AAPA 2021 Lighthouse Awards; Communications   
Port of Baltimore | Category One  
Videos | Video of Appreciation  
Run Time: 1:14  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktYzaBcR6J0&t=2s>

**Summary**

The Maryland Port Administration directed and produced a video of Port of Baltimore leaders and supply chain partners thanking the Port of Baltimore workforce for their work during the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal of our “Thank You” video was to publicly show our appreciation for the Port of Baltimore frontline workforce.

**Challenges and Opportunities**

Our goal was to create a short video for our social media platforms and our website that featured leaders of different Port of Baltimore supply chain partners thanking our workforce for the jobs they were doing as the COVID-19 pandemic was consuming our world. We began planning and executing the video shortly after the pandemic had begun and started drastically impacting our daily lives. It was an extremely uneasy time for everyone, including port workers. Even though mandatory teleworking policies were being implemented at some port businesses, many logistics and supply chain partner businesses could not operate as effectively with teleworking. Many port workers had to continue coming into work due to the nature of their jobs and we believed a video thanking them from top leaders representing supply chain partners would be meaningful. The idea and development of the video was also occurring during a time when many retail establishments were running out of products and consumer goods that come through ports. We wanted the video to reiterate how important port workers’ jobs were in restocking retail store shelves of medicines, food, and clothing.

Many different factors were considered when planning the video. First, we wanted to show as many different segments of our supply chain as possible. We wanted to show leaders of our labor organizations, tug companies, auto manufacturers, shipping lines, trucking organizations, and others. We also wanted to show as much diversity as we could. It was important to do this, especially during 2020, when social justice became a huge focal point for the world. We wanted to include people of color and female leaders within the Port of Baltimore. We also needed each video participant to shoot their own video. During the time we did this, the facts about COVID-19 were evolving. There was a lot of misinformation including how you could get it. We knew that many people would not feel comfortable with us being physically close to them shooting a video, so we requested each person to shoot their own and submit it to us. We provided the script for each person and they shot their own video. We also needed to make recommendations to each person on how to make their own video presentable and good quality, such as shooting outside or in a well-lit environment, speaking slowly and clearly and showing empathy.

**Mission**

The mission of the Maryland Port Administration is to bring waterborne commerce to the Port of Baltimore and generate jobs for Maryland. The Maryland Port Administration manages and oversees the state-owned, public marine terminals of the Port of Baltimore and it’s the face of the Port of Baltimore. However, there are many private marine terminals, terminal operators, and other businesses that comprise the Port of Baltimore that are equally important to its overall success. It was very important to us when creating this video that we showed as many different facets of the Port of Baltimore as possible. We did not want the video to just showcase the Maryland Port Administration. To make the strong statement that we wanted it to make, we needed to show the reach of the Port of Baltimore. We needed to show examples of the many different businesses that depend on a healthy and busy Port of Baltimore such as longshore labor, terminal operators, tug companies, law enforcement, and trucking.

**Communication Planning and Programming Components**

The goal of the video was to provide a boost or pick-up to the Port of Baltimore workforce. It was done as an appreciation and acknowledgement for the work they were doing as the COVID-19 pandemic was raging through our world. We wanted them to feel appreciated and to know that key leaders within the Port of Baltimore recognized what they were doing and how important their jobs were to maintain our economy. The video was executed during the early months of the pandemic and during a time of great uncertainty and unease. We knew that many people were hesitant to even come to work, but ports play such a critically important role in world economies that those jobs are needed to deliver needed goods and restock store shelves. The specific objective was to create a thank you video to port workers that showed diversity, both in terms of different companies and organizations within the Port of Baltimore and in terms of people in leadership positions. Our measurables needed to reach this goal were: At least 10 Port of Baltimore leaders and demonstrating diversity among those leaders. We were very conscious to not want to show only white males even though most leadership positions within the Port of Baltimore are held by white males. Port labor forces are changing, with more women and people of color entering the maritime industry, so it was very important for us to show those people. The primary audience for the video was the Port of Baltimore workforce which includes more than 15,000 direct jobs. The secondary audience was the public because we wanted the public to be reminded that the Port of Baltimore workforce was out there every day during a very uncertain time delivering goods and products to their favorite retail stores.

**Actions**

To execute this project, we needed to get the support of as many different Port of Baltimore businesses as possible. We needed to show leaders in our port showing their appreciation and giving thanks to our workforce. The main strategy was to show diversity among our port leaders in both the different jobs that occur at the Port of Baltimore and leaders that include women and people of color. Our tactics included a strong verbal and written pitch to each of the targeted participants. The pitch included the goal of the video, what we wanted each person to say, and how we wanted each person to video themselves. We drafted and provided each participant with their own 10-second thank you message to record. We then provided each person with tips on how to best execute their own video, including lighting, camera placement, and finding a location that effectively represented their company. We also instructed each person to show empathy as we felt a thank you video during this very challenging time would be best done with port leaders showing empathy for their workforce. The timeline for the video was to complete the project during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. We did not want to do it too early because we wanted some time to pass to show our thanks more effectively after a period. There was no outsourcing as the video was planned, produced, executed, and posted by the Maryland Port Administration’s two-person communications department.

**Communications Outcomes**

Prior to initiating interested parties for the video, we informally surveyed Port of Baltimore leaders and members of the workforce on the idea itself.  We wanted to know how leaders felt about this idea but even more importantly, we wanted to know how our primary targeted audience, our supply chain workers, would feel about it.  We were happy to find out that this idea was very well received by everyone.  Leaders were very excited to participate and offer their thanks and the port workers that we spoke to thought it was a very good idea that would receive overly positive feedback from their fellow workers.  In fact, there were two port workers who offered recommendations for what leaders should say.  That turned out to be very valuable information for us to plan and execute the video.  When the video was completed and posted to our social media platforms and website, we received overwhelming positive responses.  The responses came from the port workers who were our intended targets, but they also came from other port leaders who saw the video and thought it turned out great.  We also received feedback and inquiries from other ports who had seen the video, thought it was also a great idea, and wanted to do something similar for their workforces.

Total Video Stats:

Reach: 10,303  
Engagements: 1,094

To view the video, please click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktYzaBcR6J0&t=2s>