



## ABOUT

North Lanarkshire is one of 32 council areas in Scotland. It borders Glasgow and comprises many of the city's suburbs, commuter towns and villages. It is the fourth largest authority in Scotland, serving 338,000 people.



*Email communication is at the heart of our efforts to grow an online audience, with GovDelivery bulletins now one of the top sources of traffic to our website. Growth is unprecedented. By the end of 2016, we expect to have more email subscribers than followers on our Facebook and Twitter pages combined.*

*Mark Barbieri, Digital Media Officer North Lanarkshire Council*

## REACHING 24,000 MORE RESIDENTS WITH A NEW APPROACH TO DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

### SITUATION

#### A NEED TO DEVELOP THE STRATEGY TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO SERVICES AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION.

Adopting a "digital first" strategy means looking for new ways to meet the needs of residents who increasingly expect North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) to use digital technologies to deliver services.

In 2014, to increase NLC's reach and diversify its communications portfolio, the council decided to adopt GovDelivery's digital communications platform – a solution already well-established among public sector organisations. The decision was informed by customer research which indicated that 69 percent of residents would "definitely" or "possibly" subscribe to email communications if available.

NLC already had a following on social media, which accelerated dramatically in the winter of 2010 when Twitter became the go-to channel for residents during "the big freeze". @nlcwinter provided immediate updates and the information people needed about roads, schools, and bin collections, helping to alleviate the pressure on the council's website. More than 25,000 people now follow the council on social media, giving them access to the latest updates on a range of matters – from country parks to Gaelic language lessons.

NLC's decision to develop digital communication channels – like social media and email – has been key to its strategy for reaching customers, especially since it no longer produces a monthly newspaper. Furthermore, with the consumption of traditional media (particularly newspapers) in decline, and the use of smartphones and other digital technologies on the rise, these channels are proving vital for disseminating messages to residents.

### SOLUTION

#### NEW DIGITAL CHANNELS GIVE RESIDENTS THE UPDATES THEY NEED.

Using GovDelivery's Communications Cloud, NLC quickly increased the number of people subscribed to its email service – introducing key topics of interest such as "Council News", "Bins" and "Roads". In 2014, another harsh winter prompted thousands more

## METRICS

**24K+**

EMAIL  
SUBSCRIBERS

**75%**

ENGAGEMENT  
RATE

**5**

TOPICS PER  
SUBSCRIBER

people to sign up via the council's website. On one particularly stormy morning, more than 700 people signed up to the email service.

NLC also offers a range of topics aimed at specific groups of residents. For example, "School Menus" has been a popular choice from the outset. The council started to email the primary and secondary schools' lunch menus every Sunday evening using the handy scheduling tool. NLC has since been able to adapt its email strategy in response to customer feedback, optimising its email service to suit subscribers. For example, the school menus are now sent out earlier so parents and carers have time to sit with their children and plan for the week. Over 6,000 people receive menus each week.

The GovDelivery's Communications Cloud enables NLC to react to ever-changing business needs. A teacher shortage meant there was huge demand for short-term supply staff. To alleviate the pressure on the council's HR team, which relied on telephoning potential candidates, NLC introduced some topics for education professionals to subscribe to, including "Temporary Primary Teachers", "Secondary School Teachers" and "Classroom Assistants". As soon as vacancies arose, subscribers were notified by email, receiving clear calls-to-action for how to apply.

From the outset, the council took a targeted approach to its email communications about education, encouraging individual schools and nurseries – particularly those who were already digitally active – to adopt the GovDelivery's Communications Cloud.

## RESULTS

### **INCREASE IN ONLINE REACH WITH 24,000 RESIDENTS ENGAGED VIA EMAIL.**

More than 20 schools send regular email bulletins to parents, all managed by the schools' administrators – one of the schools has more than 1,600 subscribers. This relieves the burden on the council's corporate communications team. Typically, as parents sign up to the topic for their child's school, they also subscribe to other topics of interest, enabling NLC to reach a wider audience with communications relating to other campaigns.

Like all digital channels, success is easy to measure. Referrals to the council website from email bulletins are now higher than from all social media. In just 18 months, NLC has doubled its digital following. Over 24,000 people have subscribed to the emails, and further insights can be gained from the user-friendly analytics dashboards. Developing different digital channels gives customers more choice and flexibility; they can engage with the services they need when they like and "where" they want.

## ABOUT GRANICUS

Granicus provides technology that empowers government organizations to create better lives for the people they serve. By offering the industry's leading cloud-based solutions for communications, meeting and agenda management, and digital services to more than 3,000 public sector organizations, Granicus helps turn government missions into quantifiable realities. Granicus products connect more than 150 million people, creating a powerful network to enhance government transparency and citizen engagement. By optimizing decision-making processes, Granicus strives to help government realize better outcomes and have a greater impact for the citizens they serve.