MASTERING
PUBLIC SECTOR
MARKETING

A 7-step framework for marketers

Hello and welcome! Thanks so much for having me today. I'm Dani Tharaldson, Marketing Manager for CareerOneStop.org.

I hope to share with you some insights and tips on how to master marketing in a government organization, and leave you with a simple framework to help guide your efforts more smoothly - or at least gain confidence in the process.

SHORT LIST OF PROFESSIONAL
TITLES I'VE HELD

- Graphic Designer
- Photographer
- Administrative Services Associate
- Production Artist
- Advertising Sales
- Marketing & Communications Specialist
- Jet Engine Mechanic
- Broadcast Journalist
- Press Desk NCO
- Public Affairs Specialist
- Marketing Manager

I'll share a bit about my background so you can rest assured this entire presentation wasn't just generated by ChatGPT 😉. I consider myself a creative communicator, having worked as a graphic designer, photographer, videographer, and writer over the past 20+ years of my career.

I've held positions in many industries including finance, hospitality, medical, publication, and retail – and the bulk of my experience in government starting as a Jet Engine Mechanic, then a Military Public Affairs Specialist, and now managing the marketing for the CareerOneStop website.

The picture in this slide is of my Wingman and I on the top of the St. Paul Capitol building while on military duty during the Derek Chauvin trail. Check out my LinkedIn – it's ridiculous – I'm not sure anybody could make up the trajectory my career has taken.

KEY
DISTINCTIONS

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Building/managing relationships & influencing decisions

COMMUNICATIONS

Sharing information effectively

MARKETING

Promotion of a product/service/organization

So what does all that experience have in common? – Marketing was always at the foundation of what I did.

And what exactly is marketing, and how does it differ from other commonalities such as communications or public affairs? You most likely will engage all three, but here are some key distinctions to keep in mind:

• Public Affairs entails building and managing relationships and influencing decisions between a government agency & the public

• Communications is sharing information effectively and entails a broader focus including internal & external audiences

• and Marketing simply put is the promotion of a product, service, or an organization relating its unique value to a targeted audience

And one more distinction I'll throw in here, more as an FYI – there is a difference between public sector marketing and government marketing, although subtle. Government marketing is a form of public-sector marketing, whereas public sector marketing encompasses a broader range of organizations including government, non-profits, and public corporations. The broader range brings nuanced differences in scopes, focuses, and challenges.

PUBLIC SECTOR
MARKETING

Inform & Engage the Public

- Jack of all trades – master of none

- PSM also deals with LIVES & LIVELIHOODS
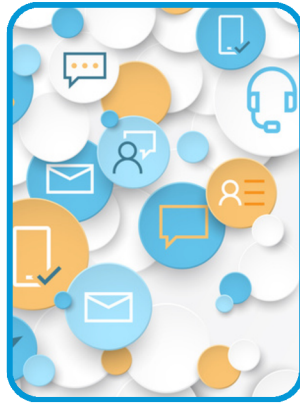
So what makes public sector marketing so different?

;) Public sector marketing is about – you know, the easy stuff - building relationships, serving communities, creating positive change; and not focusing on generating revenue or maximizing profit.

Seriously though, bottom line: It's not about selling, it's about informing & engaging the public

• #1 task that's asked of public servants or government – is how to do more with less

WE MUST BE A JACK OF ALL TRADES – MASTER OF NONE
• Many of us are asked to run marketing in addition to other roles – the expectation is to become a graphic designer/ event coordinator/ data analyst/ budget analyst/ public speaker/ webmaster/ content manager/ social media manager – and each of these alone is a full-time job …

So while we can be good at many of those "trades" – we can't be experts on EVERYTHING marketing entails

Public sector marketing also deals with and can directly affect lives & livelihoods

• This isn't easy or simple – take it from a gal who's had years of Air Force training on this and still learns new things daily…

If you don't feel there are areas you're failing at – you're not doing it right … let me say this again

 If you think there isn't an area of marketing you're not failing at right now – you're not practicing trial & error which is the #1 rule of public sector marketing (if you look this up on AI, it's gonna tell you something different but trust me – trial & error is #1)

PSM RULE
#1

PSM RULE
#2

TRIAL & ERROR

PLAN

Failure teaches you
everything

Planning is your friend
and will save you time

This brings me to the top 2 rules to remember with Public Sector Marketing.

Rule #1 – TRIAL & ERROR – Failure teaches you everything
 Try, measure, adjust – repeat
• this is how you discover your own organizational marketing best practices
• I'm not brilliant enough to come up with this all on my own, I stole it from a marketing class – but I test this at least monthly, and it works! We'll talk more about this in the 7-step framework.

Rule #2 – PLAN
 PLANNING is your friend – take the time to do it and it will save you so much time in the end (if you need a little more proof - Gemini says a well-structured plan can save anywhere from 20-50% of the total project time)

o At CareerOneStop for example, we plan our social media calendar out 6-weeks in advance and it's been working great - not to much in the future, and not struggling to keep up

Planning also helps to flush out goals, strategies, and helps keeps capacities in scope

PSM RULE #1 - TRIAL & ERROR (ADVERTISING EXAMPLE)

2022 Promotions				
Run Time	**Media**	**Budgeted**	**Clicks**	**CPC**	**Focus**
1-month	ALA Blog	$1,500	(378 views)		Libraries
1-month	NAWDP Newsletter	$500	(500+ circulation)		GMF
1-month	NCDA Magazine	$614	(5,000 circulation)		Career development
1-month	Spotify Ad	$5,300	1,039	$5.10	COS overview
3-months	Google Ad	$5,300	7,220	$1.36	Find a job
1-month	LinkedIn Ad	$600	149	$4.03	ER
1-month	YouTube Ad	$3,000	1,524	$1.97	Occ Profile
monthly	NCDA Annual Ad	$2,500	(5,000 circulation)		Career exploration
1-month	**Google Ad**	**$88**	**191**	**$0.46**	**COS overview**
1-month	Google Ad	$3,800	1,442	$2.64	GMF
3-months	**Google Ad**	**$6,000**	**19,215**	**$0.31**	**COS overview**
1-month	**Google Ad**	**$3,800**	**17,705**	**$0.21**	**Work Values Matcher**
1-month	Google Ad	$3,800	(9,250 engagements)		COS overview

Here you can see a spreadsheet example of our ad campaigns in 2022. We were experimenting with different media to try to determine which platform was best to use for advertising.

Through research, I discovered the national average cost-per-click for a digital ad ranges between $1-2. Our goal is to keep within, or even better - under this average.

By tracking some simple metrics - we determined that 3-month Google Ad campaigns gave us the best performance and results.

We now primarily run Google Ad campaigns, but continue to experiment with different medias a couple times a year.

PSM RULE #2 - PLAN (SOCIAL MEDIA EXAMPLE)

TYPICAL WEEKLY CONTENT SCHEDULING

	Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Fridays	Weekends
AM:	Blog	shared content	DOL priority content	shared content	COS regular rotation	Remarketing posts (2 per day)
PM:	TRENDING	video post or COS regular rotation	Spanish promo's	COS regular rotation	COS regular rotation	

COS Regular Rotation Content Categories

- 55+
- Business Center
- Career Videos
- Clearinghouse Competency Models
- Workers with Disabilities
- Disaster Recovery
- Entry-level Workers
- Job Search section
- News Center (footer)

- mySkills myFuture
- Spanish translation
- ExOffenders
- Explore Careers section
- For Developers (footer)
- Find Local Help section
- Find Training section
- GetMyFuture (youth)
- How-to Guides

- Toolkit section
- Veterans
- COS Blog
- COS Newsletter
- COS Conferences

Remember when I said planning is your friend – now I'll show you I practice what I preach.

These are excerpts from a very complicated Excel spreadsheet I use to track our social media content.

They help me build a plan to create weekly social media posts.

As you can see from the typical weekly content scheduling calendar on top, we post a minimum of 2x's a day, which is probably more than most do. We decided to post this often as we have SO MUCH CONTENT - and I haven't been able to post about everything over the 3 years I've been managing social media for COS.

Having a plan for what and when you post almost automates the process for you. And we've easily been able to adjust when needed so it can be flexible. For instance, my plan is to post shared content every Tuesday & Thursday mornings. Weeks when I am attending conferences, this doesn't always happen - and that's OK. All the rest of the planned content is scheduled 6-weeks in advance so there's always something posting, even when I get sick or have other priorities pop up.

Now that you know the top 2 rules of public sector marketing, let's get into the 7-step framework I've created for CareerOneStop. I've kept this generalized so it can pertain to any organization, but I'll continue to give specific examples for CareerOneStop to help with understanding.

WHAT IS **CAREERONESTOP?**

I'm going to take a quick second to explain what COS is all about. In a nutshell, and as some may already know, we are a comprehensive career, education, and employment website. But of course, as with government, nothing is that simple. We source and pull together all the government data relating to employment and careers, and try to distill it into digestible tools and content anyone can use to help make decisions to reach their goals.

Data is sexy, right? Easy stuff to market ... I barely have to lift a finger 😉. Oh - and everything on the site is free, so it sells itself. I have the easiest job in the world. Sound familiar?

7-STEP MARKETING
FRAMEWORK

Discover
CHALLENGES, ASSUMPTIONS & MISPERCEPTIONS

Know your **AUDIENCE**

Develop KEY MESSAGES

ANALYZE & MEASURE – MAKE ADJUSTMENTS, RINSE & REPEAT

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Determine **GOALS & VALUES**

Conduct **MARKETING RESEARCH**

Engage **MARKETING CHANNELS**

How in the world do we take a complex organization like this, that has multiple initiatives, policies, and stakeholders, and successfully market ourselves? I have developed a 7-step framework that has helped us navigate all those operational pieces.

Hopefully, this doesn't look too intimidating or is speaking Greek to anyone. The concepts are easy to understand, but a bit harder to implement. Let's dive into each step more in-depth.

1 KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

WHO IS MY
AUDIENCE?

Ask this in EVERYTHING you do

Step 1 is KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE! This is the most important step and is essential to Rule #2 - planning, and helps to narrow in on specifics

⬜ Ask yourself this in everything you do for marketing - Who is my audience?

⬜ Again, I stole this from my favorite professor at MCAD – but it is the golden rule to marketing strategy

PRIMARY
AUDIENCES

- Educators
- Employers
- Job Seekers/Changers
- Students
- Workforce Development Professionals

SPECIALTY
AUDIENCES

- 55+
- Entry-level Workers
- ExOffenders
- Military Veterans
- People w/Disabilities
- Youth/Young Adults

TARGET
AUDIENCE PERSONAS

- Repeaters
- Employment Guidance Seekers
- Customized Support Seekers

I think this has been the toughest question for marketing at our organization. Who is CareerOneStop's audience? It's everyone interested in having a job or a career – so that narrows it down nice doesn't it ….

• Our scope follows closely with directives set by the U.S. Dept. of Labor Employment & Training Administration, the MN Dept. of Employment & Economic Development, and the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act or anyone else who partners with DOL or receives funding – so this changes who our audiences are frequently

• This slide shows how we currently break down our AUDIENCES, with primary and specialty being audiences our website has content for, and target personas being audiences we focus on marketing to.

Our target audiences will change depending on variables such as time of year, economic trends, demographic changes, etc. We created personas based on our top 3 targeted audiences, as they can include both primary & specialty audiences we serve – and quite frankly would be a waste of time and effort to create personas for each and every defined audience which traditional marketing says you should do – well I don't listen when things just don't make sense to do 😉 (may have learned that from my military service)

Here's how we broke down target audience personas and why:

 'Repeaters' are Workforce development professionals or career counseling types who will

continually use and promote COS resources in their daily work

 'Employment Guidance Seekers' are those looking for employment assistance and resources

 'Customized Support Seekers' are those with unique barriers to employment like Military Veterans and those who are Justice-Involved

2 — DETERMINE GOALS & VALUES

How do your **marketing** goals **align** with your **organizational goals**?

What **value** does your organization bring to your audience(s)?

Step 2 is Determine your marketing goals and values.

Some questions for consideration:

 How do your marketing goals align with your organizational goals and how can you measure effectiveness?

 What value does your organization bring to its audience(s)?

 And while determining value - How does what you offer differ from your competitors or complementary organizations?

DETERMINING GOALS - EXAMPLE

OUR WEBSITE GOALS	OUR MARKETING GOALS	OUR METRICS
Maintain & increase traffic to the website	Drive traffic to the website	Google Analytics 4 KPI's (user acquisition, tools & content popularity, top search queries, audiences)
Reach individuals who can benefit from our resources	Increase brand awareness & engagement	Social Media KPI's (website clicks, engagements, impressions, followers, published posts)
Continually update and gather data and information relative to our audiences	Increase brand authority	Data Quality KPI's (error rate, completeness rate, consistency checks, timeliness, validity checks, duplicate detection)

While I can't answer those questions for you, I'll show you some examples of what I created for CareerOneStop while thinking through Step 2.

 Sometimes you need a visual to react to. So I created this chart from Excel to see how our organizational goals compare to our marketing goals and how we can determine metrics.

As you can see, these goals align well and have defined key performance indicators for measuring how we are, or are not, meeting these goals.

Value Proposition Statements

- Provide quality information at no cost to users or requirement to create an account

- Be the nation's most trustworthy provider of workforce information and tools

- Offer a national scope, serving all 50 states and U.S. territories

Values took more thought to flush out. I'll share some common methods we used to help determine values including value proposition statements, SWOT analysis, and a competitive analysis.

 A value proposition is a clear and concise statement explaining what unique offerings you have to meet the needs of your target audience. If you haven't done one of these before, you can easily find guidance on writing these via AI or a quick Google search.

During this writing exercise, I asked how does CareerOneStop solve a specific problem for those we serve?

Competitive Analysis Sampling

		CareerOneStop	U.S. DOL	ONET	LINKEDIN
SUMMARY		Comprehensive website providing career exploration, training & job search resources	Oversees the American workforce	Comprehensive information on standardized & occupation-specific descriptors	Social networking platform for professionals
PRODUCTS/ SERVICES		Free career resources	Protection & support for workers	Resources & information related to careers & occupations	Help professionals find jobs, learn skills, build networks; marketing for businesses
MISSION		To deliver integrated, easy-to-understand workforce information that helps job seekers, students, workforce intermediaries, and employers develop their capacity and make sound economic decisions in the new economy.	To foster, promote, and develop the welfare of the wage earners, job seekers, and retirees of the U.S.; improve working conditions; advance opportunities for profitable employment; and assure work-related benefits and rights.	To provide comprehensive occupational information to help job seekers, students, workers, workforce intermediaries, and employers make informed career decisions.	To connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful.
VISION		To be the nation's most trustworthy provider of comprehensive, integrated, relevant, and personalized workforce information tools and resources on any desired electronic delivery system.	To promote pathways to economic liberty for individuals and families working to achieve the American Dream.	To be the go-to source for comprehensive occupational information.	To create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce.
TARGET AUDIENCE		Anyone interested in career information	Anyone involved in the U.S. workforce or interested in learning about it	Anyone who wants to learn about the world of work	Professionals at all stages of their careers
OVERVIEW OF BRAND POSITIONING		Trustworthiness, comprehensiveness & relevance	Trusted source for protecting & supporting workers	Go to resource for career exploration & job analysis	Worlds largest professional network
COMPETITIVE EDGE		one stop shop' - comprehensive & integrated approach to career resources	Expertise, authority, resources & partnerships	Comprehensive & reliable information on over 900 occupations	Focus on professional networking & career development

Another great way to determine values is to create a Competitive Analysis. They are a lot of work, but well worth the effort. And AI is fantastic for helping to create this tool.

These help to identify your competitive advantage, flush out your SWOT, and help with planning and decision-making.

 I've grabbed a sampling of part of our competitive analysis to show you some comparisons of CareerOneStop, the U.S. Dept. of Labor, ONET, and LinkedIn

DETERMINING VALUES - EXAMPLE

Marketing SWOT Analysis

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
INTERNAL	**Strengths** • Vast # of resources • Credible source • Videos • Can be helpful at any stage of careers	**Weaknesses** • Overwhelming # of resources • Limited capacity to customize content to each platform
EXTERNAL	**Opportunities** • Hold higher share of produced videos on YouTube (USDOL, LinkedIn & Indeed the exceptions) • Never any cost to users or advertising on the sites • One-stop shop for career resources	**Threats** • Limited advertising budget • Limited marketing resources (hard to devote appropriate time to social media marketing in keeping up with the competition)

And our last method to determine values is to create a SWOT Analysis.

 I created this one with the help of ChatGPT and building the Competitive Analysis really helped flush out specifics for our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

3 CHALLENGES, ASSUMPTIONS & MISPERCEPTIONS

- What **marketing challenges** exist for you?

- What are **common misperceptions & assumptions** about your organization?

- What **does** your organization provide?

- What **doesn't** your organization provide?

Step 3 is to identify what challenges, assumptions, and misperceptions exist about your organization.

Think this through for both your internal and external audiences and include stakeholders. Some questions to consider:

 What MARKETING CHALLENGS exist for you?

 What are COMMON MISPERCEPTIONS & ASSUMPTIONS about your organization?

 What DOES your organization provide?

 What DOESN'T your organization provide?

MARKETING
CHALLENGES

- Promotion on a national scale
- Overwhelming number of resources
- Limited team capacity (team of two)

COMMON
MISPERCEPTIONS & ASSUMPTIONS

- We're unknown or misunderstood
  - thought of as a job search site
  - 50/50 split of being recognized or not known at all
- Audiences are unaware of the full scope of resources available
- Often confused with Employment/AJCs
  - also known as Career OneStop centers

CareerOneStop has a wealth of knowledge in our employee base, with many having worked for the website for over 10 years. I was able to gain great feedback to determine our challenges, assumptions, and misperceptions via feedback from our team and also from surveys and inquiries via website users, and talking with our audiences directly at conferences.

ORGANIZATION
DOES PROVIDE

- Free online career & job search resources
- Industry trends and employment data
- Connections to local employment services & programs

ORGANIZATION
DOES NOT PROVIDE

- Career or employment services
- Unemployment services
- Hire direct or own our job bank - partner with NASWA to share NLX job posts

It is also helpful to think through what your organization does provide compared to what it doesn't. Again, a simple visual like what's up on screen can help give people something to react to.

4 CONDUCT MARKETING RESEARCH

What's happening within your industry?

What are your audiences top challenges or problems?

Step 4 is to Conduct marketing research.

Understanding your audiences' behavior, learning what marketing trends are happening within your industry, and keeping an eye on competitor or complimentary organizations' activities can help better inform your strategy.

CONDUCT MARKETING RESEARCH - EXAMPLE

Marketing Goal	Social Media Goal	SM Platform Research
Increase brand awareness	User popularity	Be most active on platforms with a minimum of 400 million monthly active users - Facebook - Instagram - YouTube - LinkedIn
Drive website traffic	Relatable/ relevant user base	Pinterest main uses include tutorials/how-to media - not as relevant for our promotional content Threads is a new platform we should try, fosters conversations whereas X (Twitter) is seeing a performance decline
Increase brand authority	Promote resources in multimedia formats	Identified importance to be consistent & post daily on most popular platforms - Build posts the same to the minimums on the most restrictive platform - Share relevant content from partners/experts 2x's per week and customize for the platform audience

This example shows how we determined which social media platforms to be active on. It highlights the alignment of goals and research that gave insights on:

 which platforms were most popular by the number of monthly active users,

 what type of media was most used on the platform,

 and consistency of posting.

HOW DO WE
SOLVE THIER PROBLEM?

Step 5 is to develop key messages that help solve your audience's problems.

When developing your key messages, ask what value can we add for our target audiences?

ACTIVE VOICE
BULLET STATEMENTS

- Our **free resources** empower people to **achieve** their **full career potential**
- **We connect** you to free resources to guide **your career journey** all in one site
- (**You**) **Impress potential employers** with our comprehensive job search resources

ACTIVE VOICE = SUBJECT, ACTION, OBJECT

PASSIVE VOICE = TO BE VERBS (AM, IS, ARE, WAS, WERE, BE)

We've created bullet statements in active voice to develop a consistent tone and help keep our messaging similar across marketing channels.

Writing in active voice makes your writing more impactful and easier to follow. It is clearer, more direct, and easier for your audience to understand than passive voice.

A hack you can use to write in this voice style (other than just using AI) is to list your subject first, then the action, then the object - as bolded in our example statements on the slide.

HOW CAN WE BEST
REACH OUR
AUDIENCE?

Step 6 is where we Engage our marketing channels.

Understanding your audience's behavior, learning what marketing trends are happening within your industry, and keeping an eye on your competitor/ complimentary organizations activities can help better inform your strategy and answer how you can best reach your audience.

MARKETING CHANNELS - EXAMPLE

- **Advertising**
- **Content Marketing**
  - **blog, newsletter,** podcast**, website**
- **Customer Service**
- **Direct Mailings**
- **E-mail Marketing**
- **Events**
  - **conferences**, job fairs, etc.
- **Influencer Marketing**
- **Networking**
- **Partnership/Alliance Marketing**
- **Print**
  - **billboards, brochures, flyers**
- Public Relations/Public Affairs
- **Social Media**
- **AI SEO**
- **Website**
- **Webinars/Presentations**
- **Word-of-mouth/ Employee Advocacy**
- **Video**

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but highlights common channels and the ones in bold are what we currently use.

Remember - you can't do everything all at once, and what works for us may not work for you. Plan and prioritize what needs to get done first, work on one thing at a time, and keep building. It's OK if you don't do it all.

And what is the #1 form of advertising? It's word of mouth so make sure you're utilizing employee advocacy and give those working for your organization some basic talking points.

7   **ANALYZE, MEASURE, ADJUST - RINSE & REPEAT**

WHAT ARE MY
KPI'S?

And finally Step 7 - Analyze and measure, make adjustments as needed - then rinse and repeat the process with every marketing channel you engage.

What are your Key Performance Indicators?

Unfortunately, they're not going to be the same across the board as you may remember from our Determining Goals example in Step 2. For example KPI's for a website may include user acquisition, URL views, top search queries, and tracking of audiences. Social media would look at engagements, impressions, number of followers, how many published posts and how many URLs were clicked on. Advertising would look at the cost, URL clicks, cost-per-click, how many views, how many engagements, and what was the reach of the ad.
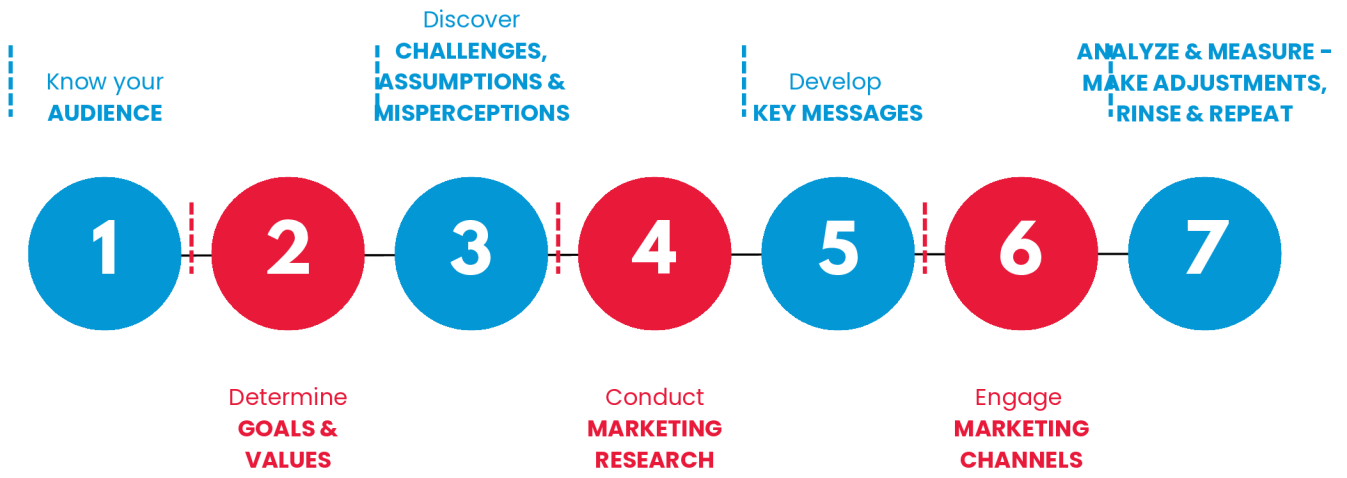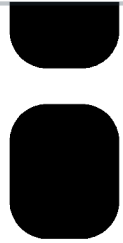
ANALYZE, MEASURE, ADJUST - EXAMPLE

Profile	Audience	Net Audience Growth	Published Posts	Impressions	Engagements ▾	Engagement Rate (per Impression)	Video Views
Reporting Period Jan 1, 2023 – Dec 31, 2023	**79,296** ↗ 11.7%	**8,473** ↘ 11.1%	**3,313** ↗ 9.4%	**3,111,498** ↗ 1.9%	**147,516** ↘ 7.5%	**2.3%** ↘ 6.3%	**2,488,618** ↗ 4.3%
Compare to Jan 1, 2022 – Dec 31, 2022	71,005	9,534	3,027	3,053,085	159,513	2.4%	2,386,110
CareerOneStop	31,500	5,967	37	N/A	77,463	N/A	2,338,612
CareerOneStop	24,356	500	859	2,478,485	57,257	2.3%	99,665
CareerOneStop	11,278	1,709	796	125,978	6,878	5.5%	23,272
@Career1Stop	10,291	-32	801	112,185	3,559	3.2%	11,459
careeronestop	1,871	329	820	394,850	2,359	0.6%	15,610

Here's an example of our Social Media KPI's for 2023. As you can see, even though this is measuring all social media platforms, KPI's aren't consistent as some platforms don't have analytics on impressions or engagement rate.

This informed us that our YouTube channel was our #1 performing platform, which helped us to devise a way to keep producing monthly videos even after we lost our lead video person. It also shows how X was trending down in performance, which aided in the decision to add another platform, Threads, to our active platform rotation. Of course these decisions weren't solely made on this report, there was marketing research involved - but these KPI's pointed us in a direction to look at.

7-STEP MARKETING FRAMEWORK

1 — Know your **AUDIENCE**

2 — Determine **GOALS & VALUES**

3 — Discover **CHALLENGES, ASSUMPTIONS & MISPERCEPTIONS**

4 — Conduct **MARKETING RESEARCH**

5 — Develop **KEY MESSAGES**

6 — Engage **MARKETING CHANNELS**

7 — **ANALYZE & MEASURE – MAKE ADJUSTMENTS, RINSE & REPEAT**

And that's the framework we use to help us navigate our marketing strategy.

I hope I've given you some new information you'll find helpful in continuing your marketing work within your organization.

THANK YOU

CONNECT
WITH ME!

- *email:* Danielle.Tharaldson@state.mn.us
- *LinkedIn:* Danielle Tharaldson
- *DM:* any CareerOneStop social media account

Thank you for your time and attention.

I also hope you'll reach out with questions, feedback, and opportunities to collaborate on public sector marketing.

I'll also provide a PDF version of this presentation with notes, as I know I went through the steps quickly.

Thank you! Can I answer any questions?