



## Innovation Award Application 2014



### Hillsboro, Oregon Police Chief Recruitment Video

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### Describe the Program/project/ product/ service innovation:

In August 2013, the City of Hillsboro created a unique and funny 6-minute recruitment video designed to attract the right candidates for our vacant police chief position. Not your average government or law enforcement recruitment video, this innovative project was inspired by input from our elected officials, employees and from community members about what values they want reflected in our next police chief. Through a combination of entertaining skits involving more than 20 Hillsboro police officers, along with two actors, we showcased Hillsboro, our Police Department's connection to our growing community, our dedication to top-quality, professional public safety work and our approachability. It reflected our commitment to making the Hillsboro Police Department the best place to work by encouraging creative and visionary leadership and by maintaining a healthy sense of humor. The results of this video were more than we expected. Once posted to the City's website as part of the recruitment packet, this video quickly went viral and attracted local, national and international media attention, including website front page news and live interviews on CNN, BBC radio and the Huffington Post. An influential national police website, [policeone.com](http://policeone.com), also featured the video, and police officers from across the country weighed in, mostly in praise of Hillsboro for showing the human side of policing. Not only did this video accomplish the primary goal of attracting the right police chief for Hillsboro (who we are excited to say begins work on February 3), but it also had other very significant benefits: it created a predominantly positive buzz of pride and excitement in Hillsboro and within the police department, and it put Hillsboro on the map as a creative and innovative City government.

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### Short description of the importance, internal impact, and community benefits:

Thanks to the quirky recruitment video, the entire country (and many living abroad) learned that Hillsboro was looking for a new Police Chief. That attention and free publicity was priceless in helping us to attract the best candidates in our nationwide search. We hired our top candidate, Lee Dobrowolski from the Salt Lake City Police Department. Lee credited the video with helping him make the decision to apply for this position and helping him to realize that Hillsboro is the place where he and his family want to be. He appreciated our innovation, risk-taking and sense of humor. Lee said of the video, "The only way we as law enforcement can be approachable to the community is to show that we are human, and humans have a sense of humor," he said. "That video showed the police department is approachable. That is my style, and it is evident that the Hillsboro community is very supportive of its police department." Another impact of this video was the building of camaraderie within the police department, which had been without a chief since early 2013. There was a great deal of team building (and fun) that occurred during the creation and filming. Following that, the great excitement and pride within the department that resulted from the public response and support was very powerful. Finally, the video showcased our community culture and built our reputation as an innovative and strong City. Nearly 150,000 people have watched the video posted on our YouTube channel to date. We received an enormous amount of publicity and feedback – from as far away as New Zealand - because of the video. Some comments were critical of us making light of law enforcement, but many more emails and phone calls from law enforcement agencies and employees nationally and internationally, gave us big kudos for addressing the human side of police work, for telling a story that they can relate to, and for making

them laugh. The video was also recently named “Best Police Use of Social Media” by the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

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## What makes this a quantum leap of creativity?

To us and to our community, law enforcement is about so much more than just traditional law and order. Policing is an art form and this video is a representation of our community’s and our police department’s culture. We knew incorporating humor would make this video subject to interpretation, and that it would not appeal to everyone; however, it clearly demonstrates that our City organization is innovative and progressive, and understands that using humor is an effective way to address the stress associated with an exceptionally challenging profession. Also, using appropriate humor with our citizenry can make us more approachable, thereby building stronger relationships within our community. Further, we wanted the public to know that the City of Hillsboro doesn’t settle for status quo and that we encourage creativity and innovation in order to provide the exceptional services our residents want and deserve.

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## Who benefits?

Our entire community benefits from this successful project. The free publicity from the video helped us to attract many highly-talented applicants. We hired an exceptional police chief and, in the process, we sent a message to all that Hillsboro is a great place to work and live.

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## How was the program/project/product/service initiated and implemented?

The idea of doing a recruitment video as part of the recruitment packet initially came from Hillsboro City Manager Michael Brown. His vision was clear as a result of input from employees, City Council and the community on what they wanted to see in our next Police Chief. He encouraged us to make the video unique and innovative, and to represent what our residents told us they want: personable, friendly police officers, capable of both protecting and serving the community. We were definitely on a fast track with this project to meet the timeline of our recruitment process. It took about six weeks to turn the initial idea into the final video. Creative ideas for the script were first generated internally through a brainstorming session with our City Manager Michael Brown, Lt. Henry Reimann, Lt. Mike Rouches and Communications and Marketing Manager Corinne Bloomfield. We then interviewed and sought bids from two local video production companies, and hired Resonance Productions. More creative brainstorming meetings followed, along with script review and editing. We reached out to a large number of our police officers to make sure they were involved in the creative process, and many had roles in the video production, making it more real and authentic. The shoot itself took place over two days in various locations in Hillsboro. Production, review and editing followed over the next few weeks, leading to the final version. Once the video was posted on our website and went viral, we spent the next six weeks managing media interviews and responding to emails and phone calls from citizens, law enforcement community members from around the globe, and from potential candidates. The job posting closed on September 20, 2013 and we received 62 applications. We announced the hiring of Lee Dobrowolski on December 23, 2013, and he officially begins as Hillsboro’s Police Chief on February 3, 2014.

## What risks were taken?

The Police Chief position is critically important to any city. When our former chief resigned after just a few years with the department, we knew it was imperative to attract the most qualified candidates in order to find the best Police Chief possible for our community. We could have chosen to do a safe, strictly professional, talking head video with a show-and-tell presentation about Hillsboro for candidates. Instead, we took a risk in doing something we felt would be more meaningful, creative, innovative and effective. There was great risk that this humorous style could create negative backlash, but we worked hard to communicate our vision for the video and the community input that supported it.

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## What, if any were the costs and/or savings?

The cost of the video was \$10,400. That was primarily for the video production company's work. We chose to scale back our spending on a national recruitment firm, essentially using the savings to pay for this video. We feel we received an exceptional return on our investment. We could not have paid for the national and international publicity this video generated, or if we did pay, we would have spent tens of thousands of dollars, if not more, to achieve this level of awareness. The City owns the raw video as well, which can be used for other marketing and communication purposes.

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## What are the lessons learned that other local governments can learn from?

From our perspective, innovation and justifiable risk taking should be the norm and not the exception for local government. If we truly want to excel in creating and maintaining successful communities into the future, we must proactively seek out and embrace innovative and creative solutions. Hillsboro will continue to "think outside the box" in our approach to providing the best possible services to our community.

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## What department and/or individual(s) championed the innovation? If a contractor was used, please list the name and their contact information.

City Manager Michael Brown: overall vision and creative encouragement; Hillsboro Police Department Lt. Mike Rouches and Lt. Henry Reimann: creative input, casting and directing assistance; Communications and Marketing Manager Corinne Bloomfield: overall project management and creative input; Resonance Productions, Brett Eichenberger, 503-805-4263: script writing, directing, filming and video production

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## Any additional information you would like to share?

Here is the video YouTube address: <http://youtu.be/0i7yjabtBs8> (or search City of Hillsboro on YouTube)