



Holland Board of Public Works

Creative Strategy Brief

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Welcome!

This brief describes a new creative strategy that will touch the hearts of Holland BPW's customers. By building an emotional connection through this new strategy, we will strengthen the bond that our customers feel for Holland BPW, their community-owned utility.

Questions

- Why is a new creative strategy needed?
- How was this strategy was developed?
- What is the new creative strategy?
- How will we measure success?
- What are the action steps?
- When will this happen?

LOCAL. RELIABLE.
EFFICIENT. ESSENTIAL.

Objectives

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Holland BPW is a community-owned utility company that provides electric, water, wastewater and broadband services for the greater Holland, Michigan area. Holland BPW empowers the community through local control of infrastructure that enhances quality of life.

Holland BPW is committed to quality communication that helps customers make informed decisions about their utility services. We approach our creative brief is designed to inform our communications calendar, which produces analytics that provide insights.

An annual customer survey provides insight into how customers perceive Holland BPW. The 2021 Customer Satisfaction Survey shows:

- 91.1% of customers reported that they are highly satisfied with Holland BPW.
- There is a very low level of awareness for a particular rebate program. Lack of awareness of a program is indicative of an opportunity to improve our strategic communications.

Holland Board of Public Works

Strategic Priority #4: Communication, Education, and Branding

Communication, Education, and Branding initiate and embraces proactive messaging and marketing. An elevated marketing function focusing on our value proposition to our customers and the community will be implemented. More communication and branding will position us to “Our truth.” Other activities include raising literacy across all utilities and maximizing the use of various social media channels.



This new creative strategy solves

- Holland BPW business objective Strategic Priority #4.
- The opportunity for improvement in communications revealed by the customer survey.

Understand Our Customers

We want to influence public perception of Holland BPW's brand in positive light. Since our aim is public perception, the target audience that Holland BPW needs to reach is residential customers. Holland BPW's residential customers are people who live in the utility's service territory.

In order to deepen our connection with customers, we need to get to know them.

1. Ask the right question – Hunt Statement
2. Form perceptions based on learnings about our customers – Consumer Insights
3. Follow the customers' experience path with our organization – Consumer Journey

Collecting Information: The 2021 Community Energy Plan Survey asks customers to rank community issues in question 8, which is a start to answering our hunt statement. The list of is synchronous to the terms used in other City and BPW surveys. Data collected from this question will inform our consumer insights on page 4.

Hunt Statement

A hunt statement provides direction for Holland BPW's consumer research to get a deep understanding of the target audience. We want to know more about them by learning what they care about. Topics our audience cares about will lead our messaging and enable us to appeal to the emotions of our customers.

Holland BPW's Hunt Statement

“Understand what is most important to our customers related to our community, in order to develop messaging that deepens our relationship, is educational, and inspires engagement with Holland BPW's digital media.”

Why this will work: As a community-focused organization, we want to support the things that are important to our customers. The reciprocal side of that is building deeper relationships with customers because they see Holland BPW involved in what matters most to them. This alignment will result in a greater liking of Holland BPW and generate more awareness of our programs, services and how we impact the community. We will use digital media as a tool for engagement and education about our organization.

Consumer Insights

Consumer insights are what Holland BPW understands about our customers. Insights are gleaned from social listening, experience with customers, and digital analytics.

Why this will work: Tapping into our consumer insights to plan campaigns will result in content that matters to our customers. When people care about what you are saying, they listen. When they listen, they learn. Holland BPW will have more success educating the public about the brand and programs when we connect to what they care about first.

Insight 1

Holland BPW Customers Focus on Sustainability

- Holland BPW's customers care about the environment.
- Customers have a growing interest in Holland BPW's sustainability initiatives.

What this means: Holland BPW needs to show excitement around sustainability by sharing stories that demonstrate progress and initiatives related to the environment.

Insight 2

Holland BPW Customers Focus on Local

- Holland BPW customers are proud of their town.
- Holland BPW customers care about good deeds happening in their community.
- Holland BPW customers enjoy feel-good stories.
- Top performing social media posts are about Holland BPW employees helping others.

What this means: Show good deeds being done by Holland BPW employees. A "Local Hero" campaign will present stories that show Holland BPW employees making a difference in the community.

Consumer Journey

Holland BPW’s consumer journey is the path that we see as the ideal customer experience. Knowing what that journey looks like, helps identify opportunities that we have to interact with customers. The ideal customer journey involves moving into our territory, setting up an account, a positive outage experience, learning about Holland BPW, ending in loyalty to the community.

The Customer Journey diagram walks through the steps that are likely to be experienced. The prismatic color bar shows the emotional temperature customers feel as they experience Holland BPW through their journey.



Why this matters: Exploring the consumer journey reveals opportunities to connect with customers. It helps us to empathize as we understand what they are experiencing as they interact with us. Paying attention to how they might feel about Holland BPW at different parts of the journey informs us of where we stand in our relationship with the customer at each stage. Just as it is natural for a friendship to develop over time, it is natural that it will take time to develop a great customer relationship. An important observation is that many of our touchpoints happen during times that are highly stressful: moving, bill paying, and outages. In moments of high-stress, Holland BPW has the opportunity to truly help the customer, which will elevate the emotional temperature of the relationship.

Connect to the Hearts of Our Customers

When we connect to the hearts of our customers, we will build strong relationships and gain in the areas of trust, enhancing public perception of Holland BPW's brand.

In order to connect to the hearts of our customers, we need to show that we care about the same things.

1. Set-up the brand – Organizing Idea
2. Explain who you are – Elevator Pitch
3. Example of message – Email

Holland BPW's mission is to advance the community through public infrastructure. An advantage of municipal infrastructure is local control and a personal stake in the community. Holland BPW puts the needs of the community first. Keeping priorities local, Holland BPW empowers the community, rather than prioritizing stockholder profits. People and businesses flourish when essential needs are fulfilled in a reliable, healthy, and affordable way. Therefore, a simple way to explain our purpose is "empowering our community."

Organizing Idea:

Flourish Locally

Holland BPW's organizing idea is "flourish locally." As experiences are designed around the idea of "flourish locally," meaningful brand awareness will take shape. "Flourish locally" helps customers understand how their community-owned utility helps them as individuals, businesses, and the whole community thrive.

Why this will work: Just like our customers, Holland BPW cares about the local community. Our essential services work to create the foundation of our community's success. The door to connecting with the hearts of our customers is wide open when we lead with what they care about. Customers will understand the value Holland BPW has in their lives as they see the connection between our services and how the community flourishes.

Organizing Idea

The organizing idea provides a set-up for the development of brand content to make sure that all experiences are linked to the company's purpose. Through the lens of the organizing idea, customers are touched by the brand and want to be a part of it, resulting in a deeper connection. The organizing idea is meant inspire experiences, as it becomes the basis for all customer touchpoints.



Elevator Pitch

Who is Holland BPW?

Electricity, water, wastewater and broadband - Holland BPW takes care of the essentials, so you can flourish at home and in your business. As Holland's community-owned utility, our top priorities are right here. Serving our neighbors, family and friends, there is no stronger driver of our standards for excellence. Our reliable, efficient utility infrastructure and services empower our community for advancement and self-determination.

LOCAL. RELIABLE. EFFICIENT. ESSENTIAL.

Electricity, water, wastewater and broadband - Holland BPW takes care of the essentials, so you can flourish at home and in your business.



LOCAL. RELIABLE.
EFFICIENT. ESSENTIAL.

#hollandbpw is #communityowned

1 LOCAL

Community-owned. We put local first. When big decisions are on the table, we listen to what our local community has to say.

2 RELIABLE

Holland BPW provides reliable utility services, so you can count on the basics being there when you need them.

3 EFFICIENT

Caring for our community means efficiently using resources. That means we operate with financial and environmental responsibility.

4 ESSENTIAL

Essential to our community, we provide utility services you need today in a way that allows you to flourish into the future.



ELECTRIC



WATER



WASTEWATER



BROADBAND

Elevator Pitch

A good elevator pitch explains your brand and captures the heart of your message, letting people know who you are, what you do, and why you do it. Holland BPW has crafted three versions of its elevator speech for different applications: a tweet, a 30 second paragraph, and a single page.

View the infographic on page 7 to read the pitches.

The infographic explains Holland BPW's foundational and brand messaging in a simple format that can be used for training Holland BPW employees.

Our Brand Message: Where did it come from?

Local. Reliable. Efficient. Essential.

Holland BPW aims for the heart of the customer. Residents have a lot of pride for the community of Holland. Messaging that embraces the **local** aspect will garner the affection of customers. Holland BPW conducts an annual customer survey to understand how they feel about our performance and to understand their needs. **Reliability** of service is always the most important attribute. As a public utility, customers care about how Holland BPW manages finances. The community is also passionate about sustainability. Therefore, **efficient** is a word that connects with our customers in two different ways. The word **essential** describes the importance of the services and infrastructure provided by Holland BPW.

Tweet

Simply states what services Holland BPW provides and how it helps the customer. It includes the brand tagline to remind customers about how the community benefits from Holland BPW. Hashtags are used to remind customers of their personal ownership in Holland BPW as a public utility.

- Twitter
- Merchandise

Paragraph

Adds narrative to the same ideas presented in the tweet, showing customers they are top priority.

- Facebook
- Brochures
- Presentations

Page

The page length elevator pitch includes the paragraph and describes the words in the brand tagline. It shows customers how these words relate to Holland BPW and why they benefit from these attributes.

- About Us, hollandbpw.com
- Brochures

Why this will work: The elevator pitch is effective because it explains who Holland BPW is and how we impact the community. The elevator pitch is useful to everyone at Holland BPW. Having the various lengths of texts prepared and ready to use keeps the brand consistent and polished. It saves employees time when preparing documents or presentations that introduce Holland BPW. Everyone can easily input the version of the elevator pitch that best fits the project.

Email

New marketing channel:

Adding email as an avenue to communicate with customers solves the problem of customers who receive electronic bills not getting bill stuffers.

Email communications will be reserved for:

- Bill stuffer information
- Event promotion
- EWR newsletter
- Weather/safety/crisis communications

This email example can be used as a template and for inspiration.

Why this will work:

- **Design:** Holland BPW brand standards
- **Connects with brand message:** Holland BPW's foundational messaging inspires the text "our community's passion for sustainability is flourishing."
- **Compelling subject line:** Employs influential strategy (social proof)
- **Educational:** Whether or not the customer is interested in the program, he/she will learn about their community-owned utility, adding value to the communication.

Join your neighbors and switch to renewable energy! 



Holland Board of Public Works



Reduce Your Carbon Footprint

Our community's passion for sustainability is flourishing. More and more residents are signing up for Holland BPW's Elective Renewable Energy Rate, to increase the amount of renewable energy that they use at home.

Did you know that 15% of the energy you receive from Holland BPW automatically comes from renewable sources? You can elect to have more or all of your electricity generated by renewable sources by [signing up](#) for the Elective Renewable Energy Rate.

[Learn More](#)

Elective Renewable Energy Rate

- Purchase additional renewable energy in 5% increments of your monthly consumption
- \$0.01 premium* per kWh
- Adding 85% gets you to 100% renewables!
- Participation requirement: 12 month minimum

*Premium is in addition to energy charges

[Sign Up Now!](#)

Holland BPW and the City of Holland have both chosen
100% renewable energy for municipal buildings!

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Evaluate and Strategize

Before creating a new plan, we need to understand where our communications currently stand. We evaluate the current state to make an informed plan that fill gaps, solves problems and effectively promotes the Holland BPW brand. We track and measure our progress along to the way. We define success by setting goals that are meaningful.

In order to build our connection with customers, we need to know where we stand and plan for where we are going.

1. Where are we? – Audit
2. What is working? – Experience Space
3. What does success mean? – Define Measures
4. Where are we going? – Declare Action Steps
5. When are moving? – Set a Timeline

Audit

Holland BPW conducted an audit to understand the current state of communications and to plan for improvements. Two different angles were evaluated, the communications business strategy and the content strategy.

The audit has for stages.

- **IMMERSE** (the research stage): Find out where we are starting from. What is the history of the organization? List starting points for metrics and demographics.
- **ASSESS** (the evaluation sage): Analyze the data in the first stage to develop conclusions. The conclusions will shape next steps.
- **ORIGINATE** (the idea stage): Explain the ideas that will answer the needs defined in the assess stage.
- **ARTICULATE** (the deliverable stage): Map out a brief explanation of what will be created in response to the ideas defined in the originate stage.

Why this will work: Implemented as a repeatable process, the audit will aid the communications team in evaluating progress and strategies. The audit helps us to understand the current state of communications affairs.

Communications Audit

	IMMERSE	ASSESS	ORIGINATE	ARTICULATE
Communications Business Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holland was an early adopter of electricity Community vote for municipal entity in 1892 Community has roots in being innovative Community roots value community-owned infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication, education and branding are a strategic priority <p>https://hollandbpw.com/en/strategic-plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop key performance indicators (KPI) Department growth plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of department plan Benchmark other utilities communications department structure
Communications Content Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook (1219 followers) Instagram (834 followers) Twitter (822 followers) LinkedIn (782 followers) Nextdoor (10,282 members) 	<p>Facebook</p> <p>Most engaging channel (14%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audience is 64.5% women Audience is located in Holland <p>Top posts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal voice People oriented Feel-good story 	<p>Communications voice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Casual, personal tone Pictures of people Narrative stories about helping <p>Goal: Facebook average engagement rate 18% by the end of 2022</p>	<p>Local Hero campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly Holland BPW employees helping Offer incentive for staff to share their stories <p>All other social media campaigns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal and heart-warming as possible

Experience Space

Understanding every touchpoint that a customer has with Holland BPW is an opportunity to discover ways to innovate, improve, and cut back to get the most value out of marketing efforts. Analyzing the experience space allows Holland BPW to determine value rankings for each touchpoint.

Touchpoints

Probable touchpoints are the places where customer interaction happens.

In-person touchpoints are evaluated based on logical assumptions and intuition.

Virtual touchpoints are ranked based on historical analytics data.

Ranking system

Holland BPW ranks each touchpoint by reach, engagement, and inbound sentiment. These are the prioritization criteria. The ranking scale is 1-10, with one being the least priority and ten being the highest priority.

- **Reach** - the average share of reach for each touchpoint over the past six months.
- **Engagement** - the average engagement rate for each touchpoint over the past six months.
- **Inbound sentiment** - qualitative assessment of each touchpoint.

Story System

The story system defines what role each touchpoint plays in the experience space.

Town Centers - most of the information lies and transactions are made

Destinations - where a lot of action takes place, highly engaging and offer the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge.

Roundabouts - drive the customer to the town centers, offer quality information, and engagement is encouraged.

Sign posts - where information is placed to grab attention without the customer necessarily seeking out Holland BPW.

Insight

Google My Business – Red Flag!

- High-reaching roundabout that drives a lot of people to Holland BPW
- Sentiment is low

Action

Improve Holland BPW’s Google Reviews

- **Why?** An improvement in Google Reviews would raise perception of the brand by showing online audiences that other people like Holland BPW.
- **How?** Ask! At the end our website feedback survey, ask for a review on Google
- **Duration:** Ongoing, evaluate biannually
- **Who?** Customers who rate our website postively
- **What?** Provide a direct link to leave Holland BPW a review.

Why this work: The experience space will be evaluated annually to make sure that all areas are performing adequately. The plan to improve Google Reviews will work because a timely request for a review at the end of a website feedback survey makes it easy for customers to do, resulting in more reviews. Targeting those who express postive sentiment about our website because they would be the most likely to leave a postive review.

Experience Space Evaluation

Probable Touchpoints	Prioritization Criteria			Story System
	Reach	Engagement	Inbound Sentiment	
Website	9	9	5	Town Center
Facebook	7	7	8	Destination
Instagram	6	4	9	Sign Post
Twitter	8	3	4	Sign Post
Nextdoor	7	1	7	Roundabout
LinkedIn	5	2	6	Sign Post
MyHBPW Portal	6	9	7	Town Center
Google My Business	8	8	2	Roundabout
Service Center*	5	9	9	Town Center
Holland Energy Park*	5	10	10	Destination

*In person touchpoint

Define Measures

Holland BPW tracks social media and website analytics to understand performance of the communications strategy. The purpose is to identify areas for improvement and to inform decisions.

Monthly Reporting - We track and analyze a broad array of digital metrics and report on a subset of those, focusing on bringing meaning to the numbers for executive staff each month.

What we track

Tracked social media metrics

- Audience size
- Reach
- Engagement
- Engagement rate
- Average engagement rate
- Share of reach
- Sentiment
- Top 3 most successful campaigns
- Insights – What did we learn?

Reporting metrics for social media

- Audience growth
- Average engagement rate

Tracked website metrics

- Inbound messages
- Total visitors
- New v/s returning visitors
- Unique page views
- Bounce rate
- Sessions
- Number of page views
- Average session duration
- Time spent on page
- Portal account registrations
- Program enrollments
- Downloads
- Job applications
- Pages with high views & high bounce rate
- Pages with high view & low bounce rate

Reporting metrics for website

- Number of sessions
- Number of page views

Why this will work: Holland BPW's digital metrics will work because they are simple, clear and measurable. We seek to understand how customers are interacting with our content. Our analytics process is manageable and informative. Our metrics provide enough variety to tell the story of how people engage with Holland BPW online. This information leads us to make reasonable conclusions. Our KPIs offer substance that can easily be understood and tracked.

Key Performance Indicators

Social media audience growth

- **Increase 10%**
- **Starting point:** Total followers across all channels: 15,300
- **Goal:** 17,000 (Dec. 31, 2022)
- **Why it matters:** If we are offering content that people feel is valuable, they will follow our social media channels. If the content disappoints, they will leave our channels. Upward momentum indicates that the information we share is meaningful. It also implies we are reaching more of our customers.

Social media average engagement rate

- **Raise 3%**
- **Starting point:** Average engagement rate across all channels: 5%
- **Goal:** 8% (Dec. 31, 2022)
- **Why it matters:** Is our audience listening to our message? Engagement shows whether a person scrolled past our message or stopped to take it in. Engagement indicates that the viewer interacted with the content by liking, commenting or sharing. An upward trend in average engagement rate indicates that more people view the content as valuable.

KPIs

KPIs give a glance at how the overall strategic communications plan is performing. This is a short list of clear, simple and measurable outcomes. Watching KPI metrics over time adds depth that inspires insight. Identifying patterns and anomalies will reveal problems and opportunities. Attaching goals to our KPIs provides a benchmark for knowing what success means. It also pushes us to continuous improvement.

Website sessions

- **Increase 15%**
- **Starting point:** 140,000 (2021)
- **Goal:** 162,000 (2022)
- **Why it matters:** Sessions show us the total number of times that users interacted with our website. A session expires after 30 minutes of inactivity. Sessions are an important engagement metric because they inform us of periods of activity. We desire to be a source of information, so counting the periods of activity tells us how much the site is being used.

Website page views

- **Increase 15%**
- **Starting point:** 235,000 (2021)
- **Goal:** 270,000 (2022)
- **Why it matters:** Page views is an engagement metric that shows how many pages were visited on our website. This is a deeper engagement metric than sessions, because it informs us of how much of our site is being consumed. The more page views, the more information is seen.

Action Steps

What activities will happen this year to build our brand, increase engagement with audiences, and improve our customer experience?

Website

- **Revised website survey** - Improve website experience survey and add a request for a Google Review
- **Redesign homepage** - The tab section of our home page is limiting in the amount of information that can be displayed. Switching to a format that is more flexible in the amount of articles that can be displayed will allow us to make important information easier to find.
- **Redesign About Us page** - Our About Us page maintains a high average bounce rate. This indicates that we are missing an opportunity to shine in telling the story of who we are. A redesign is needed.

Marketing

- **New marketing channel:** Email
- **New campaign:** Local Hero

Communications Strategy

Recommend updates to the corporate communications policy to establish HBPW's views on the purpose and importance of communication; responsibilities and roles in the communication process; target groups and channels

- **Special marketing plans:** Define and communicate the process for developing marketing plans for special topics.
- **Interdepartmental marketing:** Define and communicate the process for corporate oversight for departments who conduct their own marketing activities.

Timeline

When will this happen?

- **Jan - March 2022**
 - Launch Local Hero campaign
 - Launch email platform
 - Redesign homepage
 - Redesign About Us page
 - Broadband marketing plan
 - Communications Strategy and Process
- **April - June 2022**
 - Communications training for all Holland BPW Staff
 - Media training for Communications, Senior Staff and Executive Staff
 - Annual communications audit and experience space evaluation
 - Media training for Communications, Senior Staff and Executive Staff
- **July - Sept 2022**
 - Communications audit
- **Oct - Dec 2022**
 - 2023 Communications strategy

Why this will work:

Meaningful KPI's provide targets and measures of our work. Action steps detail the ways we will innovate our communications. Training and clarifying processes improves how the organization communicates critical messages. The timeline pushes us forward and we keep moving.

Conclusion

Holland BPW's new creative strategy draws on consumer insights and incorporates measurable goals. Our intent is to connect with our customer's hearts by addressing topics that they care about. The theme, Flourish Locally encompasses all that we do as a community-owned utility, using language that shows customers the magnitude of impact that we have on their lives.

This plan was developed by taking a deep look at how our customers interact with us. The process is informative and can be repeated to create a cycle of continuous improvement for Holland BPW's communications strategy.

Through this, we will connect with our customers on a deeper level. Holland BPW's brand awareness will grow. Our customers' knowledge of our programs and services will expand. As customers gain confidence and trust in Holland BPW, brand perception will elevate.

