Fall 2011

Communications Audit

Florida Forestry Association

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Center for Public Issues Education
IN AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

UF|IFAS

Contents

Introduction

In the summer of 2011, the Florida Forestry Association (FFA) approached the UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (PIE Center) about conducting a communications audit to help the organization to continue to communicate with their audiences effectively. A communications audit is a thorough evaluation of an organization's ability to transfer information. The audit evaluates an organization's external and internal communication capabilities. The purpose of a communications audit is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of an organization's communications process directly within the organization as well as with its stakeholders. A panel of experts with background s in public relations, agricultural communications and advertising typically conducts the communications audit. The communications audit conducted on behalf of the FFA was done by a panel of experts consisting of personnel (graduate student, faculty, and professional staff) of the PIE Center.

Methodology

To conduct the communications audit, the PIE Center requested and received a representative sampling of materials used by the FFA to communicate with internal and external audiences. These included brochures, newsletters, magazines, and their website. These materials were reviewed and analyzed for consistency, usability, messaging strategies, and effectiveness. General and specific recommendations were developed that address these elements, as detailed below.

The following communications materials were reviewed and analyzed:

1. "Working Forests Work for Florida"

2. "Growing with Florida"

3. "Pines and Needles" Newsletters Volume 66, Issues 1-3

4. "Florida Forests" Magazines Volume 15, Issues 1-2 and Volume 16, Issue 1

5. Florida Forestry Association 2011 Action Plan

6. Florida Forestry Association Strategic Plan

7. Florida Forestry Association website: http://www.floridaforest.org/

8. Social media sites associated with the Florida Forestry Association

Findings

Logo

Variations of FFA's logo were found throughout the communication materials that were analyzed. In addition, the location of the logo varied across documents as well. Although this is common for member organizations that have many programs with different audiences and activities, this can affect logo recognition and brand identification. A recommendation would be to determine an ideal place to put the logo on all communications materials and ensure that the placement is consistent. Incorporating the FFA logo into the annual meeting logo should also be considered. These steps will aid in brand recognition and allow your audiences to easily identify with your organization.

The various logos found in the audit are below:

Social Media

An assessment of FFA's social media use was conducted. Searches for FFA on Twitter and YouTube did not provide any evidence of an FFA presence. A Facebook page was mentioned on the Forestry Teachers Tour page of the FFA website. However, when going to this page it is not evident that it is associated with FFA as the page is titled "Friends of Florida State Forests" and FFA is not mentioned on the page. This causes confusion as the website states, "Click "Like" for **our** organization and you will be able to access all the photos." If FFA is affiliated with this Facebook page then it should be made clear and evidence of FFA involvement should appear on the Facebook page. In addition, after conducting a search on Facebook, two additional FFA pages were found. Both of these pages appear to be informational in nature, not often updated, and not heavily trafficked. Social media is most effective when organizations create a sense of community and personal relationship with users, which requires monitoring and frequent updating with fresh material. Print screens of the Facebook pages found can be seen below.

facebook 🔍 Search [1] [7]   Home   Profile   Account ▾

Wall
Info
Friend Activity
Photos

35 like this

Create a Page
Subscribe via SMS
Subscribe via RSS
Unlike
Report Page
Share

Friends of Florida State Forests

Government & Community · Organization · Government Agency · Tallahassee, Florida

✏ Edit

Information   ✏ Edit

Description   Realizing that leveraging available resources through pubic/private partnerships can do more, concerned citizens founded Friends of Florida State Forests to solicit help. The non-for-profit corporation was approved by the Florida legislature to help the Division of Forestry with its management needs.

FFSF was created to enable citizens to contribute toward general forestry operations or specific forestry projects of their choice. A board of directors oversees its operations and expenditures.

Address   3125 Connor Blvd, C-19, Tallahassee, FL 32399-1650 · Get Directions
Phone   850-922-7030
Website   http://floridastateforests.org

Founded   1998
Company Overview   Friends of Florida State Forests (FFSF) is a non-for-profit organization committed to conserving Florida's forest resources and promoting citizen use of Florida's state forests.

Friends members and volunteers commit countless hours every year to maintaining, restoring, and promoting Florida's state forests. Although headquartered in Tallahassee, Florida, FFSF efforts extend throughout the state to...See More

General Information   FFSF offers a variety of opportunities for the public to become involved with forest restoration activities and support. Over 90% of all membership dues go directly back into restoration and planting projects.

Through a variety of membership levels, FFSF members can have trees planted in their honor, access to discounted state forest recreation passes, and other exclusive memberships.

Mission   Through community support, FFSF is to assist the Florida Division of Forestry to expand opportunities for recreation, environmental education, fire prevention and forest management within Florida's state forests.

Email   floridastateforests@gmail.com

You and Friends of Florida State Forests

👥 Christy Windham Chiarelli likes this.

Recommend This Place

 Help your friends discover great places to visit by recommending this.

Write a recommendation...

Friends' Photos

 Tagged — Christy Windham Chiarelli
👍 2

 Tagged — Christy Windham Chiarelli
💬 2 👍 4

facebook

Search

Home   Profile   Account ▾

Florida Forestry Association   👍 Like

✏ Edit

Government & Community · Organization · Tallahassee, Florida

Information   ✏ Edit

Address	402 E Jefferson St, Tallahassee, FL 32301-1818 · Get Directions
Phone	+1 (850) 222-5646
Website	Add Website

[■] **Info**
👥 Friend Activity

8 like this

Is this your business?
Do you know the owner?
Create a Page
Report Page
Share
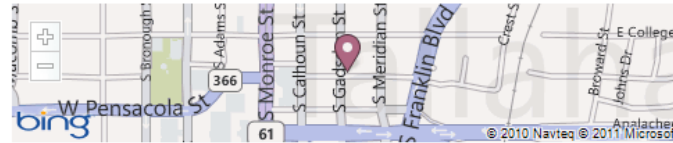
Nearby Places   Create a Page · See All

Strozier
Library
3,300 check-ins · 693 likes

Florida State University
University
3,632 check-ins · 631 likes

Doak S. Campbell Stadium
Sports Venue/Stadium
4,531 check-ins · 1,817 likes

University Club Townhomes
Real Estate · Real Estate Service
307 check-ins · 242 likes · Open until 6:00 pm

Tallahassee Regional Airport
Airport
3,890 check-ins · 184 likes

Tallahassee, Florida
City
4,458 check-ins · 20,803 likes

Source

Community Pages are not affiliated with, or endorsed by, anyone associated with the topic.

Recommend This Place

Help your friends discover great places to visit by recommending **Florida Forestry Association**.

Write a recommendation...

Friends' Events   See All

SAND KEY TRIATHLON
Saturday, September 17, 7:30am-10:30am

RSVP: Yes · No · Maybe

An Open House for Seth & Ashley He...
Saturday, September 17, 11:00am-2:00pm

RSVP: Yes · No · Maybe

Analysis of "Working Forests Work for Florida" brochure:

- Work the mission and vision of FFA into the brochure

- Create consistency with logo styling and location

- Consider incorporating a QR code that sends readers to FFA's website

Analysis of "Growing with Florida" brochure:

- The mission and vision of FFA are not directly represented in the brochure

- Consider incorporating a QR code that sends readers to FFA's website

- Membership application may be more effective in a postcard, pre-paid postage format

- The membership dues categories are very confusing. Consider trying to incorporate a checkbox format for individuals to select their dues category.

- The statement "Annual membership dues include a one-year subscription to Pines & Needles newsletter at an annual cost of $5 (included in your dues)" is confusing. It is likely that a reader will stop reading after the $5 and miss the statement that says, "included in your dues." To avoid confusion, consider revising this statement to "Annual membership dues include a one-year subscription to Pines & Needles newsletter."

Analysis of "Pines and Needles" Newsletter:

- Identify a consistent place where the vision and mission could be placed in each issue

- Consider incorporating a QR code that sends readers to FFA's website

Analysis of "Florida Forests" Magazine:

- Incorporate the FFA logo into a consistent place in each issue to enhance brand recognition

- In Volume 15, issue 1, three different versions of the FFA logo appear throughout the issue. Page 9 depicts the "Working forests work" logo, page 15 shows the FFA logo with brown text and a light brown box around the entire logo, and page 17 includes the "40 under 40" version of the logo. Consistent use of your logo will improve brand recognition of FFA.

- Identify a consistent place where the vision and mission could be placed in each issue

- Consider incorporating a QR code that send readers to FFA's website

Analysis of FFA Website:

- "Who are We" page

    o The mission of FFA is listed on this page. However, it does not exactly reflect what is included on FFA's strategic plan. In addition, consider incorporating your vision and values/code of conduct to this page.

- "Benefits of Belonging" page

    o "DOT trucking manual" link does not work

- "Join FFA" page

    o The current drop down list for dues categories does not include all options. For example, if a contract trucking company wishes to become a member of FFA, they can select this category in the drop down list. However, four sub categories exist in the contract trucking company category ($100 per truck; $200 (2-5 trucks); $450 (6-15 trucks); $600 (16+ trucks)). Representing all categories and sub categories in the drop down list would help decrease confusion among potential members and may also be beneficial for FFA record keeping.

    o If a potential FFA member chooses to submit an online membership application, there is no information about payment. Consider making electronic payment an option or provide payment instructions.

- "Forests Products" page

    o "The report" link does not work

- "Positions Statements" page

  o This page is listed under the "Who are we" tab, but comes up under the "What we do" title.

- "Government Relations" page

  o The title of this page says "What we do: Advocacy." To be consistent with the title format for the rest of the pages it should read "What we do: Government Relations"

- "Legislative Updates" page

  o "The Association's legislative wrap-up of the 2011 session" document should include the FFA logo for brand recognition.

  o The "Federal Weight Talk Sheet" document should include the FFA logo for brand recognition.

  o The www.regulations.gov link does not work.

  o The "PRINCIPLES" document includes the "Working forests work" logo, but FFA is not mentioned in the document.

  o The "Consumers wanting to apply for a permit should select this link" link does not work

  o The "Stand-alone bill (S-3381)" link does not work

  o The "Text of FFA's comments presented to the panel of EPA representatives are available here" link does not work

- "Forestry Teachers Tour" page

  o Clarify if the "Friends of Florida Forestry" Facebook page is part of FFA. If so, include a direct link to the Facebook page.

- "Log a Load for Kids" page

  o The events listed on this page have passed. Consider replacing them with press releases covering the success of these events or indicate that the 2012 dates will be coming soon.

  o The "Bass tourney flyer" link does not work.

  o The "Golf @ Sunny Hills registration and information" link does not work

- "Florida Master Logger" page

  o For the FAQ's consider re-listing each question above its corresponding answer. The current organization makes it difficult to determine which answer goes with which question.

- "Project Learning Tree" page

  o The "PLT Giving program" link does not work

- "SFI Program" page

  o There is a missing line space between two of the Florida SFI companies. Consider correcting to improve readability.

  o Some of the company links open a new window and some navigate away from FFA's webpage. Consider editing the company links to ensure that they all open in a consistent manner.

- "Teaching Tools" page

  o Separating the tree ID tool into its own page may be a good way to attract non-members to your website

  o The "Fire in Florida's Ecosystems (grades 3-12) page has changed and the link needs updated

- "Managing your Forest" page

  o The "Tax tips 2010" link does not work

  o The "Federal listing of the Gopher Tortoise" document should include the FFA logo for brand recognition.

  o The "2009 Tax Tips" link does not work

  o The "Best Management Practices for Silviculture and Notice of Intent to Implement" link does not work

- "Educations Link" page

  o The "Lake City Community College" link does not work

- "Industry Links" page

  o The "Crop Production Service" link is not up to date, but it does redirect

  o The "Florida FGT" link does not work

  o The "Industrial Tractor Company" link does not work

  o The "Meek's Farm and Nursery" link does not work

  o The "Nextran truck Center, Jacksonville" link does not work

  o The "Red River Specialty" link does not work

  o The "Roberts Land and Timber investment Corporation" link does not work

- o The "South Eastern Timber Corporation" link does not work

- o The "Southeastern Wood Producers Association" link does not work

- o The "Thompson Tractor Company" link does not work

- o The "Wood promotion network" link does not work

- "Advertising" page

  - o The "Banner Ad Info" document should include the FFA logo for brand recognition.

  - o The F&W Forestry Services Inc. link does not let you use the back button to navigate back to the FFA's website. This should be corrected as it directs the FFA audience away from the FFA page without an easy return.

  - o The "www.fdoa.org" link takes you to the Amelia Shotgun Sports page instead of the Florida Disabled Outdoors Association page.

  - o The Nextran Truck Center link does not let you use the back button to navigate back to the FFA's website. This should be corrected as it directs the FFA audience away from the FFA page without an easy return.

  - o The "www.southeastschool.net" link does not work

- "FFA Alerts" page

  - o The page instructs the reader to "Click on alerts for details" but it is not clear where the reader is supposed to click.

- "TreeTube" page

  - o If possible, consider uploading these videos to YouTube as well to widen your audience.

- "Forestry Friday" page

  - o The link "Click here for link to online newsletter archive" takes the reader to a PDF document. The PDF document opens and includes another link that the reader must click on. Consider including a link to the direct source as a several step link could discourage your audience. In addition, if a reader does not have the advanced version of Adobe they will be unable to click or copy and paste the link in the PDF document.

- "Pines and Needles" page

  - o Consider listing the newsletters in order. Currently a 2010 issue is at the top, then there are some 2011 issues, and more 2010 issue finish out the list.

Recommendations

Include FFA Mission in Communication Materials

Communication materials that were reviewed reflect the mission of the FFA, but not all materials analyzed explicitly state the FFA mission. It is recommended that the FFA mission be included in communication material where possible.

Create an Identity Guide

To ensure consistency, it is recommended that an identity guide be created for all communication material promoting FFA. An identity guide establishes a protocol when any new communication material is created, whether it is a brochure or an additional page to the website. It specifies requirements for placement of the logo, colors to represent the organization, which fonts to use for headlines and body text, and any other specifications the organization wishes to use to help develop and maintain brand recognition.

The University of Florida has an online identity guide that anyone can access who wishes to create communication material representing the University of Florida. They have information regarding which colors represent the university, as well as downloadable logos. Specifications and copyright laws are explained regarding which logos can be used in which setting. The identity guide can be found at http://identity.ufl.edu/.

Another example is the Center for Public Issues Education (PIE Center) identity guide. In the guide, there are specifications for typography, graphics elements, color palette, tag line usage and logo usage. This guide ensures consistency and can be used by those who wish to use the PIE Center brand. A copy of the PIE Center Identity Guide is included as an appendix to this communication audit.

Effective Branding with Logo Consistency

In order to help create a consistent brand, it is important to use similar logos that represent different programs conducted by an organization. To deal with the need to brand specific products or programs, many organizations have an "umbrella brand"- which is the overall organization's branding element/logo, and then specific identifiers for sub-brands/programs. Both the organizational and specific program logos are designed to complement each other and often appear together. This concept is called "brand-within-a-brand", which means that the major focus is to make sure that all programs are visually identified as belonging to the overall "umbrella" brand, in this case FFA. It is recommended that FFA adopt this concept specifically with their "40 under 40," "Working forests work," and "Annual meeting" logos.

Susan G. Komen for the Cure had the same problem-different logos representing different branches of the same organization:

Now, each brand has a consistent logo, but with an opportunity for each branch to be represented:

Conduct Annual Testing of Website Usability

Usability testing ensures that documents or websites are straightforward, honest, and easy to understand by the prospective audience. The basic items of focus during usability testing include content, organization, style, design, and any ethical, legal, or cultural considerations. The following website http://usability.gov/ provides helpful information in regards to ensuring that usability is achieved in communication materials. It is recommended that FFA consider conducting a usability test on their website on an annual basis. During the communication audit of FFA's website, it was discovered that 26 links either did not work or were broken. Usability testing would allow for broken links or inconsistencies to be identified annually as website materials are updated and changed.

Create an Effective Social Media Presence

Social media is a powerful marketing and communication tool. As FFA seeks to retain and expand their membership it is recommended that various social media outlets be considered. During the communication audit, it was identified that three separate Facebook pages appear to be affiliated with FFA. It is recommended that FFA work to establish one

Facebook page and manage it effectively. Once a Facebook page is being managed effectively, adding a Facebook button to the FFA homepage would allow members and non-members alike to socially connect with FFA. To manage the presence effectively, it is important to create content that will generate conversation with members and non-members.

Additionally, FFA currently has several videos on their website. Creating a YouTube channel and adding these videos to YouTube would allow FFA to expand their social network and increase search engine optimization. In the results section, it was suggested the QR codes be added to some of FFA's communication materials. QR codes are two-dimensional bar codes that can be scanned with smart phones. When individuals scan the QR code they are directed to a website. Implementing QR codes on communication materials could increase traffic to FFA's website. An example of a QR code can be seen on the last page of the appendix.

The following best management practices should also be implemented:

- Assign someone in the association the responsibility of maintaining social media profiles. A consistent, unified voice is extremely important.
- Use a social media dashboard to assist in efficiently managing various social media profiles. Social media dashboards allow you to consolidate your time and efforts.
- Limit the number of posts to 1-2 times a day and no more than 5-7 times a week. Too many updates discourage users to continue following. Limiting the number of posts and updates also limits the amount of conversation you should monitor.
- Be sure the content that is created generates conversation or two-way communication to take full advantage of social media. This type of content should use polls, contents, pictures and should solicit user generated material and feedback.

Appendix: PIE Center Identity Guide

identity guide

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This guide details the visual elements that support the PIE Center brand. It also explains how, when used correctly and consistently, these elements speak for the PIE Center in an articulate and compelling way.

Please note: the design of the PIE Center's brand elements was not arbitrary. And their collective impact is not subjective. The PIE Center logo, typefaces, color palette, and usage requirements reflect and reinforce the very essence of the Center.

By following this guide, you help define The PIE Center for our stakeholders, partners, and our industry at large. Equally important, you help them recognize, differentiate, and remember us. In some cases, this guide provides explicit rules on how to use—and how not to use—various elements. But overall, it offers a framework for making and evaluating creative decisions.

If you have questions about how to use any brand elements, or need additional information, contact Kevin Kent, Media Specialist, 352.273.0749, kevin.kent@ufl.edu.

"Design, good or bad, is a vehicle of memory. Good design adds value."

-Paul Rand

The PIE Center logo is a cornerstone of the center's purpose, vision and mission. The leaves represent the various sectors of the agriculture and natural resources industry. Additionally, the grouping of the leaves symbolizes the importance of unity across the industry. The Center is also anchored by the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, both graphically and methodically.

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"The design of a logo... is ultimately a reflection of the integrity of the business it symbolizes. Its effectiveness is largely dependent on its exposure, how often and how well it is used."

-Paul Rand

Preferred

One Color Option

Preferred Reversed

Clear Space Area for the PIE Center logo

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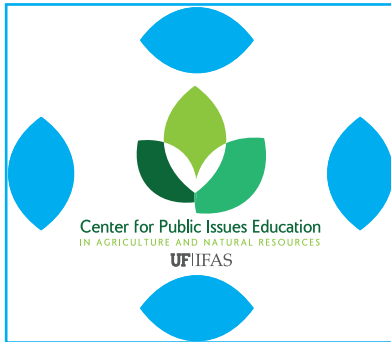
Space equal to the width of the center leaf should remain free of any type on all four sides.

- **DO NOT** use the logo in any colors other than green, black or white.
- **DO NOT** use any artistic filter on the logo, such as embossing.
- **DO NOT** stretch, rotate or distort the logo.

In some cases, depending on the message that accompanies its usage, the PIE Center logo may be treated with the fluid tag line "turning research into practice."

The term "fluid" is used to describe the tag line because of the option to interchange the word "practice" with other approved terms to help communicate a message more effectively.

The typography of the tag line is design to use independently from the logo, but in a relationship with.

turning research into [practice]

Approved terms include:
- Action
- Results
- Policy
- Productivity
- Profits
- Tools
- Understanding

All terms should be enclosed using the brackets. This identifies the diversity and fluidness of the center.

The PIE Center uses white space liberally to convey an open, modern, uncluttered feel. That said, the formal PIE Center color palette consists of five main colors and two accent colors.

The color palette creates a modern, fresh feel for the center's new approach to bridging the green divide.

VIVID GREEN
C 50% M 0% Y 100% K 0%
RGB 141, 198, 63

TEAL GREEN
C 75% M 0% Y 75% K 0%
RGB 43, 182, 115

DARK GREEN
C 90% M 30% Y 95% K 30%
RGB 0, 104, 56

GRAPHITE
C 0% M 0% Y 0% K 80%
RGB 88, 89, 91

HIGHLIGHT ORANGE
C 0% M 18% Y 85% K 10%
RGB 232, 189, 59

HIGHLIGHT BLUE
C 39% M 0% Y 0% K 0%
RGB 145, 217, 248

The PIE Center typeface (used in the logo) is COM4t Sans Medium, a clean contemporary typeface used for titles and graphic elements only.

All header and paragraph character styles should use the Minion Pro typeface.

Type may be discretely set in all uppercase to create a hierarchy of information, as in sub-heads and section headings.

For internal documents, such as PowerPoint presentations, Word documents, and e-mails, the typefaces Arial and Times New Roman may be substituted for COM4t Sans Medium and Minion Pro, respectively.

COM4t Sans Medium
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

Minion Pro Regular
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

Minion Pro Italic
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
*ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ*
1234567890

Minion Pro Bold
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

The leaves of the logo can be used as graphic elements to add meaning or distinction to the PIE Center brand. When using the single leaf graphic element, all uses should be subtle and used judiciously.

The leaves and/or leaf of the logo may be used as a background within a container of which the elements bleeds off the page. This usage must not include any typography from the logo.

Additionally, the single leaf element may also be used as an end-of-article character.

Background with Bleed
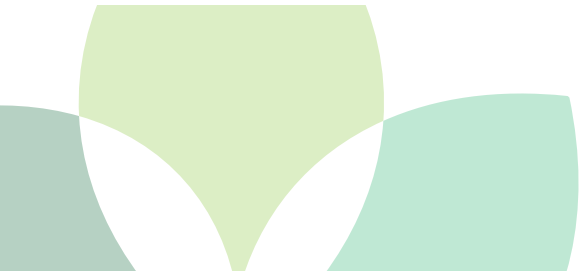
Single Leaf Element

Research briefs are designed to serve as a vehicle for delivering research reports to targeted audiences. As part of the PIE Center strategic communication process, the research briefs identify the issue that is facing the agriculture and natural resources industry. The research is then translated to provide solutions based on the findings for industry stakeholders in the form of

Research briefs will be distributed on the PIE Center website (thePIECenter.com) as well as part of the Weekly Media Campaign in the "What's happening at the PIE Center" section of Monday Media Mentions and Tuesday Trends and Topics.

The following process should be followed for each research project conducted by the PIE Center.

Research Project Announcement
announces the project or partnership and its purpose.

Research Topline Brief
identifies the problem or issues and is accompanied by the official topline report if available.

Research Findings Brief
identifies the problem or issue, recommends suggestions to fix the problem or issue and is accompanied by the official executive report.