

# Utility Branding Network: Tucson Water Branding Case Study

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The following Utility Branding Network case study addresses how Tucson Water made use of its brand, which is articulated by a series of *commitment statements*, as the framework for its 2007 business plan.

Throughout Tucson Water's business plan, the commitment statements provided the context for the agency's strategic initiatives and core activities. By *connecting actions to commitments*, Tucson Water demonstrates integrity and clarifies the commitments that its customers can expect from the organization.

Tucson Water's mission statement and commitments are listed in the boxes below. Note that each commitment begins with a simple statement and is followed by actions, plans, or standards that support the commitment.

## Tucson Water Department Mission Statement

"Our commitment is to ensure that our customers receive high quality water and excellent service in a cost-efficient, safe, and environmentally responsible manner."

## Tucson Water Department Commitments

*Tucson Water is committed to the following:*

- 1. Conduct long-term planning and appropriately invest in water reliability, water quality, and the environment.**  
Tucson Water will perform long-range water supply planning and be an advocate for appropriate investment in time to meet future needs.
- 2. Provide highly reliable water supplies and water service.**  
Tucson Water will be proactive in investing in and maintaining water delivery infrastructure, and ensure that the Tucson Water supply is drought-resistant.
- 3. Provide safe, high-quality water.**  
Tucson Water will:
  - Enhance water quality through increasing knowledge and continuous improvement.
  - Be diligent in testing and responsive to water-quality issues or problems.
  - Provide the right quality for the intended use, which includes both potable and non-potable uses.
  - Meet or exceed water-quality regulations.
- 4. Protect, restore, and enhance the environment based on community dialogue.**  
Tucson Water will:
  - Consider and minimize the environmental impact of its operations.
  - Sustainably manage the groundwater basin.
  - Lead a community dialogue about allocating water for environmental needs.

## **Tucson Water Department Commitments, *continued***

### **5. Provide world-class customer service.**

Tucson Water will clearly define its service levels and the positive service experience that it intends to deliver to its customers.

### **6. Conduct sound financial management.**

Tucson Water will:

- Provide good value for the money and not always recommend the lowest cost alternative.
- Strive to improve the efficiency of its operations.
- Be transparent in its financial decision making.
- Update annually 6-year and 20-year financial plans.

### **7. Provide effective and efficient communications.**

Tucson Water will:

- Collaborate with the community on water issues and investment decisions.
- Ensure that it reaches the people who may be affected by important issues.
- Provide frequent, consistent, and regular communications.

In the Tucson Water business plan, the commitment statements are reinforced by linking them with the *specific strategic initiatives* and *core functions* of the organization. The first commitment is included in the box below.

Connecting the planning and actions of the utility to the commitments not only demonstrates integrity, but also helps Tucson Water managers ensure that the *actions of the organization are consistent with its stated values, or brand*.

In the absence of clearly stated values, community members will compare the utility's decisions against what they believe the values of the organization should be. This ambiguity often leads to confusion, a poor reputation for water utilities, and insufficient investment in water resources and infrastructure.

By stating its values, Tucson Water's business plan provides clarity and effectively removes this ambiguity.

## **Tucson Water Department: Commitment 1**

**Conduct long-term planning, and appropriately invest in water reliability, water quality, and the environment.** Tucson Water will perform long-range water-supply planning and be an advocate for appropriate investment in time to meet future needs.

### **Strategic Initiatives**

#### **Water Plan: 2000-2050**

Tucson Water will update its *Water Plan: 2000-2050*, originally published in November 2004, on a regular basis as needed to reflect changes in population projections, service area characteristics, water resources, decisions by the Mayor and Council regarding the critical questions identified in the plan, and other factors that influence long-range water planning.

## **Commitment 1, continued**

### **Water Quality Assessment and Implementation Program**

This program was developed to assist Tucson Water in resolving the decision points set forth in the *Water Plan* and to plan, design, and implement processes and capital facilities for using CAP water, groundwater, and wastewater effluent. To date, technical and cost information related to mineral content of the future water supply have been developed, in addition to extensive public outreach efforts to ensure two-way communication concerning mineral control with our customers. Community feedback will be provided to the Mayor and Council in March 2007.

### **Clearwater Program**

The Clearwater Program centers on the development of a number of facilities to be designed and built to provide a blended water supply to the community (the “blended supply” consists of recharged and recovered CAP water and Avra Valley groundwater). Facilities within the Clearwater Program include:

- The Central Avra Valley Storage and Recovery Project (CAVSARP), currently being expanded to recharge 80,000 acre-feet of CAP water and recover a CAP water/groundwater blend of 70,000 acre-feet by 2009.
- The Southern Avra Valley Storage and Recovery Project (SAVSARP), located several miles to the south of CAVSARP, is currently under design to recharge 45,000 acre-feet of CAP water by 2009 and 70,000 acre-feet by 2011, and recover 30,000 acre-feet by 2012 (based on community water demand).
- The existing Avra Valley wellfield.
- The Hayden-Udall Water Treatment Plant, where the recovered water supplies are treated prior to introduction into the distribution system.
- The Avra Valley Augmentation Transmission Main.

SAVSARP, in conjunction with CAVSARP and the Pima Mine Road Recharge Project, will provide sufficient recharge and recovery capability to utilize the City of Tucson’s entire current allocation of Colorado River water. In the future, SAVSARP may be expanded if the City acquires additional rights to Colorado River water.

### **Water Conservation**

Efficient use of all resources is an important component of the City's long-range water resources plan. Tucson Water has convened a Community Conservation Task Force to further develop its conservation efforts. The CCTF has been charged with providing community input into the development of recommendations designed to reduce per capita water consumption. In addition, consultant services have provided technical assistance in the analysis of water use data, including development of baseline water use characteristics, impacts of various conservation measures, and program evaluation criteria. Recommendations from this process will be provided to the Mayor and Council in early 2007 and will be incorporated into *Water Plan: 2000-2050*.

### **Reclaimed/Effluent Utilization**

Staff is assessing opportunities to maximize the City’s use of its entitlement of municipal effluent. Efforts are currently underway to optimize source development and to assess opportunities to add new reclaimed water customers to the Reclaimed Water System. An update to the reclaimed water master plan is currently under development.

The *core functions describe activities and assets that apply to each commitment*, both of which are important in providing value to the community.

### **Core Functions**

#### **Operate Treatment Plants**

*Hayden-Udall Water Treatment Plant:* Treats blended water supplies from the CAVSARP and SAVSARP recharge and recovery facilities for delivery into the central distribution system via the Bureau of Reclamation's Snyder Hill Pumping Station and Tucson Water's Clearwell Reservoir.

*Reclaimed Water Treatment Plant:* Treats secondary effluent received from Pima County Roger Road Wastewater Treatment Plant for delivery to large turf users (golf courses, parks, schools) and residential properties. It also includes operation and maintenance of reclaimed water recharge facilities and the Sweetwater Wetlands adjacent to the Santa Cruz River.

#### **Operate Potable and Reclaimed Water Distribution Systems**

Oversee distribution of potable and reclaimed water supplies on a 24-hour, 7-day-per week basis. Operation of both systems includes monitoring reservoir levels, opening/closing valves, operating booster stations, and monitoring well functions. In addition, operation of the potable system includes monitoring pressure zones.

Tucson Water's business plan provides similar information for all the commitment statements. Therefore, these sections in the plan provide a significant amount of information for customers and stakeholders, which is expected of a comprehensive business plan. Adding an Executive Summary would also help non-water professionals read and understand the plan.

Overall, the Tucson Water 2007 business plan illustrates a good structure for *integrating the brand (values) with the actions and efforts of the organization*.

The **Utility Branding Network** for water and wastewater agencies is committed to helping utilities better understand branding principles and to help them build a strong brand with their communities.

*"A strong brand increases trust, support, and investment."*

If you are not yet a member of the Network or just want more information, please contact John Ruetten at [john@utilitybranding.net](mailto:john@utilitybranding.net) or Jeff Mosher at [jeff@utilitybranding.net](mailto:jeff@utilitybranding.net).

The Network is administered by the National Water Research Institute.

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