

2018 LGFCU Excellence in Innovation Award Project Evaluation

Project ID	PIP-6
Title of Program	New Hanover County Strategic Plan Report
Program Category	
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Implementation Date	18-Sep-17
FLSA Designation	Both (if applicable to a team)
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Description of Productivity Improvement

New Hanover County's 2012-17 Strategic Plan established three focus areas to meet the needs of the county's citizens to ensure effective planning, measuring, and strategic investment. At the end of the strategic plan's cycle, it was important for the county to highlight those focus areas, link successful outcomes with the strategic plan, and show achievement through third-party recognition.

This was the first time a five-year strategic plan had been implemented, and it was important to show its success by illustrating the wide range of programs, services, and innovative initiatives the county implemented over those five years. To accomplish this, county staff created a modern and visually-

appealing Strategic Plan Report, which was the first time a report of this nature had been created for the county.

The report was developed and designed by county staff from the Communications & Outreach, Strategy, and IT departments, and was a visual and tangible way to share the county's accomplishments. It was important for the report to be unique and not look like a regular "government" report, so every aspect of the booklet was carefully designed, written, and selected to ensure that it was engaging and innovative.

The tangible report was presented at a Board of Commissioners meeting on September 18, 2017, and was made available on the county's website, condensed into a creative video format, and promoted actively on the county's social media. It was also distributed at all county meetings, brought to community fairs and events, and given to local legislators, elected officials, community and economic development partners, and businesses. It became a true promotional piece for the county to use and effectively show the five years of strategic success.

Description of why this project was initiated

From 2012 to 2017, the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners embraced its first five-year strategic plan that guided and directed county decisions and initiatives. In order to showcase the work of the county over those five years, New Hanover County created a Strategic Plan Report booklet to enhance the level of citizen understanding of the government's programs and services.

This collateral material was a creative way to share the county's success stories, including county awards and outside recognition, and highlight the goals from the strategic plan and the county's achievement of them. It was also important to share that information in a visually engaging way, framed around the community's perspective and what matters to our residents.

The booklet was designed as a square, 8.5"x8.5", piece of collateral and the photos were strategically chosen to exemplify the county's successes in a clear way. Aerial photos were taken by Communications staff to get recent photos of our beautiful landscape, infrastructure, and county assets.

The graphic design of the booklet includes photos that stretch across the front cover to the back, and also across inside pages, to denote the continuity across all of the county's priorities and successes. The colors used in the booklet match the colors from the 2012-17 Strategic Plan for each strategic priority section, and headings and symbols draw the reader's eyes to the highlights of the report.

Over the five years of the strategic plan, symbols had been used to show the progress of each of the strategic plan's five-year goals; those same symbols were included in the report with a qualifying description to show that the goals were met and exceeded.

The content for the report was selected based on careful research, documentation, and numerous meetings with county staff and leadership to ensure that the report accurately captured the county's biggest achievements. It was written in a consistent, active voice that was clear, engaging and to the point.

The Strategic Plan Report was first presented at the televised September 18, 2017 Board of Commissioners meeting by the county manager. At the start of his presentation, a three-minute video was played that summarized the Strategic Plan Report. The video also played on the county's NHCTV for those viewing at home.

The three-minute video was produced by county staff, based on the written report, and provided a visual overview of the past five years. The video used footage from around the county and clearly illustrated the county's achievements. By illustrating the report in a video form, the county was able to reach even more people with our message of success.

To promote the Strategic Plan Report, the county employed several communications tactics, which included:

- Creating a webpage with the report as a pdf and interactive flip book, and the video embedded. A slider for the county's homepage (NHCgov.com) was created that links directly to this webpage.
- Sending a press release about the county's success, which was also posted on the county's Facebook and Twitter pages. The release linked to the webpage and had the video embedded.
- Promoting the strategic plan report on social media, using the embedded video to increase the posts' reach. Numerous county departments also cross-promoted the posts on their pages.
- Sharing the report and video on the county's intranet site to inform and thank the county's 1,700+ employees.

500 copies of the report were printed and given to New Hanover County's Commissioners and leadership team, as well as to local, state, and federal elected officials. Multiple copies were given to municipality partners, economic development organizations, Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, Cape Fear Public Utility Authority, New Hanover County Schools, New Hanover Regional Medical Center, and more community organizations.

Printed reports were also placed at all county buildings, including the Senior Resource Center, Development Services Center, Public Library branches, the Commissioners' and County Manager's offices, in meeting rooms, and on tables at the Government Center.

The reports have also been taken to numerous community events and fairs where county departments have had a booth. It was a true promotional piece for the county to use and effectively show five years of strategic success.

The Wilmington Chamber of Commerce and other organizations promoted the report to their membership, using a link to the online report and video, as a way to tout the many economic development and business successes in the region.

The report's design and content, the various ways it was presented and promoted, and the conversation it created in the community made it an impactful and engaging printed publication.

Quantifiable results (sustainability, cost savings, cost avoidance and/or a higher level of service).

Indication of what resources were used and what was done with any accrued time savings

The Strategic Plan Report increased the level of confidence among community partners and leaders, because they could see how all of the different county programs and services worked together to

obtain the desired outcomes. The report was a tangible way that key partners could see the county's progress and provided a foundation to invite those partners to take part in strategic plan workshops and help co-develop the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan.

The report was also helpful in framing the conversation for the next strategic plan, which was adopted in January of 2018. By seeing what the county has already accomplished visually in a report, it provided greater context for where should be heading; and it provided a clear credibility in the work of New Hanover County.

By presenting the report in multimedia forms - a printed booklet, an online, interactive flipbook, and a video - we were able to reach a more diverse and larger audience with the report's message. It allowed for greater discussions, more awareness, and a deeper understanding of the county's work.

The printed Strategic Plan Report was created and designed in-house by county staff. The photos used in the publication were all taken by Communications staff, including the aerial photos - which were taken from the NHC Sheriff's Office SABLE helicopter during an in-kind ride along. In addition, the Strategic Plan Report video was produced in house. The county was able to save money by having the talent to create this project in-house.

The printing of 500 copies of the booklet cost \$1,976.49 and a small promotional budget of \$20 was used to promote the video, with a link to the report, on social media. From that \$20, the video received 2,901 video views. Because most of the printed copies have been distributed around the county, and taking into account the video views - the price per person that learned about the county's success was approximately 58 cents.

By promoting the county's success in this form of a multimedia report, we reached more people, garnered support for the county's work and future initiatives, and showed that New Hanover County is an innovative government agencies focused on strategic, continuous improvement.

Other descriptive information

Below are several supplemental resources that will help show the value of the Strategic Plan Report:

- News Release - New Hanover County Report Successes of Five-Year Strategic Plan: [news.nhcgov.com/news-releases/2017/09/new-hanover-county-reports-successes-five-year-strategic-plan](https://www.nhcgov.com/news-releases/2017/09/new-hanover-county-reports-successes-five-year-strategic-plan)
- Strategic Plan Report webpage that includes an interactive flip book of the report and the three-minute report video: www.nhcgov.com/administration/budget/strategic-plan-update
- The Strategic Plan Report video can be viewed on the county's YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/jsFhIfnSo6U>
- A direct link to the report as a pdf can be viewed here: <https://www.nhcgov.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/StrategicPlan-Final.pdf>