



Utility Branding Network Direct Support Options

The Utility Branding Network (UBN) provides direct support to water and wastewater agencies who subscribe to the Network. Direct support includes customized branding assistance, such as the following:

Conducting Branding Workshops – Developing and building a utility brand is a collaborative process that requires a clear understanding of branding principles and how branding applies to water and wastewater utilities. UBN branding workshops are designed to help utility staff appreciate the subtleties and power of branding, as well as address specific branding issues facing their utility. The goal of these workshops is to help clarify important issues and outline specific tactics for moving forward.

Reviewing Strategic Plans – The UBN planning review process ensures that strategic plans are clear, express meaningful value, and are consistent with standards articulated in the brand.

Auditing Communication Materials – Without a meaningful framework of value, written and online communication can alienate or confuse people. The utility’s brand provides this framework and is the context for auditing the website or other collateral materials. These communication audits identify branding risks and outline opportunities for increasing the impact of communication pieces. The auditing process also offers suggestions regarding which communication pieces should be a priority and which should be eliminated. The result is effective and efficient communications.

Setting a Strategic Direction or Imperative – Building relationships with important community members is a must for helping policy makers vote for appropriate rate increases. However, building relationships requires having a compelling story to tell about challenges and needed investment. This story, or strategic imperative, provides a reason for people to pay attention to the utility’s activities and policy/investment decisions. UBN can help define this strategic message by applying sound branding practices and by helping the utility treat community members like investors.

Evaluating City Council or Board Meetings – The relationship between policy makers and staff relates to branding because of misperceptions each has of each other. Staff members often “brand” policy makers as looking out for their own political careers or unwilling to vote for appropriate investment. Policy makers may brand staff members as being unclear, uncooperative, or incompetent when it comes to efficiency or finances. Therefore, it is important for utility staff to have a clear understanding of the dynamics that impact their relationships with policy makers and, ultimately, rate setting. UBN city council or board meeting reviews shed light on these dynamics and provide specific recommendations for enhancing these critical relationships.

The purpose of utility branding is to ensure that rate setting reflects appropriate investment in water, public health, and the environment. The net result must be strong relationships with community leaders and policy makers that produce better investment decisions.

Subscribers can arrange for direct support by contacting UBN Administrator Jeff Mosher at jeff@utilitybranding.net or Branding Specialist John Ruetten at john@utilitybranding.net.

For more information about the Utility Branding Network, please visit www.utilitybranding.net.