



## Communications Policy Statement

*Policy approved by the Board on April 26, 2007*

### **Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines to keep all communications between the PA Dutch CVB and its stakeholders 1) appropriate, 2) recognizable, 3) consistent and 4) professional and to assure appropriate access to the Board by members.

### Timeliness

**Communications should provide the membership with timely, accurate, clear, objective and complete information about PA Dutch CVB policies, programs, services and initiatives.** The Board has a duty to explain its policies and decisions, and to inform the membership of its priorities. Communications therefore should be complete, clear and swiftly follow any changes or major initiatives.

**Programs should plan for communication from the beginning.** PA Dutch CVB programs should address communication needs in the development stage of policies and programs. Policies and programs should never surprise the membership or happen by accident. PA Dutch CVB should proudly promote each and every service and program it provides. Programs about which the membership has not been educated are bound to fail.

### Authorization

**Collective communications must be authorized.** No communication that claims to represent the policies or positions of either the Board or PA Dutch CVB as a whole shall be made public until and unless it is approved by the Board. All official communications shall be distributed to the organization's various publics by PA Dutch CVB staff.

**Individual officials of the PA Dutch CVB are encouraged to communicate directly with the membership.** Openness in governance helps members fairly judge our performance, and helps enable membership participation. Officials serve the organization best by communicating openly and frequently about programs they administer, while treating sensitive information with the discretion it requires.

Board members have a right to have their dissent in votes explicitly recorded in the minutes, which are made available to the membership via IdeaLink, after being approved at the subsequent Board meeting. However, current Board members and other elected or appointed officials of the organization may not attempt to undermine the actions or intent of the CVB or the Board in the public expression of these rights. As indicated in the Board of Directors Code of Conduct Policy, members of the Board have an absolute duty of undivided loyalty to the PA Dutch CVB. This duty prevents questioning or publicly opposing any and all Board decisions, and requires public silence as a Board member on any and all Board decisions with which any Board member may not agree. This duty supersedes any conflicting loyalty such as that to advocacy or interest groups and membership on other boards or staffs. All officials of the PA Dutch CVB have the right of resignation if they cannot support the activities or decisions of the Board, and are freed of the duty of obedience, but not the requirements of confidentiality, upon their resignation.

Under no circumstances should staff express public dissent with a decision of the Board or President & CEO.

**Unauthorized communication between individual Board members and other elected or appointed officials of the PA Dutch CVB and the media is expressly forbidden.** Coaching and planning is often required before engaging with the general public or the media. Therefore, officials of the CVB must not engage the public or the media about CVB issues unless authorized by the VP and/or the President & CEO.

The President & CEO, and the VP or other designated spokesperson are authorized to engage with the general public and membership on PA Dutch CVB issues, but must at all times communicate to the public in line with the established wishes and policy expressions of the Board.

With the exception of announcing/promoting new and/or Priority 1 & 2 groups coming to Lancaster, the PA Dutch CVB will not – without Executive Committee authorization – distribute any press releases on behalf of another organization, or in a manner that may be perceived as endorsement.

### Transparency

**The PA Dutch CVB defaults to transparency.** Transparency is essential to good governance. Therefore, by default, any action or policy of the PA Dutch CVB is public at the moment it is authorized by the Board, and repeatable by anyone to any member of the CVB. If the Board requires actions at meetings or other information to be private and confidential, it must specify that when the action is taken. All action taken in executive session is private.

**Communications should be openly two-way.** The PA Dutch CVB does not engage solely in top-down communication with its membership or the general public. All public communications should include clear mention of a method the recipient can use to contact the appropriate staff person for more information or discussion.

The Board should never be, or seem, inaccessible to the membership. The PA Dutch CVB should frequently call attention to Board/membership communication. Such attention will help demonstrate to non-communicative members that the Board is open and responsive. To encourage that, inquiries sent to the CVB official channels should be responded to promptly, and where possible, completely.

Multiple communications channels (e-blast, personalized e-mail, postcard...) will be employed to ensure that key information is effectively communicated to the target audience.

### Style

**Communications should be clear and engaging.** Communications must use plain language, be clearly formatted and expressed, and be accessible to all our members.

**Official communications should be consistent.** Any periodic communication, such as the IdeaLink to members or any other type of regular communiqué, should stay consistent in format and structure, with infrequent redesigns or alterations.

Communications being sent to more than 30 individuals must first be reviewed by the Vice President, Communications.

**New Priority 1 event**

The PA Dutch CVB will explore providing media assistance for the first year of the event that may include implementation of one or more of the following actions in conjunction with appropriate (e.g., AQS) staff: (1) furnishing of certain press lists; (2) review or writing of selected press releases; (3) placing selected media pitch calls; and (4) coordinating a press announcement of the event. The PA Dutch CVB cannot guarantee press coverage.

**New Priority 2 event**

The PA Dutch CVB will explore providing media assistance for the first year of the event that may include implementation of one or more of the following actions in conjunction with appropriate (e.g., AQS) staff: (1) furnishing of certain press lists; (2) review of selected press releases; and (3) coordinating a press release announcement of the event. The PA Dutch CVB cannot guarantee press coverage.