FLATE
Florida Advanced Technological Education
a National Science Foundation Regional Center of Excellence

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FLATE’s Communications Program informs key stakeholders and the media about the center’s multi-faceted communications and media relations initiatives. The Center’s strategic communications program is designed to reflect and match FLATE’s vision “to be Florida’s leading resource for education and training expertise, leadership, projects, and services to promote and support the workforce in the high performance production and manufacturing community.” FLATE uses print, web, and social networking tools to disseminate information about its activities and projects to stakeholders that include students, faculty, industry professionals, and regional/statewide media.

FLATE’s Communications program comprises of an extensive portfolio of tools to inform its stakeholders about FLATE-led projects and events.

These include: Newsletters, Press releases & News alerts, Social media, Media kit, FLATE websites and publications.
A newsletter is an effective dissemination tool to inform stakeholders about an organization’s products, services and events. Newsletters can be used to establish a company’s identity, or build awareness about its resources. The making of an effective newsletter requires:

- Defining its purpose & objective
- Determining a target audience
- Designing layout, content and story ideas
- Developing an effective dissemination platform
- Developing and maintaining a distribution list

The FLATE newsletter, the **FLATE Focus** is designed with the “end user” in mind. It has a **Clear, Concise, and Coherent** messaging strategy that centers on: Research, Action, Communication and Evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Research</th>
<th>2. Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Brainstorm &amp; finalize article ideas with management and staff</td>
<td>- Set-up a timeline from conception to completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Research article topics</td>
<td>- Conduct interviews by phone, or email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identify and contact candidates for interviews and quotes</td>
<td>- Draft articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Finalize layout &amp; prepare for dissemination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Communication</th>
<th>4. Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Check distribution list</td>
<td>- Connect blogger to Google analytics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Email newsletter to stakeholders</td>
<td>- Run monthly Google analytics reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Tally and analyze data regularly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outlined below are additional tips on getting started on a newsletter, and pointers to help keep you focused on your readers.

**TIPS**

- Make “news” a habit with your team
- Keep a story idea file
- Have a point person
- Be regular with your standard communication
- Be professional
- Share partners’ & stakeholders’ news and successes
- Share with NSF program officers
- Pick a format that meets your needs
- Pick a format that works for your stakeholders

**Once you get going**

- **Dive into the data**—what are people reading?
- **Survey readers** – what do they want to read?
- **Be concise** – main ideas with following details
- **Jazz it up** – attention-grabbing titles; challenge your readers
- **Strategize graphics**– be sure they tell a story
- **Get interactive** – polls, quizzes, surveys
- **Give options** – for viewing, saving, printing, accessing
Gauging the reach and impact of internal and external communications is an integral part of any organization’s messaging practices. Evaluation affords an in-depth look into the effectiveness of existing communications tools, and provides insights for streamlining future messaging strategies. There are several evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of communications campaigns. Among these, Google Analytics is considered an excellent free resource. Google Analytics provides insights on website and blog traffic patterns, and has been a helpful tool for FLATE to determine the key demographics of its stakeholders and measure effectiveness of web content dissemination to stakeholders.

**Other available web analytics tools include:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paid</th>
<th>Free</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mint</td>
<td>Google Analytics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chartbeat</td>
<td>GoingUp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kissmetrics</td>
<td>Clicky (21 day free trial)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UserTesting.com</td>
<td>Mix Panel (Free up to 25K data points)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

( more web analytics sites listed on: [http://www.adpushup.com/blog/web-analytics-tools-google-analytics-alternatives](http://www.adpushup.com/blog/web-analytics-tools-google-analytics-alternatives) )

Given the emphasis on web analytics data, social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn each provide tools to gauge the reach and impact of social posts. Among these, Hootsuite is a popular social media analytics tool used by FLATE, and one that offers a single dashboard to manage social media accounts to include among others, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.
Press Releases are an effective mechanism to promote organizational messages and capture wider attention among stakeholders and local/regional press. Press releases have to be timely and relevant. A press release should always have:

- **A Headline:** attention-grabbing statement
- **A Dateline:** date and city of the news release
- **A Lead/Introductory paragraph:** who, what, when, where, why and how
- **A Body:** additional details supported by quotes and a call-to-action
- **A Boilerplate:** organizational information
- **Contact information:** contact information for media and stakeholders

Distribution tools to optimize visibility of a press release:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paid</th>
<th>Free</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRNewswire.com</td>
<td>PRLog.org <em>(currently used by FLATE)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRWeb.com</td>
<td>PR.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businesswire.com</td>
<td>PR-Inside.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketwired.com</td>
<td>Newswire.com</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A News Alert is a communication tool that can be used as part of an email messaging system. FLATE uses news alerts to keep internal stakeholders engaged, informed and connected with the Center. News Alerts can be short news blasts that serve as factoids about an upcoming event, stakeholder recognition, or important updates. Tips for designing an effective news alert include:

- Keeping it short, concise and on point
- Attention-grabbing headline
- Attractive email template
- Easy to read & distribute (via email) format
A “Media Kit” is a fast-fingered information kit that provides a quick overview of current projects to news professionals. The media kit is distributed to newspaper/magazine reporters and television anchors during press events. There is no set format for developing a media kit, it can be tweaked according to the event at hand, but a general-rule-of-thumb while compiling a media kit is to include:

- Mission/Vision Statements
- Contact information
- Product and services information
- Recent press/news coverage
- Recent magazine articles & organizational publications
- High res photos, Video clips, High res logos (in a zip drive)
- FAQ’s about the organization

**Websites** are windows to the world to showcase an organization’s expertise and services. Key elements of an effective website include:

- Compelling content
- Easy to navigate & read layout
- Professional logo & photos
- Mindful use of colors
- Social media buttons
- Call to action & contact information

The “FLATE Websites” [www.fl-ate.org](http://www.fl-ate.org) & [www.madeinflorida.org](http://www.madeinflorida.org) have been live since 2003 and 2005 respectively, and offer a rich storehouse of information for educators, students, and parents, connecting them to the world of manufacturing.
Social media is ubiquitous, and brand presence on social networking sites is no longer an option, but a necessity to increase digital exposure and enhance social presence. Today social media marketing is an important facet of integrated marketing communications and often serves as the social face of a company, or a brand. Here are a few tips on leveraging social media effectively to build your brand and/or brand presence:

- Choose networks that support your brand presence, and are also most used by your stakeholders
- Chart a consistent and active messaging strategy that will be valuable to your stakeholders
- Use integrated social communications strategy to promote content and organizational messages
- Always provide contact information for follow-ups
- Use analytics to improve your social media network

**FLATE** maintains a prominent social presence that has given the Center an opportunity to provide/share timely news with stakeholders, including local and regional media. You can find FLATE on the following social networking sites:

- **Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/madeinflorida](http://www.facebook.com/madeinflorida)
- **Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/Made_InFlorida](http://www.twitter.com/Made_InFlorida) @Made_InFlorida
- **LinkedIn:** [https://www.linkedin.com/company/et-degree-alumni](https://www.linkedin.com/company/et-degree-alumni)
- **YouTube:** [https://www.youtube.com/user/MadeInFlorida2010](https://www.youtube.com/user/MadeInFlorida2010)
Sample Newsletter Email Template & Blog Template

Appendices
Sample Google Analytics Report

Site Usage
- 432 Visits
- 865 Pageviews
- 2.05 Pages/Visit
- 71.76% Bounce Rate
- 00:02:26 Avg. Time on Site
- 67.13% % New Visits

Visitors Overview
- Visitors 340

Traffic Sources Overview

Content Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pages</th>
<th>Pageviews</th>
<th>% Pageviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Traffic</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>18.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search Engines</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>10.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referring Sites</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>10.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/2011/05/lasts-executive</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>9.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/2011/05/high-tech</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>4.47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SNAP SHOT STATS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Visitors</th>
<th>% visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 1, 2011 - May 31, 2011</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample News Alert

FLATE: Florida Advanced Technological Education
A National Science Foundation Center of Excellence
www.flate.org

News from FLATE
10414 E. Columbus Dr.
Tampa, FL 33619

Contact:
Dr. Marilyn Barger, Ph.D.
P.I. & Executive Director
Tel: 813.259.6378
Email: barger@flate.org

For immediate release

Industry Day for Local Students Helps Build Interest in STEM

FLATE (Florida Advanced Technological Education Center), the National Science Foundation regional center of excellence for advanced technological education at Hillsborough Community College in Brandon, is partnering with CTEF (Career Technical Education Foundation) located in Palm Harbor, FL, to orchestrate a two-day “Industry Day” for high school students in the greater Tampa Bay area. As part of this effort, students from the engineering academies at River Ridge High School in Pasco County and students from East Lake High School in Pinellas County will tour six high-tech manufacturing facilities in Hillsborough and Pinellas counties. These fun-filled, educationally engaging tours will be conducted on May 17 and 18, and are geared to give students a first-hand view of high-tech operations, showcase the importance of industry-aligned STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) education, and outline tools/pathways to secure sustainable, career goals in high-tech industries in Florida.

Industry hosts Pall Aeropower, Nielsen Media Research, Micron Pharma Works, Bauer Foundation, Southern Manufacturing Technologies and Mitre Corporation have agreed to open up their facilities and give students a detailed overview of some of their high-tech operations. Special employee presentations have been planned to give students a first-hand account of STEM-based educational pathways needed to secure high-tech careers. Paul Wahnish, president of CTEF Inc., who masterminded the initiative says “using a theoretical arsenal of basic science and math, students are driven to apply that which they have learned, making strong STEM skills relevant to them.” Wahnish says this relevance “engages a student’s interest and develops a strong desire to apply their knowledge toward innovation.”
If you would like to print your guide in a “booklet” format (from the original PDF file), please use the following steps, you will need a printer that can print double sided documents:

**Step 1** – select **Booklet under Page Sizing and Handling** (please make sure you are using a printer that prints double sided documents).

**Step 2** – make sure **Booklet subset is for Both sides**

**Step 3** – select **Print**

Before selecting Print, make sure that the Booklet subset is for Both Sides.
All FLATE Best Practice Guides are available as online resources, or for download at fl-ate.org/best-practices
Florida Advanced Technological Education (FLATE)

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Visit us on the web
www.fl-ate.org
www.madeinflorida.org
www.flate.pbwiki.com
www.flate-mif.blogspot.com