



SAN MARCOS

DISCOVER LIFE'S POSSIBILITIES

City of San Marcos

Graphic Design - Print

“San Marcos Recruitment Brochure”

2019 CAPIO EPIC Awards

Government communicators are working in the age of disruptors—a time that’s all about changing the game for the better. Yet most settle for the status quo when it comes to employee recruitment. That’s a big missed opportunity because agencies are only as good as the talent they attract and retain.

This inspired the City of San Marcos to boldly reimagine its recruitment—allowing its communications officer to drive a new vision in conjunction with the human resources (HR) team. Naturally, this included a standout graphic identity, which was beautifully captured in a recruitment brochure for the Finance Director position, a key leadership role.

RESEARCH AND PLANNING

JPW Communications (JPW) was hired in 2016 for support on this project, which started with **research**. This included several internal focus groups, eight staff interviews, an online survey that was sent to all 248 city employees with 96 responses, and an audit of recruitment strategies. The City also enlisted a team of students at California State University San Marcos to gauge work culture, understand its strong points and find ways to leverage them.

Research showed that employees feel empowered to pitch ideas, and it’s benefitted the City by cutting red tape. To keep that going strong, the City focused on attracting candidates who were not only qualified—but also driven to innovate. As someone with private sector experience, the HR director knew that corporate leaders could bring fresh perspectives that would be valuable to the City.

Therefore, the **objective** of the campaign, which included this brochure, was to attract more highly-qualified candidates with a more diverse mix of professional backgrounds and skill sets. The **goal** of this brochure was to attract at least 25 qualified candidates.

IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

The **strategy** was to mirror the recruitment of top innovative employers like Google and Airbnb—strategies that attract corporate leaders. After sizing up the competition, it was clear top talent wants to connect with a worthy mission; prefers a workplace where they can have an impact, and values work-life balance—all things that the City of San Marcos offers.

These naturally became the brochure’s message points. To entice private-sector candidates, the City needed to speak their language. There would be no room for government jargon.

The **tactic** was to give the brochure a tone that is fresh, forthright and at times, even cheeky. For example, the brochure opens by plainly saying that San Marcos wants “more than a bean counter” for its next Finance Director. You will not find that sort of language on government job boards, and that is precisely the point.

Just as the City wanted “more than a bean counter” for its Finance Director, the recruitment piece needed to be a complete departure from the text-heavy descriptions and qualifications of yesteryear. Instead, the design of the brochure embraced infographic-style illustrations and highlighted phrases to make for a quick and engaging read.

The clean and simple graphics, combined with curved shapes and circular photos, echoes San Marcos’ circular rose compass, which is a central part of its newly minted brand, “Discover San Marcos.”

With a solid piece in place, the City distributed the brochure to 435 people—and strategically targeted that outreach to the city’s ideal candidates.

By partnering with the League of California Cities, the City was able

to target every finance directors at municipalities across the state. The City also used LinkedIn Jobs, the platform's online recruiting tools. These tools allowed the City to target candidates outside the traditional city pool and make direct contact with desirable candidates. When candidates interests were piqued, the City could then point them to the brochure.

Budget Breakdown:

- Consultant costs: \$4,900
This included: Revise job description for content, social media digital assets, print-ad, digital ad, social media content and content, design and project management of brochure
- In-house city costs
Printing: \$450 (printing)
Internal staff time for program coordination, review and implementation, not budgeted as part of regular job duties
- Total: \$5,350

HR analyst and communications officer staff hours were used to oversee campaign development and manage program implementation.

RESULTS

This project has seen tremendous success. According to the City's HR team, this recruitment outreach helped bring in 97 unique applications, and 54 qualified candidates. This exceeds the project's stated goal by more than 115 percent.

"The application volume was much more than expected, with a wide reach including East Coast candidates," remarked HR Manager Janelle Laughlin. "The number of qualified candidates also was more

than expected, with a good mix of public and private sector professionals. The reach to the private sector impressed me. We got some Ivy League candidates and well-tenured employees in top-level finance jobs who were interested in this opportunity."

This confirms that in addition to meeting the brochure-specific goals, it also met the bigger campaign goal of attracting a new type of candidate from the private sector.

In addition, this helped earn advocates for communications. The City's leadership was able to see its worth in a new way. As the Deputy City Manager Michelle Bender put it: "This taught me communicators aren't just the press release people. They deserve a seat at the table when discussing key strategies."

CAMPAIGN COLLATERAL

Recruitment brochure for finance director

distributed to **435** people—targeted specifically to the city’s ideal candidate



CAMPAIGN COLLATERAL

Supplemental advertisement placed in Western City Magazine
- publication is distributed to every city in California



**DISCOVER WHERE YOUR
TALENTS CAN TAKE YOU NEXT**

NOW RECRUITING FOR **Finance Director**
\$135,541 - \$184,131

The City of San Marcos runs more like a business than a bureaucracy. So, if you're more of an innovator than a bean counter, consider this exciting opportunity to head up our finance department.

Learn more about our unique environment and apply at:
san-marcos.net/jobs

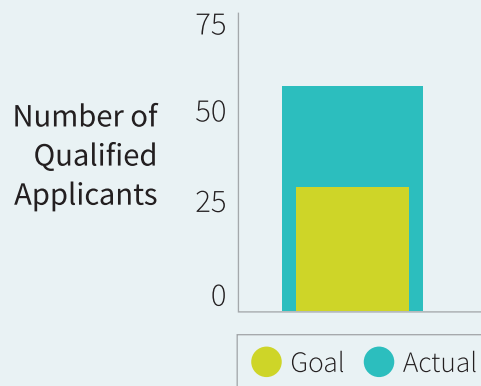
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The advertisement features a background image of a cityscape at sunset. A large, faint compass rose graphic is overlaid on the right side of the advertisement.

SUCCESS SUMMARY

BY THE NUMBERS:

Exceeded stated goal by **116%**



In their own words:

“The reach to the private sector impressed me. We got some Ivy League candidates and well-tenured employees in top-level finance jobs who were interested in this opportunity.”

~ Janelle Laughlin, San Marcos Human Resources Manager

“This taught me communicators aren’t just the press release people. They deserve a seat at the table when discussing key strategies.”

~ Michelle Bender, San Marcos Deputy City Manager



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Thank you!

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