



2017 CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT PLAN





INTRODUCTION

Revolutionary advances in communication technology and their subsequent public adoption have expanded opportunities for organizations to communicate effectively and efficiently with the public. NITTEC now has a wide and growing choice of robust real-time formats to deliver traveler alerts, weather and road condition updates, traffic advisories, guidance about alternative routes, emergency operations, and a means to inform the public about construction and road maintenance, road closings, and other planned events.

Informing and educating the public is a key part of the transportation and public-safety-related services that greatly affect the quality of life in the region which have a direct impact on public confidence in local governmental entities. Further, in an age of expanded and direct communication between public servants and the constituencies they represent, we cannot under-state the importance of effective public communications to create and maintain support for transportation-related public policy.

In that regard, NITTEC's role is absolutely critical in how well it communicates with and educates the public. NITTEC must adopt an approach to education that enables NITTEC, on behalf of its stakeholders, to proactively communicate with travelers and users of the region's transportation network using all available communication channels and on a real-time basis. As such, NITTEC's public-facing position must be as the one, vital source for all information needs pertaining to transportation, and it must approach providing this service as a vital mission.

By enacting the recommendations in this plan, NITTEC has an opportunity to achieve the following benefits:

- Increase audience reach to deliver NITTEC communications, travel advisories and useful information
- Improve public awareness of NITTEC's services, communications, and positive impact on the region
- Enhance public response to travel guidance, advisories and emergency initiatives
- Create greater public engagement around regional transportation initiatives
- Establish NITTEC as a go-to authority for transportation information and guidance during emergencies.

NITTEC CURRENT COMMUNICATIONS

To help meet the transportation needs of people in the region, NITTEC makes several types of information available. Some is disseminated in real-time, some do not change and remain available on an ongoing basis.

Public travel alerts

- Traffic incidents
- Construction zones
- Alternative routes guidance
- Emergency information, guidance and Amber alerts
- Estimated travel or wait time, e.g., bridge crossing queue length
- Bridge crossing warning

Traffic and weather conditions

- Multi-agency coordination and communication for operations during planned and unplanned events
- Interactive maps for travel planning
- Views of traffic flows and incidence of congestion
- Weather updates
- Presence of construction projects or other factors affecting traffic

Public service information

- Safety and travel tips
- About NITTEC and its operations and projects
- Multi-agency coordination for long-term planning and ongoing operations management

Information from related and relevant organizations

- Public transportation options
- Airport information
- Site links to relevant organizations

NITTEC AUDIENCE SEGMENTS

Below are the audiences in the Buffalo-Niagara region that NITTEC serves with a corresponding description of their core informational needs in the context of specified use-cases. This illustrates the variety of people and how their information and communication needs vary across different transportation scenarios. Since its inception, NITTEC has served all audiences and their needs both faithfully and effectively.

NITTEC Coalition members

Transportation Systems Management & Operations (TSM&O): Understanding of NITTEC's functions, operations and available information about the benefits from NITTEC's operations and to coordinate, collaborate or augment the member's own operations.

Daily operations: Access to an accurate, up-to-the-minute, and region-wide view of traffic, weather and road conditions to align their daily operational functions.

Unplanned or emergency situations

situations: Centralized and coordinated two-way communication to share and receive accurate, up-to-the-minute information on a secure and private basis regarding unplanned events affecting traffic, such as accidents and weather emergencies, to adjust current operations in response to conditions and to re-adjust as conditions change.

Ongoing management: Access to performance dashboards and project status for purposes of aligning and adjusting the management of ongoing operations on a data-driven performance basis.

Long-term planning: Access to strategic planning priorities, performance reports and raw data, budgets and grant information

- for custom analysis to align and adjust organizational planning, budgets and priorities;
- and to participate in projects and planning for NITTEC (as appropriate to membership level).

Local motorists & commuters

While in route: A means to receive accurate, up-to-the-minute, view of traffic, weather, road conditions and alternative routes while on their current route to adjust their speed, course, schedule or travel details, including if and when to leave the road or seek safety in the event of extreme conditions or emergencies.

Prior to travel: Access to an accurate, up-to-the-minute, view of traffic, weather and road conditions on their intended route to optimize their trip by adjusting their course, travel plans, or schedules.

Feedback: Notify authorities of incidents, road debris, potholes and other needs and share personal thoughts, priorities and concerns regarding transportation roadway and mobility improvements.

Public officials and public sector interested parties

Unplanned or emergency situations:

Access to accurate, up-to-the-minute information on a secure and private basis regarding unplanned events affecting traffic and public safety to understand and support any operational response to be enacted or already underway by NITTEC and Coalition members.

Parallel management: Being informed about ongoing projects and their status, and NITTEC's operations, to align the management of their organization's ongoing operations and to understand the value of NITTEC's services.

Long-term planning: Being informed about NITTEC's strategic planning priorities to align the management of their organization's ongoing operations; and to understand the benefits of NITTEC; and, to consider their organization's participation in NITTEC.

NITTEC AUDIENCE SEGMENTS, continued

Private sector

(e.g., freight operators, towing companies, travel & tourism businesses, event organizers)

Daily business: Access to accurate, up-to-the-minute view of traffic, weather, road conditions in their immediate area to understand how conditions affect customer and supplier access to and from their area or other relevant business destinations to adjust business operations accordingly.

Unplanned or emergency situations: Access to accurate, up-to-the-minute information regarding unplanned events and emergencies affecting traffic and public safety to understand how these events affect customer and supplier access to and from their areas, and if, when and for how long businesses operations should be temporarily curtailed or closed.

Immediate participation: Being informed about incidents, ongoing projects and their status, and other relevant NITTEC's operation, to understand and act on appropriate opportunities to offer goods and services to NITTEC and interested parties.

Longer-term participation:

Being informed about the region's planning priorities, projects and status, and other relevant ongoing operations.

- to understand how these might affect both short-term projects and long-term planning objectives;
- to align plans and operations accordingly, independently or in conjunction with NITTEC;
- to offer relevant goods and services to NITTEC and interested parties;
- to consider their organization's participation in NITTEC on an ongoing or formal basis.

General public

Area impact: Local members of the public being informed to understand and be aware of ongoing projects and their status, and NITTEC's operations that result in changes to road conditions and road and service availability, and their timeframes.

- to make necessary adjustments when traveling in affected areas;
- to understand NITTEC's services and value; and,
- to help inform others

Emergencies: A means to receive accurate, up-to-the-minute, view of traffic, weather, road conditions and alternative routes, including if and when to seek safety in the event of extreme conditions or emergencies.

- to avoid and cancel non-essential travel
- initiate unplanned travel when evacuation or relocation is required
- and take any other recommended or required action

Tourists

Non-residents who visit or pass through the region on a temporary basis generally have the same needs as local motorists and commuters but who most likely lack access, awareness of, or exposure to NITTEC resources.

While in route: A means to receive accurate, up-to-the-minute, view of traffic, weather, road conditions and alternative routes while on their current route to adjust their speed, course, schedule or travel details, including if and when to leave the road or seek safety in the event of extreme conditions or emergencies.

Prior to travel: Access to an accurate, up-to-the-minute, view of traffic, weather and road conditions on their intended route to optimize their trip by adjusting their course, travel plans, or schedules.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAM: RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Explain the value of NITTEC's TSM&O program to NITTEC members and internal audiences

Action item	Now	2-3 yrs	4-7 yrs
Strategic Planning committee to disseminate quarterly status reports outlining progress toward NITTEC strategic objectives and key projects, and covering notable NITTEC accomplishments and activities to NITTEC members and key audiences and constituencies	X		
Each committee to maintain updated status and data pertaining to progress toward strategic objectives and key projects and covering accomplishments and notable activities in process, made available to NITTEC members online	X		

Create broadcast partnerships with news organizations in the region to publish NITTEC information

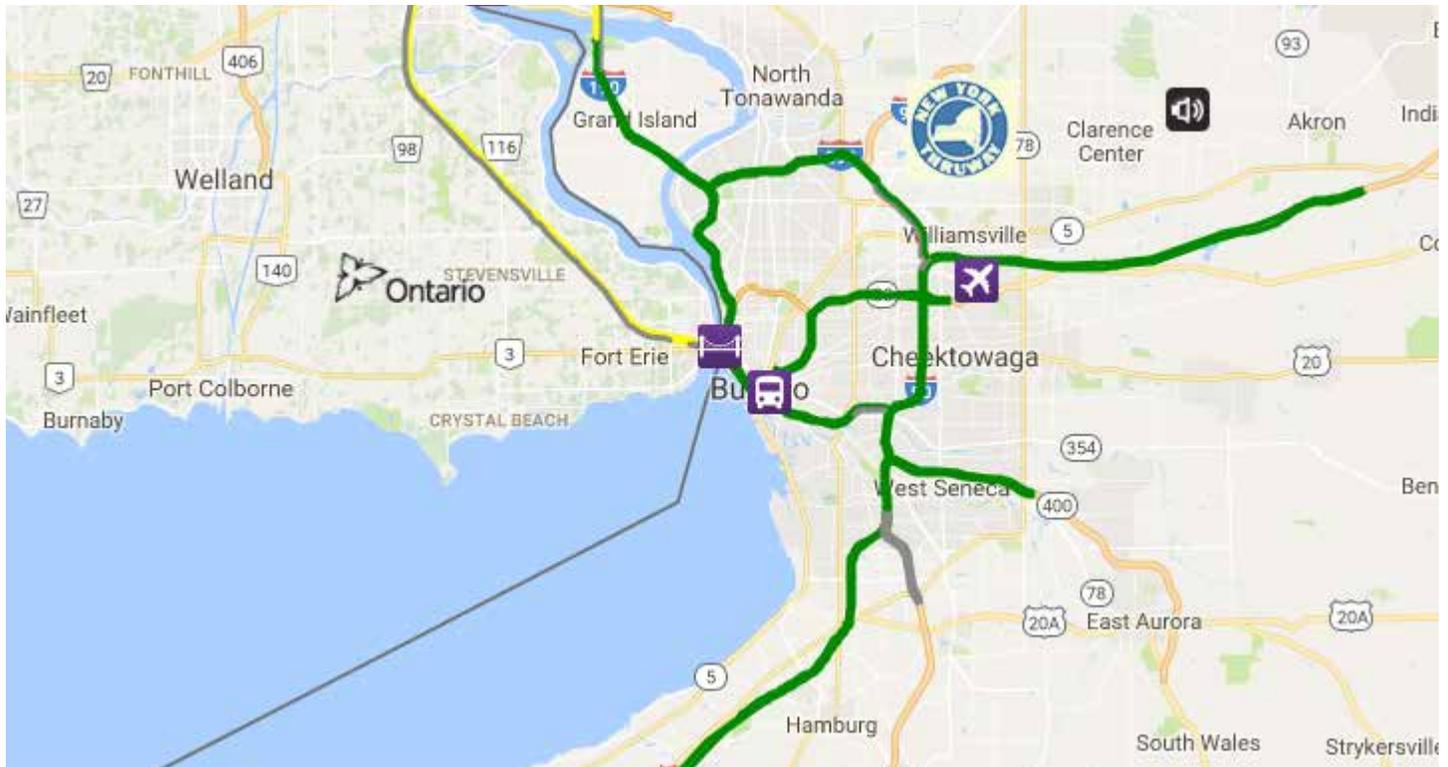
Action item	Now	2-3 yrs	4-7 yrs
Identify and engage relevant outlets such as local TV channels, radio stations, print & newspapers, travel & tourism websites, online blogs, mobile apps, etc.	X		
Enlist entities as "broadcast partners" who agree to publish and public-service information from NITTEC on a regular basis	X		
Mutually define the "content franchise*" format and substance to deliver to each content broadcast partner	X		
Develop a schedule and cadence of delivery for ongoing broadcasts	X		
Operationalize the creation and delivery of content; leverage partners' production resources to create content as NITTEC supplies data and analysis	X		
Have broadcast partners, to in turn, promote NITTEC and its services	X		
Support partners by hosting links to partners on NITTEC site		X	
Coordinate social media posts with broadcast partners to mutually reinforce and support messaging through broader audience reach		X	
Consider formalizing the participation of broadcast partners into a NITTEC committee focused on the dissemination of public information		X	
Automate information and data exchange and delivery to make content creation and publication automatic, like a dashboard for 3rd-party usage		X	
Develop a social media content calendar to promote each instance of 3rd-party publication of NITTEC content		X	

EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAM: RECOMMENDED ACTIONS, Continued

*A content franchise is a specific piece of content created to meet the needs of partners who in turn publish or broadcast it regularly to their audiences. For example, a TV news broadcast might regularly feature a NITTEC segment on traffic conditions created from NITTEC video feeds. A radio station might broadcast an audio version of the same information. Doing so creates additional value from NITTEC's assets.

Leverage the owned properties of stakeholders and interested parties to promote NITTEC services

Action item	Now	2-3 yrs	4-7 yrs
Enact signage and place brochures in all DMV locations within the region to promote adoption and usage of MYNITTEC services	X		
Enact signage and place brochures in public and municipal buildings to promote adoption and usage of MYNITTEC services, e.g., county and municipal offices, public libraries, police and fire stations, etc.	X		
Engage travel, tourism and transportation entities in the region, car rental, hotels, and airports to offer NITTEC brochures to their customers as a service	X		
Promote NITTEC content on partner websites and apps to expand reach and feature partner links on NITTEC site as a courtesy	X		
Enact signage on busses and at bus stops promoting the MYNITTEC service		X	
Enact signage on public buildings, bridges and outdoor public spaces to promote adoption and usage of MYNITTEC services		X	
Enact signage and place brochures within partner buildings to promote adoption and usage of MYNITTEC services		X	
Engage other travel, tourism and transportation entities in the region to carry and offer NITTEC brochures to their customers as an added-value service		X	
Supply signage and brochures to nearby organizations outside the region which provide travel & tourism services to people likely to visit the region			X



Enact website and MYNITTEC enhancements to make services more valuable and indispensable to users

Action item	Now	2-3 yrs	4-7 yrs
Publish updated weather report content directly on site via automated feeds (instead of only hosting links to external 3rd-party weather service sites)	X		
Receive and publish alerts of interest from other entities, such as school closings and delays, event cancellations, airport & flight updates, etc.	X		
Establish a process and calendar for scheduled site and app enhancements	X		
Adopt mobile-first approach to future site enhancements	X		
Develop on-site dashboards that showcase performance metrics against key NITTEC objectives to inform and increase public accountability	X		
Create a NITTEC site widget that 3rd-party sites can easily publish on their site, blog or social media to feature automatically updated NITTEC content	X		
Engage in outreach to recruit regional entities, municipalities and interested parties to publish and feature NITTEC widgets on their site		X	
Add parking functionality to search and find public and private-lot parking, determine availability, obtain price information, and facilitate payments; collaborate and integrate development work with City of Buffalo		X	
Publish updates on frequently-travelled routes updates, such as time-to-travel		X	
Integrate NITTEC data in key 3rd-party mobile apps, such as Google Maps		X	
Integrate NITTEC data into 3rd-party vehicular apps and maps e.g. OnStar		X	

EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAM: RECOMMENDED ACTIONS, Continued

Enlarge traveler information and public communications by enhancing existing services

Action item	Now	2-3 yrs	4-7 yrs
Real-time updates which automatically populate and disseminate through key distribution channels	X		
Initiate parallel updates to DMS by staff, as appropriate	X		
Website and mobile app would be interactive to enable users to customize views and information, and address specific travel needs	X		
Partner with regional media owners (e.g., TV and radio newscasts) to establish regular outreach and which promote NITTEC and its traveler information tools and services; For example, create and distribute daily segments on traffic from NITTEC covering traffic congestion, road conditions, alternate routes (when deployed), upcoming events, and transportation updates	X		
Ability to motorists to report incidents, road debris or need for assistance via SMS with precise GPS		X	
Contractor-operated PVMS would be integrated into a communications alert system to be available for utilization as needed in specific geographic areas or region-wide, as determined by NITTEC (i.e., standards should be made compatible with NITTEC's ATMS to enable automatic command & control)		X	
Site or app functionality and information which includes traffic and estimated travel times on specific routes and locations, current and forecasted weather, road and driving conditions, alternate routes (when applicable), and other important information		X	
Full-matrix signs in select locations (e.g., graphics)		X	
Partner with private-sector owners of popular mobile applications (e.g., Google Maps or Waze) to create an interface for easy means to incorporate key NITTEC updates and regionally-specific information, and so 3rd-party applications can send and receive data (e.g., INRIX, HERE, RITIS, etc.)		X	
Deploy Signal Phase and Timing (SPaT) as part of ATMS as a first step toward supporting CAV			X

Upgrade traffic congestion management capabilities with new services

Action item	Now	2-3 yrs	4-7 yrs
Unified view of all activities; Bring all data into a single ATMS	X		
Cameras which cover arterials and other key routes	X		
Proactive monitoring	X		
Data-driven decision support system (i.e., rules based)		X	
Variable speed limits		X	
Implement hard shoulder running i.e., using paved shoulder as travel lanes during peak hours (and usually accompanied by deployment of LCS)		X	
Bluetooth or wi-fi on key local/arterial routes to track travel times		X	

Enhance special event planning and management capabilities with a single unified tool

Action item	Now	2-3 yrs	4-7 yrs
Develop a single, unified system with construction coordination and other planned projects to enable a single point of entry for event information and dissemination, made available 24-7 to NITTEC member	X		
Event information and plans incorporated into single, unified map-based system to view and manage events on a regional basis	X		

EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAM: RECOMMENDED ACTIONS, Continued

Leverage crowd sourcing to enhance services and obtain information about local conditions in real-time

Action item	Now	2-3 yrs	4-7 yrs
Get direct customer feedback on the quality of transportation in the region	X		
Actively seek and obtain feedback and input from users to understand their needs and to establish an agenda of future site and app enhancements	X		
Recruit users with mobile devices to upload frequent updates, videos, livestreams, photos and data about local road, traffic, weather conditions and relevant user-generated content (UGC) to supplement NITTEC's information	X		
Establish a review and approval process for publishing UGC content	X		
Actively recruit app users and members of the public to participate	X		
Designate and pre-approve members to publish directly (e.g., live stream)		X	
Automatically and passively collect data on site and app usage to inform future enhancements to services and functionality		X	
Add functionality to enable users to provide 3-1-1 type of information and public service tips e.g., to report accidents, animal remains, potholes, etc		X	
Deploy an automated approval process for publishing UGC content		X	
Collect travel data from app users to augment vehicle speed and other traffic information directly to the NITTEC system as an employee benefit		X	

Engage municipal entities in the region to pursue public policy that promotes NITTEC services

Action item	Now	2-3 yrs	4-7 yrs
Develop a "how-to" video brochure explaining how to use NITTEC services and their benefits; then distribute to public and private entities across region	X		
Incorporate key performance metrics into official meetings and records of regional municipalities to raise awareness of regional goals and their progress	X		
Create locally-tailored custom reports and online dashboards for regional municipalities to report on ongoing performance within each community		X	
Ask public entities to have employees adopt and use NITTEC services for their transportation needs		X	
Require livery services in the region to offer NITTEC service brochures		X	
Ask local governments to pass resolutions designating as NITTEC official notice points for the dissemination of public information during emergencies		X	
Incorporate plow routes into NITTEC site and app using VML on plows; then publish times and routes of most recent plow coverage on routes		X	

Enhance NITTEC’s social media presence to be more robust and valuable

Action item	Now	2-3 yrs	4-7 yrs
Develop a monthly content calendar for planned posts at specified intervals	X		
Increase Twitter activity to a minimum of 12 posts per hour	X		
Re-focus Facebook posts to parallel Twitter posts on an automated basis	X		
Direct Twitter posts to automatically update site and app content	X		
Utilize content publication tools to automate editorial creation and publication	X		
Expand NITTEC’s YouTube page to incorporate new “content franchises”	X		
Use performance data to assess impact and optimize efforts	X		
Promote performance results and other publications on social	X		
Promote area events of interest as a courtesy and value-added service to users	X		
Develop cross-post strategies with NITTEC partners, relevant organizations, and partners		X	
Identify ongoing relevant conversations in the region (e.g., sporting events) and use hash-tag strategy to proactively engage event participants and groups		X	
Conduct listening exercises to measure NITTEC audience reach and impact		X	

Support NITTEC education and communications program with adequate staff resources

Action item	Now	2-3 yrs	4-7 yrs
Hire or designate dedicated staff assistant to execute video dissemination, social media calendar, metrics reporting, outreach to community outlets and NITTEC members, and manage real-time chat and social during emergencies	X		



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