

Playbook for Marketing and Communications Work Across the UT Institute of Agriculture

December 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purpose.....	3
Introduction	3
Guiding Communications Principles Across UTIA.....	4
About the UTIA Office of Marketing and Communications	4
UTIA Office of Marketing and Communications Mission, Vision, and Values	4
Mission.....	4
Vision	4
Values.....	4
How We Work	4
Partnerships	4
Expertise	5
Operational Model Description.....	5
Team Roles and Responsibilities.....	5
Scope of Practice	5
UTIA Identity standards and Guidelines	7
Visual Brand Standards.....	7
Editorial Brand Standards	9
Standards of Practice.....	10
Content Management.....	10
Digital Communications and Website Development	11
Internal Communications.....	11
Media Relations.....	12
News Release Template.....	13
News Distribution.....	14
News Pitching	14
Social Media Management.....	15
Monitoring Successes.....	15
Conclusion	15

PURPOSE

This playbook provides guidance and best practices for anyone who has an opportunity to help build the reputation of the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture. These audiences include both those who are seeking marketing and communications needs and those who perform marketing and communications work. In addition to this document, a presentation also is available to aid in sharing the information found here. This guide is housed online for ease of access and will be updated as needs arise.

INTRODUCTION

At the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, our mission is to serve the people of Tennessee and the world. To effectively deliver on our mission, we need to effectively communicate with our stakeholders.

That means our external and internal communication, in whatever form—personal interactions, marketing, social media, events, news media relationships, and more—must be principled and thoughtful. After all, people need to know us and understand us to reap the benefits of the vast array of knowledge and expertise at UTIA.

We welcome everyone at UTIA to get to know our communication approach and standards, as outlined in this playbook. You will no doubt find a multitude of ways to make your work part of the growing, positive reputation of UTIA. I thank you for your involvement and engagement in letting stakeholders know how they can benefit from association with UTIA.

All the best,

Keith
Keith Carver
Senior Vice Chancellor and Senior Vice President
The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture

Lisa
Lisa Stearns
Vice Chancellor, Marketing and Communications
The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture

GUIDING COMMUNICATIONS PRINCIPLES ACROSS UTIA

- Be honest and forthright. Nothing is more important to the reputation of the Institute than integrity.
- Be insightful and listen. Proactively taking steps to determine what stakeholders need to know and understand is the foundation of effective marketing and communication.
- Be selfless. Strategies depend on individuals putting agreed-upon goals first.

ABOUT THE UTIA OFFICE OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

This information, as well as supplemental information about the office, is available on the [Office of Marketing and Communications website](#).

UTIA Office of Marketing and Communications Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

We use our expertise to raise the profile of the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture by communicating its Real. Life. Solutions.

Vision

As a land-grant institute, we aspire to improve the lives of Tennesseans and beyond—one discovery, one community, one classroom, one home, and one farm at a time.

Values

Respect for our clients, our team, and our work.

Accountability to everyone we serve.

Excellence in all we do.

How We Work

UTIA Marketing and Communications provides leadership for internal and external communications efforts that highlight programs, events, research activities, and Extension and outreach to elevate UTIA and that impact the populations we serve. Our services are offered across all four units of the Institute (AgResearch, Extension, Herbert College of Agriculture, and UT College of Veterinary Medicine) as well as their constituent departments, centers, schools, and programs.

Partnerships

Members of our team work alongside UT Knoxville and UT System marketing and communications professionals to promote UTIA programs across UT platforms and to highlight UTIA efforts as part of UT Knoxville and UT System visibility efforts. We also work with state government officials, particularly with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, to ensure that joint and complementary programs receive visibility.

UTIA Marketing and Communications professionals also work with our counterparts in other land-grant institutions on regional and national projects and with communications professionals in aligned industries and organizations to elevate UTIA's reputation.

Expertise

Our areas of expertise are strategic marketing and communications planning, brand management, and creative campaign development and media strategy. Other examples include social media strategy, media relations, crisis and issues management, internal communications management, graphic design, video production, photography, Extension publications editing and production, website design and content consultation, displays and exhibits, podcast production, and event planning. Content creation and design services provided by Marketing and Communications team members are offered without charge.

We work directly with faculty, staff, and communications professionals embedded in departments and programs to ensure:

- All messages are on brand and in accordance with UT System, UT Knoxville, and UTIA policies and guidelines.
- Targeted audiences and communications goals are reached.
- Messaging supports our brand promise: Real. Life. Solutions.

Operational Model Description

UTIA Marketing and Communications originated as a service-only office, but over the years it has taken a more strategic posture. With the evolution of the communications and marketing industries, changes in the requests and needs for services, and the overall changes brought about by the UT Knoxville reunification necessitate changes in the way UTIA Marketing and Communications serves the UT System, UT Knoxville, the UTIA community and our clientele. UTIA Marketing and Communications is transitioning to a hybrid communications model where staff continue to serve some traditional service functions but also are called upon to interact with administration and faculty in the strategic marketing of UTIA and its programs to ensure that the Institute's land-grant role is fulfilled for all of Tennessee and beyond.

What does that mean? UTIA Marketing and Communications will increase its emphasis on strategic communications planning and implementation of projects that will continue to raise the profile of UTIA across the state, nation, and globe as a premier research, education, Extension and outreach institution. This document outlines how we plan to coordinate and accomplish this mission with the help of all UTIA faculty and staff. We welcome opportunities to work with you one-on-one or through official committees like the Extension Visibility Committee, the Ag Day Committee, and others.

Team Roles and Responsibilities

UTIA Marketing and Communications is broadly organized around three areas: branding and creative services, multimedia, and marketing and content strategy. These teams actively work together, as almost all UTIA Marketing and Communications projects include aspects of each specialization. What's more, outreach is most effective when strategically managed across multiple platforms to reach varied audiences. A current organizational chart is available [here](#).

Scope of Practice

- High-level administrative communications with faculty, staff, students, and clientele. These projects involve content creation that elevates the reputation and role of UTIA, including magazines, annual reports, administrative presentations, employee newsletters, and more.

- Crisis communications. Faculty and student issues are handled in conjunction with UT Knoxville and UT System as appropriate. All potential crises must be reported to your direct supervisor. Supervisors are to contact their department heads and unit dean, who should seek the counsel of the Vice Chancellor of Marketing and Communications for additional communications needs.
- UTIA brand management. The UTIA brand promise is Real. Life. Solutions., and a formal brand guide is available online. The exception to this treatment is the Herbert College of Agriculture and corresponding student collaterals, which carry the academic T as its visual brand. The UTIA logo is used in conjunction with this mark as appropriate. Brand management includes the upcoming UTIA Data Asset Management system, which will provide multiple resources and tools to internal audiences for use in daily communications functions.
- Digital Educational Platform that delivers data-driven information produced by faculty and researchers.
- Media relations, including overall content strategy and messaging, social media management and policy, marketing, website strategy, and content organization.
- High-level videography and photography, especially at events or locations where photos will have multiple high-impact uses across UTIA.
- Extension publications. These works are an integral part of the land-grant mission as well as UTIA's brand promise to provide Real. Life. Solutions.
- High-level event management. These events are usually tied to an initiative or specific strategic audiences.
- FOIA requests. These requests are handled in conjunction with the UT System Administration. Contact the UT System FOIA Coordinator.

To request services, complete and submit the UTIA Marketing and Communications project intake form. A member of our team will reach out in response and work with you to develop an appropriate project plan and schedule.

UTIA Marketing and Communications professionals will offer guidance for the following projects that are outside the scope of the department's charge:

- Routine content creation, such as day-to-day events or activities.
- Routine website management at the unit and departmental level.
- Event management at the unit/department/county level.
- Book publishing.
- Digital projects that are not sustainable.
- Local event photography and videography with limited scope.

Note: UTIA Marketing and Communications maintains a list of preferred outside vendors that can assist with projects outside our normal scope of operations. Our staff is happy to work with you to coordinate needed services. Contact our office for project advice.

Some Preferred Suppliers

- For printing (paper items):
 - University Printing and Mail has first right of refusal
 - Russell Printing Options
 - Graphic Creations
 - For those outside of Knoxville, Staples is preferred
- All apparel and giveaway items/swag MUST go through a UT licensed vendor
- A sample list of preferred freelancers

UTIA IDENTITY STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Visual Brand Standards

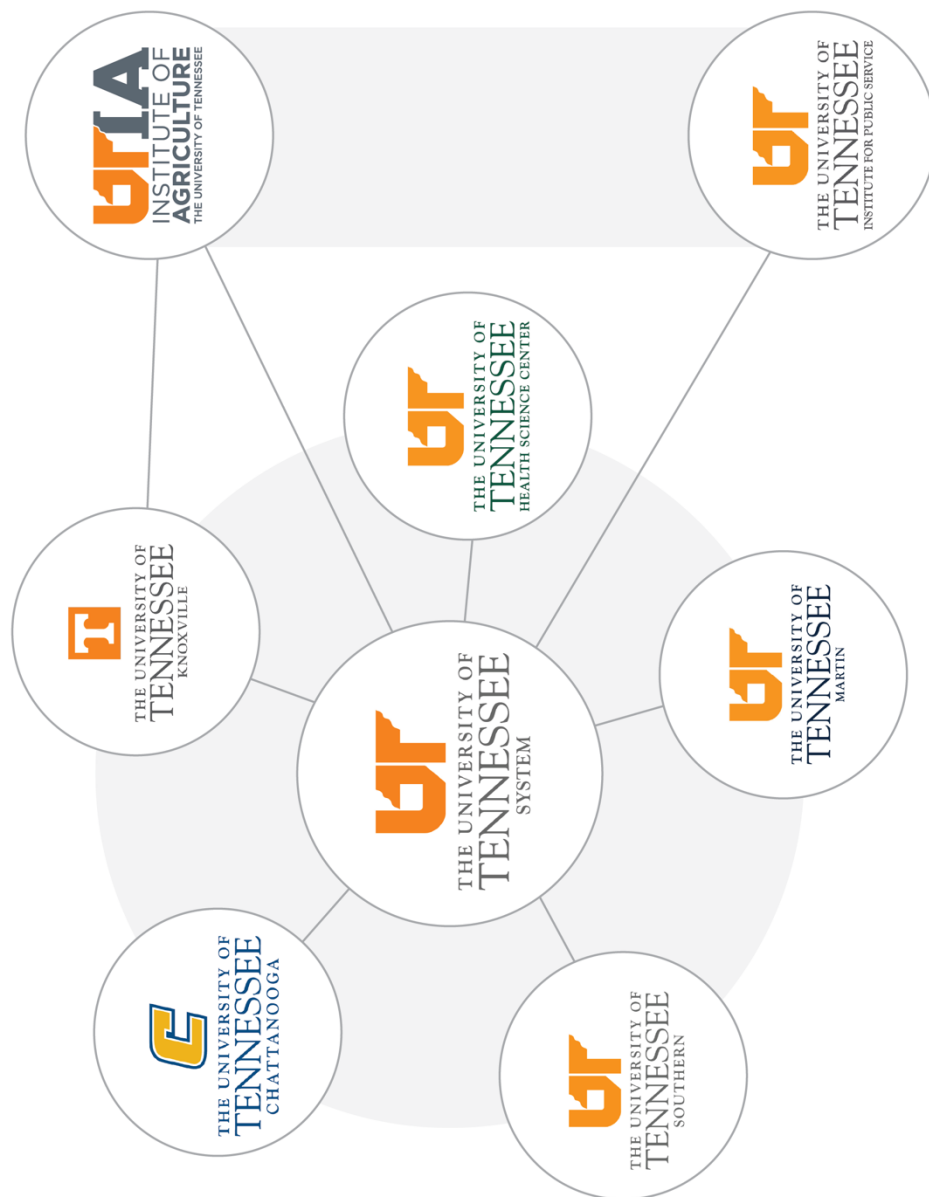
Maintaining a cohesive visual look is key to keeping our brand clear in the eyes of our various stakeholders. There are several elements to our visual brand, and by incorporating these elements into your communications, you contribute to our organization's success. Consult the [UTIA Visual Standards](#) for detailed information on our colors, logos, and typography.

The UTIA family of logos is the cornerstone of our visual brand. The UT icon, established in 1986, is a stylized treatment incorporating the shape of Tennessee's state into the letters. Our logo family builds upon this iconic mark and puts visual emphasis on the touchpoints for our clientele—our units. A broad suite of logos has been established for counties, centers, departments, and offices using identifiers with these logos. Entities that span multiple units use the UTIA logo as their base.

All custom logos must meet basic design and usage standards and must be created or approved by the UTIA Office of Marketing and Communications.

Branded items and apparel [require licensing](#) and must meet university policy.

Contact the UTIA Marketing and Communications [Director of Creative Services and Branding](#) with questions and for approval.



THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE SYSTEM

The University of Tennessee is comprised of five campuses at Knoxville, Chattanooga, Pulaski, Martin and the Health Science Center at Memphis, as well as two statewide institutes, the Institute of Agriculture and Institute for Public Service.

5 Campuses

2 Statewide Institutes



Editorial Brand Standards

The *UTIA Editorial Guide* sets recommendations to ensure we communicate our identity clearly in text. It provides a framework for consistent communication to our audiences—the public, our clientele, our alumni and friends, our students, and the media. It is not a random grouping of style rules. The *Guide* reflects the unique editorial treatments needed for our unit names, programs, academic titles, county offices, etc., and it was developed with consideration for coordinating content throughout UT System publications, websites, and more.

Our Tone

Our tone is conversational, yet direct, simple, and educational in nature. We use plain language to help our readers understand complex subjects. We avoid using acronyms, and if they are used, we spell them out on first reference. We value brevity.

Target Audiences for Consideration When Writing

This list of key audiences is extensive, but not exhaustive. At least one unit of the institute has a touchpoint to these groups, with some crossing multiple segments.

- Lay Tennessee individuals, families, and homeowners (SNAP benefits, farm management, pet owners, home gardeners, etc.)
- Professionals/businessowners in agricultural and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, and veterinary sciences (referring veterinarians, nursery owners, row crop producers, etc.)
- Tennessee youth (citizenship and life skills)
- Prospective undergraduate students
- Prospective graduate students
- Key Governmental Entities both National and International (e.g., USDA NIFA, USAID)
- State Nongovernmental Agricultural Partners (Farm Bureau, Co-Op, etc.)
- State and County Level Government (Tennessee Department of Agriculture, county mayors, etc.)
- Current Students
- Faculty and staff
- Alumni
- Donors
- Advisory Boards
- Media
- UT System Entities

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Content Management

Formal content created on behalf of UTIA to high-level internal or audiences such as members of the Tennessee General Assembly, UT System and campus leadership, commodity group leaders, key donors/alumni, industry partners require a review by Marketing and Communications. Contact the UTIA Marketing and Communications [Director of Marketing and Content Strategy](#) for more information.

An important key in content management is the content calendar, also known as an editorial calendar, which allows communicators to plan messaging well in advance of needs. These calendars contain important dates relating to target audiences and initiatives, both internal and

external, that align with an organization's priorities. A formal calendar is under development and will be shared with UTIA communicators on a regular basis for discussion and refinement.

Other content considerations:

1. **Be mindful of the date you need information to appear in external publications.** Calendars, event announcements, detailed event schedules, feature articles tied to seasonal events like planting, etc. should be published a minimum of six weeks in advance. Quarterly external publications require approximately twelve weeks advance notice. High-end publications and trade publications may require six months of notice.
2. **Consider listing an event on the UTIA and UT Knoxville calendar.**

Units and departments with specific needs are encouraged to work with the UTIA Marketing and Communications Project Manager to develop a plan to ensure that projects are completed in a timely manner.

Digital Communications and Website Development

Digital communications takes on multiple forms, from targeted messaging via email platforms to website environments and applications.

- **Best Practices.** The office works in conjunction with UTIA's Information Technology Services to shape the institute's web presence and provide guidance on infusing the brand story throughout the website. Consult the guidelines and best practices manual, authored jointly by these teams, for more information on UTIA's web presence and best practices for content managers across the institute.
- **Strategic Web Application Development.** Marketing and communications team members also assist in the strategic development of web applications, such as the new digital education platform, and work closely with information Technology Services to launch new spotlight blocks and other web tools for creators.
- **Accessibility.** Digital communications require attention to details involving information accessibility, best practices, and maintaining technical standards. Contact the UTIA Marketing and Communications Digital Information Specialist for assistance.
- **Website Content Management.** UTIA Marketing and Communications maintains certain top-level UTIA web pages, including the *Land, Life and Science* site and *Outstanding in Their Field*.

Artificial Intelligence

For those interested in learning more about artificial intelligence in communications, UTVerse is available through the university to faculty, staff, and students ([Link](#)).

Internal Communications

The Office of Marketing and Communications works closely with the Senior Vice Chancellor and Senior Vice President to ensure appropriate and important information is provided to our internal audience. We use a number of means:

- Direct communication from the Senior Vice Chancellor and Senior Vice President (Town Halls, direct emails, in-person appearances)
- *Monday Notes*
- *Common Ground*

- New employee orientation. The Office A Welcome Kit for new faculty and staff is available at [Welcome Kit | Marketing and Communications](#), and an FAQ section is available at [Frequently Asked Questions | Marketing and Communications](#)

The office also works closely with the UTIA Executive Council to assist in formal internal communications via multiple mediums.

Media Relations

Media relations takes many forms. UTIA Marketing and Communications produces internal communications and works with external media and stakeholders to deliver high-level, strategic messaging that raises the overall profile of UTIA.

Examples of media relations efforts include:

- Writing strategic, high-profile news releases and feature stories and distributing a monthly package of video news releases.
- Web publishing and electronic distribution of news releases and feature stories written by communications partners across UTIA.
- Maintaining a robust [UTIA News website](#) that also distributes relevant news to populate across UTIA department and county websites.
- Pitching relevant and timely topics/experts to the media.
- Responding to media inquiries.
- Coordinating social media with news and timely topics.

News release requests should be submitted through the UTIA Marketing and Communications [project intake form](#). To the extent possible submitters should submit content following the attached news release template, including graphics:

News Release Template



News and Information from the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture

Contact: [insert name, department, phone number and email address]

For Release
[insert date in the format Month, Date, Year]

Main Title: All Words Five Letters or Longer Capitalized

Subtitle in Italics

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – The article should begin with a short introductory paragraph containing the main point. It should include a first reference to the main entity (usually the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, or the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture). Always spell out UT on first reference.

For news releases, UTIA follows AP Style.

Academic titles are not permitted in AP Style, so titles follow one of two formats:

- Titles preceding a person's name are capitalized: UTIA Senior Vice Chancellor and Senior Vice President Keith Carver or UTIA Vice Chancellor of Marketing and Communications Lisa Stearns.
- Titles following a person's name are listed in lowercase: Keith Carver, UTIA senior vice chancellor and senior vice president, or Lisa Stearns, UTIA vice chancellor of Marketing and Communications.
- The title "Dr." may be used in direct quotes to appropriately honor the efforts of those who hold a Ph.D., but only medical doctors and in some instances, veterinarians will be addressed as "Dr."

The final paragraph should be the UTIA boilerplate:

The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture is comprised of the Herbert College of Agriculture, UT College of Veterinary Medicine, UT AgResearch and UT Extension. Through its land-grant mission of teaching, research and outreach, the Institute touches lives and provides Real. Life. Solutions. to Tennesseans and beyond.
utia.tennessee.edu.

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Contact:

[insert name, title if desired, department, phone number and email address]

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Text and photo available online at UTIA News. [UTIA Marketing and Communications will insert a live link to the URL of the release published on our website.]

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Find the UT Institute of Agriculture on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube:



News Distribution

All formal news releases posted on the [UTIA News](#) website are distributed to external media and/or shared on UT Knoxville or UT System media sites. UTIA Marketing and Communications maintains media lists of news outlets across the state as well as regional and national trade publications for several academic disciplines. Faculty and staff are encouraged to share the names/contact information for appropriate media outlets related to all their news. Those news items that do not rise to the level of a formal news release will be listed as a highlight on our news site.

Most news items are also shared on UTIA social media sites. Faculty and staff are encouraged to use the social media “share” icons associated with any relevant **individual** news item on the [UTIA News](#) site. The UT Knoxville media strategy specifically encourages the use of LinkedIn to highlight successes and articles of interest.

When news falls into a category accepted by the AAAS news distribution service, [EurekAlert!](#), UTIA Marketing and Communications submits the stories to that organization for distribution across multiple platforms to reporters and publishers interested in science and academic news. Example categories of news accepted by EurekAlert! include competitive grants or awards, new collaborations with industry, conferences and scientific meetings, and published articles or books. The Institute subscribes to this service. Our news and experts posted to EurekAlert! have been shared on national and international media sites, including *Science News*, *Wired*, and the *Washington Post*.

News Pitching

UTIA Marketing and Communications will gladly pitch news of interest to **major media** markets across the state, regionally, nationally, and internationally as well as to appropriate trade publications.

UTIA works with the UT Knoxville Office of Communications and Marketing on external-facing projects including the news site [The Conversation](#). The site is an independent source for news articles and informed analysis written by university faculty and researchers and edited by journalists for the public. Through a relationship with the Associated Press, articles published on the site typically are reprinted in news outlets across the nation and world. While UT Knoxville coordinates the faculty introductory sessions, our staff works with UT Knoxville and UTIA faculty authors to help them pitch successful and relevant topics. Contact the UTIA Marketing and Communications [News and Information Manager](#) for assistance.

Direct Media Inquiries

UTIA Marketing and Communications does not restrict faculty and staff from talking to members of the media. We do request that they let us know when they have been interviewed, the name of the reporter and the media outlet represented, and the faculty member’s overall impression of the interaction with the reporter. Contact the UTIA Marketing and Communications [News and Information Manager](#) for assistance.

NOTE: The UT College of Veterinary Medicine and the UT Veterinary Medical Center require media and faculty to work through the college’s media relations office as a precaution to help prevent HIPAA violations. Contact [CVM Media Relations](#) for assistance.

Social Media Management

UTIA Marketing and Communications maintains formal accounts on behalf of the Institute on Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, and YouTube. For more information, please review the [UTIA social media policy and best practices guide](#). This document contains information for accounts affiliated with UTIA, including guidelines for registration of these accounts with the Office of Marketing and Communications. Contact the UTIA Marketing and Communications [Social Media Specialist](#) for further information.

MONITORING SUCCESSES

What do we measure and why? UTIA Marketing and Communications monitors the number of media impressions, social media shares, newsletter open rates, and more to help measure the effectiveness of our efforts as well as their possible reach to target audiences.

- Overall UTIA media impressions are pulled from Critical Mention (a subscription media monitoring service) weekly. We look for prominent local, regional, national and even international mentions and usage. Our video news releases are particularly effective across the state, appearing in every major broadcast market. Our releases of event and feature-based news as well as county-level efforts regularly are pushed up by local media to national websites including [Yahoo!News](#) offering the opportunity to expansive reach and name recognition.
- Social media impacts are managed through Sprout.
- Google Analytics 4 for web pages is available Institute-wide.
- Digital media effectiveness is measured based on a platform's ability to capture open rates and other metrics. The open rate of the UTIA monthly newsletter Common Ground.
- We use the Trello project management software to track and measure the progress of projects that elevate the Institute.

CONCLUSION

Building the reputation of an organization takes time and consistency. Thank you for reviewing this playbook, learning more about our approaches and standards, and being part of the UT Institute of Agriculture story.

If you have questions regarding this playbook, please feel free to reach out at utiamarketing@tennessee.edu. We look forward to working with you



UTIA.TENNESSEE.EDU

Real. Life. Solutions.™