Building a Purpose-Driven Community: A Technology Roadmap

The modern community is facing unprecedented challenges such as public safety, misinformation and data security. To address these challenges and meet constituents where they are, communities must implement technology that helps engage their community, facilitate public trust and better advocate for those they serve.

Diligent Community

In This Guide

"In a rapidly changing world, purpose-driven leadership can be what guides and strengthens your decision-making, no matter the environment you find yourself in."

Dottie Schindlinger
Executive Director, The Diligent Institute

The right technology can enable purpose-driven leaders to focus on what matters, to answer a greater calling and to positively impact the communities around them. A purpose-driven community depends on building a commitment to your mission — both within your constituents and your team.

A. Cultivate Trust, Transparency and Communication

Clearly and Continuously Communicate Your Organization's Purpose

Connecting with a common purpose begins with communicating your purpose through your organization's mission statement. Deliver your mission to staff and community members by using the 3 C's: Clearly and continuously communicate.

An effective mission statement is plausible and attainable, but still inspirational, and uses clear and simple language.

It should provide a foundation on which your organization can build its goals and initiatives, as in the examples below.

"I was at an equity conference recently and almost everyone I sat next to was using a Diligent platform to distribute their policies to their communities. And I was sitting there thinking, 'Yes, **this** is why I do what I do!'"

Angela DeLosSantos
Senior Director, Policy Services, Diligent Community

Tacoma, Washington, City Counsel

"We provide high-quality, innovative, and cost-effective municipal services that enhance the lives of our citizens and the quality of our neighborhoods and business districts."

The Housing Authority of the City of Alameda, California

"The Housing Authority of the City of Alameda, in partnership with the entire community, advocates and provides quality, affordable, safe housing; encourages self-sufficiency; and strengthens community inclusiveness and diversity in housing."

Somerset County, Maryland, Board of Education

Serving a rural, diverse community rooted in rich traditional values, Somerset County Public Schools empowers all students to become innovative problem solvers and ethical leaders by providing engaging, technology enhanced instruction and balanced extra-curricular programs.

How to Start: Publish your mission statement in a central and prominent location, not only on the "About Us" page of your website.

Be Transparent to Build Trust

Building trust starts with transparency. A key aspect of your communication strategy should be to ensure transparency – both across the organization and within the community.

In today's virtual world, technology plays an important role in transparency. Technology removes barriers to access; by providing news and information, it helps establish a culture of transparency. Much of daily life already happens online including banking, work, school, communication and even virtual communities such as Reddit and Facebook groups. The public has come to expect the transparency and access that technology provides.

How to Start: Provide a board portal to the public and board members that is built for transparency and enables easy access to relevant news, information, meeting agendas and documentation.

Required Capabilities

✓ Publish your organization's mission statement, news, achievements, agendas, staffing needs and public feedback on a customizable portal that provides 24/7 access to resources.

✓ Establish a single source of truth for school board or local government meeting documentation, instead of the public relying on disparate sources for information.

✓ Update staff, board members and community members via email or SMS on the go.

✓ Ensure full public visibility, from any device, into current and past board materials for all community members, including public notifications on updates and a full search capability.

"I knew I needed to speak the truth and speak it with good intention, honesty, authenticity and professionalism, as many people looked up to me as a mentor."

Toni Hoy
Author, Second Time Foster Child

B. Engage Your Staff and Community With a Purpose

Highlight Your Uniqueness

Mission statements — and the organizational purpose that powers them — must become a living, breathing part of your organization. They should guide organizational actions, tone and communication strategy.

You know your community is unique and has a lot to offer. Make sure the unique aspects of your mission statement carry through to your public-facing materials and ongoing communication. This will build your credibility and connect the public to that mission.

The City of Thomasville, Georgia has extended its organizational purpose into a vision statement and core values, which it shares openly and often with the community. The city uses social media effectively to remind its community what makes them unique.

City of Thomasville, Georgia, Mission statement

vision statement
A progressive and unified community providing an inviting place to live, work, play and prosper.

In partnership with our community, Team Thomasville will deliver excellent and dependable public services while building trusting relationships through openness, inclusion and innovation.

mission statement

team thomasville core values

TRUSTWORTHY & DEPENDABLE
We are dedicated to provide reliable services to our citizens and community.

EQUAL & INCLUSIVE
We will empower a diverse and progressive culture to strengthen community partnerships.

ACCOUNTABLE & TRANSPARENT
We will maintain business practices that build community trust with openness, integrity and accountability.

MODERN & INNOVATIVE
We will execute creative plans and innovative strategies to bring sustainable growth to our entire community.

How to Start: Use your unique mission statement as a guide for setting priorities, establishing goals and communicating progress to your community.

"I'm working on trying to execute the policy decisions that are made by the council, but also recognizing that the community at times does not feel heard. How do we ensure that those voices are incorporated in the implementation of those policies? We want them to be involved in the process and we want to make sure that they get good results from those policy decisions."

Kimberly Richardson
Assistant City Manager, City of Peoria, Illinois

Actively Encourage Engagement & Inclusion

Board engagement is a critical component of a purpose-led organization. When board members have easy access to information, they can be more prepared for each meeting and able to make better decisions. Providing a platform for board members to access and review necessary information fosters a more productive meeting environment where board members can stay informed and focused.

In turn, engagement must also extend to the community. Inclusion means enabling easy accessibility to all community members regardless of disability, education and social status. When community members are engaged, their needs can be heard and reflected in board initiatives. That allows community members of all backgrounds to identify with your organization's objectives.

How to Start: Establish an intuitive technology platform that provides opportunities for community engagement and encourages transparency.

Required Capabilities

✓ Board members and staff can easily review information and share necessary information with the public as needed.

✓ Staff can submit, review and approve agenda items, annotate board materials and communicate on document changes in real-time.

✓ Administrators can manage a diverse committee structure with tools and resources needed to share information and encourage better decision-making.

✓ Public organizations can exercise transparency by navigating remote public meetings and sharing information effectively.

"My advice for leaders in trying to become more purpose-driven is to listen and engage with your community. Begin to think deliberately about areas that represent common vision. Convene people around what they agree on."

Bradford Saron
Superintendent of Sun Pairie,
South Dakota

C. Be Accountable to Your Mission and Goals

Communication, transparency and engagement all facilitate accountability and build trust in your institutions. Your organization must ensure it has the technology it needs to meet its obligations to the community and the right technology partner to uphold those promises.

Protection of data, customer support, access to a network of like-minded professionals — these are all qualities to look for when choosing the right technology partner.

How to Start: Implement Diligent Community, a modern governance solution designed to support purpose-driven community boards and organizations.

Required Capabilities

✓ Easily track tasks and progress across different departments.

✓ Provide a secure platform for administrators, boards and council members to effectively conduct agenda and meeting management duties while staying engaged with the public.

✓ Empower staff to focus on more strategic projects by eliminating manual processes.

✓ Save money and support sustainability and climate change initiatives by reducing paper usage.

✓ Provide governing professionals with critical information to make timely and informed policy decisions.

✓ Get support with unparalleled implementation assistance and over 100+ years of combined experience serving the public sector

"I have worked with school districts and government organizations for 16 years. Over 10 years with Diligent, I helped customers adopt the best technology to help them succeed. I am passionate about helping people and building long-term partnerships with a positive attitude while having fun along the way."

Merrit Brooks
Online Training Specialist, Diligent Community

Diligent Community

Diligent Community is the next generation of the industry leading solutions, iCompass & BoardDocs, trusted tools used by over 4,000 public governing bodies. The intuitive, easy-to-use paperless meeting software supports public leaders and board members to streamline the way they build agendas, distribute materials to the board, and communicate with constituents before, during, and after public meetings — whether they are in person or virtual.

To learn more about Diligent Community, contact us today:
Email: Community@diligent.com • Visit: diligent.com/community