

Strategic Communications Report 2022

Date: January 25, 2023

To: Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo

From: Senior Director, Strategic Communications & Guest Experience

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report focuses on the primary activities and achievements of the Strategic Communications Branch at the Toronto Zoo for the year 2022. The Strategic Communications team oversees all of the public facing communications to connect our audiences to our animals, messages, events and activities and onsite marketing opportunities for our guests.

Once again, our Strategic Communications team was faced with a challenging year balancing the exciting opportunities that accompanied a return to longer term “regular” on-site operations, paired with the ongoing content management of very successful digital and virtual audience connections that we have invested great effort into building during the past few years.

Included in this report is a snapshot of some of the key activities, statistics and achievements of our efforts over the past year.

Three attachments are included with this report to represent information visually.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Senior Director, Strategic Communications & Guest Experience recommends that:

1. The Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo receives this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendations in this report.

DECISION HISTORY

There is no decision history available for this item.

COMMENTS

The key accomplishments in 2022 are listed below and in the attachments for Social Media, E-Marketing, Media Activity, Website, Promotional Partnerships, Advertising, and more.

Social Media

Our strategy with social media is all about value to our audiences. Ensuring compelling and engaging content is always our focus and priority, and has allowed us to enjoy extremely strong engagement rates which is key in building a long-term, sustainable and growing social media community.

Online audience and engagement growth key stats are summarized below and in Attachment 1, Items 1.1., 1.2., 1.3., 1.4.

- The total follower count for the Zoo's social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and TikTok) was **971,349** as of December 31, 2022 – we are closing in on the 1 Million mark!
- **We gained a total of 96,482 followers/fans** across all platforms (a 13% total increase over 2021).
- Published **3,340 posts in 2022** on FB, IG and TW (the highest number of annual posts yet)
- The Zoo's TikTok account **gained 39,490 followers**, the largest total increase across all platforms.
- **We are ranked #1** for Facebook engagement for major Toronto attractions and similiary Canada attractions , **we are #3** compared to the US Zoos and Aquariums.
- **We are ranked #1** for Instagram engagement among major Toronto attractions and similiary Canada attractions and **#3** compared to US Zoos and Aquariums. This is consistent with 2020.
- We had over **10.7 million TikTok views** and **5.6 million video views on YouTube** in 2022.
- We had over **55,000,000 total video views** last year on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, **up 41.7%** from 2022.

E-Marketing Program

We are in our second year of our E-Marketing Program, and our first full year of deploying eblasts to our Zoo Members with more content strategy and professional graphic designs.

In this first year we have been able to collect and compare data and analytics to guide strategy and decision-making in content and email marketing management.

Key achievement stats:

- **77 e-blasts** created and sent out Zoo Member e-database in 2022
- 32,956 Email Contacts in the member email list as of January 2023 – (compared to 28,060 Contacts in the Member email List January 2022)
- Average Unique Open Rate: 68.35% (1,604,492 individual emails opened)
NOTE: this is 101.86% higher than the industry average in e-marketing!
- Average Unique Click Rate: 3.71% (87,080 individual emails clicked)
NOTE: this is 179% higher than the industry average
- 2,347,384 individual emails sent out in 2022

See Attachment 2 for examples of some top performing e-blasts. Note: in the actual emails these have gifs and video content embedded which is something new for our e-marketing that makes them even more appealing!

Media Activity

Media Relations continues to be an integral component of our strategic communications strategy to support our advertising budget.

Media Stats for 2022:

- Total Mentions in 2022: 13,127
2021: 9,673
- Ad Equivalency: 2022: \$60.11M
2021: \$26.18M
- Aggregate Readership (total) 2022: 4.2B

(Attachment 3, Items 1.1., 1.2.)

Highlight of media relations/public relations activities included:

- 20 newsletter submissions written and submitted (Scarborough Community Renewal Organization SCRO, Highland Creek Villager)
- 12 Scarborough Mirror Columns written and submitted
- 42 press releases and media alerts issued
- Onsite Media Events included:
 - Lunar New Year – launching Year of the Tiger (*Attachment 3, Item 2.1., 2.2.*) garnering approximately 145 media mentions throughout the year
 - Masai giraffe calf announcement (*Attachment 3, Item 3.1., 3.2., 3.3.*)

- Tiger Awareness Weekend highlighting Year of the Tiger ongoing activities and conservation stories of tigers
- Sumatran Orangutan baby - introduction and name reveal, with participation of the Indonesian Consulate (*Attachment 3, Item 4.1.*)
- Terra Lumina re-opening media night/events (*Attachment 3, Item 5.1.*)
- Network of Nature partner media event with Royal Canadian Geographic Society
- Plastics Pathway launch with the Honourable **David Piccini**, Ontario's Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks

Overall, 2022 was a very positive year with some significant increases over 2021. We continue to work with all areas of the Zoo to provide engaging and educational content on all our communications platforms and continue to explore new ways to reach broader audiences.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Social Media Performance 2022
Attachment 2 – E-Marketing Program 2022
Attachment 3 – Media Activities 2022