AAPA 2021 Lighthouse Awards; Communications
Port of Baltimore | Category One
Periodicals
Port of Baltimore Magazine

<https://pobdirectory.com/digital-issue/>

**Overview**

The Maryland Port Administration (MPA) publishes the bimonthly Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore magazine that features information about the port and topics that are important to its stakeholders. The Port of Baltimore magazine promotes and markets the cargo, cruise, environmental, and security programs at the Port of Baltimore. The magazine also highlights and features different Port of Baltimore businesses and individuals in the supply chain.

The Port of Baltimore magazine is used as an important marketing tool used by the MPA to attract and inform potential customers.

**Challenges and Opportunities**

Challenges: As a state agency, the MPA faces very strong challenges such as budget constraints and different levels of government communication/ approvals. The MPA has a team of two on their communications staff; the resources and time needed to produce a 24-page publication every other month would be an overwhelming task for the small department so we outsource with a local Baltimore company, Today Media, to produce the magazine.

Opportunities: The magazine presents a medium entirely dedicated to the Port, providing the opportunity to deliver in-dept explanations of projects, issues, and the port’s successes. The magazine gives us a larger forum to fully explain plans that will benefit Port of Baltimore businesses, users, and communities.

The magazine doubles as an amplifier for local companies that work with the Port of Baltimore to promote their businesses through advertisements, advertorial, and spotlight stories. The MPA Communications Department works with Today Media on topics and stories to be published and also on the branding of the Port of Baltimore. The department also collaborates and communicates with other departments within the MPA as well as private Port of Baltimore businesses and tenants on story ideas for the magazine.

**Mission**

The Maryland Port Administration has a mission to stimulate the flow of waterborne commerce through the State of Maryland in a manner that provides economic benefit to the citizens of the state. The Port strives to capitalize on business opportunities. It provides, manages and promotes competitive, secure, state-of-the art terminals capable of efficiently handling diverse cargoes and leverages mutually supporting public and private sectors. It also acts as a good steward of Maryland’s natural environment. The MPA wants to make sure customers are aware of the progression of the Port of Baltimore’s facilities, as well as all the initiatives it undertakes. The magazine is a way to present a breadth of information on a regular basis and is a go-to for stakeholders at the Port of Baltimore to get news on the port.

**Planning and Programming Components**

The primary audience for the magazine includes current and prospective international maritime shipping customers, cargo owners, ocean carriers, logistics/transportation companies and labor. Currently, the magazine has 4,000 subscribers around the world that include maritime shipping and logistics professionals, cargo owners, and many members of our international supply chain. The goals of the magazine are to inform current and potential port customers of current projects and overall cargo, cruise, and environmental updates at the Port of Baltimore. It offers a longer form format to highlight and promote Port of Baltimore businesses as well as MPA projects.

**Actions/ Communications Outputs**

The Port of Baltimore magazine is the only outsourced communications product of the Maryland Port Administration. The MPA’s Communications Department has two full-time employees. It works very closely with the outside magazine production company on the magazine. They collaborate on article ideas, planning, photos, and overall design. The magazine production company handles ads and assigns writers to magazine stories. The Port of Baltimore magazine comes out every two months and is distributed to all MPA employees and at the Port of Baltimore public marine terminals. It is also made available online in a digital format and on the MPA employee intranet network. The magazine is available to the general public either online or in print.

**Communications Outcomes**

The MPA conducts informal surveys about the magazine during the year. We have also previously conducted formal surveys of our subscribers. We reach out to MPA employees and also private Port of Baltimore businesses to gauge their thoughts and opinions about the magazine. That has proven to be a very valuable tool for us in terms of planning future stories and featuring specific Port of Baltimore businesses and individuals. It is critically important for us to receive feedback and ways to improve the magazine from our targeted audience. We want those Port of Baltimore businesses to continue giving us ideas that could turn into stories in the magazine. It also allows them to feel like they are a significant part of the planning and execution of the magazine itself. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we received a lot of feedback on the magazine from our readers. We determined that because people were spending more time at home, they had more time to thoroughly read the magazine and provide feedback. We were happy to learn that the majority of our subscribers really like the magazine and find it important to their businesses when they are featured in an issue. We look forward to continuing to work with them in a collaborative way moving forward.

Please view our digital magazine here: <https://pobdirectory.com/digital-issue/>