

Outsourcing Content Management: A 360-Degree View



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Today's Takeaways

- What to consider before outsourcing
- What outsourcing looks like for an association of your size
- What to expect from a partner vs. an internal hire
- Expectations for a partner, from the RFP process to a partnership
- Return on Investment (ROI) expectations



Outsourcing & Bridging the Staffing Gap

Associations recognize they need help, and outsourcing is a practical and cost-friendly option.



- When asked what associations would do with an unexpected 50 percent budget increase in their communications departments, 53 percent of respondents said **they would invest that windfall in hiring more staff.**
- With 49 percent of associations reporting that they are understaffed, **outsourced communications services can help bridge the staffing gap** to ensure their communications plans are engaging, robust and effective.



Poll Question

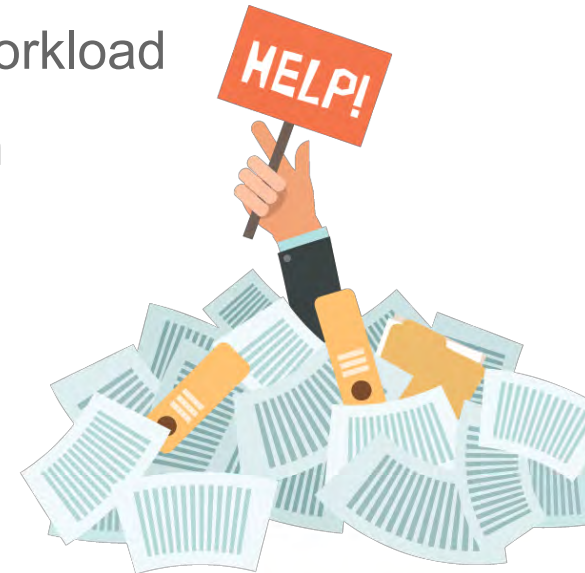
Have you outsourced any of the following communications department responsibilities?
(Select all that apply.)

- Content creation – magazine, website, etc.
- Social media management
- Video script writing
- Newsletter content aggregation
- Other
- No, but we're moving in that direction
- No, we're not convinced it's the right solution for us

When Is It Time to Consider Outsourcing?

The time to outsource is different for every association.

- When you want staff to focus on other areas of membership, such as membership growth and education
- When you need a fresh set of ideas
- When the quality of your communications start to suffer
- When you can no longer manage your current workload
- When the association's bottom line is in question
- When growth is being impacted negatively



Association Communications Challenges



● The Association Adviser Communications Benchmarking Study found that associations truly capable of integrating their communications are more effective than other associations when it comes to engaging their members with better content that considers reader/member/advertiser needs.

● Associations still struggle greatly with content relevancy, communication integration and using data advantageously to learn more about their members. More than one-third of associations believe they have significant challenges when it comes to content.



● While staffing has increased slightly, it does not seem to be increasing sufficiently to handle the ever-increasing communication workload at today's associations.



You're Not Alone

	Creating more relevant content	Understanding reader/member/advertiser needs	Leveraging data for optimal engagement	Engaging new/younger members	Social media engagement	Utilizing content across all channels	Measuring effectiveness	Generating non-dues revenue	TOTAL
SMALL Association <1,000 members	22.0%	11.0%	9.7%	12.0%	5.3%	17.3%	11.7%	11.0%	100%
MIDSIZE 1,000 to 5,000 members	14.1%	13.1%	14.1%	13.6%	3.7%	17.3%	13.6%	10.5%	100%
LARGE (Over 5,000 members)	22.2%	12.6%	17.8%	10.4%	3.7%	13.3%	9.6%	10.4%	100%

N = 626. Source: Association Adviser and Naylor Association Solutions, 2015.

Unique Challenges, in All Sizes



Small is defined as having
≤ 1,000 members

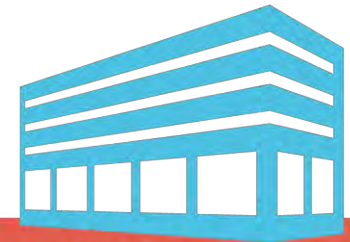
SMALL ASSOCIATIONS

- Feel their communications programs are slow to improve
- Are still struggling to develop a mobile strategy
- Think they need better social media engagement



MID-SIZE ASSOCIATIONS

- Aim to customize member communications and integrate content across all channels
- Actively measure their communications effectiveness



Mid-size is defined as having
1,000 - 5,000 members



Large is defined as having
≥ 5,000 members

LARGE ASSOCIATIONS

- Report having trouble engaging newer members
- Blame their inability to customize member communications on technology shortcomings





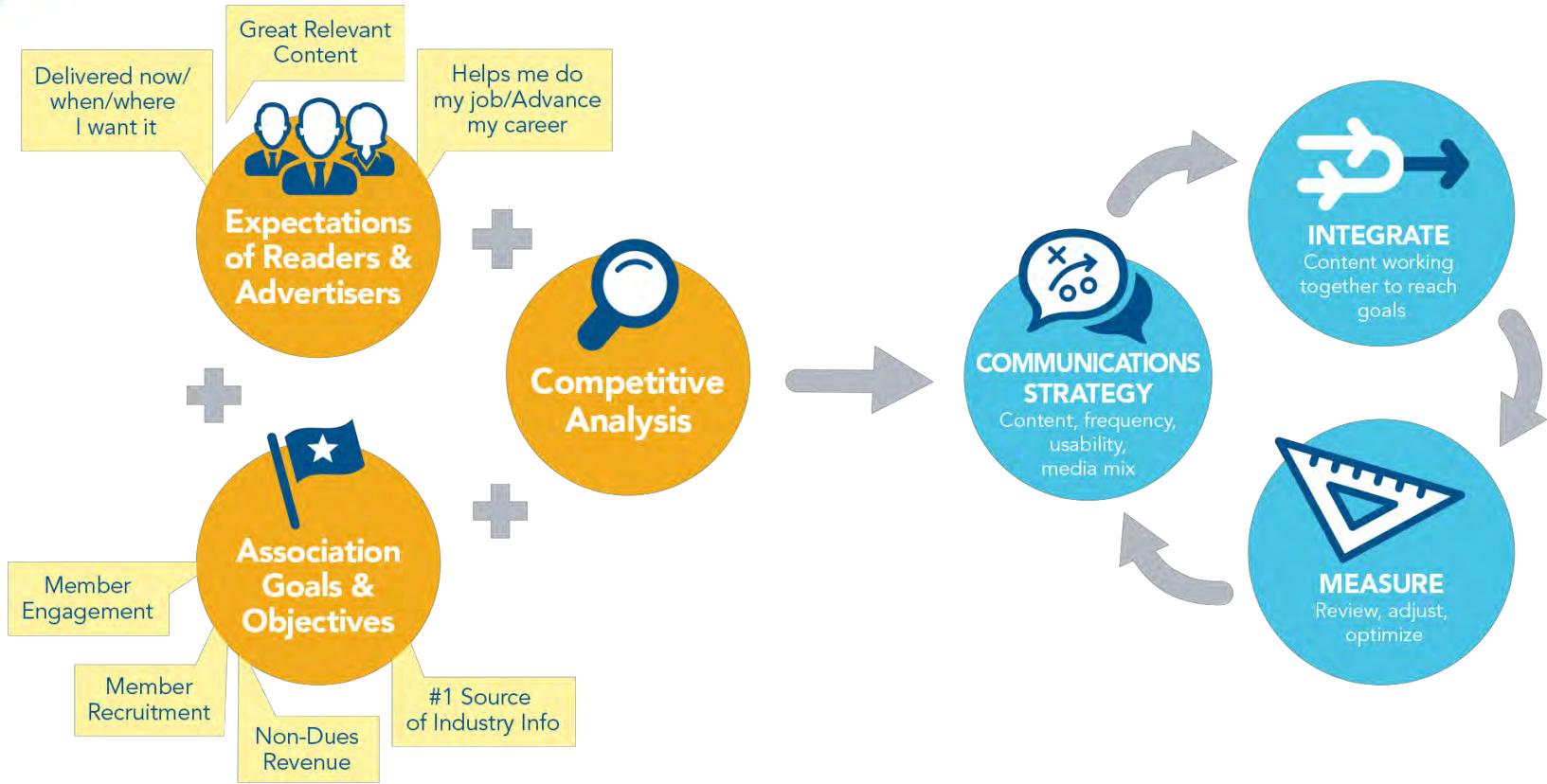
Outsourcing Can Help Combat **ALL** of These Challenges

- An outsource partner should recognize your goals and should align directly with them.
- A partner should create the content your members need and want.
- Outsourcing allows time to be freed up for other essential tasks to be performed in-house, helping combat more challenges at once.

By allowing your communication outsource partner to do what they do best, you're free to do what you do best.

It's a win-win!

Communications Gap Analysis



Outsourcing – Not One Size Fits All

- Outsourcing can come in a mix of forms, such as:
 - Acting as an extension of your staff that can oversee/lead content creation and distribution of your integrated content strategy;
 - Or, as an extra pair of hands who can take direction from you and your team.

Whichever approach suits you, ***the goal should be to have a consistent editorial voice*** in print, online and at your events.

Blog



MHEDA TV



The MHEDA Journal online



I Know I Need a Hand, What Content Might be Outsourced?

Areas to outsource can fall into:

- Content thought leadership (white papers, ebooks, infographics, etc.)
- Social media
- Print and digital magazine and/or journal
- Membership directory and resource guide
- eNewsletters
- Video development, promotion, tracking, etc.
- Anything that involves creating content!

eNewsletter



Social Media



@MHEDAJournal

Outsourcing vs. Internal Hire



Things to consider:

- Cost
- Onboarding
- Culture
- Other benefits and shortcomings

Outsourcing Could be a Great Fit

What Now?

First Things First – Explore Your Options!

- Consider the level of control you want.
- Who would be your partner's point person?
- How does this decision tie into your association's long-term strategy and goals?
- What would be the best mix of pieces to outsource? Would this help with consistency?
- What type of financial commitment are you prepared to make?

What to Look for in a Partner





Poll Question

What would you currently expect from a professional communications outsource partner? (Free write your response.)

The RFP Process

Start to finish:

- Do your homework
- Share your goals and objectives
- Encourage creativity in the proposal process
- Review vendors' work
- Have at least one face-to-face meeting

RFPs should include information on:

- Cost
- Non-dues revenue
- Project deliverables
- Success measurement and evaluation

End Goal: Select the partner that can help your association reach its communications goals today and into the future.



Evaluate Potential ROI Before Selection

- What value is being presented to you through a partnership?
 - Consistency
 - Product excellence
 - Experience
 - Industry knowledge
 - Growth through content
- What are you saving, other than money?
- Is there a chance to earn non-dues revenue?



What Does Content Outsourcing Look Like After You've Selected a Partner?

Content + Value

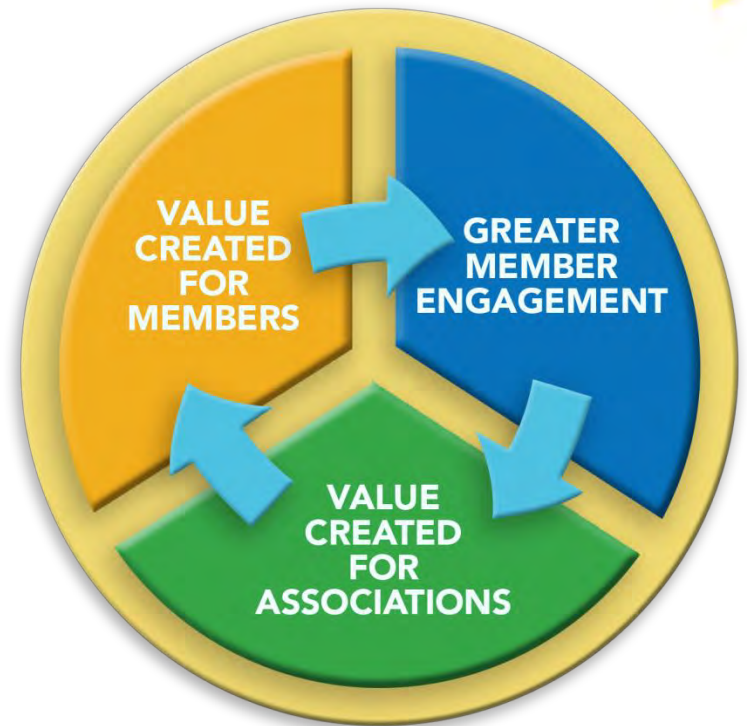


- A team with a focus on content planning that engages you in this process
- Constant monitoring and measurement
- Annual progress reports
- Transparency and clear plans to ensure success
- Product metric improvement
- Follow through, consistency and innovation
- An active participant with your association
- Someone who wants to see your association succeed and thrive

Is Outsourcing Right for You?

What other benefits can your association absorb from outsourcing and will those benefits help your association to reach long-term goals?

When you outsource, you can focus your time, attention and resources on your association's core competencies and spend your time setting new goals and finding ways to achieve them.



Q & A

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