



MANUAL TRANSMITTAL

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

11.1.1

JULY 2, 2015

EFFECTIVE DATE

(07-02-2015)

PURPOSE

- (1) This transmits revised IRM 11.1.1, *Communications, Introduction*.

MATERIAL CHANGES

- (1) IRM 11.1.1 has been updated for editorial changes, organizational titles, and contact information.
- (2) IRM 11.1.1 has been updated to reflect the addition of the Technical Communications Branch.

EFFECT ON OTHER DOCUMENTS

IRM 11.1.1 dated August 22, 2008 is superseded.

AUDIENCE

Audience - All Operating and Functional Divisions

Signed by
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Director
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11.1.1

Introduction

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- 11.1.1.1
(07-02-2015)
Purpose
- (1) This Chapter provides guidelines for the conduct of communications in promoting maximum voluntary compliance with the federal tax laws and support of the Service's mission.
- 11.1.1.2
(07-02-2015)
Scope of Communications
- (1) The mission of the Office of Communications is to deliver professional communications services to our internal and external customers to support the overall IRS mission and effective tax administration.
- 11.1.1.3
(07-02-2015)
Office of Communications Organization
- (1) The following describes the Office of Communications organization.
- (2) The Director, Office of Communications, reports directly to the Chief, Communications and Liaison (C&L) and is responsible for planning, managing, directing and executing servicewide communications and all media relations. The Director provides advice and support to the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioners, Chief Counsel, National Taxpayer Advocate, and other National Office officials on communications matters.
- (3) The six branches that make up the Office of Communications are Internal Communications, Visual Education and Communication, Social Media, Technical Communications, National Media Relations and Field Media Relations.
- 11.1.1.4
(07-02-2015)
Office of Communications Responsibilities
- (1) This portion describes the responsibilities of the Office of Communications.
- 11.1.1.5
(07-02-2015)
The Office of Communications
- (1) The Office of Communications works with business units and organizations throughout the IRS to develop strategic communications plans to achieve communications, marketing and public relations objectives. Through its six branches, the Office produces concepts, messages and products and creates partnerships with a variety of stakeholders. The Office develops communications material to implement the major goals of the IRS.
- 11.1.1.6
(07-02-2015)
Internal Communications Branch
- (1) The Internal Communications Branch is responsible for servicewide internal communication planning and integration in support of the IRS mission, goals and objectives. The branch is responsible for servicewide communications with IRS employees and manages servicewide communication channels through the development and deployment of products and services intended to meet business and behavioral objectives.
- (2) The main business units within the IRS all have dedicated communications staffs (<http://irweb.irs.gov/AboutIRS/bu/default.aspx>), which should be the first point of contact for employees requesting servicewide communication services. Service requests can also be made to the Assignment Desk via email to assignmentdeskclcic@irs.gov (*Assignment Desk - CL:C:IC), or by fax to 202-307-6210, Attn: Assignment Desk.
- (3) The Internal Communications Branch is composed of communications consultants who provide services to the business units. The consultants use a variety of tools and work with program owners and embedded communicators in the

business units to plan, deliver and measure communications that encourage behavioral change in support of IRS programs and initiatives.

- (4) Communication research is an integral part of the servicewide internal communications processes. Communication planning concepts, research tools and methods and research results are maintained on the branch's web site which can be accessed through the IRS Communications Center at <http://irweb.irs.gov/AboutIRS/bu/cl/comm/ic/default.aspx>.
- (5) The Internal Communications Branch relies on those submitting servicewide communication requests to ensure their technical accuracy through coordination with other stakeholders and subject matter experts. Adherence to product guidelines is necessary to ensure timely placement of messages in service-wide publications. Guidelines are posted at: irweb.irs.gov/AboutIRS/bu/cl/comm/ic/icprod/default.aspx.
- (6) The Internal Communications Branch produces several products:
 - a. *Leaders' Alert* is a weekly e-newsletter for IRS executives, managers and management officials.
 - b. *IRS Headlines* is a weekly e-newsletter for all employees.
 - c. *IRWeb* is the IRS Intranet portal or home page. It includes a servicewide news section that is updated daily, links for news from the business units, feature stories about employees and interactive poll questions.
 - d. An *all-employee email* is used when a message, due to its significance to employees (i.e., personal security) or systems security (i.e., email), must be communicated as quickly as possible.
 - e. An *all-employee VMS* is used to convey information that is of enough significance or timeliness to warrant a message from a highly placed executive, such as the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner.
- (7) Surveys and focus groups are conducted periodically to ensure that service-wide communications products and channels are meeting the needs of Internal Communications Branch clients and customers.
- (8) Employees requiring communications assistance should follow these steps:

If	And	Then
You need help with communications planning, developing newsletter articles or messages for a servicewide audience	your business unit has an embedded communication function	contact your embedded communication function http://irweb.irs.gov/AboutIRS/bu/cl/src/srccontact/default.aspx
You need help with communications planning, developing newsletter articles or messages for a servicewide audience	your business unit does not have an embedded communication function	contact the Internal Communications Assignment Desk via email at *Assignment Desk – CL:C:IC or by fax at (202) 307-6210.

If	And	Then
You need help planning/developing a CPE or training or video	your business unit has an embedded communication function	contact your L&E Coordinator within your communication function http://irweb.irs.gov/AboutIRS/bu/cl/src/srcontact/default.aspx
You need help planning/developing an informational video	your business unit does not have an embedded communication function	visit the Visual Education and Communication Web site at http://irweb.irs.gov/AboutIRS/bu/cl/comm/tv/default.aspx .

11.1.1.7
(07-02-2015)
Visual Education and Communication

- (1) The Visual Education and Communication Branch is responsible for developing and implementing servicewide broadcasting strategies to communicate the IRS corporate vision, mission and goals. This includes supporting all executives in the development and implementation of strategies to communicate servicewide and organization-specific information and training through broadcast communications.
- (2) The Visual Education and Communication Branch develops servicewide broadcast standards and guidelines for audio/video for both internal and external video products and hosts the Servicewide Video Editorial Review Board which is responsible for standardizing, reviewing and minimizing duplication of video efforts across the agency.
- (3) Products and Services
The Visual Education and Communication Branch is responsible for design, development and delivery of:
 - Interactive Video Teletraining (IVTs),
 - DVDs and CD-ROMs (Interactive, Continuous, Embedded PDF files),
 - Videos (internal and YouTube channels),
 - Audio Recordings (MPEG, Podcast, Radio spots),
 - Intranet (Video-to-desktop streaming, Webinars, PSAs), and
 - Closed Caption.
- (4) In addition, the branch manages two professional areas, one analog audio/video production center and multiple editing suites. This also includes studio maintenance, repairs and modification of equipment, and execution of expansion of video capacity for video to desktop streaming capabilities with IT and CENTRA; coordination with field coordinators; and maintaining the online program guide, calendar and all other Corporate TV content on IRWeb.
- (5) Procedures and Guidance
Guidance is disseminated through the Visual Education and Communication Branch website at <http://irweb.irs.gov/AboutIRS/bu/cl/comm/tv/default.aspx>. which contains the following information:

- Schedules of upcoming programs
- Information on scheduling TV studio services
- Information for field coordinators
- Tips and procedures for IVT presenters and developers
- TV studio forms and documents
- Printed material for upcoming IVTs
- Contact information
- Train-the-Teletrainer materials

11.1.1.8
(07-02-2015)

**e-Communications and
Marketing Branch**

- (1) The Social Media Branch is responsible for the administrative oversight of and content strategy for all IRS social media channels, including:

- Twitter (@IRSnews)
- Facebook (www.facebook.com/IRS)
- Tumblr (www.internalrevenueservice.tumblr.com)
- YouTube (www.youtube.com/IRSvideos www.youtube.com/user/IRSvideosASL www.youtube.com/IRSvideosmultilingua)

The branch staff partners with channel managers in other business units to ensure consistent timing, content and branding on all other channels in accordance with all privacy standards. These channels include

- Twitter (@IRSTaxPros, @IRSenEspañol, @RecruitmentIRS, @YourVoiceatIRS)
- Facebook (www.facebook.com/irs.espanol, www.facebook.com/IRSTaxPros, www.facebook.com/IRSRecruitment, www.facebook.com/YourVoiceAtIRS)
- LinkedIn groups (Nationwide Tax Forums, Return Preparer, Recruitment, Taxpayer Advocate)

- (2) The Social Media Branch processes and maintains Privacy Impact Assessments for all official IRS social media channels. Branch staff coordinates with Treasury officials on Terms of Service agreements for existing and new social media channels, whether they are specific for all Treasury bureaus or the broader General Service Administration terms.
- (3) The Social Media Branch is responsible for developing content that reaches taxpayers, practitioners and other stakeholders outside traditional media channels. A cross-functional Social Media Working Group includes all official channel managers and representatives from a number of business units. This group convenes regularly to ensure cross-channel coordination of content, share metrics and elevate issues of concern to the Governance Council.
- (4) The Social Media Governance Council serves as an advisory body for oversight, coordination, and providing input and guidance on major decisions relating to development and implementation of new social media channels. The Social Media Branch works closely with the Council and makes recommendations on new strategy, channels and policy for its approval.
- (5) The Social Media Branch is a member of the Customer Early Warning System (CEWS), a partnership with Accounts Management, Submission Processing, Contact Analytics and a number of other taxpayer-facing organizations that identifies potential service issues and elevates them for response. The Social Media Branch reports on issues found in social media channels to this group and recommends strategies to mitigate those issues.

11.1.1.9
(07-02-2015)

**Technical
Communications Branch**

- (1) The Technical Communications Branch is responsible for planning, developing and implementing overall communications strategies in support of the key agency initiatives.
- (2) Currently, a primary focus of the Technical Communications Branch is the communication effort supporting the implementation of the Affordable Care Act tax provisions. The staff of the Technical Communications Branch serves as the IRS' single point of contact for clearance of external ACA communication. This includes:
 - a. Handling media requests by directly interacting with Media Relations Specialists and coordinating responses with Operating/Functional Office subject matter experts, ACA and NHQ executives, Health Care Counsel and other designated personnel.
 - b. Developing and coordinating the clearance and issuance of various ACA-related communication products, including publications, IRS.gov web pages and articles, and outreach presentation materials.

11.1.1.10
(07-02-2015)

**Media Relations
(National and Field
Branches)**

- (1) The National and Field Media Relations Branches are responsible for developing and implementing an overall media strategy in support of the entire agency, including the Operating/Functional Offices. The staff of Media Relations serves as the IRS' single point of contact for all media. This includes handling media requests by directly interacting with the media and coordinating responses with Operating/Functional Offices Communications Specialists, NHQ executives or other designated personnel.
- (2) The National Media Relations Branch serves as a single point of contact for national media, national stories or NHQ issues. National Media Relations also is responsible for coordinating and publishing all national news releases for the Agency.
- (3) The Field Media Relations Branch is comprised of Field Media Relations Specialists (FMRs) who serve as the single point of contact for local media, generally media outside of the Washington, D.C. area and media outlets that are not national in scope. These specialists, under the guidance of an area manager and the Field Media Relations branch chief, respond to local media inquiries about various IRS topics, including stories that are geographically based and of interest to the media. They also provide IRS information to the local media and issue local news releases to local media outlets. All FMR communications are coordinated with local Business Operating Division "embedded" communicators and/or other BOD staff, as warranted.
- (4) For additional information about National Media Relations, see IRM 11.1.3, or call the Branch Chief, National Media Relations at 202-317-4000. For additional information about Field Media Relations, see IRM 11.1.3, or call the Branch Chief, Field Media Relations at 414-231-2251.

