



Wild, Natural & Sustainable[®]
Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute
ASMI Communications Program
FY16 Plan

Delivered to Joint FS/RT Committee April 21, 2015

Background

The ASMI Communications Program has grown substantially over the past four years in terms of activities, personnel, and budget. As early as 2011 the program was a single person with a budget of \$300,000. This has grown to a program with one full- and three part-time employees and contractors with a total budget of \$1.2 million.

The Communications Program supports the marketing programs through media relations activities, press interviews, social media coordination, participation in seafood industry trade shows, preparation of reports, press releases, and serving as the official spokesperson for ASMI. The Communications Program is responsible for generating a substantial portion of ASMI's media library. These photos and videos are used both internally by ASMI and externally by media, industry, trade partners, and stakeholders. Additionally, the Communications Director is responsible for the management of the Consumer Public Relations Program.

The Communications Program also has purview over all in-state efforts to positively impact Alaskan's perceptions of the commercial fishing industry, as well as communicate ASMI's efforts effectively to the fleet, industry, and policy makers.

Current Situation

Even with the current concerns of the sockeye salmon market and currency exchange rates not being favorable to export, seafood ex-vessel prices have remained stable, harvest levels are healthy, and the economic outlook of the industry is generally good. Consumer research continues to show that among consumers, flavor, nutrition, and knowing where their seafood comes from

remain top drivers of seafood purchases. The same strong dollar that challenges overseas markets offers opportunity in the United States.

During the interim period between agency contracts, the Communications team oversaw execution of the existing national PR projects while maintaining an aggressive schedule of in-state event and conference sponsorships. Many budget items like social media content creation and consumer research were brought into the Communications from the Consumer PR contract in 2013. Going forward, these items will be handled by ASMI's PR agency of record with oversight by the Communications Program Director.

ASMI Mission

The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute is a marketing organization with the mission of increasing the economic value of the Alaska seafood resource through:

- Increasing the positive awareness of the Alaska Seafood brand;
- Collaborative marketing programs that align ASMI and industry marketing efforts for maximum impact within the food industry;
- Long-term proactive marketing planning;
- Quality assurance, technical industry analysis, education, advocacy and research;
- Prudent, efficient fiscal management.

Objectives and Goals

The Communications Program targets both in-state audiences, as well as national consumers, to achieve ASMI's mission. Creating content and promoting Alaska as the source of premium seafood both within Alaska and nationwide will remain a focus for the program.

On a national level, the program works in concert with the Consumer PR Program to promote Alaska as the source of wild, natural, and sustainable seafood to affluent food-centric consumers. By raising consumer awareness of, and preference for, Alaska seafood, this creates demand and pushes or drives consumers to 'ask for Alaska seafood' at retail and foodservice.

In addition to facilitating opportunities to communicate directly with consumers, the Communications Director serves as the point person for interviews, press events, and official statements about Alaska seafood for a variety of opportunities as produced by the PR team.

Within Alaska, the Communications Program is also tasked with communicating the value of ASMI and the seafood industry to key audiences. With this objective

in mind, the Communications Program will focus on increasing the economic value of Alaska seafood through:

- Increasing positive awareness of ASMI and the Alaska Seafood brand among the following four key audiences;
 - Fishermen/Industry
 - Alaska Foodies
 - Alaska Public – Economic
 - Alaska Legislature.
- Collaborative marketing programs that align ASMI and industry marketing efforts for maximum impact within the food industry;
 - Producing content to be used across all departments
 - Serving as a spokesperson with media and Food Influencers.
- Long-term proactive marketing planning;
- Quality assurance, technical industry analysis, education, advocacy, and research;
 - Focused education and advocacy efforts among industry issues
- Prudent, efficient fiscal management.

Strategies

In order to maintain or improve prominent top-of-mind positive perceptions about Alaska seafood, the coming fiscal year will see a continuation of engaging directly with domestic consumers, as well as an increase in focused grassroots efforts to garner support for ASMI and the seafood industry in-state. To achieve these objectives efficiently and effectively, the program has identified the following audiences, each with its own unique key message and strategies to achieve these goals.

I. Audience: Domestic Consumers

Message: *“Alaska seafood is wild, healthy, delicious and sustainable.”*

Raising consumer awareness about Alaska as a source of premium wild seafood creates demand at foodservice and retail. The Communications Program creates content and manages social media, directly communicating with consumers. Additionally, Communications manages photo, video, and biography production, helping all departments tell the story of Alaska seafood.

II. Audience: Alaska Fishermen/Fleet/Industry

Message: *“ASMI brings value to Alaska fishermen and the seafood industry by raising the value of the Alaska Seafood brand.”*

It is imperative that ASMI continue to generate positive awareness of its activities, values, and successes among this group of stakeholders, on

which ASMI depends. This strategy is two-fold: first, efforts to capitalize on this ‘low hanging-fruit’ will focus on educating these stakeholders about the activities and value that ASMI brings to the industry, leading to ongoing support of ASMI programs.

Second, this group can then be armed with consistent, accurate message points about Alaska Seafood and ASMI, then deployed as brand ambassadors among other key audiences within Alaska.

III. Audience: Alaska Foodies

Message: *“Alaska seafood is local, delicious, and healthy.”*

The strategy for this audience is to ensure the Alaskan public knows that all Alaska seafood is delicious, healthy, and local. Efforts to raise awareness will capitalize on the growing local/foodie trend within Alaska, as well as leverage other Alaska brands with similar messaging.

IV. Audience: Alaska Public – Economic

Message: *“Alaska seafood is a vital part of the state economy.”*

The goal for this audience is to raise awareness among the Alaskan public about the vital role the commercial seafood industry plays in the state economy. This strategy utilizes positive impression of Alaska’s commercial fisheries and fishing families, with special focus on non-coastal/Interior regions of Alaska that often lack direct access to Alaska seafood or close, if any, ties to Alaska’s seafood industry.

While advocating for public support of Alaska’s seafood industry in-state has many merits, pursuing this audience and message contains some unique challenges for ASMI. Advocating for the seafood industry is not part of ASMI’s mission to *raise the economic value of Alaska seafood*. Furthermore, positioning ASMI as the political advocate for the commercial fishing industry in Alaska could position ASMI in the crosshairs of divisive political issues among various user groups, therefore jeopardizing ASMI’s necessary state funding.

Our recommendation is to proceed conservatively by focusing on the family fishing and food-centric message within the state to achieve positive awareness this way while continuing to update economic data to support the Domestic PR messaging about American fishing families.

V. Audience: Alaska Legislature

Message: *“An investment in ASMI supports the Alaska economy.”*

Educating the Alaska Legislature about the value ASMI adds to fisheries has been identified as a vital effort to continue the funding of ASMI's programs. It will be critical to show how dollars spent on ASMI are a worthwhile investment in the future. With the drop in the price of oil resulting in a \$3.9B hole in a \$6B budget, ASMI should expect some level of reduced funding for the foreseeable future regardless of being able to prove return on investment and effectively achieving the mission.

Tactics

In order to ensure that current and new in-state tactics are strategic, the Communications program recommends formal research efforts to identify the key message needs within each audience group, and refine tactics as necessary.

I. Audience: Domestic Consumers

Message: *"Alaska seafood is wild, healthy, delicious, sustainable."*

Tactics:

- Oversee all aspects of the Consumer PR Program.
- Social media content approval, monitoring, engagement, and maintenance.
- Serve as point of contact for press releases, emerging news, crisis communications, and official statements.
- Create video and photo content for use by all programs (video, photo, Original Fare).
- Build relationships with prominent media and Food Influencers to communicate the value of Alaska Seafood.
- Assist with coordination of and represent ASMI on media tours and outreach events (Sikumi, Culinary Retreat, NY Week, Long House Food Revival, James Beard Foundation Food Conference).
- Represent ASMI at various events and conferences in concert with other state agencies (Iceland, DCCED NY event).
- Commission and oversee consumer research.
- Manage sponsorships of athletes and other spokespersons.
- Provide product and other underwriting for opportunities as they arise (MasterChef, Superbowl Taste).
- Leverage national PR efforts to maximize in-state benefits. Positive national media provides an excellent reflection back to in-state.
- Leverage statewide PR efforts to attract national media and consumer/trade press, as appropriate.

II. Audience: Alaska Fishermen/Fleet/Industry

Message: *"ASMI brings value to Alaska fishermen and the seafood industry by raising the value of the Alaska Seafood brand."*

Tactics:

- Overhaul of www.alaskaseafood.org to increase usability among stakeholders.
- Update McDowell Group Industry Survey to measure perceptions among this group and identify specific messaging needs.
- Print and mail out fleet newsletter to various stakeholder groups statewide.
- Cast a wider net with current e-newsletter by having marketing updates rebroadcasted by industry groups and individual companies (including Boston Seafood Show contacts).
- Continue Fisherman Ambassador program.
- Continue Fishing Families Photo Contest.
- Refresh Seafood Industry Economic Value Study and distill message points from research that can be used to promote industry.
- Coordinate industry events such as the Boston Seafood Show party.
- Produce ASMI Annual Report.
- Continue to sponsor or attend trade shows and events focused on fishermen and members of the industry.
- Continue underwriting, sponsorship, and advertising in appropriate media channels.

III. Audience: Alaska Foodies

Message: *“Alaska seafood is local, delicious, and healthy.”*

Tactics:

- The ‘Eat Alaska’ campaign is a partnership with Alaska Grown to create retail and foodservice promotions within Alaska (bear with salmon and cabbage, Alaska chef recipes, photography, microsite, recipe leaflets, events). This can be expanded to a multi-year campaign with expanded partnerships.
- Target Alaska food bloggers, active influencers on social media, and regional food events to entice Alaska Foodies to connect with Alaska seafood as a local food of value.
- Continue Fishing Families Photo Contest.
- Continue Great Alaska Seafood Cook Off (GASCO) event.
- Create value-added, ASMI branded literature for personal seafood use within Alaska (collateral such as fliers, refrigerator magnets or books on filleting, preserving, canning, smoking, etc.) Partner with Cooperative Extension.
- Promote and sponsor Catch Share program with Alaska Marine Conservation Council.
- Continue strategic advertising, underwriting, and promotions through various media channels.
- Foodservice efforts in-state (Chef training program, recruit more AK chefs, recipe contests).

- Retail efforts in-state (fishermen in the stores, cooking demos. We have saturation at small stores and with direct marketers but need more presence in large chains in Alaska).

IV. Audience: Alaska Public – Economic

Message: “*Alaska Seafood is a vital part of the state economy.*”

Tactics:

- Focus on regions of the state where they don’t have an immediate connection to the industry, including the co-branded Alaska Grown ‘Eat Alaska’ campaign. (Anchorage, Mat-Su, Fairbanks, Interior, etc.)
- Produce ASMI Annual Report.
- Continue in-state media relations focusing on appropriate angles, for example, repurpose monthly National Fishermen stories to outlets in-state.
- Continue strategic advertising and underwriting of events, media, partnerships that further the economic message of Alaska seafood.

V. Audience: Alaska Legislature

Message: “*An investment in ASMI helps the Alaska economy.*”

Tactics:

- Put marketing updates in easy-to-find, continuously updated link from home page of www.alaskaseafood.org
- Continue to collaborate with industry lobbyists for strategic messaging and adjust the annual internal legislative plan accordingly.
- Distribute ASMI marketing updates to all Legislators and staff.
- Continue ASMI Lending Library for Legislators.
- Continue Juneau Symphony of Seafood event.
- Host Lunch-and-Learns, Fish Fridays, Seafood Suppers, or other ASMI-centric educational events.
- Update ‘ASMI 101 video’ with more emphasis on yearly marketing activities.

ASMI Communications Program FY16 Budget

Program Operations

Personnel:	\$68,000
(half of Director's salary paid by International Program)	\$57,000
Admin Staff (1/3 paid for by International Program)	
Travel:	\$50,000
Conference and Event sponsorships: (includes in-state and domestic opportunities)	\$250,000
Fleet, Industry, In-State advertising, and promotions	\$200,000
Domestic Consumer Public Relations Support	\$140,000
Alaska Stock, Photo, Video, and Profiles	\$80,000
Printing, Materials, and ASMI swag	\$55,000
Media Tours Expenses	\$60,000
<u>Contract Labor Support</u>	<u>\$240,000</u>
Communications Program Total	\$1,200,000

Ongoing Efforts In-State

As part of the In-State ASMI Communications Program, listed below are ongoing efforts that target all key audiences and continue on an annual basis, including events and conference sponsorships, advertising, and swag.

Events and Conference Sponsorships

ASMI sponsors, presents, and distributes materials at several events statewide throughout the year. Some events are as simple as a monetary sponsorship. Most include a seafood product sponsorship, a speaking engagement, table of materials, swag, and auction items. Many events include all of those.

Attached is a list of many of the events sponsored by the Communications Program and their primary key target in-state. The list is not all-inclusive and is subject to change at any time.

Advertising

In-State Advertising can be separated into 4 categories of target audiences.

- 1) Commercial Fishermen
- 2) Alaska Foodies
- 3) Business Community
- 4) Sport Fishermen and Tourists

The print ads used are typically reworked ASMI retail or foodservice ads. Attached is a list of advertising outlets for Alaska Seafood. The list is not all-inclusive and is subject to change at any time.

Alaska Seafood Branded Swag/Collateral

In addition to further strengthening the Alaska Seafood brand by repeat exposure, branded swag allows members of the industry to serve as ambassadors and to advocate for their brand. The number of impressions are infinite with logo merchandise and that exposure is valuable.

The amount of ASMI shirts, jackets, hats, and all manner of other branded gear has grown substantially in the past couple of years. Managing the stockpile and distributing at events has become cumbersome. We are therefore reducing the variety and amount of swag kept on hand and will be moving towards ordering for specific events with a 'just-in-time' approach to control inventory and costs.

Measurement

Measurement is a critical part of any effective marketing effort. The Communications Program can track their impact through a variety of methods.

The Seafood Industry Survey by McDowell Group has been updated to include questions targeted specifically at fishermen this year. The Communications Program will also consider some form of research for both the Alaska Public (via online survey or polls) and the Alaska Legislature (interviews among ex-officio ASMI board members of the Legislature) to determine a baseline of perceptions within our target audiences and serve as a benchmark for future measurement.

Alaska residents may be surveyed. Engagement methods will be built into aspects of our efforts and reported. For example, the Eat Alaska campaign will encourage users to use the hashtag #eatalaska to help us track engagement. If digital ads are utilized, data will be tracked and presented.

In addition, the Communications Program will use a combination of media ad value and reach to assess earned media efforts.

Appendix A: ASMI Communications Program Events and Conference Sponsorships

List is not all-inclusive and is subject to change.

1. Great Alaska Seafood Cook-Off (Alaska Public/Legislature)
2. Alaska Federation of Natives Conference (Alaska Public/Fleet)
3. Alaska State Fair Seafood Throwdown (Foodies)
4. Anchorage Salmon Daze (Foodies, Economic)
5. Association of Village Council Presidents (Economic)
6. Alaska State Chamber of Commerce Conference (Industry, Economic)
7. Alaska Tourism Industry Association events (Foodies)
8. Kodiak ComFish (Fleet/Industry, Economic)
9. Sitka Seafood Festival (Fleet, Foodies)
10. Juneau Maritime Festival (Fleet/Economic/Foodies)
11. Naknek Fishtival (Fleet/Foodies)
12. Ketchikan Shellfish Festival (Fleet/Foodies)
13. Oysterfest (Foodies)
14. Fall Fisherman's Festival (Fleet/Public)
15. ProStart High School Chef Competition (Foodies)
16. Resource Development Council (Economic)
17. Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (Economic/Fleet)
18. Southeast Conference (Economic/Fleet)
19. Council of State Governments Conference (Economic)
20. Alaska Municipal League Conference (Economic/Fleet)
21. Alaska SeaLife Center Alaska Marine Gala (Foodies/Economic)
22. United Fishermen of Alaska Fundraiser Dinner (Fleet/Industry)
23. Alaska Marine Conservation Council (Economic/Fleet)
24. Alaska Food Policy Council Conference (Foodies/Economic)
25. March of Dimes Signature Chef Dinner (Foodies)
26. UAA Culinary Program Celebrity Chef Invitational (Foodies)
27. UAF Culinary Program Fundraiser Dinner (Foodies)
28. Prince William Sound Science Center Copper River Nouveau Cookbook (Foodies/Fleet)
29. Bean's Café Children's Lunchbox Fundraiser (Foodies)
30. Farm To School Conference (Economic)
31. Alaska Public Media Chef Series

Appendix B: ASMI Communications Program Advertising

In-State Advertising can be separated into 4 categories of target audiences.

- 5) Commercial Fishermen
- 6) Alaska Foodies
- 7) Business community
- 8) Sport fishermen and tourists

The print ads used are typically reworked ASMI retail or foodservice ads. Following is a list of advertising outlets for Alaska Seafood. List is not all-inclusive and is subject to change at any time.

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|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Anchorage Airport | 8. National Fisherman |
| 2. Alaska Magazine | 9. Pacific Fishing |
| 3. The Alaska App | 10. Fishermen's News |
| 4. Fish Alaska Magazine | 11. Alaska Journal of Commerce |
| 5. Alaska Magazine | 12. Coastal Journal |
| 6. Alaska Fish Radio | 13. Alaska Business Monthly |
| 7. Alaska Fisheries Report | 14. Seattle Times, Seafood 101 |

Appendix C: ASMI Communications Program Strategic Core Values

In order to *raise the value of Alaska seafood*, the Communications Program will ensure efforts are strategic, targeted, and measurable by evaluating them before and after execution against the following strategic criteria.

Core Value: *Grow and Know Our Audience*

- Who is the audience for this opportunity?
- Does this opportunity expose us to a lot of people, new people, a targeted demographic, a minority demographic.

Core Value: *Return on Relationships*

- Are we leveraging previous investment to maintain or advance a relationship with an influencer?
- Does this opportunity align ASMI with strategic partners, similar brands, or value added opportunities?

Core Value: *Content That Supports The Brand*

- Are we developing content that is compelling and shareable on various channels?
- Is our content promoting all species and regions and being utilized effectively?
- Does content support international and domestic ASMI program objectives?

Core Value: *Shares Our Successes*

- Does this effort increase industry and stakeholder buy-in?
- Will these efforts be visible to fishermen, processors and other stakeholders, and will they see the value?
- Does this communicate the best message about strategic use of ASMI funds?