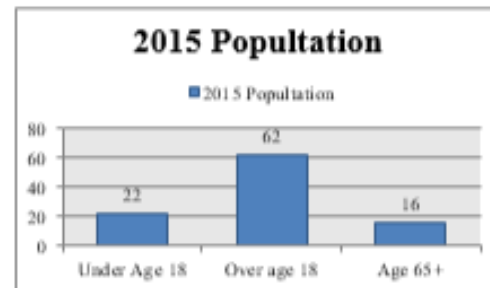
problems with proper communication. Grimes County has recently developed a strategic plan to conquer issues within the county in the next five years. In the closing of the

plan, section seven, there are a list of overall observations and recommendations made to help achieve their goals faster. The first one to be listed is the issue of communication. It states that a main problem like this is fixable and cost efficient. The intention of this proposal is to serve as a transparent guide to better communication through a planned approach countywide in years coming for all departments and the public by providing the means of tackling the internal and external

communication problem in an efficient and timely manner.

Population Overview

According to the United States Census, the approximate population of Grimes County is over 27,000 people of diverse backgrounds and continues to grow.



Methodology

The methodology section describes the steps taken to gather information in the creation of the proposal.

1. Before writing the proposal, it was crucial to know what communication problems existed in the county. I talked to various employees to gather the most common issues of communication that needed to be tackled.

1. The common issues being: transfer information (distance, timing, and inconvenience), emergency situation communication, failure to update communication practices
2. Demographics of the county were obtained to match proper trends with the community.
3. Online research was conducted to find the top communication trends that would most benefit Grimes County based on demographics and the needs of the employees. As well as by what systems were key to success in many of today's successful businesses.
4. Other Counties were contacted to compare and contrast their communication practices opposed to Grimes County.

The overall aim for this proposal is to open up the idea of new communication practices to Grimes County. Throughout the proposal are different statistics and suggestions that serve as a framework that Grimes County shall use to discover and adopt these new practices of communication. After listening to the input about current communication practices from employees, this is something Grimes County should highly consider putting time and effort into. It is important to remember that communication is a two-way street. So listening to request to update systems and methods is beneficial to officials and other employees as it will undoubtedly increase work ethic and save time for everyone.

Grimes County has already taken a great first step in improving communications methods. The Grimes County Strategic Plan listed different issues that the community came together and listed as a problem in order of importance. Amongst that list, the second of more than thirty issues listed is better internet speed. Productive internet speed plays a

crucial role in proper communication. Especially since most current communication trends are accomplished via internet. Internet offers a large range of communications options that businesses can utilize for themselves and for presenting their company to the public. The great news is that Grimes County is already active in creating a solution to this issue and getting that faster internet installed for the whole county. With the citizens of the county being the ones who played a great part in creating the list of issues and listing internet as a top priority, it is safe to assume that most of them are internet savvy. This can also be assumed since an estimated 62% of the populations in Grimes County are millennials, who statistics show to be highly active in using the internet.

Goal

Vision

- To create clear and quick communication between offices throughout the county.

Mission

- Provide accurate and necessary information to the employee's of the county in a consistent and timely manner.

Strategy

- Choose program
- Assign a leader
- Train and begin use of new system

Here and Now

Grimes County is made up of 802 miles, which consist of nine different cities. The seat city of the county is Anderson, Texas. This is where all of the mail boxes for the different offices are located. This is our first problem in



communication among the work places of Grimes County. Although Anderson is generally located in the heart of Grimes County and is accessible to everyone in surrounding areas, employees from the offices outside of Anderson do not want to make a daily drive to check a mail box. The use of the mailbox continues due to many different offices of the county choosing to not adopt having an email

account. Another existing problem is the need to stay updated with the different growing trends in communication for all offices. Which would be having an emailing system. This will allow the flow of better communication, which leads to better team work. So how can we achieve this level of better communication?

Suggestions: Increasing Communication Trends

An important characteristic in communication is the ability to evolve and adapt to the quickly changing key trends of society. Especially since research shows that an increase in technology to change the way work is done has been predicted for 2016. In this section of the proposal will be a list of current communication tools that are popular and adequate for success among businesses and the public to satisfy communication needs that seem fit to benefit Grimes County.

1. Updated Electronic Devices

As mentioned, research shows that an increase in technology to change the way work is done has been predicted for 2016. Therefore, it is important to keep electronic devices updated.



This means keeping desktops and their software updated. Another important consideration is investing in mobile devices. Investing in mobile devices, such as tablets, can

improve an employees work as they do not have to be glued to a computer to get it done. Work can get done wherever they are. Especially for those offices of Grimes County that have a significant amount of work that happens outside the office, like EMC.

Financials: Best to contact your Technology Service Department for most accurate estimate. Things to consider in prices are: The size of your organization, your upgrade cycle, the actual machines you'll purchase, engineering labor.

Next Step: Contact a wholesaler near you for the following steps and best deals beneficial to the county.

2. Email

This is the simplest solution. The one mailbox that employees do check every day is their email. Creating an email group is simple and free of charge. The only thing it takes is your time. It would be a greatly beneficial and cost efficient update for the county to make a mass email group for the different departments throughout Grimes County. With having a massive email group set up for every event, reminder, or any piece of news that needs to be distributed the only thing that needs done is for it to be typed up and sent. Unlike if you were to keep using the mailbox and have to type, print, fold, and lick the envelope, possibly stamp. Emails save time, money and resources. As well as reach people a lot faster.

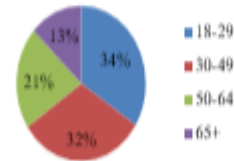
Financials: FREE

Next Step: For Grimes County employees, Michelle Sanders is contacted and from there sets up a TAC (Texas Administrative Code) email account for you. Or one can choose to create a personal email account which is quick and simple. Gmail is highly suggested to pair with future suggestions.

3. Social Media

The trend of social media to benefit the workplace is sky rocketing. Examples of just some of the many different social media sights used are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

Demographics



These media sites reach people quickly and efficiently. Proof to this would be that Facebook has more than one billion active users.

Therefore, they are commonly used as a public relation tool. Groups for the employees can be made or public page for each office can be made. These groups or pages can serve as a reminder of events. They can serve to post updates of recent events. They serve as a way to share expertise advice and provide adequate feedback. They can serve as a way to evaluate potential employees. Overall, it is a socially savvy way to reach your online users.

Financials: FREE

Next Step: A group official should just simply login under their email address and create group or page through the instructions given by social media site.

4. Online Work Space

One of the things mentioned in the Grimes County Strategic Plan is that more teamwork has greater importance to the county than the

revenue. Online work space is a great solution to creating better teamwork. It is a virtual workroom for employees to store information that can be reached easily by other employees. By creating an online work space that can be accessed from the Grimes County webpage would be beneficial to employees, especially when working together but being based out of different areas. This is in collaboration with cloud-based software. The cloud movement continues to grow everywhere. Computers crashing are a common problem in the workplace. When it happens many people lose important documents and information in the process. With cloud based software this is no longer an issue. With this software, all of your work is stored on the internet and not your computer's hard drive. This is greatly beneficial because your work can later be accessed from another computer or device with internet.

Financials: Depending on the program and value of package selected the online work space is paid for monthly at an average price of \$30 to \$100.

Next Step: Do your online research to find out which program is best to benefit the employees of Grimes County. A highly recognized online work space is Amazon Workspaces.

5. Google Docs

This is a free web-based tool in which different documents, calendars, and spreadsheets can be created, edited and stored. It can be easily



accessed and shared amongst different people and through different

computers. It is another beneficial tool for

employees from different offices working together or for sharing news and events among different offices. This communication tool can compare to an online work space just with less features and benefits.

Financials: FREE

Next Step: Create a Google Docs account with your email. From there create private documents and shared documents of different sorts for all of your work. A great alternative is Microsoft Outlook Programs that offer the same features for a small price.

6. Chat Services

This is another great media tool that could be created on the Grimes County webpage. It is a simple way for the citizens of the county to reach the employees without blowing up phones and emails in a real time manner. It is a very organized and timely beneficial tool to everyone. To eliminate the dreadful idea of having too much chat for employees to respond to, a question and answer forum for common questions and concerns should be created and posted as link on the Grimes County website.

Financials: FREE

Next Step: Edit the county webpage to where this feature is added and connected to someone's computer and email who has the time and capabilities to respond.

7. Emergency Alert Software

The county's sheriff department has a way of sending out alerts to the county in all emergency situations. What about the situations that is only of value to you and your employees? For example, the recent storms that struck Texas. Storms like that tend to knock out power. How do you let your employees know there is no need to put them at risk driving in a storm because the office is closed? By obtaining computer-based alert software you are able to send out notifications

of any emergency situation to any group of people. This type of system is very popular amongst school systems and has been proven very beneficial. The benefits of this system are that it can be sent in many different forms of communication. The notification can be sent via phone call, text message, or email. It is a unified system that optimizes communication in emergency situations.

Financials: A company must be contacted to receive a quote for such system. A highly favorable system is Omnilert. Companies like them offer special pricing to Government agencies or Free.

Next Step: Contact an emergency alert software wholesaler to receive quote and take the next step in acquiring and installing system or take advantage of the already existing system within the 911 addressing office, ~~Nixel~~.

Keeping the Basics

In the midst of keeping the workplace in tune with the most recent communication practices, it is still important to keep the community in tune with the workplace. Grimes County Commissioners court is open to the public for them to stay updated on county decisions and

for a chance to announce their remarks. For those who cannot attend every, if any, commissioner's court meeting it is of great value to stick with



communications practices such as local television and radio broadcasting and the newspaper. However, the form of public communication that should be most focused on is the county website. This is where most citizens report for information. Therefore, it should always stay updated with recent and important county news and information. The

website should be accompanied with a calendar for the events open to the public. Grimes County can be commended for already doing a great job with this. To accommodate the website, I suggest that the county adopt the idea of a monthly newsletter. It can be posted on the website to be easily accessed by employees or the general public. Adding this newsletter is a fun way to reach out to your citizens.

Training

Training for these programs is ultimately free. There will always be online training tools available 24/7 that are easy to find and follow. If any of these increasing communication trends were to be adopted by Grimes County I would be willing to show anyone how to use it whether in a group setting or in the comfort of their office. Once one person in an office is knowledgeable in any program I am positive that they would be more than happy to help others learn as teamwork is important to Grimes County. Most service also offer customer service whether via the online chat services or over the phone.

System Assurance

To assure that Grimes County stays updated in their communication systems, in order to keep working effectively and efficiently, a reprimand should be set in place to renew this proposal every so often. The time frame of that should be decided by the employees on how long they seem fit. This way Grimes County is always keeping their software updated and their communication quick and clear. Annual training sessions should be set in place along with the renewal of the proposal to adequately adjourn to any questions or concerns.

Conclusion

In the methodology section I stated that I came in contact with other counties to compare and contrast their communication systems with those of Grimes County. Most, if not all, of the increasing communication trends suggested were used by the other counties. When asked how they felt about the communication amongst their office and between other offices of the county, they were all satisfied. I believe that



would be the answer from Grimes County employees if they were to adopt any of these practices. The practices would deliver information faster. More information

could be delivered at once. It would ultimately reduce costs for the county. They are easy to learn and use. It would increase the amount of work done in one day. They are environmentally friendly which can improve branding for a county. The benefits are endless. All that Grimes County needs now is the motivation to make it happen.

OVERALL



Real feel for the professional field

Great Community

