PORT PASCAGOULA



AAPA Lighthouse Award-Excellence in Digital Media Communications

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“Digital Tides: Enhancing Maritime Awareness Through Strategic Social Media”

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Background

As Mississippi's largest seaport, the Port of Pascagoula plays a critical role in international trade, economic development, industrial growth, and maritime operations along the Gulf Coast. Despite its importance to the region, the maritime industry is often not fully understood by the general public due to its technical nature and the limited visibility of day-to-day port operations.

Recognizing the need to strengthen community awareness and engagement, the Port of Pascagoula launched a strategic social media initiative designed to make the maritime industry more accessible, educational, and relatable to the public. The initiative was developed to bridge the communication gap between the Port and the surrounding community and to establish a consistent, recognizable digital presence across social media platforms.

Before implementation, much of the Port's external communication focused primarily on operational announcements and formal updates. While informative, these communications provided limited opportunities for consistent public engagement or educational storytelling. The Port recognized an opportunity to leverage social media not only as a communication tool but also as a platform for community outreach, maritime education, and public engagement.

To accomplish this, the Port developed a series of recurring digital campaigns focused on education, history, and audience interaction. These campaigns created a structured and recognizable communication strategy that consistently delivered meaningful content to the community while reinforcing the Port's identity and mission.

Purpose

The purpose of this initiative was to establish a comprehensive and consistent digital communication strategy to enhance community outreach, promote maritime awareness, and strengthen public understanding of the Port of Pascagoula's role in the region and the broader maritime industry.

As Mississippi's largest seaport, the Port recognized that many aspects of maritime operations, terminology, and economic impact are often unfamiliar to the general public. While the Port plays a critical role in supporting commerce, industry, transportation, and regional development, much of that work traditionally occurs outside public view. This initiative was developed to bridge that communication gap by creating content that is educational, engaging, and accessible to audiences of all backgrounds.

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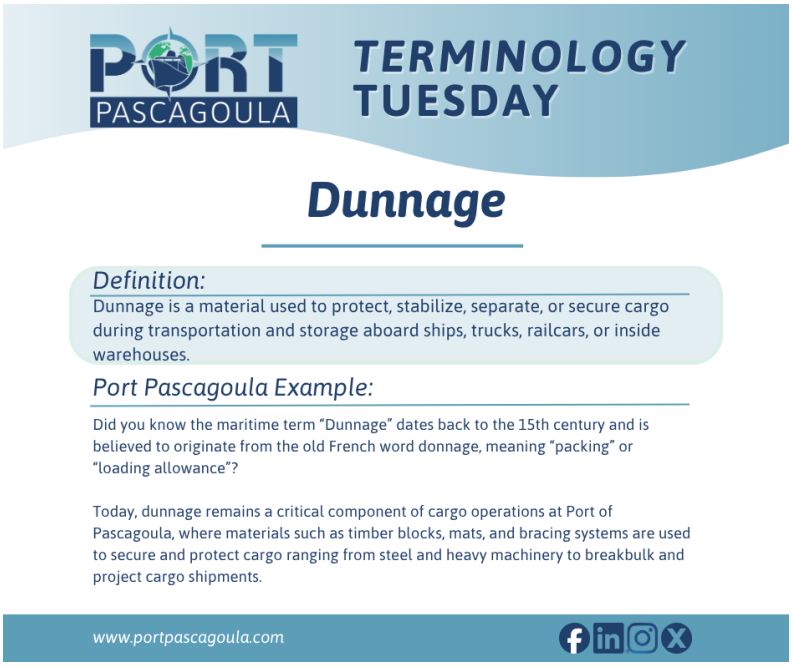
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Through strategic use of social media and digital storytelling, the Port sought to transform its online presence from primarily operational messaging into an interactive platform for education, outreach, and community engagement. Rather than simply distributing information, the initiative was designed to create meaningful and consistent communication that encourages public participation while reinforcing the Port's identity and value to the community.

A key component of the initiative was the establishment of recurring themed campaigns that audiences could recognize, anticipate, and engage with regularly. These campaigns provided structure and consistency to the Port's messaging strategy while creating opportunities to communicate maritime concepts in creative and approachable ways.

Terminology Tuesday

Terminology Tuesday was developed to educate the public on commonly used maritime and port-related terms by explaining them in simple, easy-to-understand language. The campaign helps demystify technical maritime terminology and provides audiences with greater insight into daily port operations, shipping, logistics, and maritime culture. By translating industry language into relatable explanations, the Port has made maritime knowledge more accessible to the community.



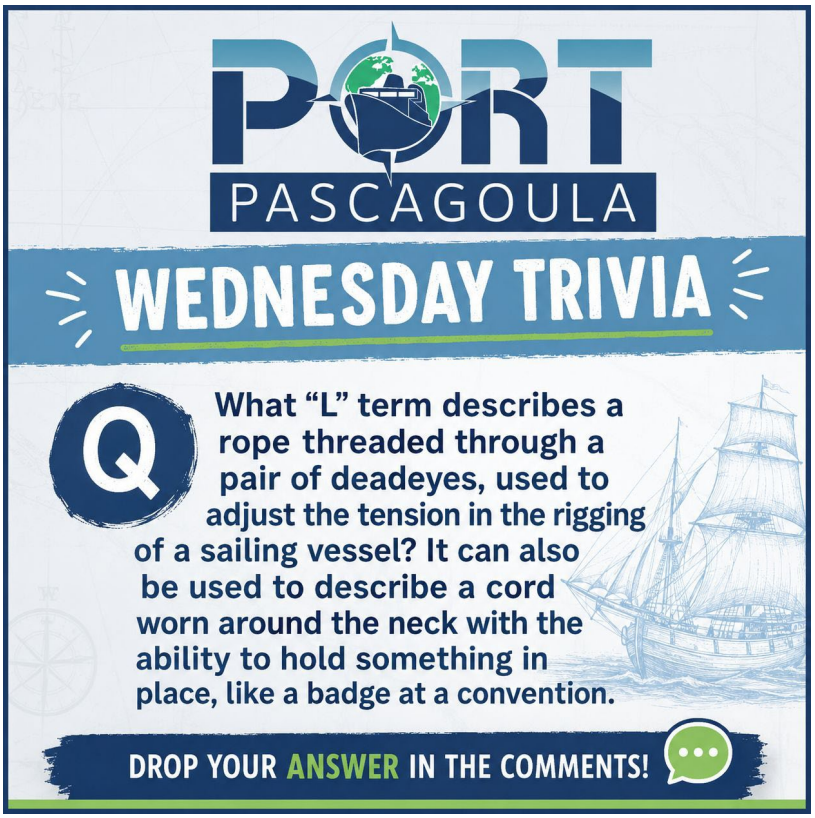
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Trivia Wednesday

Trivia Wednesday was created as an interactive engagement campaign to encourage audience participation and promote maritime education in a fun, approachable format. Weekly trivia questions on maritime history, shipping, logistics, and port operations help audiences learn about the industry while increasing engagement across social media platforms. The campaign transforms passive viewers into active participants, strengthening community engagement and digital reach.



Throwback Thursday

Throwback Thursday is a historical storytelling initiative that showcases significant milestones, achievements, and defining moments throughout the Port's history. Through archival photos, historical facts, and stories from past operations, the campaign highlights the Port's longstanding economic and cultural importance to the Gulf Coast region. This initiative helps connect current audiences with the Port's legacy while reinforcing the organization's impact across generations.

Collectively, these campaigns were designed to establish a recognizable and trusted digital presence that keeps the Port consistently engaged with the community while promoting transparency, education, and maritime awareness. The initiative also supports long-term outreach goals by increasing public familiarity with the maritime industry, strengthening community trust, and encouraging broader appreciation for the Port's role in economic development and regional growth.

Ultimately, the purpose of this initiative is not simply to maintain a social media presence, but to create a sustainable communications platform that informs, educates, engages, and connects the Port of Pascagoula with the people and communities it serves.



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Goals and Objectives

Enhance public understanding of the maritime industry.

One of the primary goals of this initiative was to make the maritime industry more understandable and accessible to the general public. The Port recognized that many community members interact with or benefit from the maritime industry indirectly without fully understanding the operations, terminology, infrastructure, and economic activity that support it. Through educational, simplified digital content, the initiative sought to bridge this knowledge gap and increase public awareness of the Port's contributions to commerce, transportation, industry, and regional development.

By translating complex maritime concepts into relatable, easy-to-understand messaging, the Port created an opportunity for audiences of all backgrounds to engage with and better understand the importance of maritime operations in their daily lives and local economy.

Establish a consistent and recognizable community presence

Another major objective was to establish a consistent and trusted digital presence within the community. Before implementation, communication efforts were often centered around operational updates and formal announcements. While important, these communications did not always create ongoing engagement or recognizable interaction with the public.

Through recurring campaigns such as Terminology Tuesday, Trivia Wednesday, and Throwback Thursday, the Port developed a structured and predictable communications strategy that audiences could recognize and anticipate each week. This consistency strengthened the Port's visibility across digital platforms while reinforcing its identity as an active and engaged community partner.

Increase audience engagement through interactive content.

The initiative sought to transform social media from a one-way communication channel into an interactive engagement platform. Through campaigns such as Trivia Wednesday, audiences were encouraged to actively participate in discussions, answer questions, and engage with maritime content in a fun, approachable way.

This interactive approach increased audience involvement and strengthened overall engagement by encouraging users to comment, share, react, and participate consistently across social media platforms. The Port recognized that meaningful engagement is built not only by delivering

information but also by creating opportunities for audiences to interact with and connect to the content being shared.

By incorporating educational entertainment and audience participation into the communication strategy, the Port expanded its reach while building stronger digital relationships with community members.

Preserve and share the Port's history and legacy.

A significant objective of the initiative was to preserve and communicate the Port's rich history and longstanding importance to the Gulf Coast region. Through Throwback Thursday, the Port highlighted major milestones, historical achievements, infrastructure developments, and defining moments that shaped both the organization and the surrounding community.

This objective extended beyond historical storytelling alone. It allowed the Port to demonstrate its long-term economic impact, contributions to maritime commerce, and role in regional growth across multiple generations. By connecting audiences to the Port's past, the initiative reinforced the Port's identity and strengthened community appreciation for its continued importance.

The campaign also created opportunities for community members to engage through shared memories, historical discussions, and recognition of local maritime heritage.

Strengthen transparency and community trust.

The Port also sought to strengthen transparency and public trust by maintaining open, consistent, and informative communication with the community. Regular digital engagement allowed the Port to communicate in a way that felt approachable, educational, and community-focused rather than solely institutional or operational.

By consistently sharing informative and engaging content, the Port reinforced its commitment to openness and accessibility while strengthening relationships with local stakeholders, residents, businesses, and maritime partners. This transparency helped position the Port not only as an economic driver but also as an active and invested member of the community.

Promote long-term maritime awareness and workforce interest.

Another important objective was to encourage broader interest in the maritime industry and increase awareness of potential career pathways and workforce opportunities. By regularly

exposing audiences to maritime terminology, operations, history, and industry functions, the initiative helped increase familiarity with maritime careers and the broader port industry.

The Port recognized that building long-term industry awareness begins with education and exposure. Through consistent digital outreach, the initiative contributes to broader workforce awareness efforts while helping younger audiences and community members better understand the maritime sector's opportunities and importance.

Create a sustainable and scalable communications framework

In addition to immediate outreach goals, the initiative was designed to establish a sustainable, long-term communications model that can evolve with audience interests, operational priorities, and emerging digital communication trends.

The recurring campaign structure provides flexibility for future expansion into additional educational series, multimedia storytelling, video content, live engagement opportunities, and collaborative community initiatives. This scalability ensures that the Port can continue enhancing its communications strategy while maintaining consistency and audience engagement over time.

Ultimately, the goals and objectives of this initiative were centered on building stronger community connections, improving maritime awareness, and creating a communications platform that educates, engages, and informs while reinforcing the Port of Pascagoula's role as a critical economic and community asset.

Implementation & Resources

The Port of Pascagoula implemented its social media initiative through a structured and strategic communications approach focused on consistency, audience engagement, and educational outreach.

The initiative was built around developing recurring weekly content campaigns designed to provide audiences with predictable, recognizable, and engaging digital content. Rather than relying solely on occasional announcements or operational updates, the Port established a proactive content strategy that ensured regular communication with the community.

Content creation focused on balancing educational value with audience accessibility. Maritime terminology, historical events, and industry concepts were translated into concise, engaging posts for social media consumption while maintaining informational accuracy.

Visual storytelling played a major role in implementation. Historical photographs, port imagery, branded graphics, and multimedia content were incorporated to increase audience engagement and strengthen visual identity across platforms.

The initiative leveraged existing internal resources, including communications personnel and operational subject-matter experts, to develop content and maintain consistency. By leveraging internal expertise and digital platforms already available to the organization, the Port implemented a high-impact communication strategy without requiring significant financial investment.

Additionally, the Port monitored audience engagement, participation levels, and community interaction to refine messaging and improve content effectiveness over time. This adaptive approach allowed the initiative to evolve in response to audience interests and engagement trends.

Innovation & Relevance

The Port of Pascagoula's social media initiative represents an innovative approach to maritime communications by transforming traditional public information into interactive, educational, and community-focused digital storytelling.

A key innovation of the initiative is the use of recurring branded campaigns to establish familiarity and audience anticipation. Campaigns such as Terminology Tuesday, Trivia Wednesday, and Throwback Thursday create a structured communication framework that encourages consistent audience engagement while delivering educational value.

The initiative also demonstrates innovation by making complex maritime topics accessible to non-industry audiences. By translating technical terminology and operational concepts into simple, relatable language, the Port expanded the community's understanding of the maritime industry in a way rarely seen in port communications.

Additionally, the use of interactive content and historical storytelling strengthens emotional connection and community identity. Rather than focusing solely on operational messaging, the initiative highlights the people, history, and impact behind the Port's operations.

This approach is highly relevant in today's digital communication environment, where organizations must compete for audience attention while maintaining transparency, credibility, and engagement.

Results, Evidence & Impact

The implementation of the Port's social media initiative significantly enhanced community engagement, maritime awareness, and the effectiveness of digital communication.

The recurring campaigns established a consistent online presence, increasing audience familiarity and engagement across social media platforms. Community interaction improved through comments, shares, reactions, and participation in educational and interactive content.

Terminology Tuesday successfully increased public understanding of maritime terminology and operations by presenting industry concepts in approachable language. Trivia Wednesday increased audience participation and encouraged ongoing interaction with maritime-focused content. Throwback Thursday strengthened public appreciation for the Port's historical significance and longstanding contributions to the region.

Over the last three months, the Port of Pascagoula's social media initiative has demonstrated measurable success in expanding community engagement, increasing digital visibility, and strengthening public interaction with maritime-focused content. Performance metrics show that the Port's strategic approach to recurring educational and community-centered campaigns is driving meaningful, sustained audience growth across digital platforms.

During this period, the Port generated **20,334 impressions**, reflecting a substantial increase in audience reach and overall content visibility. This growth demonstrates the effectiveness of maintaining a consistent and recognizable digital presence through recurring campaigns such as Terminology Tuesday, Trivia Wednesday, and Throwback Thursday. By delivering content that is both educational and engaging, the Port successfully expanded awareness of maritime operations and increased community exposure to port-related messaging.

Audience engagement also increased significantly during this timeframe. The Port recorded **415 reactions**, representing a **30.1% increase** in audience interaction and demonstrating a stronger public connection to the Port's content and messaging. This increase reflects the success of creating approachable, informative, and interactive content that encourages audiences to engage directly with maritime topics and Port activities.

Community interaction through comments experienced one of the most notable increases, with **10 comments representing a 400% increase** over previous performance metrics. This growth highlights the initiative's ability to foster conversation, encourage participation, and create two-way communication between the Port and the public. Rather than functioning solely as an

informational platform, the Port's social media presence has evolved into an active community engagement tool that encourages discussion and audience involvement.

Additionally, the Port recorded **9 reposts, representing a 200% increase** in content sharing and audience-driven distribution. This increase demonstrates that audiences not only engage with the Port's content but also find it valuable enough to share within their own networks. Reposts significantly expand organic reach and strengthen the Port's ability to communicate maritime awareness and educational content beyond its immediate audience base.

Collectively, these metrics demonstrate the measurable impact of the Port's strategic digital communications initiative. The sustained increase in impressions, reactions, comments, and reposts validates the effectiveness of consistent educational storytelling, interactive campaigns, and historical reflection in strengthening community outreach and public engagement. These results further reinforce the Port's commitment to transparency, education, and maintaining a strong and trusted presence within the community through innovative digital communication strategies.

Integration, Adaptability & Scalability

The social media initiative has been fully integrated into the Port's communications and outreach strategy, supporting both day-to-day messaging and long-term community engagement objectives. Rather than functioning as a standalone marketing effort, the initiative has become an essential component of the Port's public communication, transparency, and awareness of maritime operations and their impact on the industry.

The campaign structure is highly adaptable, allowing content to evolve in response to audience interests, current events, maritime trends, and operational priorities. The recurring format provides consistency while allowing flexibility in messaging and creative development. This adaptability enables the Port to quickly incorporate timely topics, industry developments, weather events, historical milestones, or operational achievements into its communication strategy while maintaining audience familiarity with established campaign themes.

The initiative is also scalable and can easily expand to include additional campaign themes, multimedia storytelling, video content, educational partnerships, and broader digital outreach efforts. As audience engagement continues to grow, the Port can further diversify its communication strategy through short-form video content, live event coverage, interactive educational features, and partnerships with schools, community organizations, and maritime stakeholders.

Additionally, the recurring campaign framework creates a sustainable, long-term communications model that can continue to evolve alongside digital communication trends and audience behavior. Because the initiative is built around adaptable themes rather than one-time campaigns, it provides the Port with a reliable structure for maintaining consistent engagement while continually introducing fresh, relevant content.

The scalability of the initiative also allows the Port to extend its outreach beyond local audiences and engage broader regional, industry, and educational communities. This positions the Port to continue strengthening its digital presence while expanding awareness of maritime operations and the Port's economic importance throughout the Gulf Coast region.

Stakeholder Engagement & Collaboration

The success of the Port's social media initiative is rooted in strong collaboration between communications personnel, operational staff, and the surrounding community. Internal collaboration with subject-matter experts ensures content accuracy and enables the translation of technical maritime concepts into accessible public messaging.

Externally, the initiative encourages active community participation through interactive content, educational outreach, and historical storytelling. Community members engage directly with the Port through comments, participation in trivia, shared memories, and discussions about maritime operations and local history.

This collaborative and interactive approach has strengthened the Port's relationship with the public while enhancing awareness of the maritime industry's importance to the region.

The initiative has also created opportunities for stronger engagement with educators, local historians, maritime professionals, businesses, and community organizations that share an interest in the Port's history and operations. Historical content and educational campaigns frequently generate conversations that connect multiple generations of community members, reinforcing the Port's longstanding role in regional development and economic growth.

In addition, the consistent and approachable nature of the Port's social media presence has helped humanize the organization by creating more direct and meaningful interaction with the public. Rather than limiting communication to formal announcements, the initiative fosters two-way engagement that encourages dialogue, participation, and shared community pride.

The Port's ability to maintain regular and engaging communication has also strengthened stakeholder confidence by demonstrating transparency, accessibility, and a continued investment in public outreach and education.

Conclusion

The Port of Pascagoula's social media initiative demonstrates how strategic digital communications can strengthen community outreach, increase maritime awareness, and build meaningful public engagement.

Through consistent educational campaigns, interactive storytelling, and historical reflection, the Port transformed social media into a dynamic platform for communication, transparency, and community connection.

By leveraging creative content and consistent messaging, the Port of Pascagoula has created a scalable and sustainable communications model that strengthens relationships, promotes industry awareness, and reinforces the Port's importance to the community and maritime sector.

More importantly, the initiative demonstrates how digital communications can extend beyond traditional marketing efforts to become a powerful tool for education, outreach, and relationship-building. Through recurring campaigns such as Terminology Tuesday, Trivia Wednesday, and Throwback Thursday, the Port has created content that is informative, engaging, and community-focused while maintaining consistent visibility across digital platforms.

The success of the initiative reflects the Port's commitment to transparency, innovation, and public engagement. By combining educational storytelling with interactive communication, the Port has strengthened its connection with the community while promoting greater appreciation of the maritime industry and its role in supporting economic growth and regional development.

Ultimately, this initiative provides a scalable and adaptable model for how ports and maritime organizations can leverage digital media to educate audiences, strengthen stakeholder relationships, and build long-term community engagement in an increasingly digital communications environment.

Beacon of Excellence Statement

The Port of Pascagoula's social media initiative demonstrates excellence in communications by transforming digital engagement into an educational and community-driven platform that connects the public to the maritime industry. Through consistent and innovative campaigns such

as Terminology Tuesday, Trivia Wednesday, and Throwback Thursday, the Port has increased public awareness, strengthened community relationships, and enhanced understanding of the Port's economic and historical significance. By combining educational content, storytelling, and interactive engagement, the Port has established a recognizable and trusted digital presence that extends beyond traditional public relations. This initiative provides a scalable model for how ports can leverage digital media to build stronger connections with their communities while promoting maritime awareness and industry engagement.

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Did You Know?

PORT PASCAGOULA

OVER THE PAST

THREE YEARS,

Port Pascagoula has hosted

1,000+ STUDENTS

on educational tours!

We're proud to inspire the next generation by giving students a firsthand look at maritime careers, our operations, and the vital role the Port plays in our community and beyond.





EDUCATING TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

CONNECTING STUDENTS TO REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE

BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY TOGETHER

THANK YOU *to all our partners, educators, and visitors!*

STRONG PORT. STRONG REGION. STRONGER TOGETHER.

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TERMINOLOGY TUESDAY

Under Keel Clearance (UKC)

Definition:

the minimum vertical distance between the bottom of a vessel's keel and the seabed beneath it.

Port Pascagoula Example:

UKC is a critical factor in daily vessel movements—especially for deep-draft vessels transiting the Pascagoula Ship Channel and operating in Bayou Casotte. With ongoing sedimentation, tidal influences, and heavily loaded export vessels (such as bulk carriers loading Southern Yellow Pine), maintaining adequate UKC is essential for safe and efficient operations.

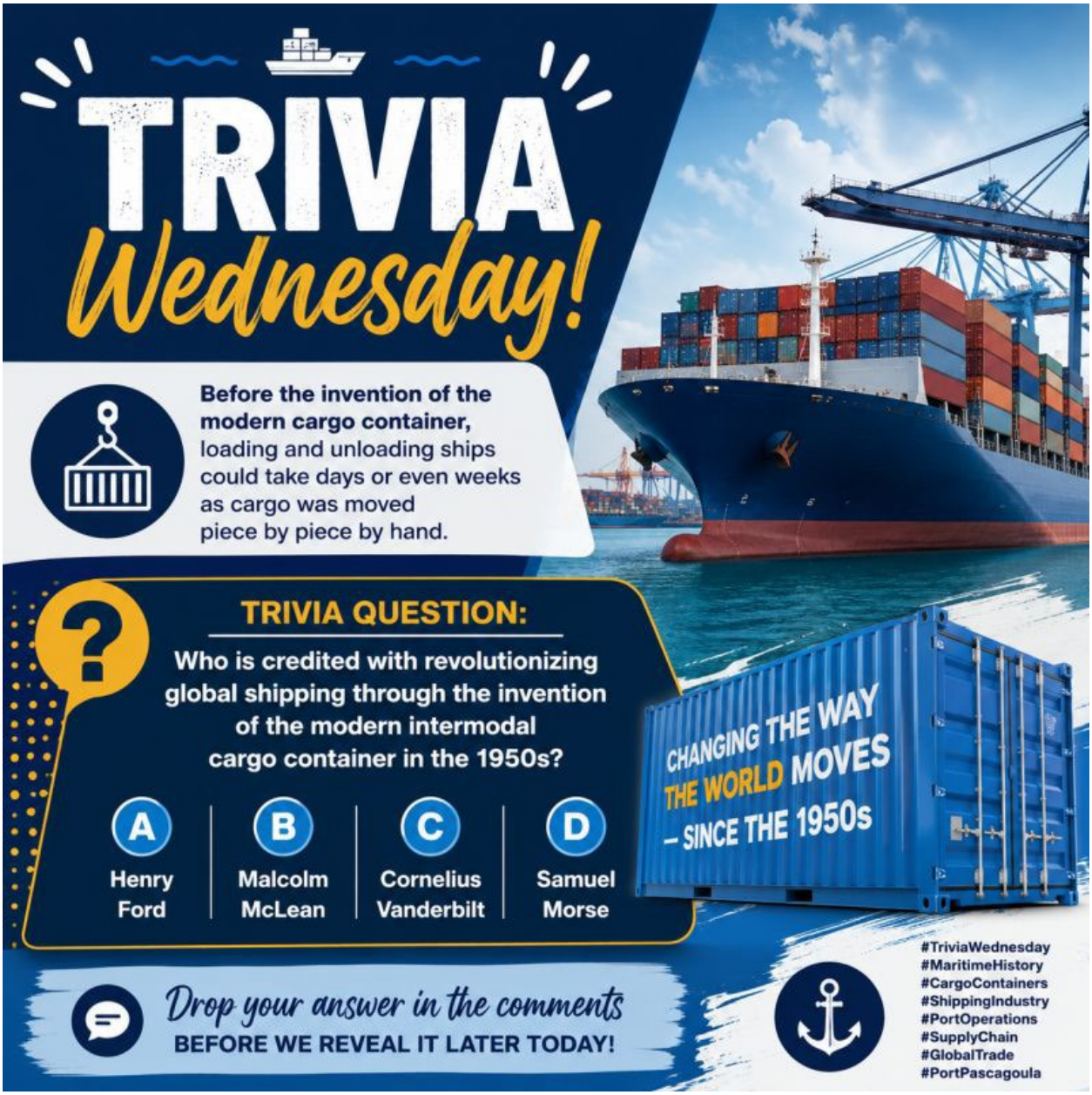
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