

IABC Houston - 2020 Chapter Management Awards Entry
Category: Communication Management (Division 2: Medium Chapters)

WORK PLAN

Introduction

The IABC Houston chapter continually sets our sights on further improvement and professional development. Communication is a major component in the vitality of the fourth largest city in America, buoyed by major industries such as energy, healthcare and manufacturing. Though we compete with Public Relations Society of America and American Marketing Association chapters, our chapter embraces the full diversity of the communication profession..

Goals and Objectives

- **Fill Marketing Leadership:** With the VP of Marketing role empty for the first half of the 2018-2019 board year, some marketing responsibilities had been absorbed by other board members, though others were unable to be completed. Our goal was to identify an engaged leader for the Vice President of Marketing position as quickly as possible.
- **Establish Consistent Processes:** Once a volunteer had been identified to handle chapter communications, our goal was to create consistent communication via a systemized process and reallocate all marketing responsibilities to the Vice President of Marketing.
- **Recruit Volunteer Committee Members:** To ensure that IABC Houston has a pipeline of volunteer leaders, our focus was to add volunteer committee members under the Board of Directors, both to distribute workloads and think ahead to succession planning.
- **Reprioritize and Grow Social Media Presence:** While email communication had been maintained in the absence of a Director of Marketing, social media outreach had been lowered as a priority. Our goal was to reestablish consistent posting and grow follower counts across four key platforms: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram.
- **Set Up Regular Reporting:** Along with a decline of social media activity, reporting and metrics monitoring had been neglected. Our goal was to consistently review analytics on emails and social posts and report out evaluations.

Budget

Our communication budget was minimal as we focused on organic growth. However, we budgeted \$100 per month for our content management system, which also handles our email communication.

Implementation

Communication Leadership: An engaged chapter member was recruited to lead our social media efforts. This is a strategy we promote in the IABC Houston chapter, as not everyone has the desire or time to serve on the Board of Directors, but may still be interested in making an impact on the chapter. Additionally, it exposes members to new roles and the operations of the

chapter. This strategy allowed the member to test out a volunteer role in the chapter that would grow into the VP of Marketing role.

Consistent Processes: With new leadership in place, we quickly realized the need to stay organized in planning social content and email newsletters as the chapter increased the number of monthly events to include luncheons, our Entrepreneur Strategic Interest Group's meetings, Networking Nine dinners and chapter happy hours, alongside singular events like workshops, certifications, conferences, membership promotions, etc. We established a monthly social content calendar to be drafted, reviewed and edited prior to the month's beginning. Additionally, we planned e-blasts to ensure members and prospective members were not overloaded with emails but were still knowledgeable about chapter happenings. We operated on the unofficial rule of no more than three emails a week, at the most, and created consistency by always emailing about an event one week before, the week of and the day before.

Volunteer Committee Members: After a member volunteered to lead our annual Bronze Quill awards social media communications, our board saw an opportunity to continue the member's involvement in the chapter post-awards. The VP of Marketing presented the offer of handling social media for the chapter as a whole. The two worked together to establish a working relationship and divide responsibilities, and continuously evaluated and adjusted the arrangement to ensure success and satisfaction in both roles.

Social Media Presence: According to a newly published Pew Research Center report, 55 percent of U.S. adults now receive their news from social media either "often" or "sometimes" – an eight percent increase from 2018. We wanted to capitalize and establish consistent activity on social media, knowing it reaches both members and prospective members. We began by planning posts to increase awareness of upcoming chapter events. We also leveraged each social platform's individual capabilities, including Facebook event postings and 24-hour Instagram stories. We utilized each platform to increase awareness and engagement of other accounts. For example, we live-tweet during chapter luncheons, sharing insights from our speakers. This allows members who are unable to attend the events an opportunity to gain nuggets of information, as well as proves the relevance of topics and gives a taste of what to expect to prospective members. We direct our audiences on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn to Twitter on those days.

Regular Reporting: Again, there was no precedent to work from on reporting and analytics for the newly established VP of Marketing. Knowing the importance of evaluation when implementing these new strategies in email and social media, we began producing monthly analytic reports, looking at followers, engagement rates, impressions, and page views on each of the four social platforms, as well as timing of spikes in those metrics throughout the month and correlation to chapter events or activity. These reports were shared with the Board of Directors at monthly meetings and available in the shared directors' Google Drive folder. This allowed our Board to develop a targeted engagement strategy ahead of the next month.

Measurement and Results

We were thrilled with the results of our communication efforts in 2019. By regularly engaging with members, we filled the Vice President of Marketing role and added a volunteer committee member. We prioritized social media and grew both followers and engagement across the board, regularly evaluating and reporting on social metrics. Systems were put in place to ensure consistency, accuracy and smooth future transitions in IABC Houston communications.

- **Fill Marketing Leadership:** Accomplished. The Director of Marketing role was filled in early 2019, and a VP of Marketing was in place ahead of the 2019-20 board year.
- **Establish Consistent Processes:** Accomplished. Social media calendars are now used each month and e-blasts are scheduled according to events. As a result of our new communications strategy and email cadence, our open rates jumped from an average of 14.2 percent to 17.7 percent.
- **Recruit Volunteer Committee Members:** Accomplished. A volunteer committee member handles drafting social media posts, while the VP of Marketing handles implementing posts, sending emails and monthly reporting.
- **Reprioritize and Grow Social Media Presence:** Accomplished. We began consistently posting on social media, sharing upcoming event information and post-event insights or photos. The significant expansion of our social media activity has been very effective at reaching external audiences and also encouraged members attending events to tag IABC Houston in their posts, furthering our reach. From April to October 2019, we grew our followers on LinkedIn (86 to 146 or 69.77 percent), Instagram (152 to 178 or 17.11 percent), Twitter (2,107 to 2,154 or 2.2 percent) and Facebook (969 to 996 or 2.7 percent).
- **Set Up Regular Reporting:** Accomplished. The VP of Marketing presented a monthly recap of social media analytics at each Board of Directors meeting. Please see monthly analytics reports in our work samples.

WORK SAMPLES (1-5)

- Email newsletter
- Monthly social media analytics report
- Screenshots of our social media accounts