

CHARTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL

August 2013

A. Purpose

To plan, coordinate, implement and improve NRC communications strategies, share best practices and lessons learned that add value across the agency, and provide assistance to staff and management on communication-related tasks.

B. Organization

Members will be staff who have expertise or interest in communication from across the agency that are designated by their office directors or regional administrators to serve on the Council. Serving on the Council will be a collateral duty. The Council will be chaired by a member of the Senior Executive Service at the Deputy Division Director level, which will rotate to a new chair every other year. A member of the OEDO's communication team will assist the Chair in scheduling meetings, completing meeting minutes, and other duties.

C. Background

In June, 2003, the Safety Culture & Climate Task Group conducted a systematic assessment of the key areas for improvement identified in the Office of the Inspector General's (OIG's) Special Evaluation Report, "OIG 2002 Survey of NRC's Safety Culture and Climate," issued December 11, 2002. In June, 2003, the Safety Culture and Climate Task Group issued a report that contained four recommendations to address most of these key areas. Establishment of a Communications Council to improve internal communications was one of these recommendations (reference William D. Travers, EDO, memorandum to Office Directors and Regional Administrators dated September 25, 2003, ML032650780). In addition, senior managers identified improving internal communication as a critical need for the agency.

The Council operated successfully for years and survey results involving internal communications continued to be strong. Because of the Transforming Assets into Business Solutions initiative, including streamlining and elimination of certain functions in offices, the communications function in many offices was eliminated. Therefore, interest in Council activities began to wane, and the final meeting of the Council was held in July, 2012.

However, although the recent results on surveys indicate that communication activities continue to be strong, the staff and management expressed a need to continue the emphasis on these important activities through a community of practice or center of excellence network.

D. Objectives

The main objectives of the Council are:

1. To engage staff from around the agency who have a wider shared vision and could help to facilitate projects that need multiple office input, coordination and agreement.
2. To act as a center of excellence for communication at the agency and a resource to assist staff and management when they are challenged with a communication activity.

The Council will be primarily responsible for:

- providing a forum for offices to share ideas and for advising and recommending further improvements in communication;
- recommending and reinforcing important communication themes, such as frequent feedback and two-way communication;
- developing mechanisms to communicate the agency's vision, mission, values, activities and direction;
- addressing the effectiveness of certain communication projects and recommending areas/tools for improvement;
- promoting openness and transparency in agency communication activities; and
- providing assistance to staff on communications-related topics.

E. Scope

The Council will be focused on both internal and external communication issues.

F. Procedures

Each member is expected to suggest agenda items and present information pertaining to their offices' activities. Members may also request meetings to discuss time-sensitive matters.

Meeting Ground Rules

- Meetings should be held at least quarterly
- Meeting agendas will be issued at least 2 days prior to the meeting to allow for adequate preparation
- Meetings will start and end on time
- Members will foster an environment that allows them to openly exchange ideas and information
- Participation by all members is expected

G. Council Activities

The activities of the Council are aligned with goals in the agency's strategic plan (2008-2013) to increase openness by conducting its business in a transparent manner, enabling stakeholder participation, including assisting the NRC in:

- Providing clear, accurate, and timely information to members of the public about the NRC's independent role, policies, decisions, programs, and activities and to enable them to participate in agency regulatory and decision-making processes.
- Ensuring early communication with stakeholders on issues of substantial interest, use of social media for public discussions, Web-conferencing, and training staff on best practices for public meetings.

H. Roles and Responsibilities

Chair

The Council will be chaired by a member of the Senior Executive Service at the Deputy Division Director level, which will rotate to a new chair every other year. The Chair's roles are as follows:

- Ensuring continued progress by the Council
- Chairing meetings and facilitating discussion
- Keeping the Council informed of agency-wide activities regarding communications initiatives
- Calling for votes on major action items, if needed

- Communicating major issues and recommendations to the EDO and other senior managers for appropriate action

OEDO Communications Staff Lead

A member of the OEDO Communications team will assist the Chair by:

- Scheduling meetings, requesting agenda items, and transmitting agendas
- Drafting meeting summaries and ensuring records of meetings are maintained on the web page

Council Members

Council members' roles are as follows:

- Participate in Council meetings and provide agenda items
- Assist in the development and implementation of agency communication initiatives, and promote initiatives within their home Office/Region
- Work toward improving infrastructure processes and methods for communicating
- Participate in agency communication working groups and/or special projects
- Assist in facilitating projects that need multiple office input, coordination, and agreement
- Share best practices, lessons learned, and resources on various internal/external communication activities
- Provide feedback to Office/Region management and staff on Council activities, meeting discussion topics and action items
- In the event a council representative is unable to attend a meeting, he/she should arrange for a back-up to participate and attend in their absence

Any Council member may propose changes to the Charter, which will then be reviewed and voted upon by the entire Council. Passage and adoption occurs when a simple majority of members present vote in the affirmative.

To help effectuate projects that need multiple office input and agreement, the Council members will work with the appropriate offices designated by the Council Chair for resolution.

I. Meeting Minutes

Summaries of meetings will be provided to Council members within two days of the meeting. The members will review the draft and comment within two working days of receiving the draft. The final will be posted on the internal web for the benefit of all NRC staff.