Express Communications Assessment Report

September 2018

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Executive Summary

Indian Wells has a compelling story to tell. The city benefits from a high-income community, amazing weather (most of the year) and resort facilities that are made possible by a strong tourism component to the local economy. Trends are moving in the right direction on several fronts: enhanced sports at the Tennis Center with pickleball coming to town, landing the IRONMAN competition, a positive trend on ticket revenue fees for the City and a brand that resonates as being an elite destination spot in California’s Coachella Valley.

Communications are a critical component of informing the public and seeking community feedback on an array of City activities and policies. In Indian Wells, communication takes on an enhanced purpose with a need to promote the City’s resorts as destinations, while also promoting City venues that operate like enterprise funds, such as the golf course and the Vue restaurant. In executing its communications, the City has distinct audiences that require different emphasis for the information that is conveyed.

The first audience is external to the City, where the message is focused on selling the resort opportunities and related sporting events. Here the message emphasizes the image of the City as an elite world destination.

The second audience is the residents themselves, and the work here is focused on informing them about City programs, policies and services. Within the resident audience, there are different cohorts with unique needs. A significant portion of residents are part time locals and during the hottest months they are in other parts of the world. This is a “part timer” cohort. A second cohort is defined around the Resident Benefit Card perks where some residents use the City club house and golf course as their “club” while others are active within their own private clubs and have no need for the City’s offerings. For some residents, the private club and services of the homeowner’s association are really the only “services and government” they care about. The different interests of these resident cohorts impacts the effectiveness of the City communication channels and makes the resident engagement process more challenging in terms of connecting with the broadest audience possible.

While the City has big communication goals for itself and some unique challenges, it also has excellent assets. The City has a history of communicating well with residents. City Staff demonstrated throughout our review that they are committed to transparency and resident engagement (perhaps an obvious point given their proactive choice to engage Tripepi Smith for an outside review of their efforts). City Staff has foreseen the need to execute routine communications and has a huge advantage in the areas of email collection with the Resident Benefit Card program. This program alone results in significant email address collection for the
City, giving it one of the strongest ratios of population to resident email addresses collected we have observed in a city.

Tripepi Smith reviewed components of an extensive marketing effort that reached wide audiences on platforms that many other cities will likely never reach. City Staff have recognized the need to provide routine communications with residents and have assembled an extensive email roster that is routinely contacted. Finally, City Staff have demonstrated a desire to try new platforms and experiment with marketing approaches when seeking engagement with the tourism audience.

In the following pages, Tripepi Smith outlines our observations and makes a series of recommendations. It is important to remember that to add the most value possible, Tripepi Smith turns over stones and seeks to find recommendations, even when an operation is doing well. While we don’t advocate change for change’s sake, Tripepi Smith also feels it is our duty to find recommendations and ensure our engagements adds value. Even cities that do an outstanding job of communications will have room to improve. Extensive recommendations on our part do not indicate there are problems in City’s communication efforts.

**Summarized Observations**

**Summarized Recommendations**

1 – **Website Strategy Enhancements**

The City’s current website arrangement, access to metrics and unification of tourism and city governance matters is not the best arrangement. Tourists and residents are distinct audiences with distinct interests. The City should review options to better connect with these distinct audiences online.

2 – **Adopt Social Media Policy**

A city that is active on social media should adopt a social media policy. It provides some legal support, provides guidance to the organization and it will assist in your resident communication process.

3 – **Develop Social Media Strategy**

The City does not use social media to engage residents. While it is true that older population segments use social media at a lower rate, there are large swaths of the older population that still use it. Further, time marches on and the Generation X users that are higher propensity Facebook users are becoming your new crop of residents. Finally, platforms like Nextdoor are
taking hold in your community regardless of what the City does, and these platforms provide an effective way to engage with residents.

**4 – Optimize Email Communications**
The City has a massive database for tourism emails and a second large database of residents’ emails. Tripepi Smith observed that metrics are not accurate on these platforms, and we know from prior experience that the Civica platform for email communications is weak. Email is a core component of the City’s communication strategy, especially with residents, and the City needs to consider better tools.

**5 – Develop a Communications Calendar**
City Staff do not routinely gather to strategize across the organization about communication goals. This process, combined with detailed itemization of communication opportunities, will create a proactive and strategic communication effort.

**6 – Revamp Tourism Marketing Approach**
The City has developed several different methods for driving traffic and promoting tourism in the City. Renewing those approaches each year appears to be driven mostly by what “seemed” to work. There is room to improve measurement of the methods to determine which worked best and how that method drove traffic or conversions.
About the City of Indian Wells

The City of Indian Wells, incorporated in 1967, is a community of more than 5,400 full-time residents. Approximately 14.5 square miles in size, the City is located 120 miles east of downtown Los Angeles and 70 miles east of downtown Riverside. Indian Wells is a charter city governed by the city council/city manager form of government. A mayor is selected annually by the council; the five-member council is elected by residents. The city manager is appointed by the mayor and council and serves as the chief executive of the City.

Per the Southern California Association of Governments Profile of the City of Indian Wells 2017, the City’s racial makeup is:

- Non-Hispanic White: 83.8%
- Hispanic: 11.2%
- Non-Hispanic Black: 1.1%
- Non-Hispanic American Indian: 0.5%
- All other Non-Hispanic: 1.7%

According to the Southern California Association of Governments Profile of the City of Indian Wells in 2017, the City’s median age is 64.6 years, nearly 30 years older than the median age in Riverside County (34.8 years). The 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Age and Sex report indicates a large majority of the population belongs to the 65-74 age range (30.6%) with the 75-84 age range (23.3%), and the 55-59 age range (22%) making up a large remainder of the population. Less than 3.7% of the population is under the age of 18.

Indian Wells is home to primarily English-only speakers. According to the 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Language Spoken at Home report, 88.1% of residents speak only English. Of the 11.9% of residents who speak a language other than English, 5.6% speak Asian and Pacific Island languages, 3.5% speak other Indo-European languages, and 2.2% of the population speaks Spanish. Of the residents who speak a language other than English, 45.5% of them speak English less than “very well.”

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1 Estimated population during the cooler winter months is approximately 8,000.
In summary, the population is older, more white and more affluent, than most of California and other cities within the Coachella Valley.

The Southern California Association of Governments Profile of the City of Indian Wells reports 2,894 occupied housing units with a total of 5,262 occupied and unoccupied housing units. The average household size is 1.9 persons per unit, with a median household income of $66,869. The homeownership rate is 80.9%, with a median existing home sales price of $635,000. In comparison, Riverside County has a homeownership rate of 54.3% and median existing home sales price of $332,000. The average travel time to work is 23 minutes, compared to Riverside County’s average of 35 minutes. Notably, large segments of the population of Indian Wells are retired.

Indian Wells is a unique community. Though primarily residential, a large portion of the population is seasonal (arriving late fall and departing mid-late spring, which explains the above-noted gap in occupied vs. unoccupied housing units), and the City is home to four large resorts that cater to business and leisure visitors. During the spring, the City experiences a rush of tourism thanks to music festivals and the annual BNP Paribas Open, the sixth-largest tennis tournament in the world. The City’s government serves residents from across all demographics, though primarily wealthier retirees, as well as tourists from all over the world.

There are also 58 Homeowners’ Associations (“HOA’s”) and five major country club communities. These groups create an additional layer of “community governance” that either dominate the interests of their residents or deliver programming in lieu of City-provided activities. The HOA’s and country clubs also create unique challenges for the City’s government in terms of communicating with its residents and providing services and programs. Some we spoke to anecdotally observed that a significant portion of residents are disengaged with the City because their HOA or club is the “primary provider” of services to the resident. HOA’s also represent a platform through which the City can communicate with residents to share information about City activities – though City staff commented this has been met with mixed results.

The Importance of Communications

Local government is the institution of government that is closest to the people. It is often a constituent’s only point of civic engagement in any given year. It is also the most trusted form of government due to, in part, the ability of residents to interact directly with elected leaders and city staff in the course of everyday life.
Building and consistently executing a communications plan helps cities foster an engaged community. By leveraging established communication platforms and creating new outlets, local governments can inform residents of upcoming initiatives, alert constituents to community meetings and organize community members in response to emergencies. To see the most benefit from their communication efforts, cities must build trust with residents and set their expectations through regular, proactive communications efforts.

Additionally, the City has an active visitors and tourism program designed to promote stays at the myriad of resorts in the City. These resorts generate revenue for local businesses, but most importantly, also drive transient occupancy tax revenues for the City. This tax has been a critical area of income for the City, making up for large revenue losses resulting from California’s elimination of redevelopment agencies. The City operated one of the more advanced redevelopment agencies in California before its elimination.

The City of Indian Wells has the potential to further leverage existing communication tools and implement new communication strategies to cultivate an engaged community. Residents and businesses would benefit from the City’s efforts across all departments. This report documents current communications, identifies successes and suggests future goals for the City’s communication efforts.

**Engagement Approach**

Tripepi Smith was engaged to review and research the City’s existing communication platforms. The goal of the City of Indian Wells Express Communications Assessment is to consider the most optimal methods of engagement and communication for the City’s needs (both resident and tourism) before committing to a particular communications strategy.

Tripepi Smith led an onsite meeting with City Staff to discuss a variety of factors important to the City’s communication efforts, including audiences, platforms, brand, etc. and reviewed a variety of internal and external communications platforms available to the City. Additional phone calls were executed with key staff and significant follow-up emails and other communications were used to round out data and verify key information.

Tripepi Smith has documented existing platforms, identified opportunities for improvement in City communications and surfaced best practices that the City can integrate effectively into existing processes.
A Changing Communications Landscape

With a growing number of communications channels available, engaging audiences is becoming more complex. Audiences cannot be reached entirely through a single channel. From print newspapers to online news websites to social media platforms, people use a variety of digital and traditional channels to consume information. With a robust tourism industry and the Indian Wells community being comprised of primarily retirees and a growing middle-aged population, it is important to consider using a variety of communications channels to disseminate City information so that it is easily accessible to all. Additionally, the need to reach audiences far beyond the borders of the City to promote tourism requires a strong understanding of outreach and advertising platforms that drive tourism business.
Indian Wells by the Numbers

The City uses a variety of tools and methods to communicate, each providing an opportunity to reach audiences in a different way. An effective communications effort will involve leveraging multiple platforms to reach as many audience members as possible. Typical platforms may include websites, social media, and printed collateral. It is imperative to understand the City’s demographics in order to refine and set communication goals. The charts below depict the current audience for communications in the City of Indian Wells and the size of channels to reach the audiences. Hard data provides a better context to understanding what can and can’t work to “get the word out” to residents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAT</th>
<th>COUNT</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City Population &amp; Racial Demographics (per SCAG Profile of the City of Indian Wells 2017)</td>
<td>5,412</td>
<td>The racial makeup of Indian Wells is:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Hispanic White: 83.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic: 11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Hispanic Asian: 1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Hispanic Black: 1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Hispanic American Indian: 0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All Other Non-Hispanic: 1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Voters</td>
<td>2,762</td>
<td>As of May 2018.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Housing Units (per SCAG Profile of the City of Indian Wells 2017)</td>
<td>5,262</td>
<td>The homeownership rate in Indian Wells is 80.90%. (Housing units include occupied and unoccupied units.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Households (per SCAG Profile of the City of Indian Wells 2017)</td>
<td>2,894</td>
<td>The average household size in Indian Wells is 1.9. (Households refer to occupied housing units.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Resident Email Addresses in Civica</td>
<td>6,661</td>
<td>As of April 2016. Source for many is resident benefit cards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Currently Issues Resident Benefit Cards</td>
<td>4,997</td>
<td>As of July 13, 2018.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Email Addresses in Civica</td>
<td>150,944</td>
<td>144,000 + emails are tourism-related; 6,661 resident email addresses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total open rate for emails sent through Civica: 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total click through rate for emails sent through Civica: 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granicus Media Views</td>
<td>967 Total Views</td>
<td>(12/1/17 - 7/1/18) Internal views (City Staff): 84, External views: 883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAT</td>
<td>COUNT</td>
<td>NOTES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Licenses</td>
<td>1,945</td>
<td>Total number of active business licenses as of June 2018 – this includes many home business licenses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nixle Subscribers</td>
<td>1,131</td>
<td>As of June 2018.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Residents on Facebook</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>Determined through Facebook Ads Manager: An ad with a “Reach” goal; targeted at Facebook users ages 13-65+; targeted at users who self-identify as living in Indian Wells, California; and excluding placements on Instagram or Facebook’s “Audience Network.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Residents on Nextdoor</td>
<td>1,148</td>
<td>As of June 2018. (Metrics from Sheriff’s Nextdoor account.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Facebook Page Likes/Fans &amp; Follows</td>
<td>10,423 Likes 10,023 Followers</td>
<td>As of June 2018.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Twitter Account Followers</td>
<td>5,046 Followers</td>
<td>1,391 tweets; following 2,981 accounts. As of June 2018.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Instagram Profile Followers</td>
<td>297 Followers</td>
<td>28 posts; following 72 accounts. As of June 2018.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City LinkedIn Followers</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>29 employees on LinkedIn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City YouTube Subscribers</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>As of June 2018.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Indian Wells by the Numbers

- City Facebook Page Likes: 10,423
- Total Resident Emails Addresses in City: 6,661
- City Population: 5,412
- Housing Units: 5,262
- City Twitter Followers: 5,046
- City Twitter Households: 2,894
- Registered Voters: 2,762
- Number of residents on Facebook: 2,100
- Number of residents on Nextdoor: 1,945
- Number of residents on Nexls: 1,148
- Number of subscribers on Nextdoor: 1,131
- granicus media views: 967
- City Instagram Followers: 297
- City LinkedIn Followers: 59
- City YouTube Subscribers: 35
Current Communication Methods

Website
The City’s main website www.cityofindianwells.org is hosted by Civica. Staff uses Siteimprove to monitor website analytics. Civica implemented Google Analytics on the website but City staff does not have access to the account and hasn’t been able to gain access since Granicus acquired Civica in 2015. The City may be able to retrieve access to the account by proving ownership of the website to Google.

General Traffic to the Website
In the past 12 months (June 1, 2017 – May 31, 2018), there have been 111,094 Visits\(^2\) to the City’s website from 83,880 Unique visitors who viewed 295,014 Pages. Of the 83,880 Unique visitors, approximately 97 percent are new visitors who have not previously visited the City’s website; 3 percent are Returning visitors. The Siteimprove account has been configured to filter out internal traffic from City Hall, a best practice that ensures website traffic data is not inflated by visits from City staff.

Figure 1: A graph of visits to www.cityofindianwells.org from June 1, 2017 to May 31, 2018

\(^2\) A visit is defined as a series of page requests from the same uniquely identified visitor with a time of no more than 30 minutes between each page request.
Traffic to the website stays consistent from April to December, then gradually increases from January to March. The rise in traffic in January and February is correlated to the BNP Paribas Open resident ticket lottery. During these months, the Tennis page where residents can enter the lottery is the most popular page besides the homepage. In March, the high spike in traffic is likely from BNP Paribas Open attendees; the most popular page besides the homepage during this month is the About Us page. The highest spike in traffic in March occurred on March 18, 2018, the last day of the BNP Paribas Open.

In October, November, and December 2017 - the three months prior to the rise in traffic - the top pages are the homepage (9,287 Page views), the Human Resources page (2,445 Page views) and the 2018 Residential Benefit ID Card page (2,188 Page views). During the rise in traffic in January, February, and March 2018, the top pages were the homepage (37,914 Page views), the Tennis page (14,160 Page views) and the Upcoming Residents Events page (14,351 Page views).

**Website Traffic by Device**

Website visitors are primarily using Desktops to access the City’s website. From June 1, 2017 to May 31, 2018, 55 percent of total visits were from Desktops, 34.8 percent were from Mobile and 10.2 percent were from Tablets. This distribution is common among the city websites reviewed by Tripepi Smith in other engagements. Given current trends in technology, the number of visitors using Mobile is likely to rapidly increase. With a mobile responsive website, the City is prepared to respond to an increase in Mobile visitors. These ratios of desktop to mobile traffic are in line with common results in other cities.

![Website Visits by Device](image)

*Figure 2: Percentage of website visits by device from June 1, 2018 to May 31, 2018.*
Top 10 Most-Viewed Webpages

The most popular page on the City’s website from June 1, 2017 to May 31, 2018, was the homepage (65,000+ Page views). This is typical for most websites, as the homepage is usually the main point of entry for visitors. Data for the homepage appears under multiple URLs in Siteimprove: cityofindianwells.org and www.cityofindianwells.org. The Upcoming Resident Events page is the next most popular page with 15,000+ Page views. The popularity of the Upcoming Resident Events page may be an indicator that residents are frequently navigating to the website for information.

Top 10 Most-Viewed Visitors Webpages

The Visitors section on the website is the City’s main platform for promoting Indian Wells as a tourist destination. From June 1, 2017 to May 31, 2018, the most popular page within this section was the main Visitors page (6,180 Page views) followed by the Traveling to IW page (3,855 Page views) and the Gaming and Casinos page (1,895 Page views).
Most Popular Internal Searches

In the past 12 months, there were a total of 2,649 searches within the search engine on the City’s website. The table below lists the most popular searches from June 1, 2017 to May 31, 2018. There is a significant drop in monthly searches in January, February, March, April and May of 2018 which may suggest that the search logging feature requires some attention to ensure it remains active at documenting the searches being executed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Search Term</th>
<th>Search Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>bids</td>
<td>132 searches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>jobs</td>
<td>90 searches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>employment</td>
<td>35 searches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Cynthia Frawley</td>
<td>32 searches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>business license</td>
<td>29 searches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>grants</td>
<td>20 searches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>rfp</td>
<td>21 searches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>property taxes</td>
<td>16 searches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>careers</td>
<td>18 searches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>marijuana</td>
<td>17 searches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 Graph showing significant decrease of internal searches starting in January 2018.

Transparency Efforts – IW Open Checkbook

The City has implemented a portal on City finances that leverages the elements of the Tyler Technologies financial systems. The portal can be found here: http://openbooks.tylertech.com/indianwells/TransWebPages/Home.aspx and provides access

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3 Tripepi Smith attempted to contact Granicus regarding issues with the internal search engine tool but did not receive a response.
to an array of revenue and spending activity. Google Analytics is implemented on the portal and is managed by Tyler Technologies. Since its launch on April 1, 2016, 324 Unique users have visited the portal. The homepage is the most popular page with 1,209 Page views followed by the Category page (653 Page views) and the Department page (537 Page views).

**Website Analysis**

**Content Organization**
Content on the City’s website is a mixture of City-related and tourism-related information. Overall, the website is fairly easy to navigate with a well-structured top navigation bar that lists information logically below each button category: About, City Hall, Residents, Visitors, I Want To and Contact Us. The website also features a prominent search bar (functionality requires verifications) in the center of the homepage that allows visitors to quickly search for information. Additionally, the homepage provides three buttons on the left-hand side that allow visitors to easily access Events, News and Helpful links.

As recently as two years ago, the City had a separate website they operated just for communicating about tourism opportunities and to promote Indian Wells resorts. The site was eliminated in a cost-cutting move and consolidated into the City government website.

**Mobile Design**
The City’s website has a “mobile responsive” design which allows users to navigate the website easily through a mobile browser. On a mobile browser, all sections of the website can be seen from the mobile screen without zooming in and out of pages. As traffic from mobile devices becomes increasingly popular, it is especially important that the City has this mobile responsive website.

**Security**
The City’s website does not appear to have a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) certificate running on all pages of the site. An SSL certificate enables encryption of sensitive data during online transactions, and is especially important if the City collects any personal information on its website, such as addresses, social security numbers, or payment information for online bill pay. An SSL certificate is present when attempting to conduct a transaction such as purchasing a Resident Benefit Card. The website does shift the user to a site with an SSL Certificate ([https://rbc.cityofindianwells.org/](https://rbc.cityofindianwells.org/)).

Google has taken a strong stance on using SSL throughout websites for overall security reasons. As such, the best practice is to have an SSL certificate applied to every page.
Recently, Google Chrome browser – the most popular browser in the US, started inserting the words “Not Secure” on any page that does not have SSL. See figure below.

![Chrome Not Secure](image)

*Figure 4 - Chrome version 68+ (released in June 2018) started adding the Not Secure language in the URL bar.*

Additionally, SSL certificates improve website Search Engine Optimization, since Google uses SSL certification as a signal in search ranking algorithms to ensure websites with SSL appear higher on search results.

**Terms & Conditions/Privacy Policy**

The Indian Wells website has a Privacy Policy page that can be found at [http://www.cityofindianwells.org/privacy.asp](http://www.cityofindianwells.org/privacy.asp). A link to the Privacy Policy is easily accessible at the website’s footer.
Social Media

Social media is a flexible, cost-effective tool that allows for two-way communication and is used regularly across a wide range of demographics. The City’s social media accounts include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn (inactive) and YouTube. These accounts primarily target the City’s external audiences with content that promotes tourism in Indian Wells; they are rarely used to communicate with residents about City-related topics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Account</th>
<th>Manager(s)</th>
<th>Number of Likes/Followers</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook Page – Indian Wells</td>
<td>Micaela Wilkey</td>
<td>10,423 Page Likes; 10,023 Followers</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/IndianWells/">https://www.facebook.com/IndianWells/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter Account – @indian_wells</td>
<td>Micaela Wilkey</td>
<td>5,046 Followers</td>
<td><a href="https://twitter.com/indian_wells">https://twitter.com/indian_wells</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram – @cityofindianwells</td>
<td>Micaela Wilkey</td>
<td>297 Followers</td>
<td><a href="https://www.instagram.com/cityofindianwells/">https://www.instagram.com/cityofindianwells/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn – Indian Wells</td>
<td>Inactive</td>
<td>59 Followers</td>
<td><a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/indian-wells/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/indian-wells/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube – CityofIndianWells</td>
<td>Micaela Wilkey</td>
<td>35 Subscribers</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/CityofIndianWells">https://www.youtube.com/user/CityofIndianWells</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Facebook (City’s main Facebook Page)**

With more than 10,000 Page Likes (“Fans”), the City’s main Facebook Page has the largest audience of any City-managed social media platform. Of the 10,000+ Page Likes (“Fans”), approximately 63 percent are women and 36 percent are men; the majority of Fans are between 45 and 64 years old.

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4 Data sampled in June 2018.
The Page has a moderate international following; approximately 15 percent of Page Fans identify as living outside of the United States. Within the United States, the top five locations where Page Fans reside are Los Angeles (853), San Diego (412), Palm Desert (316), La Quinta (244), and Palm Springs (197). There are only 67 Page Fans who identify as living in Indian Wells. Per Facebook’s advertising tools, ads targeted at Facebook users (ages 13-65+) who self-identify as living in Indian Wells could potentially reach 2,100 people. This number can serve as an estimate for the City’s potential audience size on Facebook. The majority of Page Fans use Facebook with the language set to English.

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5 Determined through Facebook Ads Manager: An ad with a “Reach” goal; targeted at Facebook users ages 13-65+; targeted at users who self-identify as living in Indian Wells, California; and excluding placements on Instagram or Facebook’s “Audience Network.”
Based on data from all posts on the City’s Facebook Page, Video Posts have the highest average reach\(^6\) and engagement\(^7\). On average, Video Posts reached 241 people, received 24 post clicks, and 6 reactions, comments & shares. Compared to the large number of Page Fans (10,423), the average reach and engagement for posts on the Page is low.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Average Reach</th>
<th>Average Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared Video</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7: Facebook Page Posts success among type of posts as of June 2018

Content on the Facebook Page is focused on promoting the various resorts and events in Indian Wells. The City posts multiple times per week; the majority of posts are shared posts from local resorts like the Renaissance Indian Wells Resort & Spa. The City has spent approximately $1,000 across 14 boosted posts on the Facebook page. The majority of boosted posts are shared posts from other pages. There is no evidence of posts related to City Council business or City-related matters on the City’s page. The Page is clearly dedicated to marketing and tourism.

---

\(^6\) The number of people who saw your post at least once.
\(^7\) The total number of actions that people take involving your post.
Twitter

Next to Facebook, the City’s Twitter account has the second-largest social following with 5,046 Followers. From March 2, 2018 to May 31, 2018, the account’s Tweets averaged approximately 493 impressions\(^8\) and 1.5 engagements\(^9\). Similar to the City’s Facebook, posts on Twitter receive very low impressions and engagements when compared to the account’s large following (5,046).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tweets</th>
<th>Top Tweets</th>
<th>Tweets and replies</th>
<th>Promoted</th>
<th>Impressions</th>
<th>Engagements</th>
<th>Engagement rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian Wells</td>
<td>Indian Wells</td>
<td>Apr 10</td>
<td>@Indian Wells</td>
<td>Proud of our “sister cities” too thanks @CityofLaQuinta #Indianwells twitter.com/CityofLaQuinta...</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Wells</td>
<td>Indian Wells</td>
<td>Mar 22</td>
<td>@Indian Wells</td>
<td>City Of Indian Wells Named #4 City in California for Financial Soundness tinyurl.com/v8qks67o</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Wells</td>
<td>Indian Wells</td>
<td>Apr 13</td>
<td>@Indian wells</td>
<td>Remember today might be Friday the 13th but it is also National Peach Cobbler day #Indianwells #PeachCobblerDay</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8: Top 3 Tweets (March 2, 2018 - May 31, 2018)

Content on the Twitter account consists primarily of Retweets that promote local resorts, restaurants, events, and other tourism-related posts. Occasionally, the City posts about City-related matters such as the State of the City, fiscal strength, and Nixle alerts. The City has not used Twitter for advertising.

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\(^8\) Number of times users saw the Tweet on Twitter.

\(^9\) The number of times a user has interacted with a Tweet. This includes all clicks anywhere on the Tweet (including hashtags, links, avatar, username and Tweet expansion.), retweets, replies, follows, and likes.
**Instagram**
The City’s Instagram account is not regularly updated, unlike the City’s Facebook and Twitter accounts. Since the account’s first post in November 2016, there have only been 28 additional posts. Like Facebook and Twitter, content on this account is also geared towards the City’s external audiences, with the majority of posts promoting tourism in Indian Wells. The account is frequently tagged in photos posted by users visiting locations in Indian Wells. There are a variety of popular Indian Wells hashtags on Instagram including #indianwells (133,611 posts), #indianwells2017 (2,989 posts), #indianwells2016 (2,164 posts) and #indianwells2018 (1,663 posts). The City uses #indianwells in most posts as well as other less popular Indian Wells hashtags including #indianwellsca (223 posts), #visitindianwells (32 posts), and #cityofindianwells (28 posts).

**LinkedIn**
The City has a LinkedIn Company Page, but it is not actively managed. The Page is fully built out with the City’s logo and details about the City of Indian Wells. It has 59 Followers and 29 LinkedIn members have identified Indian Wells as their employer. The Page Administrator is Micaela Wilkey.

**YouTube**
Since joining YouTube in July 2010, the City has uploaded 51 videos which have received a total of 20,451 views. With 4,964 views, the most popular video on the City’s channel is “Indian Wells Meeting Planner 2016,” a video promoting Indian Wells as a conference and special events venue. The popularity of this video is likely related to its promotion or embed in other marketing contexts used by the City to promote tourism. The City uses the channel for both tourism-related promotional videos and videos with informational content for residents such as public safety, building permits and palm tree compliance videos. Informational and policy-related video content is produced by the IT Department.

**Nextdoor**
The City currently does not have a Nextdoor Public Agency account. Per the Indian Wells Police Department’s account (Riverside County Sheriff’s Department), there are 1,148 Indian Wells residents on Nextdoor, accounting for approximately 16 percent of the City’s households.

**Chute**
The City uses Chute to display a feed of Instagram posts on the Indian Wells website. The feed consists primarily of posts tagged with the Indian Wells hashtag or geotag. The City has hired
Chute staff to provide daily management services of the feed. The services were free for a few months and now cost approximately $100 monthly. Ten users have access to the Chute account: three Civica programmers, five Chute staff members and two City staff members. City Staff observed that the engagement with Chute has not worked out entirely as envisioned and warrants a revisit on continuing the solution or current engagement approach. Specifically, content generation has not taken place in a manner that was hoped for.

The follow people have access to the City’s Chute Account:

- José Gomes Júnior
  - jose.gomes@getchute.com
- Chyczewskijeanne@gmail.com
  - chyczewskijeanne@gmail.com
- Blake Cohen
  - blake.cohen@getchute.com
- Sarah Moyer
  - sarah.moyer@getchute.com
- Chris Carlson
  - chris.carlson@getchute.com
- Emily Hamelton
  - mlehmilton@gmail.com
- Jacquiemj@hotmail.com
  - jacquiemj@hotmail.com
- nsamuelson@indianwells.com
  - nsamuelson@indianwells.com
- Micaela Wilkey
  - mwilkey@indianwells.com
- Connor Katz
  - connor.katz@getchute.com

Print Publications

Print publications present another opportunity to drive messaging and create a sense of community and pride that can reflect positively on City Hall. The City has produced several print publications in the past, including resident and visitor brochures and a monthly resident newsletter. Legacy print materials and current digital materials are available on the website.

Resident Benefit Brochure

The City of Indian Wells produces a brochure to accompany its resident benefit cards. The brochure explains the benefits of the card, as well as the terms and conditions of possession.
Good Neighbor Brochure

The City of Indian Wells has produced a brochure directed at short term renters. It outlines the expectations the City has of renters, primarily what kinds of behaviors are against city ordinances (loud parties, disruptive behaviors etc.). It is no longer printed regularly, only when it needs to be included with a newly issued license or permit, and then it is printed in office on standard paper. It is also viewable online.

City Newsletter (previous publication)

The City previously spent heavily executing a printed newsletter for residents that was produced 10 times per year. It contained events, resident profiles, and general community news. The City contracted a writer and designer to help produce content, printed 5,000 copies per run, and sold ad spaces to help offset the cost. For the last year that the printed newsletter was in place (FY 16/17), the yearly newsletter budget was $130,008. That same year the City raised $18,300 in advertising revenue, though that number was higher in the two years prior ($40,662 in FY 14/15 and $29,672 in FY 15/16). Following the release of the Spring 2017 newsletter in March of that year, it was decided to evolve the newsletter to a digital-only process and frequency was shifted to a quarterly release (though the City is considering returning to the 10 times per year production schedule in the digital format). City Staff report that most residents have been indifferent with the switch or prefer it, though a few have expressed missing the printed version.

Local Media

Desert Sun

The Desert Sun is a daily newspaper serving Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley. It is owned by USA Today. Though not specific to the City of Indian Wells, the Desert Sun is a daily source of news for residents with upwards of 100,000 cumulative readers per day (print and online) and an online section specifically for Indian Wells news.

Tidbits

Tidbits of Coachella Valley is a weekly print publication targeted at Coachella Valley residents. Articles are feel-good or “fluff” pieces. 30,000 copies are printed and distributed across Coachella Valley each week with eight distribution locations within Indian Wells city limits. The publication estimates approximately 500 weekly readers in Indian Wells.
Desert Entertainer

Desert Entertainer is a monthly publication that highlights dining, events, attractions, and nightlife for residents of and visitors to the Coachella Valley. Several of the local resorts carry the publication at their concierge desk (Hyatt, Renaissance, Miramonte) and there are three other distribution locations in the City (CVS Pharmacy, Chamber of Commerce, Vicky’s of Santa Fe). It reaches approximately 1,800 readers per month in Indian Wells.

“The News” Desert Mobile Home News

This publication is a part of Desert Entertainer aimed at mobile home owners and residents in the Coachella Valley. There are 50 total distribution locations outside or near mobile home parks in the Coachella Valley and five distribution centers within Indian Wells city limits (CVS Pharmacy, Don Diego’s, Vicky’s of Santa Fe, City Hall, Chamber of Commerce). Estimates are at 500 readers per week in Indian Wells.

Desert Charities News

This newsletter is produced three times per year and 10,000 copies of each issue are distributed specifically to charity organizations around the Coachella Valley. Their opt-in newsletter has 3,200 subscribers. There is no information available for Indian Wells specifically.

Palm Springs Life

This publication is a monthly magazine distributed to the greater Palm Springs area that caters to affluent locals and visitors. It also produces “The Guide,” which is the official visitor’s guide for the Greater Palm Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau. 73% of their readership is over the age of 55 with an average household income of $368,000. It is distributed in hotel rooms, timeshares, and vacation properties around the area.

The City supports this publication with participation in the annual Coachella Valley Vision issue. The issue includes an article highlighting Indian Wells; the City has control over the editorial content and images. The City also receives access to the publication’s subscription database for an eblast. This Fall 2018, the City plans to use the eblast to promote IRONMAN.

The City supports this publication with participation in its annual Vision issue (https://www.palmspringslife.com/coachella-valley-vision/).
Locale Palm Springs

Locale is a Southern California-based magazine catering to an affluent millennial and Gen-Z audience. Their local publication, Locale Palm Springs, features celebrities, local restaurants, things to do, and vacation/staycation ideas. Locally, it is available at the concierge desks of the Renaissance, Hyatt, and Miramonte resorts, as well as Pacific Sotheby’s and CVS Pharmacy. It caters to both residents and visitors.

Desert Magazine

Owned by the Desert Sun, Desert Magazine is a lifestyle magazine targeted at affluent California baby boomers. The magazine is automatically delivered to Desert Sun subscribers 10 times per year. Circulation is estimated at 35,000+ in the Coachella Valley/Palm Springs area. Issues are also available digitally.

Local Cable Access Television

The City manages a local public access channel, IW-TV. There is approximately 17 minutes of looped content that repeats 24-7, with the exception of twice daily broadcasts of the most recent city council meetings (at 9a.m. and 7p.m. local time), and housing authority meetings at 1p.m. local time. Loop content includes the city council meeting schedule, slides featuring each City Council member, as well as ads for the BNP tennis tournament. When applicable, code enforcement information will also be posted as a slide. The City previously paid an outside agency to manage IW-TV, but in January 2018, switched to internal management and is now run by the City IT Manager. He creates the commercial loops and films and posts City Council and State of the City meetings. The City had also previously hired a contract worker to create short vignettes (about $125 per 45-second clip) that would be added to the loop, but has since slowed down on new content production. Video content is stored in a network shared drive. The City does not have viewership numbers or data for IW-TV.

Direct Digital Communications

Email

The City uses its website provider, Granicus (former Civica), to execute large scale email communication/distribution. The email manager feature of Granicus can be accessed by anyone who has access to the website’s backend (approximately 70 staff members across Granicus, Civica and Indian Wells). There are currently 150,944 email addresses in the City’s email database. Approximately 144,000 emails are for tourism-related promotions; 100,000
email addresses were acquired from Buxton. There are 6,661 resident email addresses in the database. The City’s database of resident email addresses, as a proportion of the City’s population, is significantly larger than other cities with which Tripepi Smith has worked. The City has sent 861 emails through Granicus. Granicus reports a 35 percent open rate and 1 percent click-through rate for all emails sent since the City started using the email manager in July 2012. Data in Granicus appears to be unreliable, however. Most reports for individual emails report a 100 percent open rate (or higher), yet the total open rate for all emails is 35 percent.

The Resident Benefit Card program generates a significant point of contact for the City to collect contract information from residents, including emails, and there is a significant number of emails for current residents as a result relative to the city’s total population. This email database is a significant resource for the City that few other cities have.

**Digital Newsletter**

The City recently switched from a printed newsletter to a quarterly digital newsletter that is delivered straight to residents’ email. Articles include resident profiles, highlights of local businesses, events, City news, etc.

The exact cost of the digital newsletters to date is impossible to determine because it has become a part of the overall “city communications” budget which also includes e-blasts, mailers, surveys, and Nixle. The City has considered ramping up the digital newsletter production to 10 issues per year (the same frequency as the previous, printed newsletter) as opposed to the current quarterly format. One option would be to outsource most of the production and the City has reached out to Inside Custom Media for an estimate. Inside Custom Media has provided a quote of approximately $30,000 per year for 10, eight-page digital issues. To help offset these costs, Inside Custom Media may sell ad space to offset some of the newsletter production costs.

**Nixle**

Nixle allows governments to send notifications to residents through phone, email and web. Indian Wells residents currently receive Nixle notifications from both the City and the Riverside County Sheriff’s Department. As of June 2018, the City of Indian Wells had 1,131 total Nixle
subscribers. There are 1,141 SMS numbers\textsuperscript{10}, 556 emails and 185 voice numbers subscribed to the system. Since implementing Nixle in November 2016, the City has sent 70 notifications. The majority of notifications are alerts regarding weather conditions and advisories about road work and construction in the City.

\textbf{Other Communication Methods}

\textbf{City Hall Phone Service}

The City places a strong emphasis on customer services for its residents, and that experience includes a common private sector objective: a human voice answers the phone at City Hall. In pursuit of this goal, the City tracks incoming phone calls by department and produces weekly reports to inform departments on how they are living up to this customer service standard. The report is produced by the IT Manager. From 04/01/18 to 07/06/18, City Hall received 1,469 calls. Of those, 601 went to Building, 27 to the City Manager’s office, 33 to Code Enforcement, 229 to Finance, 185 to Planning, 393 to Public Works, and 1 to the Reception Lunch line. In total, 71 calls were abandoned (unanswered and sent to voicemail). The lunch hour (12pm to 1pm) is not included in the report.

\textsuperscript{10} The SMS Subscribers number is larger than the number of total Nixle subscribers because individuals may register more than one phone number when they sign up.
Figure 7: Incoming calls to City Hall answered/transferred vs. abandoned

Partner Agencies
There are a variety of public agencies and private companies serving Indian Wells residents which the City may have the opportunity to partner with to communicate with City audiences.

Desert Sands Unified School District
The Desert Sands Unified School District serves approximately 28,000 students who live in the Cities of Indian Wells, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, Coachella, La Quinta, Palm Desert and the unincorporated Riverside County areas of Bermuda Dunes. Of the District’s 37 schools, only one school is located in Indian Wells: Gerald R. Ford Elementary School. The school serves approximately 750 students. There are approximately 87 children 5 to 9 years old living in the City, according to the American Community Survey 2012-2016 5-Year Estimates.

Burrtce
Burrtce provides waste hauling and recycling services to residential and commercial customers in the City of Indian Wells. Burrtce has few direct bill accounts for Indian Wells residents, as 95 percent of the households are billed using the property tax bill. There are 184 Indian Wells email addresses on file with Burrtce. The company reports that no households request a hold status for the summer.
Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD)
Indian Wells residents are served by Coachella Valley Water District. Customers are billed monthly. CVWD provides online bill pay to customers; attempts were made to determine how many emails are in the CVWD system as of June 2018, but the answer was not provided.

CAL FIRE/Riverside County Fire Department
The City of Indian Wells partners with CAL FIRE/Riverside County Fire Department for fire department services. The Department is active on a variety of social media platforms, including Facebook (19,393 Likes - https://www.facebook.com/CALFIRERRU), Twitter (30,000 Followers - https://twitter.com/CALFIRERRU) and YouTube (97 Subscribers - https://www.youtube.com/user/RiversideCountyFire).

Riverside County Sheriff’s Department
The Riverside County Sheriff’s Department provides police services to the City of Indian Wells through the Palm Desert Sheriff’s Station. The Department is active on Facebook (30,093 Likes) and Twitter (12,100 Followers). The Department also uses GovDelivery for email updates. The Palm Desert Sheriff’s Station has an active Facebook page with 2,006 Likes (https://www.facebook.com/PalmDesertStation/).
Marketing Beyond Indian Wells

In addition to communicating with Residents, the City is also focused on communicating with visitors and promoting tourism. Tourism creates the economic scale that supports key businesses and services throughout the Coachella Valley that many Indian Wells residents also leverage. Tourism is also a significant source of revenue for the City as it drives the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT). TOT revenues have been an essential element to offset flat or declining sales tax revenues. Additionally, tourism generates activity at Vue Grille & Bar, aiding in the economics of the City owning that facility.

The City enjoys a cooperative relationship with both the broader Coachella Valley for marketing the whole Valley and the resorts within the City. Routine meetings take place between the resort general managers and the City Manager of Indian Wells, and all parties feel comfortable contacting each other and collaborating to drive tourism opportunities.

Occupancy rates at resorts in the City run high in the fall through spring months, then trail off as the weather heats up. This is typical of the entire Coachella Valley, but Indian Wells is acutely aware of the benefits of driving additional traffic and hotel stays during the hotter months, and the significant impact that would have on both resort and City revenues. As such, the City has been working hard on innovative ideas for activities and evening lifestyle events that would be more pleasant in the summer months.
For Fiscal Year 2017-18, Indian Wells had a $821,966 budget that it used to promote tourism to the City and the broader Coachella Valley. This budget allocation split as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Budget</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CVB Funding</td>
<td>$247,052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>$158,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative/Office Supplies</td>
<td>$27,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$442,466</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourism Initiatives</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Services</td>
<td>$78,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Marketing</td>
<td>$135,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Incentive</td>
<td>$166,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>379,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Council has approved the IRONMAN and the National Pickleball Championship sponsorships since the budget was adopted, which adds $175,000 to the Tourism program.

Tripepi Smith spoke with City Staff to better understand how these funds are allocated and what parties are involved with the marketing operations focused on tourism. The goal is to generate a better summary of the activities and outcomes of the allocation of these funds.

**Advertising**

The City advertises with several groups to promote tourism to Indian Wells.

**San Francisco Chronicle**

During summer 2017, the City partnered with the StoryStudio to purchase print and digital advertisements with the San Francisco Chronicle/SF Gate to promote the Indian Wells Golf Resort stay and play packages. Advertisements were not purchased again for summer 2018. The package included two stories. San Francisco Chronicle provided metrics. According to the StoryStudio, the industry standard for average time spent on an article clocks in at 56 seconds on mobile and 1:03 minutes on desktop devices. Both stories exceed the average time spent with the “Think Outside the Bay” story averaging 1:33 minutes and the “1 Destination, 6 Weekend Getaways” story averaging 2:12 minutes. The industry standard for scroll depth sits
at 43 percent; both stories exceeded the average with “Think Outside the Bay” averaging 57% scroll depth and the “1 Destination, 6 Weekend Getaways” averaging 43% scroll depth.

Figures 8 and 9: Screen shots of the stories produced for SFGATE in partnership with StoryStudio. Each story was promoted through native placement on SFGATE and other contextually relevant sites. Stats were provided by StoryStudio.
**TripAdvisor**
The City’s banner advertisements on TripAdvisor.com promote the Indian Wells Golf Resort stay and play packages. The City pays for impressions and is billed monthly (maximum $1,200). Ads land on [www.indianwellsgolfresort.com/stay_and_play](http://www.indianwellsgolfresort.com/stay_and_play), a website managed by Troon. The City receives website metrics from Indian Wells Golf Resort Director of Sales and Marketing Michael Tebbetts.

**CVENT**
The City runs a year-round video campaign advertising Indian Wells on CVENT. The City spends $10,400 on the video campaign, paying 10 cents per video view. The campaign generates leads from event planners which are forwarded to hotels. The City also pays $3,000 for year-round Diamond listing on CVENT as well as $3,000 for a bundle that delivers Indian Wells content when a competitor is being viewed. Previously, the City also purchased banner ads with CVENT but stopped when the Greater Palms Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau started advertising on CVENT, as the City did not want to duplicate advertising efforts.

**KTLA**
The City purchased a $25,000 spot on KTLA with the Greater Palm Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau during summer 2017 and summer 2018. The advertisement is specific to Indian Wells. The City receives a year-end report that includes number of impressions.

**Westways Magazine**
The City purchases a digital and print co-op advertisement with the BNP Paribas Open on Westways Magazine. The City contributes $3,000 to the total cost ($6,000).

**ESPN**
The City purchases a $25,000 spot on ESPN during the BNP Paribas Open. The commercial is produced by the Greater Palms Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau. ESPN provides the City with metrics.

**Locale Magazine**
The City partnered with Locale Magazine for an advertising package in the print edition of their February 2018 Locale Palm Springs issue, as well as online ads and social media posts. The print edition included a feature story on tennis player and Tournament Director of the BNP Paribas Open Tommy Haas and the associated photo shoot for the story took place at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden. The 12 online ads included three each of; in-story page skins, in-story ads, leaderboard banners, and square banners, plus one web editorial about weddings in
Indian Wells. Social media posts included promoted Facebook posts, two main photos on the Locale Instagram page, and three Instagram story mentions.

![Figure 10: ESPN HH US Ratings: 2017 vs. 2018.](image)

**Tennis Channel**

During the 2018 BNP Paribas, the City purchased a $30,000 spot on the Tennis Channel, a $5,000 increase from the usual $25,000 spent in previous years. Fees include commercial production. The City is also featured on certain segments on the channel such as the best places to eat in the desert. The Tennis Channel provides the City with metrics. Overall, unique views increased in 2018 vs. 2017. Indian Wells Live saw an increase in viewership of 26%, while Tennis Channel Live saw an increase of 16%. The full tournament saw over 230,000 more unique viewers in 2018 than 2017, and an 18% uptick in gross quarter hour impressions.
Figure 11: Tennis Channel BNP Paribas Open Unique Views: 2017 vs. 2018

*2018-S. Williams v V. Williams (Live) – (3/12/18)
*2017-R. Federer v R. Nadal (Live) – (3/15/17)
**Marketing Partners**
The City has partnered with a few organizations for marketing assistance.

**Independent Contractor – Chris Martello**
In 2015, the City engaged Chris Martello, an independent third-party marketing consultant to assist with marketing efforts. Marketing efforts were primarily focused on the golf resort and helping Troon with Indian Wells messaging. The City no longer works with Chris Martello.

**JNS Advertising**
JNS Advertising assists the City with media buying. The City does not have an active engagement with the firm, but occasionally communicates with the firm for opinion on marketing efforts.

**Crail Communications**
Occasionally, the City will engage Crail Communications for assistance with writing assignments. Crail Communications is usually only engaged when City staff does not have time for certain projects.

**Point7West**
Previously, the City worked with Point7West to produce commercials, but no longer engages with the company due to high costs. Commercials are now produced by the Greater Palm Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau in house. Video assets can be found on the City’s YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/user/CityofIndianWells/

**Familiarization Trips/Sales Missions**
The City has held BNP Paribas Open familiarization trips (FAM trips) for golf writers, media and event planners. Through the BNP FAM trips, the City has been able to close deals with Kawasaki and Google. The City has stopped planning sales mission trips, as they would prefer for planners to visit Indian Wells instead even if it means that the City pays more. Still, sales mission trips are not entirely off the table, as hotel general managers and sales directors believe they are necessary.

**Hotel Occupancy**
The Greater Palm Springs Conventions and Visitors Bureau (CVB) provides the City with monthly hotel occupancy rate reports from Smith Travel Research. The City of Indian Wells and La Quinta rates are combined. The year to date (January to May 2018) occupancy rate for Indian Wells and La Quinta is at 70.5 percent, 2 percent higher than the same period in 2017. The hotels in Indian Wells are limited on the information they are allowed to share with the
City. Data about where visitors who stay at the hotels are from is not available to the City. The City is also able to collect information from the CVB with VisaVue.

**Local Event Participation**

To help build brand awareness, the City sponsors several local events, including IRONMAN 70.3 Indian Wells/La Quinta, Desert Town Hall, Modernism Week, IW Pro Am, The Living Desert, and the Indian Wells Arts Festival. Previously, the City also sponsored Taste of Tennis, but the event was not approved for FY 18-19. All events have a form of discount or complimentary ticket component for Indian Wells residents. The City has individual, long-term sponsorship agreements with each event.

**Indian Wells Brand**

**Branding Guide**

The City currently has a brand guide that was created by BrandSuite and implemented in the spring of 2007. Its implementation coincided with the launch of the City of Indian Wells arrowhead logo. It is an in-depth, 29-page document that introduces the City of Indian Wells, the Indian Wells brand, and branding best practices for the City, the Indian Wells Golf Resort, and the Vue Grille & Bar. The branding guide calls upon three key words to encapsulate the City’s brand: astute, exclusive, and tranquil. The brand attempts to set the City apart from the rest of the Coachella Valley, noting the “unsurpassed quality of life” in Indian Wells and the history of pride and ingenuity in the community. It also places heavy emphasis on the physical differences of the City, noting the lush landscaping and lines of palm trees on major roads as hallmarks of the City.

The brand guide includes proper usage of the City logo and seal, official colors, typefaces, major events in the City, guidelines for lifestyle photography, graphic elements, messaging guidelines, uniform samples, and branding application for city vehicles and landscaping.

The brand guide suggests the following timelines for maintenance/evaluation; Strategic Direction review every 3-5 years, Strategic Plan evaluation every 3-5 years, and annual maintenance of the brand experience. There is no evidence of a reevaluation since the guide was launched more than 10 years ago. Overall, the branding guide provides thorough and useful information about the strategic direction of the City, and its emphasis on a luxurious and tranquil lifestyle seems to be applicable to residents and visitors alike.
Communications Observations

General

- The City has two distinct communication goals: 1) connect with its residents to engage in traditional public outreach on municipal related matters such as budgets, services, infrastructure and development, and 2) sell/pitch/market the city’s resort lifestyle to groups and individuals to promote high occupancy rates at the hotels, particularly during the “shoulder months” in spring and fall when the weather is hot but groups still come to town. These two very different audiences require different approaches, budgets, and pathways for engagement.

- Within the goal above for local resident connections, there are two subsets of audiences: year-round residents and seasonal residents who are present during cooler months. Seasonal residents tend to be further detached from the overall city operations and community given their divided residential interests and. Connecting with these residents and holding their interest is even more challenging.

- When the City made the difficult decision to stop the monthly printed magazine and related contracting services it had the obvious result of ending an expensive distribution platform, but it also ended the cycle of editorial content planning and content generation. With the transition to a digital newsletter, the City has not sustained an editorial and communications planning process.

- The prior role of Communications Manager was heavily focused on media and traditional relationships, but was not driven toward integrating City policy initiatives with long term communication planning methods. There is no evidence of an editorial calendar process that is a fundamental starting point for strategic planning and timing of communications.

- The City is in a unique position of being viewed as both a traditional service delivery vehicle for core services and a provider of country club-style services. For some residents, especially those who do not otherwise have access to a country club, the Vue Grille & Bar is their country club. Balancing engagement with residents between being a service provider and a governing body is a particularly unique challenge for the City.

- The Resident Benefit Card program is distinct among cities in California and creates a massive engagement opportunity. With proper registration, the City acquires the emails of 80% of the residents who applies for a card (as of August 2018 just over 5,000 Resident Benefit Cards have been issued. The RBC provides a real updated email address to contact residents – the holy grail of city communications. Resident email is the key vector for proactively communicating with residents in the City.
Strategy & Policy

- The City has one adopted policy related directly related to communications: The Advertising Approvals policy in the City of Indian Wells Administrative Manual effective May 3, 2016.
- The City has not adopted a formal social media policy. A Social Media Plan, Policies and Strategies document exists, but it is outdated and has not been formally adopted. See Appendix A.

Website

- The City previously had a second website for tourism purposes; it was eliminated due to cost.
- Website traffic stays consistent from April to December, then increases dramatically during January, February, and March due to the BNP Paribas Open.
- Between January and May 2018, the website’s internal searches decreased significantly, which may indicate an issue with the internal search engine.
- SSL has not been implemented on the website, which is generally bad for search engine optimization.
- While the City has access to SiteImprove data on traffic, the more industry standard account for Google Analytics is not accessible.

Social Media

- The City’s social media platforms are focused on the City’s tourism audience, with the majority of content being reposts from local resorts, restaurants, events etc.
- The City has largely ignored social media to reach residential audiences. Yet, there are resident audiences, such as on Nextdoor, who are active in the community and should be on the City’s radar screen.
- The City has a significant following from outside the City on both Facebook and Twitter; the City’s Instagram following is significantly lower. Additionally, the City posts more frequently on Facebook and Twitter than on Instagram.
- Of the 10,000+ Page Likes on the City’s Facebook page, only 67 are attributed to users who self-identify as living in Indian Wells.
- The City has consistently expressed that recruiting talent to the Coachella Valley to work at the City is difficult. LinkedIn and related messaging tools on that platform should be a core component of the overall City recruiting brand to get the best and brightest to come to the desert and work for the City.
Media/Press

- The City has two media lists: a local media list with 126 emails from a range of local media outlets and a Southern California list with 59 emails from several outlets across Southern California.
- The City sends approximately 25-30 press releases per year.

Direct Email Communications

- The City has a large database of emails for tourism-promotion purposes; approximately 100,000 of those emails were acquired from Buxton.
- The City’s email lists in Civica are consistently updated. All email lists appear to have been updated with several new emails in 2018.
- The City’s list of resident emails exceeds the City’s population.
- The City uses Civica for email communications. The email manager in Civica has very basic reporting features and data appears to be unreliable. Metrics for individual emails sent are not consistent with grand totals. While Civica reports a 35 percent open rate for all emails sent, most individual emails report a 100 percent open rate (or higher).
- Tripepi Smith has generally observed that the Civica platform’s email blast feature is weak.

Marketing Beyond Indian Wells

- Spending by the City on marketing to people outside the City and to drive traffic does not yield significant metrics or data, or where that data is available, it is not clear that it is reviewed and made actionable.
- The closing of the City’s marketing website and folding it into the City government website mixes content and storytelling in a platform and venue that is not best suited for the purpose of promoting tourism.
- Use of the City suites at the Tennis Garden to promote key City initiatives and tourism is a missed opportunity.
Recommendations

Based on the observations above, Tripepi Smith formulated the following recommendations to help the City of Indian Wells enhance its communications and optimize platforms to further engage the community. These recommendations have been formed with both a general goal and specific actions to take to achieve that goal. They are geared toward improving the execution, delivery and impact of the City’s outreach and messaging efforts.

1 – Website Strategy Enhancements
The City’s current website arrangement, access to metrics and unification of tourism and city governance matters is not the best arrangement. Tourists and residents are distinct audiences with distinct interests. The City should review options to better connect with these distinct audiences online.

Action Steps

- Review and fix the onsite search feature. What people are searching for on your site is a critical indicator for addressing the user experience and allocation of screen real estate.
- Purchase and implement SSL on the site for security and search engine optimization purposes.
- Fix the access to the Google Analytics account on the website.
- Revisit the costs and structure to isolate tourism-focused website messaging from residents’ services. A dedicated city tourism website that does not distract visitors with content about local government and policy is important, especially if you are running separate advertising campaigns with heavy advertising spend. With an investment of hundreds of thousands of dollars on marketing and digital advertising, a portion of that budget should be dedicated to the landing page and conversion experience.
- Civica in general has been observed as a platform in decline for city websites, especially since the acquisition by Granicus. Indeed, our experience attempting to work with Grancius customer support to resolve the Google Analytics access matter demonstrated the inadequacy of their customer support. Notably, Granicus has now acquired Vision Internet, too, likely as a result of customers fleeing Civica. As such, a process to move off Civica and to another platform (Vision Internet or Civic Plus are common options) has become more murky. A healthy RFP process is advisable to pursue a new website solutions partner.
- Review metrics on website activities and share them among leadership staff to understand trends and audiences interests or concerns.
- Approximately 70 staff members across Civica, Granicus, and Indian Wells have access to the City’s website, which in turn grants access to the City’s email manager. The City
should review and narrow down website access to only include staff members who really need it.

2 – Adopt Social Media Policy
A city that is active on social media should adopt a social media policy. It provides some legal support, provides guidance to the organization and if you become more active with residents on social media, it will assist in your resident communication process.

Action Steps
- Work with the City Attorney to establish a formal social media policy that provides guidelines for the City’s development and usage of social media platforms.
- Emphasize use of social media by City Council Members to highlight risks associated with the Brown Act.
- Identify situations where the City might mute or hide comments from the public that violate the policy.

3 – Develop Social Media Strategy
The City does not use social media to engage residents. While it is true that older population segments use social media at a lower rate, there are large swaths of the older population that still use it. Further, time marches on and the Generation X users that are higher propensity Facebook users are becoming your new crop of residents. Finally, platforms like Nextdoor are taking hold in your community regardless of what the City does, and these platforms provide an effective way to engage with residents.

Action Steps
- Develop a social media strategy that addresses both internal (residents) and external (tourism) audiences. While seniors (a large component of the overall Indian Wells population) are not the highest propensity users of Facebook, Pew reports that 36% of people of 65 use the platform and Indian Well’s elevated average income data would suggest this percentage is even higher.
- Determine which social media platforms will be used to communicate with each audience. Our observations would conclude you should use Facebook and Nextdoor for residents, while continuing to use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for tourism promotion.
- Establish a procedure to determine what kind of information is disseminated to each audience.
• Develop a social media calendar to ensure communications opportunities across departments are identified and disseminated on the City’s social media platforms.
• Review social media metrics monthly to determine strengths and weaknesses and leverage insights to optimize social media strategy.
• Establish a budget for social media advertising on Facebook to increase reach of the City’s communications efforts on social media. We advise spending approximately $3000 for the first year, focused on internal resident reach and to promote the City’s Facebook page.

4 – Optimize Email Communications
The City has a massive database for tourism emails and a second large database of residents’ emails. Tripepi Smith observed that metrics are not accurate on these platforms, and we know from prior experience that the Civica platform for email communications is weak. Email is a core component of the City’s communication strategy, especially with residents, and the City needs consider better tools.

Action Steps
• Implement an email platform like Constant Contact or GovDelivery instead of using Civica for email communications.
• Experiment sending email blasts at various times of the day to determine during which times emails receive higher open and click-through rates.
• On a monthly basis, review open rates, unsubscribe rates, and similar key metrics to determine if information in email blasts is effectively reaching subscribers. Also, orient content to give people a choice to read more and then review what content is popular with the resident audience.
• Establish a set frequency for email blasts and determine what type of content warrants being distributed through email communications.
• Ensure all traffic is driven back to content on the City’s website for city governance oriented content.

5 – Develop a Communications Calendar
City Staff do not routinely gather to strategize across the organization about communication goals. This process, combined with detailed itemization of communication opportunities, will create a proactive and strategic communication process.
Action Steps

- Develop a communications calendar that identifies key City news throughout the year. Include all departments in communications calendar development to ensure all significant communications opportunities are identified.
- For each communications opportunity, determine when the information will be disseminated and on which platforms.
- Distinguish between communications opportunities that target internal (residents) versus external (tourism) audiences.
- On a monthly basis, review the communications calendar with all departments and add communications opportunities as necessary.

6 – Revamp Tourism Marketing Approach

The City has developed several different methods for driving traffic and promoting tourism in the City. Renewing those approaches each year appears to be driven mostly by what “seemed” to work. There is room to improve measurement of the methods to determine which worked best and how that method drove traffic or conversions.

Action Steps

- Require some documentation and reporting on marketing efforts with a monthly summary of spending and related results metrics (impressions, click-throughs, conversions, new emails, leads, bookings or any other imaginable metrics.
- Review the strategy for driving traffic to the Vue Grille and Bar (both digital presence and other marketing) and consider what that can do for overall City finances if more people ate at the Vue.
- Revisits and affirm or update the brand for Indian Wells. How has it evolved? Has it evolved? Are you seeking the right audience? How are you reaching younger folks? How might different audiences respond to hot weather visit opportunities? How does night programming relate to the brand? How do current ads and video align with the brand that the City wants?
Appendix A – City Policies
City of Indian Wells Administrative Manual – Advertising Approvals

IN\[Indian Wells, California\]

ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

Policy: 11.001.00
Effective Date: 05/03/2016
Approved: [Signature]

Prepared By: Director of Marketing

Subject: Advertising Approvals
Applies To: All Employees

Policy Purpose:
The City of Indian Wells Marketing and Community Services Department is responsible for vetting and approving any and all advertising. This administrative directive puts this procedure into written form and policy.

Responsibility for Enforcement:
Each employee is responsible for compliance with this policy.

Policy/Procedure:
Prior approval is required for all City advertising that publicizes a department within the City and which will be seen or heard on television, radio, regional print publications, billboards, handouts, or online. Approval is also required prior to developing logos or taglines representing the City, a department, or any other organization affiliated with the City.

These approvals are obtained from the Director of Marketing and Community Services.
City of Indian Wells Social Media Plan, Policies and Strategies
Social Media Plan, Policies and Strategies

Social Media Mission Statement

To provide real, unique and timely advice and information to visitors and prospective residents on the luxury lifestyle that comprises the Indian Wells experience.

Goals & Objectives

Currently our objectives for social media are all tourism-based and we treat the tourism as its own silo and the city as another. Below is chart on current SM platforms each silo has. Department is also an admin for Indian Wells Golf Resort SM platforms.

Current Social Media

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Goals:

1. **Increase Brand Loyalty** (potential visitors/residents)
2. Increase website traffic driving from SM
3. Increase blog traffic and email database
4. Increase visibility of hotel partners
5. Continued education of social media for staff

Strategies & tactics

1. Practice active listening: Set up listening posts to monitor buzz, send surveys, look at creating twitter driven or other form of response group
2. In order for us to be effective, our social media marketing efforts have to be ongoing. There is no finish line. As we reach goals, we need to create new ones.
Otherwise, we will go backwards. By understanding the importance of having an ongoing social media strategy, we will be ahead of the game from the start. Below are the key phases in setting goals:

THE PREREQUISITES
City Council and City Manager need to understand why social media is important, and how it can benefit the organization. It’s critical they understand three fundamental things:
- Social media is not about the “hard sell.” The primary reason to take part is to engage and build our relationships with resident, and customers.
- Smart organizations don’t jump into social media because “everyone else is doing it.” We do it because it’s the right fit for the organization, and the communication strategy.
- Social media is a long-term commitment and requires dedicated resources.
Appendix B – Interview Participants
The following City Hall staff were interviewed for this Express Communications Assessment:

Wade McKinney – City Manager
David Gassaway – Community Development Director
Kevin McCarthy – Finance Director
Anna Grandys – City Clerk
Micaela Wilkey – Management Analyst
Nick Werner – Technology Services Manager
Peter Castro – Assistant to the City Manager
Ken A. Seumalo, P.E. – Public Works Director