

IABC Kansas City: Communication Management
Work Plan 2018-2019

Background

In the face of declining membership in recent years, KC IABC sought to increase participation in chapter events and expand KC IABC's reputation as a premier local source of professional development, especially among young professionals, defined as those with less than 8 years of professional experience, and higher-level professionals with 20+ years of experience.

Our communications channels are the first avenues that Kansas City professionals (both members and nonmembers) learn of our events, therefore it was important to maintain a strong and consistent communications presence throughout 2018-2019.

KC IABC began more than 60 years ago as the Kansas City Industrial Editors and has been named IABC Chapter of the Year eight times. KC IABC has diverse membership representing the professions of corporate communications, marketing, public relations, design, videography and photography. Members work in communications for large and small businesses, agencies and non-profits. We also have several self-employed entrepreneurs in our ranks, as well as college students who are looking forward to a career in the field.

Goals & Objectives

Having a strategy to clearly communicate our message and events to members and nonmembers is critical to our success as an organization. Our events are well-attended by mid-level professionals, but we saw an opportunity to better engage young professionals and higher-level professionals.

In 2018-2019, our communications goals were:

1. Market professional development events to increase attendance
2. Increase chapter recognition and brand awareness
3. Launch a new and functional chapter website
4. Engage young professionals through chapter communications
5. Systemize communications processes to ensure consistent communication
6. Recruit a full communications committee

Budget

- **Design Tools:** We started using Canva to create marketing images at a cost of \$315/year for 2 users.
- **Social Media Management:** In October 2019, we created a Hootsuite account at a cost of \$29.99/month.
- **Email Marketing:** Our email marketing services through 2019 were provided in-kind by our sponsor Emfluence, a local digital marketing service provider.
- **Paid Advertising:** We allocated \$50 per month for social media advertising to increase our visibility and reach, especially around chapter events.
- **Website Hosting:** We started using Squarespace to host our new chapter website at a cost of \$216/year. We secured website development support in-kind from our sponsor Level Five.

Implementation

Thanks to concerted committee member recruitment efforts in 2018, the Communications Committee was fully staffed in July 2019 for the first time in several years. Committee members include a VP of Communications, plus heads of Email Marketing, Website and Social Media.

With this added support, we established an editorial calendar of social media content and created a 2019-2020 communications plan to build a strong foundation for future chapter communications.

Website - In October 2019, we launched a new [user-friendly website \(www.kciabc.com\)](http://www.kciabc.com) to effectively communicate chapter events and news. The old website had experienced a number of high-level technical problems for more than a year that had significantly compromised its visibility and practical value. We even had people say they did not join the chapter because of our website issue.

We developed the new website with future board transitions in mind, implementing an easy-to-use website building and hosting platform, Squarespace. Our board members find it much more user-friendly, and it does not require developer support or HTML proficiency.

In addition, we transferred the domain (kciabc.com) from an unreliable registrar to GoDaddy so that future domain issues can be addressed easily. We also added the .org domain to our longtime use of the .com domain so that users can find us regardless of which address they type. The new website is integrated with Google Analytics. In addition, we are able to access better analytics through Squarespace.

As part of the relaunch, the website's text content was completely re-written in a no-nonsense, jargon-free style that speaks clearly to our audience. In addition, instead of using stock photos, we relied on a growing archive of high-res photos we took ourselves over the last three years. The images on our site are representative of our audience itself.

The new website includes a comprehensive events calendar that is updated as new events are scheduled. In addition, the new website allows on-site registration. Previously, event registrants had to leave the site to go to Eventbrite and register. However, Eventbrite updated its integration so that the full registration code can be embedded within the website events calendar. Therefore, no one has to ever leave the site to register for an event. However, because we retain Eventbrite for the SEO benefits.

Throughout the relaunch, we continued to regularly blog about chapter events, past and future, including an [update](#) from the KC IABC chapter president about recent leadership changes at the international level and a [recap](#) of the annual Bronze Quills Awards winners. Blog posts included text-based articles, videos and a combination of the two mediums.

Social Media - We established a paid promotion plan (which we plan to implement in 2020) and engaged a volunteer to identify audience profiles on Twitter/LinkedIn to support our paid promotion strategy.

Our new Head of Social Media conducted real-time posting during the 2019 Bronze Quills awards, which resulted in 1,300 total impressions on Twitter.

Additional social media activities includes:

- Live posted during chapter events to drum up interest
- Implemented Instagram Stories to reach young pros
- Designed engaging social images focused on providing information

Email - We continued to leverage the capabilities of our sponsor Emfluence to issue a regular cadence of email marketing to a distribution list of 1,390 subscribers (both members and nonmembers). We discontinued the monthly newsletter format in lieu of more real-time communicate on chapter news and events.

Brand Awareness - Implemented marketing campaigns to enhance brand awareness, especially within the Kansas City professional community. We started using Canva to design chapter marketing materials with consistent brand integrity and identity, including a new chapter PowerPoint template. We also designed video content (see example [here](#)) to promote chapter news and events.

This year, the #Connect2Comms IABC Joint Regional Conference took place in Kansas City on Oct. 16-18, 2019. The KC IABC chapter conducted a brand awareness campaign to introduce IABC visitors to our great city and build visibility for our chapter. Chapter members attended and live posted from the conference, resulting in 7,600 total social impressions. We also leveraged this campaign to promote IABC Member Month in October.

Systemizing Processes – As our Communications Committee grows, we systemized our processes to allow for clearer understanding of monthly and upcoming communications tasks, develop consistent brand content, and engage volunteers.

- Established a monthly communications calendar
- Held regular communications committee meetings (via phone or in-person)
- Utilized tools such as Hootsuite, Basecamp, Canva, Keyhole, etc.

Recruiting Committee Members – Over the past year, we recruited three (3) new members to the Communications Committee, including a VP of Communications and heads of Email Marketing and Social Media, to achieve our chapter communication goals.

Measurement and Results

Market professional development events to increase attendance	<p>Objective TBD. We are still tracking the total attendance at professional development events throughout 2018-2019.</p> <p>Event emails averaged 448 views and 36 clicks per email.</p>
Increase chapter recognition and brand awareness	<p>Met objective. Announced the new website through a website launch communication campaign via email and social media, and word of mouth during chapter events.</p> <p>We conducted a brand awareness campaign around the IABC Southern Region Conference, which was hosted in Kansas City, through pre-planned posts and live posting using #KCIABC and #Connect2Comms. Resulted in 7,600 total social impressions.</p>

	Promoted IABC Membership Month in October, resulting in nearly 2,000 impressions.
Launch a new and functional chapter website	Met objective. In October 2019, we launched a new user-friendly and accessible website that solved all the issues with the previous site. So far, the new website has received 1,224 unique visitors.
Engage young professionals through chapter communications and paid promotion	Met objective. Implemented Instagram Stories to reach new and young professionals, publishing images on Instagram and gaining 50 new followers.
Systemize communications processes to ensure consistent communication	Met objective. We now have documented processes for content and frequency of email communications, content and frequency of social media and overall processes for adding events to the website.
Recruit a full communications committee	Met objective. In July 2019, we welcomed three new communication committee members. In November 2019, we welcomed two volunteers: a recent college grad to help with website/social media content and a freelance graphic designer to create promotional materials for our 2020 Business Communicators Summit.

Conclusion

We met five out of our six communications objectives during this reporting period. We look forward to expanding upon these objectives to enhance chapter management as this committee continues into 2020 and create a foundation for future success and growth toward our overall chapter goals.

Attachments

- Work Sample 1: Chapter Powerpoint Template
- Work Sample 2: Blog post
- Work Sample 3: Examples of brand engagement on social
- Work Sample 4: Examples of chapter creative
- Work Sample 5: Monthly communications calendar
- Work Sample 6: Website after redesign: www.kciabc.com or <https://animoto.com/play/e5zldv4orZZLqMK4eNHDrw>

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