Talking about operations -
It’s what we do

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Communications: What, when, where, why and to whom

What is this TMSO thing?

noun
/noun/

noun GRAMMAR

a word (other than a pronoun) used to identify any of a class of people, places, or things common noun, or to name a particular one of these proper noun.

verb
/verb/

noun: verb; plural noun: verbs

1. a word used to describe an action, state, or occurrence, and forming the main part of the predicate of a sentence, such as hear, become, happen.
In Iowa, it’s what we do.

• While our director, Mark Lowe, introduced TSMO to employees using the acronym, he made it clear.

“TSMO is what we do.”
Now let’s quit calling it TSMO and call it what it really is:

A focus on operations as the foundation of *everything* we do.

- Safety
- Mobility
Operations is everyone’s job

The shift from a construction to an operations mindset needs to be framed as something more than just another flavor-of-the-month acronym that is perceived as going away if people ignore it long enough.

In Iowa, we see TSMO as a fundamental shift in our culture where everyone understands their specific responsibilities related to safe mobility.
Communications: What, when, where, why and to whom

Operations is everyone’s job

Iowa DOT Core Functions
Communications: What, when, where, why and to whom

Realizations

1. Culture change can’t be carried out by champions.

2. Every part of the agency has to understand the basic concept of an operations focus.

3. Change in focus must become the foundation of how we do business.
TSMO Strategic and Program plans completed. Launched TSMO website.

February 2017
TSMO Steering Committee formed.

2016

2017
Subcommittee work focuses on initial three of eight service layer plans.

• Traffic Incident Management
• Traveler Information
• ITS and Communications

2018
Communication and training plans finalized and service layer plan development continues.

• Work Zone management
• Connected and Autonomous Vehicles
Communications: What, when, where, why and to whom

What’s there to talk about?

• You should know what you want to communicate before you start talking.
What’s there to talk about?

Strategic Plan
Highlights Iowa’s challenges, makes the case for TSMO, and describes the vision, mission, goals, and strategic objectives for TSMO.

Program Plan
Companion to the strategic plan and provides the structure for a comprehensive TSMO program. It outlines the programmatic objectives, strategies, processes, procedures, and resources needed to deliver the vision and goals of the TSMO Strategic Plan.
Communications: What, when, where, why and to whom

What’s there to talk about?

While both the Strategic Plan & Program Plan are vital, they should have a warning label...

“May cause drowsiness.”
What’s there to talk about?

Meanwhile... somewhat more interesting are our Service Layer Plans – tactical and practical.

- **Opportunities and Challenges** – Includes a mapping of relevant strategic goals and program objectives. Develop service layer objectives that support the strategic goals and program objectives.
- **Description of Existing Services, Activities and Projects** – Provides a detailed description of existing services, activities and completed deployment projects.
- **Existing Conditions** – An assessment of related existing conditions.
- **Gap Analysis** – Develop and apply analysis criteria to identify where services and other needs are unmet.
Communications: What, when, where, why and to whom

What’s there to talk about?

These plans still don’t get to the burning question:

Why should I care?
What’s there to talk about?

This is where a steering committee (the thinkers) comes in handy.

- 20ish member group meeting monthly to provide guidance
- Members were leaders (functional or named) of business units across the agency
- Provides a variety of opinions
What’s there to talk about?

What the steering committee does:

Provides guidance and direction by prioritizing and implementing the TSMO Plan:

- **Annual Accomplishment Year Plan** - Prioritize actions by fiscal year and track quarterly progress
- **Training** - Prioritize and authorize curriculum development and delivery
- **Policy/Procedure** - Provide feedback and guidance on draft TSMO-related policies, procedures, instructional memoranda, or other TSMO policy documents
- **Establish subcommittees** to lead development of specific actions, activities, projects, plans, or services.
What’s there to talk about?

Subcommittees (the doers)

Here’s a novel idea... for a communications subcommittee, get your communications staff on board.
Communications: What, when, where, why and to whom

Who do you talk to first?
(establish your audience)

Preach to the choir first

All directed communications efforts to this point have been internal. We plan to engage partners once we’re certain our own folks “get it.”
Communications: What, when, where, why and to whom

Why should I care?

- For all communications, focus on answering the burning question: “Why should I care?”
- Include at least one strategic goal/objective in every communications effort.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Goal</th>
<th>Strategic Objective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Safety</td>
<td>Reduce crash frequency and severity</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Reliability</td>
<td>Improve transportation system reliability, increase system resiliency, and add highway capacity in critical corridors</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Efficiency</td>
<td>Minimize traffic delay and maximize transportation system efficiency to keep traffic moving</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Convenience</td>
<td>Provide ease of access and mobility choices to customers</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Coordination</td>
<td>Engage all DOT disciplines, and external agencies and jurisdictions to proactively manage and operate the transportation system</td>
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<td>6. Integration</td>
<td>Incorporate TSMO strategies throughout DOT’s transportation planning, design, construction, maintenance, and operations activities</td>
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Top down or bottom up?

• Yes
  – For us, management drove the initial discussion, but it moved both from the top down and from the bottom up.
    • Director’s report
    • Internal blog posts
    • Staff involvement in service layer plans
Top down

- Initial introduction of “TSMO” to all employees came from our director in his widely read monthly report in September 2017.

“TSMO is a concerted and proactive effort to operate the system at its highest and best capacity. It rests on a framework formed by the intersection of road weather management, traffic control, traffic incident management, and work zone management, and touches almost everything we do – from design, to field maintenance, to how we clear crashes and obstructions, and to how we help stranded motorists. TSMO is an essential part of delivering safe mobility, and when done well it reduces crashes and increases flow and capacity without adding lane miles of roads.”

- Mark Lowe
Bottom up

- Blog posts related to what we as an agency do and underscores the question “Why should I care.”

Not one mention the acronym TSMO.

  - Overview of what it means to focus on operations
  - Intelligent work zone technology
  - Traffic incident management
  - Virtual weigh scale technology
  - Autonomous vehicles
Bottom up

• Upcoming post following the processes related to a bridge hit and how that process has the potential to touch nearly every business unit in the organization.
Quick shout out

• Because websites need love, too...

– https://iowadot.gov/tsmo
Communications: What, when, where, why and to whom

And another S/O

Documenting successes
– Accomplishment year plans
  • The steering committee is working on its fourth accomplishment year plan, which sets out more than 20 goals to be accomplished in fiscal year 2019.
  • Communications goal is to promote these more diligently.
Communications: What, when, where, why and to whom

Subtle changes to our branding to align with our focus

2014 - 2018

2018 and beyond
Training

The purpose of our training plan is to provide a framework for providing sustained operations training within the agency for all employees. The plan builds on best practices and starts to build an organizational culture. It is intended to provide guidance and education to help employees understand:

- What is Iowa DOT’s operations focus?
- What does having an focus on operations means to daily job functions?
### Training

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<tr>
<th>Operations Training levels</th>
<th>Proposed audiences</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>New Employee Orientation</strong></td>
<td>All new employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duration: 5-10 minutes&lt;br&gt;Format: Webinar logged in Iowa DOT-U&lt;br&gt;Description: Provide a brief overview of operations at a very high level.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Operations 101 On-Line or in-person Training</strong></td>
<td>Office of:&lt;br&gt;Location &amp; Environment&lt;br&gt;Driver &amp; Identification Services&lt;br&gt;Aviation&lt;br&gt;Rail Transportation&lt;br&gt;Organizational Improvement&lt;br&gt;Right of way&lt;br&gt;Local Systems&lt;br&gt;Contracts&lt;br&gt;Program Management&lt;br&gt;Operations &amp; Finance Division&lt;br&gt;Information Technology Division&lt;br&gt;Bureau of Investigation &amp; Identity Protection&lt;br&gt;Field staff – clerical</td>
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<td>Duration: 2 hours&lt;br&gt;Duration: A series of about 4-30 minute modules that cover the basics of operations&lt;br&gt;Format: Webinar or in-person training with scored quizzes&lt;br&gt;Description: Preliminary list of modules include: Introduction to operations, the role of the TMC. How operations impact how we plan projects. How a focus on operations impacts how we design projects. How we manage the transportation network to provide safety and mobility.</td>
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<td><strong>Operations 201 Advanced On-Line or in-person Training</strong></td>
<td>Office of:&lt;br&gt;Research and Analytics&lt;br&gt;Transit&lt;br&gt;Vehicle and Motor Carrier Services&lt;br&gt;Data Design&lt;br&gt;Design&lt;br&gt;Bridges &amp; Structures&lt;br&gt;Contracts&lt;br Systems Planning&lt;br&gt;Construction &amp; Materials (Ames)&lt;br&gt;Program Management&lt;br&gt;Construction &amp; Maintenance field staff&lt;br&gt;Engineering operations technicians</td>
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<td>Duration: 3 hours+&lt;br&gt;A series of about 6-30 minute modules that cover the basics of operations&lt;br&gt;Traffic Critical projects, Traveler Information at Iowa DOT, ITS Field Device Design, ITS Communications Design, ITS Maintenance, ITS Data Management – Provide overview of how District operations staff are expected to coordinate activities with central office including: budgeting, planning and operations, project design, Traffic Incident Management, Emergency Management, MDST coordination, etc.</td>
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<td><strong>Operations 301 - Basic Iowa Operations Academy</strong></td>
<td>Office of&lt;br&gt;Strategic Communications&lt;br&gt;Motor Vehicle Enforcement&lt;br&gt;Systems Operations Bureau&lt;br&gt;District Engineers&lt;br&gt;Assistant District Engineers&lt;br&gt;District maintenance managers&lt;br&gt;District operations managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration: 2-4 days&lt;br&gt;Format: Combination of Lectures, Group Exercises, and at least one field visit&lt;br&gt;Description: In depth training on all aspects of operations including presentation by national subject matter experts. Potentially work with University of Maryland to be modeled after National Ops. Academy Training could extend to other partners outside DOT.</td>
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Training

Key common elements of training beginning with Operations 101:

– Interactive – either Skype or in-person training (no video, no webinar)

– Geared toward each group’s function within the agency
Training

Challenge:

– How to make the video venue or in-person training sustainable with new employees entering our workforce and current employees transferring to different work units.
THANK YOU

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