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DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR LA COUNTY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND THE HIGH-TECH INNOVATIVE SECTOR

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Introduction

The mission of the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) is to attract, retain, and grow business and jobs throughout the regions of Los Angeles County as well as to identify trends and effect positive change for the Los Angeles County economy. To support this mission, the LAEDC offers free business assistance services throughout the 88 cities and more than 100 unincorporated regions of Los Angeles County through its Business Assistance Program (BAP). These services, provided by a team of regional managers and LAEDC headquarter office staff, include site selection, workforce resources, incentive packages, permits, licenses, zoning, and local industry analyses for companies expanding or relocating in Los Angeles County as well as for entrepreneurial enterprises that will infuse the local economy and business landscape with new and innovative companies. While the LAEDC provides valuable business assistance services to the businesses in Los Angeles County, there still remains a lack of communication and support among the economic development partners in California to enhance the economic growth and vitality of not only their individual regions but also the State as a whole.

The World Trade Center Association Los Angeles-Long Beach (WTCA LA-LB) is a subsidiary of the LAEDC which serves as a primary vehicle for international initiatives to support Los Angeles County companies and the local economy. Together with the LAEDC, the WTCA LA-LB facilitates international trade and investment in the region through a variety of strategic partnerships, programs, and initiatives. The LAEDC is keenly aware of the critical role international trade and investment plays in the continued growth of the Los Angeles County economy and its contribution to the unique competitiveness of the region. As the nation's #1 gateway to the global economy, the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach along with Los Angeles International Airport are key economic drivers for the success of Los Angeles County and currently generate employment for more than 300,000 people countywide.

In addition to working countywide to provide business assistance, the LAEDC is currently developing an Economic Development Strategic Plan that will guide efforts throughout Los Angeles County to keep the County competitive now and in the future.



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Even though the LAEDC is taking a proactive approach to regional economic vitality and sustainability, most economic regions in the United States do not have a sustainable economic development model that offers a vision for future business growth. Rather, most regions use independent economic development practices derived from practices identified in the 1980s and 1990s that focus primarily on business retention and expansion. What has been lacking in California and throughout the country is communication, coordination, and cooperation among economic development partners necessary to leverage innovative resources and strengths.

However, in a proactive effort to create an economic development model that will promote a cohesive network of economic development and workforce partners throughout the state of California, the California Space Authority (CSA) brought together the California Innovation Corridor Workforce Innovation in Economic Development (WIRED) partners to collectively create an economic development "tool kit." The goal for the development of the "tool kit" is to feature replicable support elements that can be easily adapted for use by other economic development professionals interested in taking new approaches to leverage their own regional economic development assets.

As a California Innovation Corridor WIRED partner participating in this project, a primary goal of the LAEDC is to provide the groundwork for establishing a replicable and sustainable "innovation support architecture" that can be used to promote business vitality and support for high-tech/innovative companies throughout the state of California.

This white paper reviews the LAEDC's Communication Plan. The report analyzes the delivery system of the individual elements of the plan and evaluates the plan's effectiveness and impact on the Los Angeles County business community.



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Overview

As part of the State of California designated California Innovation Corridor (CIC), The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) participated in a statewide Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) 1.1 Project. The goals of this project were as follows:

- Create an atmosphere in which the economic development culture, environment, and systems are characterized and driven by robust innovation and flourishing entrepreneurship
- Optimize the entire Corridor for innovation and 21st Century workforce competitiveness
- Create a replicable Economic Development Model that can be used in whole or part by other economic development regions throughout California in advancing their region's individual economic competitiveness

The outcome of these goals is to create an economic development "tool kit" that will incorporate support elements that can be used by economic development and workforce preparation and development professionals to leverage regional assets and enhance their business assistance efforts as well as support the growth and economic vitality of California.

As one element of the economic development "tool kit," the LAEDC developed a comprehensive Communication Plan highlighting the key assets of the most populous County in the United States, Los Angeles County. The information elements of the LAEDC Communication Plan incorporate both internal and external communication "tools." Through both internal and external resources, the LAEDC provides continuous, updated communication related to important business issues affecting the business climate within Los Angeles County. These resources also provide an avenue to celebrate important strategic benchmarks and positive events/changes occurring within the county's business community.

The dissemination of external and internal communication resources are not only for businesses, developers, real estate brokers, and site selectors throughout the business community but also for the Los Angeles County business support community, including educational institutions, city governments, workforce developers, economic development organizations, etc. The LAEDC



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communication tools provide current information for the business support community to use in focusing their own limited resources in a way that will best enhance the economic vitality and support the County's business community.

Communication Plan Objectives

- To accurately **distribute information** in a timely manner concerning important business issues, success stories, legislative updates, etc.
- To **use various media** to provide multiple sources from which information can be obtained
- To **provide clear channels** of communication to all economic development partners
- To ensure all information available is **updated and accurate**
- To **encourage feedback** from the business, economic development, and business support communities

Communication Plan Implementation

In today's challenging economic times, with a recession looming on the horizon, funding for businesses' daily operations and expansions frozen due to the credit crisis, unemployment rates rising monthly in the State of California and LA County, and companies looking at every avenue possible to stay competitive and keep their doors open, it is more important than ever that the LAEDC stay informed of all the assets available to businesses and be able to disseminate critical information to those that can benefit most – the LA County businesses and workforce providers.

One of the greatest challenges facing the LAEDC is how to communicate this information as effectively and efficiently as possible. In today's trying times, businesses are more focused than ever on keeping their companies viable. Information about such topics as financing opportunities, incentives, employee training, lean manufacturing practices, and energy efficiency programs need to be effectively communicated to the county business community because business owners can't afford time away from their companies to research these programs.

In order to meet the needs of businesses and demands of the economy, the LAEDC developed a comprehensive Communication Plan using internal resources, "on-line" electronic



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communication, traditional marketing outreach through brochures, mailings, and displays at targeted business conferences, presentations to business groups and organizations including the LAEDC Board of Governors' meetings, media outreach, and one-on-one meetings with businesses. The goal of this multi-faceted Communication Plan is to saturate the business community with information related to the business assistance tools available through the LAEDC Business Assistance and Development team and business support providers and also provide one-on-one assistance to businesses to access any and all programs to help them stay competitive during this economically volatile business climate.

Target Audience

Los Angeles County businesses, especially the high-tech and innovative companies and service provider partners, are the target audience priorities of the Communication Plan. The LAEDC is able to target priority business sectors such as high-tech and innovative companies and industry clusters through the use of the web-based Info USA resources, the list of 5,000 businesses recently surveyed in the second LAEDC Business Climate Survey, and lists available through LAEDC partners.

Even though the LAEDC has priority target audiences for its Communication Plan, the following provides a comprehensive list of the groups the LAEDC will be disseminating information to through its various communication resources:

- Los Angeles County businesses
- Workforce Providers
- Workforce Investment Boards
- Los Angeles County Economic Development Organizations
- Developers
- Utility Providers
- Chambers of Commerce
- World Trade Organizations
- Educational Institutions
- City Governments
- Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
- State Legislators



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Communication Plan Elements

The elements of the LAEDC Communication Plan incorporate both internal and external communication "tools." Through the use of internal and external resources, the LAEDC is able to provide continuous, updated communications related to important business issues affecting the business climate within Los Angeles County. By using various media to disseminate information, the LAEDC is able to provide an avenue to celebrate important strategic benchmarks and positive events/changes occurring within the county's business community. The use of both internal and external communication tools provides not only the County's businesses with targeted information but also provides current information for the business support community to use in focusing their own limited resources in a way that will best enhance the economic vitality and support the County's business community.

A. Internal Business Survey

As a portion of the WIRED 1.1 "tool kit," the LAEDC conducted a countywide Business Climate Survey Project of 5,000 businesses selected at random throughout Los Angeles County that incorporated a systematic approach to identifying needs and other concerns of County businesses. The purpose of the survey project was to (1) determine the concerns of industry in the Los Angeles County region; (2) assist the LAEDC and funding partners to target their efforts to improve the local economy; and (3) identify businesses that could benefit from LAEDC's Business Assistance Program (BAP). In this regard, the survey provided an early warning system for "at risk" companies in need of business assistance during a period of expansion, including "early stage" companies in key innovation sectors; companies in danger of downsizing or closing operations; or companies that might be thinking of leaving the region.

This survey project was the second survey of this magnitude led by the LAEDC after its first regional business survey in 2003. The survey was developed by the LAEDC to provide a mechanism to identify business trends and effect positive change for the Los Angeles County economy.



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Survey results were generated and copies of the surveys were posted to a web-based program using the state-of-the-art Executive Pulse database. Survey follow-up "alerts" were mailed electronically to each regional manager each week indicating the urgency of the follow-up action required based on the survey responses from businesses in the regional manager's area. These follow-up actions were either of an "urgent" nature requiring immediate contact with a company or "immediate action" requiring review and contact within five business days of receipt of notification. If the survey didn't fall into either the "urgent" or "immediate action" categories, a personalized letter, along with a brochure outlining the LAEDC's no-cost business assistance services were sent to the business.

Challenges that faced the LAEDC were:

- Determining a way to retain the survey information,
- Providing an efficient way to retain follow-up information on businesses contacted, and
- Adding all past and future business assistance contacts

Addressing these challenges will provide the LAEDC BAP team members and management a comprehensive overview of BAP activities to use in current and future communication outreach efforts.

As a result, the LAEDC determined that a comprehensive web-based ACT database program would meet its needs. This state-of-the-art web-based system provides a way for regional managers to track and monitor not only the results of their region's business surveys and the business contacts made as a result of the survey but also manage the business assistance needs for all current and future businesses supported through the LAEDC Business Assistance Program. From any computer, a regional manager can input information into the system which can then be viewed by any team member. The ACT system also provides instant up-to-date, computer-generated reports on each region's business assistance activities which can then be used by LAEDC management and Board of Directors for informational and decision making purposes as well as for providing information for web site and external communication purposes.



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The collective survey results provided a roadmap to help the LAEDC refine its strategies and tactics in order to address key issues affecting Los Angeles County businesses. The individual survey responses also provided an opportunity for the LAEDC Business Assistance and Development Program and its WTCA LA-Long Beach International Trade teams to identify specific businesses requiring immediate assistance which, but for this survey outreach, might never have come to the BAP team's attention. In addition, the survey provided a base of 5,000 businesses for the BAP team to revisit as the Los Angeles County economic and business landscapes change.

In these challenging economic times, and especially when other states are aggressively trying to attract Los Angeles County's businesses to their regions, this survey provided the critical information that the County's local governments will need to address business concerns in order to take the necessary steps to retain existing businesses and also attract new investment to their cities.

This information will also be useful a useful communication tool for the LAEDC to use in its work with county officials, city government officials, industry leaders, and education and workforce partners to improve the business climate in Los Angeles County.

B. Electronic Resources

LAEDC Website

The Internet is one of the most powerful means of communication and is an effective way to provide information quickly to a large audience. The LAEDC website, www.laedc.org, receives approximately 20,000 page hits per month and contains business information about Los Angeles County, its eight regions, 88 cities, and more than 100 unincorporated areas. It also offers current economic information and economic studies important to businesses and decision and policymakers through the following web site resources:



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1. The Kyser Center for Economic Research - This site provides economic reports on the Los Angeles market as well as regional overviews; roadmaps to industry clusters, Los Angeles Business Scan, and the E-Edge Newsletter which provides weekly updates of the overall southern California economy as well as an overview of business and international trade.
2. Business Assistance and Development - This site provides a myriad of information and services. At this site a business can find information on business assistance services, a profile of Los Angeles County, business operating cost factors, quality of life information, business success stories, business incentives, information on the Regional Business Assistance Network (RBAN), and a list of business assistance contacts including regional managers.
3. LAEDC Consulting Group - This site provides a resource that is available to any entity wishing to obtain unbiased research/analysis related to projects and studies of economic development significance.
4. International Trade - This site provides contact information for the World Trade Center Association Los Angeles-Long Beach sites which serve as the primary vehicles for LAEDC international initiatives.

As the primary site for business attraction and retention efforts, the Business Assistance and Development Department's portion of the LAEDC website provides information about no-cost business assistance services available to companies including site selection; demographic, incentive, and workforce information; permit assistance; employee training program assistance; and information about local, state and federal public funding programs, to name a few.

In an effort to always be on the "cutting edge" of technology and provide the most up-to-date information to the economic development community, the Business Assistance and Development Department's area of the LAEDC website is in the process of being



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expanded and redesigned to provide the information businesses, investors, site selectors, developers, and real estate brokers need in determining the ideal location for businesses in LA County.

Innovation Resource Guide

A comprehensive Innovation Resource Guide (IRG) was completed through the WIRED 1.1 Grant, providing a comprehensive listing of service providers, educational institutions, venture capital sources, and annual conferences dedicated to the support of businesses in the emerging technologies including high-tech and innovative companies. In addition, the IRG includes local, state, and federal resources that can be of value to businesses not only in Los Angeles County but throughout the state of California.

The IRG is a web-based-only resource guide designed to be updated regularly, providing important and timely information to the business community. The resource guide will be posted on both the LAEDC and California Space Authority (CSA) websites.

E-Blasts

Dissemination of important and timely information on regional and current issues, incentive programs, funding opportunities, conferences, and seminars is accomplished via e-blasts to the RBAN members, targeted businesses in the LAEDC business client database, service provider partners, the 88 cities in LA County, California Business Transportation and Housing Department, CalBIS, and Team California. E-blasts, sent as needed, allow the LAEDC to keep these priority partners current on important and/or emergency economic development issues especially those that may require a "team" effort such as legislative issues.

Reinstatement of the Regional Business Assistance Network (RBAN)

The Regional Business Assistance Network (RBAN) was reinstated through the WIRED 1.1 contract after several years of inactivity. Led by the LAEDC, RBAN was first established in 1995 with the mission to: Foster collaboration among business assistance



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providers throughout LA County, through a coordinated communication and referral system which maximizes resources to help businesses prosper and strengthen the regional economy. The membership includes six types of business assistance providers: Advocacy (Chambers of Commerce and Ethnic Business Associations), Workforce Preparation (WorkSource/One-Stop Career Centers, Colleges and Private Training Groups), Small Business Assistance (SBDCs and Small Business Focused Community Based Organizations), General Business Assistance (LA County Cities and Regional Economic Development Corporations), Financing (Small Business Administration Certified Lenders and Non-traditional Lending Institutions), and Specialized Business Assistance (export/import assistance, manufacturing assistance and utilities).

Prior to holding the first meeting in several years, the LAEDC updated the RBAN membership database. This update resulted in a list of more than 500 members, descriptions of services provided, and contact information. The RBAN member list and description of types of assistance available are posted on the LAEDC website and are updated as needed.

RBAN E-Newsletters

The RBAN E-Newsletter was reinstated and completely redesigned under the WIRED 1.1 contract, utilizing a professionally designed four-color template with graphics and photos from Constant Contact, a web-based resource that provides e-mail marketing software. Filled with important information provided by LAEDC and RBAN members, the E-Newsletter includes information on new programs as well as workshops and training opportunities impacting the LA County business community. The RBAN E-Newsletters are electronically mailed regularly to the more than 500 members of RBAN.

Quarterly E-Mail Communication with Cities and County Board of Supervisors

Communication, especially in challenging economic times, is critical and the LAEDC Business Assistance Program (BAP) team recognizes just how critical it is. Quarterly e-mail communications are sent to the 88 cities and the LA County Board of Supervisors providing current and relevant information regarding issues and concerns facing the Los



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Angeles County business community and partners, along with information pertaining to important upcoming events such as the LAEDC Annual and Mid-Year Economic Outlook Conferences which are recognized as a compass of the state's economic climate.

In addition, these quarterly e-mail communiqués inform both the city leaders and the County Board of Supervisors of the business activities that have been accomplished by LAEDC's regional managers within their respective regions. This e-mail report provides an opportunity for communication between regional managers and their regional city representatives to discuss problems, concerns, and successes involving the business community.

E-Edge

LAEDC's Kyser Center for Economic Research Department researches and prepares the Economic Data Global Express (e-EDGE), a free weekly broadcast of useful economic news for the greater Los Angeles County area. The e-Edge is electronically mailed to subscribers at no cost and includes current news and relevant statistics at the international, national, state, and local levels for businesses as well as decision and policy makers.

C. Traditional Marketing

Even though the electronic dissemination of information provides a way to reach a large audience in matter of seconds, traditional marketing materials still have a place in a comprehensive communication plan. The LAEDC incorporates many traditional marketing tools in their Communication Plan including fact sheets, brochures, mailings, presentations, impacting policy issues, and partnering.

Fact Sheets

The Chief and Senior Economists in the LAEDC's Kyser Center for Economic Research Department analyzed the high-tech and innovative sectors in Los Angeles County from a cross-section of economic data to determine three important and growing industry sectors



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to highlight in three LAEDC WIRED Fact Sheets. Extensive research was conducted on the aerospace industry, biotechnology and life sciences industry, and the high-tech and innovative industry sectors. This research highlighted the number of companies, annual sales, number of employees, annual salary impact, learning institutions, and industry support that culminated in the development of a one-page, full-color, bulleted outline format communication and marketing tool.

Professionally designed for the greatest impact through the WIRED Grant, each of the three Fact Sheets highlight Los Angeles County's high growth, high-tech and innovative sectors and provides critical statistics that underline LA County as the leader and innovator in each of these industry clusters. These Fact Sheets are recommend to become the template for creating Fact Sheets on five additional high-growth industry clusters in Los Angeles County that were identified in the Los Angeles County Economic Development Strategic Plan.

The Fact Sheets have been disseminated at LAEDC Board of Governor meetings; RBAN meetings; through targeted mailings to site selectors, real estate brokers, developers, CalBIS, and Team California; and are posted on the LAEDC and CSA websites. Recently, the Fact Sheets were translated into Chinese and used on International Trade and foreign direct investment missions.

Brochures

One of the most effective tools in a Communication Plan is a marketing brochure. A well-designed and written brochure can provide insight into both an organization's purpose and the services it provides. People expect a company to have printed literature; it gives a company or organization credibility with its customers. It also provides something tangible that a customer or prospect can take away from a conference, seminar, trade show, or business meeting that will serve as a reminder of the products or services an organization or company offers. This is true with the Business Assistance and Development Program brochures.



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The Business Assistance Program one page, tri-fold brochure provides a quick summary of all the BAP services available to businesses. This brochure is primarily used by BAP regional managers when they meet with business owners, create business mailings, or give presentations related to the LAEDC and the BAP program. It is also made available to economic development organizations to use as a resource tool for their clients.

The newly released Regions of Los Angeles County full-color, 19-page brochure is a comprehensive, all-inclusive brochure outlining the assets of doing business in Los Angeles County. The brochure offers information about Los Angeles as the entertainment, manufacturing, and international trade capital of American, offers information on the LAEDC Business Assistance Program and incentive programs, discusses the County's transportation assets, offers a full-color map of the eight regions of Los Angeles County, and highlights each of the eight regions through color photos in addition to outlining the business assets of each region.

Targeted Industry Cluster Postcard Mailings

Targeted industry cluster postcards showcasing successes companies have realized by utilizing the no-cost business assistance services provided by the LAEDC are planned and will be created and mailed to Los Angeles County companies in the same industry clusters as part of the LAEDC's intensified outreach marketing plan. Use of postcards is a quick, inexpensive way to disseminate business successes and highlight targeted industries.

D. Presentations/Meetings

Regional Business Organization meetings

Providing information through presentations and one-on-one meetings with business organizations and leaders that can help them stay competitive, plan for the future, and grow in LA County, especially during these very trying economic times, is a cornerstone of the LAEDC's multi-faceted Communications Plan. These meetings provide an opportunity for LAEDC management to provide relevant information personally,



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maintain an open line of communication with partners and stakeholders, and, most importantly, receive immediate feedback on important issues.

LAEDC Board of Governors meetings

With more than 200 members, the LAEDC's Board of Governors consists of influential business leaders and numerous city representatives in LA County. The Board of Governors are briefed regularly on the current economic climate, regional and state issues affecting LA County businesses, and advocate for business issues in order to influence policy at the local and state levels.

E. Impacting Policy Issues

It's more important than ever that the LAEDC work with the leaders of our 88 cities and the LA County Board of Supervisors regarding issues LA County businesses are facing. The LAEDC Business Assistance Team works closely with those businesses that make up a vital part of our economy – manufacturers, professional services, high-tech and innovative companies, retailers, etc. In addition, the BAP Team works closely, both by telephone conferencing or through personal visits, with CALED (California Association for Local Economic Development), the Governor's office as well as key State of California offices (Business Transportation and Housing, CalBIS, and Housing and Community Development), providing valuable input on important issues such as the Governor's economic stimulus plan, CALED's economic plan for the State, and drafting the first-ever LA County Economic Development Strategy.

Los Angeles County Economic Development Strategic Plan

As a first step to developing this strategic plan, the LAEDC initiated a study of key industry clusters in Los Angeles County over the past five years, focusing on those sectors with the highest market growth. As a result of this study, five growth clusters were selected to provide input to this economic development strategic plan. One of the primary goals of the strategic plan is to provide a roadmap that will aid all economic



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development service providers in supporting local innovative businesses within these five industry sectors.

As the second step in the strategic plan process, the LAEDC contacted industry leaders in each cluster and discussed the issues and concerns these business leaders have for their respective industries over the next five to ten years. Following meetings with industry leaders, the next step for the LAEDC is to develop a draft economic development strategic plan based on input received from the industry leaders as well as from research gathered of industry "best practices" around the world. The draft plan will be presented by the LAEDC to business groups, cities, and economic development organizations throughout Los Angeles County for additional input prior to the strategic plan being finalized. The Strategic Plan will then be placed on the LAEDC web site as another resource tool.

F. Partnering

The LAEDC BAP Team works with a number of supportive partners: representatives from 88 cities, regional economic development organizations, Southern California Edison, California Manufacturers Technology Consulting (CMTC), The Gas Company, State CalBIS, California Space Authority, Community Colleges, the WorkSource Centers, and other business organizations, all with parallel goals to assist the business community. These partnerships are vital to the success of not only the business community but also to the mission of the LAEDC organization which is to attract, retain, and grow businesses and jobs in Los Angeles County. Without strong partnerships the LAEDC Communication Plan would be futile. It is through these partnerships that vital information is obtained and disseminated to the business community. It is also through these partnerships that cohesive efforts to support and grow the County's business community can be realized and sustained.



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Communication Tools Benefiting High-Tech Companies

A priority for the LAEDC in developing its Communication Plan is to create an outlet to inform and support high-tech and innovative companies throughout Los Angeles County, especially those in high-growth industry clusters. This is perhaps best shown through the recent LAEDC business survey which provided not only information for the LAEDC BAP team to use in serving this priority group but also provided information that can be disseminated to business partners and support organizations through both the web site and printed materials. These partners can then use this information to enhance their own programs or policies to support businesses in the County.

In addition, members of the LAEDC executive management team, industry leaders, and governmental representatives recently participated in trade missions to both India and China where they were able to promote the benefits and assets of doing business in Los Angeles County using the new comprehensive brochures and high-tech and innovative business sector fact sheets. In order to have clear communication and accommodate their Chinese audience, the LAEDC also had the business sector Fact Sheets translated into Chinese.

In addition, both the LAEDC management team and WTCA LA-LB staff maintain continuous contact and conduct meetings with foreign investors with the goal of attracting new investments, businesses, and creating new jobs in support of the County's high-tech and innovative industries.

Suggestions and Recommendations

A comprehensive Communication Plan is more than printed materials and meetings. For the LAEDC, it should also encompass business visits and follow-up, attendance at strategic conferences, adoption of new technology for easy dissemination of information, and continuous feedback review and updating of existing communication tools. The following is a list of suggestions and recommendations in support of maintaining a comprehensive communication



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plan that will continue to meet the needs of the business and economic development communities of Los Angeles County.

- Attend conferences to maintain BAP Team expertise related to high-tech and innovative companies, incentive and financing programs, and growth cluster industries identified in the LA County Economic Development Strategic Plan
 - Provide advocacy related to current issues facing the LA County business community including the high-tech and innovative sectors at the state, county, and local levels
 - Conduct strategic targeted business visits identified by utilizing resources such as the ACT client database, growth industry clusters outlined in the LA County Economic Development Strategic Plan, and high-tech and innovative companies identified by NAICS codes via web-based resources such as InfoUSA
 - Send E-Blasts as needed to the LA County business community and strategic partners from internal and external resources, providing critical and timely information
 - Create targeted outreach mailings to site selectors, real estate brokers, and the State site selector CalBIS, etc., highlighting the benefits of doing business in LA County
 - Create outreach mailings to targeted LA County business clusters, including high-tech and innovative companies, highlighting LAEDC business assistance services to support their growth and enhance competitiveness
 - Post and update current high-tech and innovative sector Fact Sheets on the LAEDC website and expand to include additional growth cluster industries identified in the LA County Economic Development Strategic Plan
 - Create a GIS mapping system of LA County by region and city, highlighting specific incentives, local industry clusters, site type and availability, demographic information, links to other website resources, etc.
- Regularly update business assistance and development information on website, including the new Innovation Resource Guide, RBAN E-newsletters, etc.
 - Evaluate results and revise the Communications Plan and outreach methodology as needed in order to meet the needs of the business community and be as effective as possible



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Communication Plan Replication

Every company and organization should have a Communication Plan outlining how it will get its message out about its products and/or services. The challenge in developing a plan is deciding which "tools" already exist or can be created that will best support this effort.

This communication plan is but one part of the CSA's Economic Development "tool kit" that will become the comprehensive model for economic development and workforce preparation professionals throughout the State to use in order to leverage regional assets and enhance their business assistance efforts. The LAEDC will continue to search for model "best practices" in communication that might be replicated and shared. The beauty of the LAEDC Communication Plan is that every "tool" presented is replicable in any jurisdiction. There is no "mystery" around creating strategic plans, surveys, brochures, fact sheets, web sites, meetings, presentations, mailings, etc. The only "mystery" might be that the LAEDC created and/or is using a tool that economic development and workforce preparation professionals had not previously considered implementing in their own communication plans.

With all of the tools for communicating to the business community, including hi-tech and innovative companies, the challenge for the LAEDC now becomes monitoring the effectiveness of its communication plan during these challenging economic times. Through this Communication Plan, the LAEDC has a significant opportunity to enhance its communication efforts. It is LAEDC's commitment to create an open and two-way communication environment that will effectively meet the needs of the County's business community, business support organizations and governmental entities.

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