

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS IN PRIVATE PRACTICE

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The following is a suggested communications plan for the PEPP practice division.

Consistent and dependable communications comprise an essential element of success for any organization. To promote successful division operations, PEPP must implement and maintain such communications among and between its national, state, chapter and individual member components as well as between NSPE and its other practice divisions. The Communications Plan will guide these efforts.

ANNUAL PEPP COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The PEPP Communications Plan is generated annually. It is a complementary group of communications programs coordinated to maximize the goals of PEPP throughout the year. These individual programs include printed materials, audio-visual presentations, print and broadcast advertising, special events, and multimedia campaigns.

Elements of the Communications Plan originate from three sources:

1. Committees - programs to reach committee objectives
2. Staff - programs such as Private Practice News
3. Chair - special programs on issues of immediate concern

These individual programs are combined into a coordinated Communications Plan. The year-long plan describes the individual programs with related schedules and budgets.

WHY DOES PEPP NEED A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN?

PEPP has very clear goals: Service to the engineering public and profession, professional excellence, growth, and cost-effective operations. The key to meeting these goals is effective communication -- delivering PEPP's messages to different audiences through several channels. As the membership of PEPP increases, those messages grow and become more complex.

The PEPP Communications Plan aims to:

1. Communicate effectively with all audiences;
2. Coordinate the communications effort with various groups; and
3. Strengthen the image of professional engineers in private practice with the engineering profession and the general public.

PEPP's AUDIENCES

To develop an effective organization-wide communications plan, PEPP must identify its audiences.

Professional Engineers:

1. PEPP members
2. NSPE members
3. All professional engineers

Buyers of Engineering Services:

1. Government agencies (federal, state, county & local)
2. Private commerce & industry
3. Other professionals
4. Lay public

Schools of Engineering:

1. Administrators
2. Faculty
3. Students

General Public:

Opinion Leaders:

1. Press, radio, television
2. Elected and appointed government officials
3. Leaders of commerce and industry

PEPP'S MESSAGES ...

...TO PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS

1. All professional engineers

- a. PEPP as an organization, is dedicated to serving individual PEPP members through:
 - i. The enhancement of the engineering profession as an employment environment;
 - ii. Maintaining a high level of engineering practice in our country; and
 - iii. Service to the engineering profession and to the public.
- b. PEPP is continuing a major program to promote professional (qualification based) selection of engineering vices in our country and needs the support of all professional engineers. This long-term program, initiated in 1983, is designed to increase in activity and impact each year.

2. PEPP members

- a. PEPP is an action-oriented organization dedicated to meeting the needs of its members and of the profession.
- b. PEPP's effectiveness will be amplified by active participation of members on the local, state, and national level.
- c. PEPP will develop, promote and implement programs for continuing professional competency of its members.
- d. PEPP is the only engineering organization serving the needs of all engineers in private practice - both firm owners and employees throughout their careers.
- e. PEPP committees lead many activities dedicated to meeting the needs of the individual professional engineer.

3. NSPE members

- a. PEPP is anxious to know about and support the programs of other practice

groups and wants their input and support for PEPP programs. The engineering profession and the entire Society will benefit from a stronger, more effective national organization.

... TO BUYERS OF ENGINEERING SERVICES

4. All buyers of engineering vices

- a. Good engineering pays dividends throughout the life of a facility. Engineering design costs represent a small percentage of a project's construction cost, ordinarily less than one-tenth of one percent of the life cycle cost.
- b. Expanding technology demands greater emphasis on engineering knowledge and experience and increases the level of responsibility associated with the selection of an engineer.
- c. The choice of an engineer or engineering firm should be based on experience, quality of work, knowledge, availability of staff, references, and other factors related to technical and professional capability.
- d. Professional registration acknowledges that an engineer has met legal requirements to practice. A licensed professional engineer is legally, technically and professionally capable to assume responsibility for an engineering project.
- e. An elected or appointed public representative has a responsibility to secure engineering vices that will ensure an economical, efficient, and stable project.
- f. Industrial and commercial managers will derive optimum results by securing engineering vices that will ensure an economical, efficient, and stable project.

...TO SCHOOLS OF ENGINEERING

5. Engineering Colleges, Teachers and Students

- a. The quality of engineering in our country has its roots in our educational process.

- b. The quality of engineering rests on each young engineer's recognition of their professional responsibility to society.
- c. Tomorrow's engineers must be more knowledgeable than ever before -- not just in technology, but in ethics, professionalism, communications, and business.
- d. PEPP encourages professors of engineering to demonstrate their commitment to professionalism by example, i.e., professional registration.
- e. Private practice offers attractive career possibilities for the young engineer.
- f. Engineers in private practice want a more active interface with engineering students and teachers.

...TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

- a. The cost of good, high quality engineering is an investment in a high quality project.
- b. A consulting engineer/ engineering firm provides one or more of the following vices:
 - i. investigation and analysis of alternative methods for developing a facility, program, or process;
 - ii. design of the facility, program or process;
 - iii. construction administration;
 - iv. start-up assistance; and
 - v. commissioning of the constructed project.
- c. In most cases, the client is best served by using the vices of the same engineer or engineering firm from project inception to completion.
- d. Public servants should focus on capability and experience as the first criteria for the selection of an engineer or engineering firm. There is a sound, well-established procedure (Qualification Based Selection) for the use by the buyer of services.

- e. The general public has a responsibility to see that its representatives secure the best value for tax dollars through quality engineering vices that will pay dividends throughout the life of a facility in operations and maintenance cost savings.

...TO OPINION LEADERS

- a. All of PEPP's messages -- to professional engineers, buyers of engineering services, schools of engineering and the general public -- must be appropriate messages to convey to opinion leaders who can serve as agents for getting those messages to their communities.

ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

As the needs of the PEPP organization change, so will the objectives of the Communications Plan. However, the individual programs in any year's plan will fall into the following categories:

The Chair's Program

Also referred to as the "Theme Program" in the preliminary drafts of the Communications Plan, this program will be under the direct leadership of the Chair. In his or her year as Chair-Elect, the Chair developed a good overview of PEPP's communication needs. A larger share of the budget will be allocated to this program than any of the others because it focuses on PEPP's highest priority communication objective.

Professional Development Programs

The Communications Plan will include programs designed specifically to help the private practice engineer become more effective in his or her professional career. Such programs include PEPP videos, seminars, workshops, and publications dealing with aspects of career development.

Member Service Programs

Private Practice News, updates on legislation, information on contract documents professional liability, risk management, and any program that provides information and/or materials that directly benefit the engineer in private practice are considered member service programs.

Membership Development Programs

Each year's plan will include a program for attracting new members to PEPP and to reinforce the commitment of existing members. Although the Chair's program will have an impact on membership, there will also be a special program for this purpose.

Update of Communications Plan Guidelines

Contents of this first section of the Communications Plan -- audiences, messages, elements, responsibility and schedule -- will be reviewed each year and updated if necessary.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT

PEPP Chair-Elect

The Chair-Elect plays a key role in the development of the communications plan. The Chair-Elect will originate and oversee the development of the Chair's program.

Committees

Each of the committees will assess the communications needs of their particular area of concern. The committees will then submit their recommendations/requests to the Finance and Steering Committee for review.

Staff Director

The staff director will support the Chair-Elect and the Finance and Planning Committee to establish the components of the coming year's plan.

The staff director may suggest programs that do not fall under the responsibilities of any of the committees. These programs, when they become part of the approved plan, may be implemented by the staff or assigned to outside consultants.

The staff director, working with the Chair-Elect, will prepare the next communications plan containing descriptions, budgets, and schedules for the selected programs to be recommended to the PEPP Executive Board. To the extent practicable, coordination with other practice divisions will be utilized to avoid duplicative or wasteful practices. When the Plan is approved, the staff director will coordinate the various elements and prepare reports to the Executive Board for each of its regular meetings.

Executive Board

The Executive Board annually reviews and approves the Communications Plan at its spring meeting.

Once the PEPP Board of Governors has approved the plan, the Executive Board will receive regular progress reports from the staff director on implementation. The Executive Board will also review and approve any revisions or alterations in the plan as work proceeds on the various elements.

SCHEDULE FOR DEVELOPMENT

To keep the PEPP Communications Plan on track, a schedule for development has been established.

September-February:

The committees meet, assess communication needs, and make recommendations and/or requests for programs (member service, professional development or membership development) to be created. These may include brochures, documents, mailers, slide, or video presentations, and special events.

March:

The Finance and Steering Sub- Committees meets with the staff director to review committee requests and recommend programs to be produced during the next year. This review avoids duplication of programs, sets priorities, and makes the best use of available resources.

The PEPP Chair-Elect and staff director review the Finance and Planning Committee recommendations and outline the Chair's program for the coming year.

The staff director prepares descriptions of programs, schedules and estimated budgets.

April:

The full Communications Plan is presented by the Chair-Elect to the Executive Board for comments and approval. The past Chair submits a budget for the total Communications Plan (covering all programs) to the PEPP Finance and Planning Committee for approval.

July:

The Chair-Elect presents the Communications Plan to the PEPP Board of Governors.