

**2021 Chapter Management Awards Work Plan  
IABC Nashville: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

**About IABC Nashville**

Based in the heart of “Music City, USA” [IABC Nashville](#) is a small – but mighty – chapter. We have about ~40 members and an extraordinarily strong connection with our non-member community of more than 700 communications professionals. Our members and non-member peers are diverse, representing an array of industries, backgrounds, and valuable perspectives. We host events throughout the year to promote learning and connection, including monthly professional development luncheons, informal social networking “mixers”, and our annual awards program and ceremony.

We are incredibly proud of the close-knit community we have built - a community which has persevered through tornados, floods, explosions, a pandemic, and social unrest. We are especially proud that our efforts were recognized with the 2017 IABC Small Chapter of the Year Award. One of the major contributing factors to our 2017 recognition is our ongoing efforts to build an inclusive community – and we’re proud to continue that work today.

**IABC Nashville and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Over the past several years, IABC Nashville has committed to creating a diverse, inclusive, and safe community where all are welcome through our programming, recruitment, leadership, and beyond. Embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), goes beyond simply having one DEI-related event per year – diversity, equity, and inclusion are core values of our chapter and we weave them into everything we do. This includes but is not limited to:

- Hosting multiple events each year focused on various DEI topics and celebrations.
- Expanding our reach by partnering with diverse community organizations.
- Increasing our board diversity.

Following the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and others, IABC Nashville made a public statement in support of our Black community members ([see “June 2020 newsletter” and “Social Media” work samples](#)). But committing to DEI goes beyond issuing statements; and our chapter seeks to continue affecting meaningful change in the years to come.

IABC as a global organization has increased its focus on DEI this past year, and IABC Nashville is proud to have one of our board members serve as a critical member of the IABC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion task force which recently submitted more than 100 recommendations to IABC leadership consideration and implementation at the local, regional, and international levels.

There is much work to be done, but we are proud of the strides we have made within our chapter to embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion, and similarly proud of the broader work that is being done across IABC through our DEI task force.

***\*Note: We have included information and data from before and after 2019-2020 for additional context in this entry. We recognize that only work from 2019-2020 will be considered during judging.***

**Goals and Objectives**

Goal	Measurement	Why?
<b>Incorporate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into our professional development programming and networking events.</b>	Each calendar year, have at least one professional development / networking event with a DEI-related theme or topic.	As communicators, we are in a unique position to facilitate real conversation and impact change. We want to give our members and peers the tools they need to be able to address DEI in their respective organizations.
<b>Increase diversity on our IABC Nashville board.</b>	Increase diversity through our chapter board demographics: race, gender, age, industries represented, and sexuality.	The communications field is a diverse one. We want communications professionals to look at our membership and board and see themselves represented, and to feel inspired knowing that they, too, can get involved at that level.
<b>Partner with community organizations supporting DEI efforts.</b>	Host one event per year in partnership with community organizations that embrace and champion DEI.	To broaden our reach and celebrate diversity, it is important for us to strengthen our existing relationships with local organizations and continue to forge new partnerships.



## Budget

As a small (but mighty!) chapter, our funds are limited, and we rely heavily on our volunteers and chapter leaders to make our events a reality. We did not devote any budget dollars specifically to our DEI efforts. All communications and designs were done in house, and speakers generously donated their time and materials. Due to our virtual environment in 2020, we avoided the venue and catering costs that accompany our in-person events.

## Implementation

### Leadership

- When selecting our board members, we strive to recruit communications leaders from all ages, races, sexual orientations, and ableness through our wide-reaching network and personal contacts.
- When making decisions impacting the chapter, we consider how the decision will impact various groups and survey as appropriate.
- We take the IABC philosophy, “foster a diverse community” very seriously, and in June 2021, we issued a public statement committing to diversity, equity, and inclusion within our chapter ([See “June 2020 Newsletter” work sample](#)). This statement was used as a model for other IABC chapters and International communications on the subject. In addition, we regularly share resources for communicators related to DEI and communications ([See “Social Media” work sample](#)).
- Our chapter does not have a board position devoted to DEI, however, our board has been able to make significant progress. In addition, one of our board members co-chairs the IABC DEI task force which has created more than 100 recommendations for IABC to consider and implement at the international, regional, and chapter level in the years to come.

### Recruitment & Retention

- To recruit, include, and retain a diverse membership base, we leverage our broad network and personal and professional connections with members of various communities.
- We develop our professional development programming and networking events based on feedback from chapter members and our broader non-member community to ensure all voices are heard.
- We have fostered relationships with **four** local IABC student chapters. It is a testament to the importance of these relationships with student chapters that a former Belmont University student and IABC chapter member leveraged IABC Nashville connections to get his communications internship at a prestigious local health care company and is now a 2021 board officer. Our partnering universities include:
  - Tennessee State University, a HBCU (historically black colleges and universities)
  - Belmont University
  - Middle Tennessee State University, the largest University in the state of Tennessee
  - University of Western Kentucky

### Opportunity

- To reach diverse audiences in a way that resonates with them, we use an omni-channel approach to communications and promoting our chapter membership benefits and events, including email, social media, and interpersonal communication.
- We regularly review our membership demographics and survey our members and non-member peers to cater our events to those working in different industries and at varying levels of their career.
- We make efforts to make our communications accessible by people with varying needs, and our website is **81%** American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant.
- We have spoken at several college campuses to share our career stories and experiences through panel discussions, class presentations, and Career Day events. We offer student rates for events and award entries to encourage student participation. In addition, we have offered free entry for students to our past in-person events and had sponsors cover student costs.
- We have strengthened our long-standing relationships with community organizations such as the Nashville Black Chamber of Commerce, Nashville Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the Nashville LGBT Chamber. Through these partnerships, we have increased our membership.

## Programming

- In the past three years, we have seen a major positive change in diversifying our speakers and topics. To connect with people at varying levels of their careers, we reach out to local universities, young professional groups, and other leadership organizations. We are proud of the diverse community we have built with communications professionals from student-level up to retirees.
- We have hosted events specifically addressing DEI and ways that communicators can positively make an impact in their organizations and personal life. [See “Event Descriptions” work sample](#) for descriptions and links to recordings of our 2019 and 2020 events.

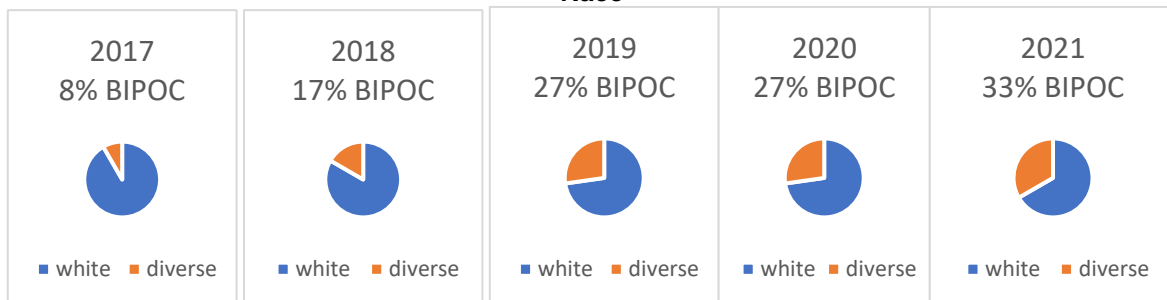
## Challenges

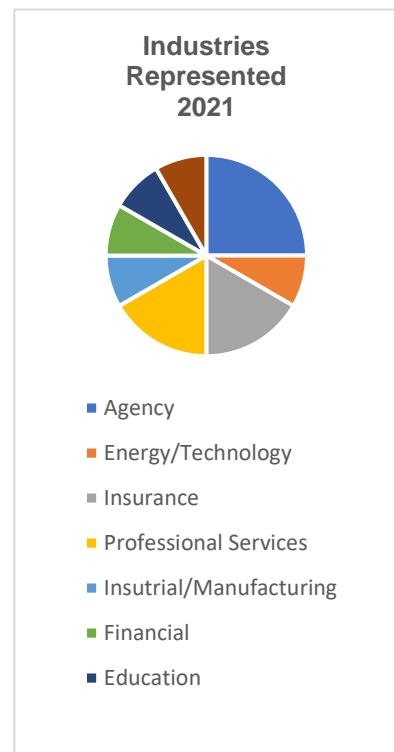
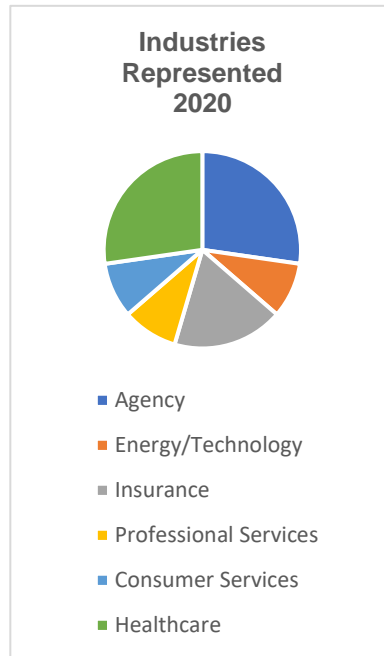
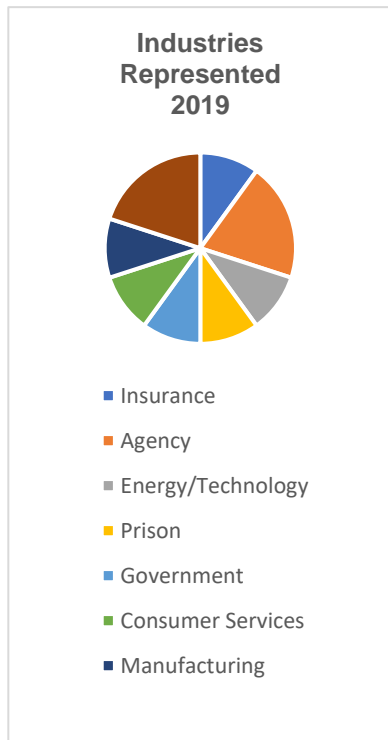
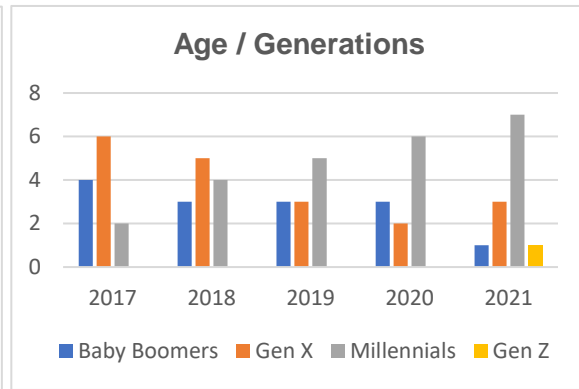
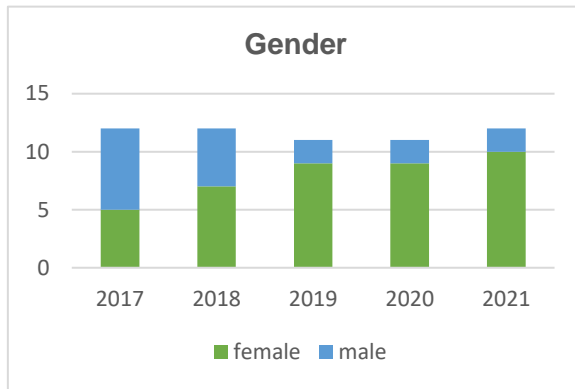
- With a tense and divided U.S. political and social climate in 2020, some people, companies and organizations were criticized for making statements in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. Others were criticized for making performative public statements, but not following up with action. As a communications organization in Nashville, the location of many historic Civil Rights Movement moments, we recognized the importance of this moment and chose to demonstrate our support for Black lives, and to vocalize to our Black community members that our chapter is a safe place for them and that we stand with them against racism and injustice. But we didn’t want to just issue a statement – we wanted to follow up with action, so we incorporated additional DEI programming to our professional development planning – specifically surrounding how business communicators and their companies can incorporate DEI to their own strategic plans – so they, too, can walk the walk.
- One of our greatest challenges is that we do not currently have a chapter board position devoted to DEI. We rely on the savvy and integrity of our officers to be mindful of DEI even without an officer role. Even without a designated vice president of DEI, IABC Nashville has made progress at the chapter and international levels.

## Measurement and Results

Goal	Measurement	Results
<b>Incorporate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into our professional development programming and networking events.</b>	Each calendar year, have at least one professional development (PD) / networking event with a DEI-related theme or topic.	We far exceeded our goal over the past four years. <a href="#">See “Event Description: work sample</a> for descriptions and links to recordings of our 2019 and 2020 events. <b>2017 – 0</b> <b>2018 – 1</b> (PD event) <b>2019 – 3</b> (2 networking mixers and 1 PD event) <b>2020 – 3</b> (3 virtual PD events)
<b>Increase diversity on our board</b>	Chapter board demographics: race, gender, age, industries represented, and sexuality.	We have increased our diversity each year for demographics we have the ability to measure. Of note, our chapter board presidency transitioned from Baby Boomer and Gen X generations to Millennial in 2019 in preparation for leadership for the future, and our board leadership includes communicators from all generations, representing a wide array of industries and career levels. See below for results and data regarding race, gender, age, industries, and sexual orientation.

### Race





### Sexual orientation

We do not have a way to quantify this as we have not asked our board members to self-identify their sexual orientation. To our knowledge, we did not have any LGBTQ+ board members in 2019-2020.

Goal	Measurement	Results
<b>Partner with community organizations supporting DEI efforts</b>	Host one event per year in partnership with at least one community organization that embraces and champions DEI.	<p><b>2019:</b> We partnered with five local organizations for our Summer 2019 networking mixer "Pride / Brewing up Business" - the Nashville Black Chamber of Commerce, Nashville Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Nashville LGBT Chamber, Collaboration for Excellence, and Tennessee Latin American Chamber of Commerce. Hundreds attended and the event was a fantastic success. (See work sample "</p> <p><b>2020:</b> We see the value of connecting in person. Due to COVID-19 in 2020 which involved remote work and Zoom fatigue, and made connection challenging, we scaled back on our networking mixers. We look to resume our partnerships with local organizations in 2021 when in-person events are safe.</p>