

Webinar Q&A: Developing Your Roadmap for Success: Findings from the Annual Association Communications Benchmarking Study

Q: How do you define "integration"?

A: Our definition of integration includes three key components:

1. Each communication vehicle has a well-defined frequency/message/audience/purpose.
2. Content is cross-purposed and cross-promoted as appropriate.
3. Advertisers have the ability to coordinate their "buys" across all channels.

Integration is cross-pollination of information, across all the different mediums that you have available. Integration also allows for your members to consume your information in the right way for them. By cross-promoting and integrating your information, the member gets to make the choice in how they consume it, leaving them to not have to rely on the magazine or social media. They can find the information where they prefer.

A great way to talk about integration is in connection to the life cycle of content, and that completing your print magazine is not the end of the process; it is actually the beginning, since you have to determine what happens next. You want to have a program that you are going to disseminate the information contained in that magazine and you have to determine how you're going to do that.

Q: How can I get a copy of the report you just referred to that gave more information on integration?

A: You can download the report at www.naylor.com/benchmarking or you can access the companion dynamic platform where you can compare your results to your peers and download the report at <https://communicationsbenchmark.naylor.com/signup.aspx>.

Q: What are ways that associations are engaging young professionals?

A: According to the 2016 Association Communications Benchmarking Report, many associations have been successful in engaging young professionals through a variety of channels. These include building a young professionals group with social media components (43.4%), involving young professionals via a communications committee (38.5%), targeting communications to encourage involvement (36.1%) and offering a qualified young professional a seat on the board (26.5%).

We work with one association specifically that does such a tremendous job of getting young professionals engaged. They have an annual young professional's group meeting where they present some really cool, unique and fresh content, which is less about, "hey, here is how you do your job" and more about each professional's personality and how they fit into the industry and the work place.

This particular association also offers a seat on their board for a young professional, and they also use their young professionals as social media – and/or integration ambassadors. Some younger members who are so bought into the industry and the association will dive into Twitter and retweet everything that comes from that association; there are a few young members who have their own persona, and when you go to events, everyone knows who they are. Because the association has taken the time to engage them, these young professionals can talk about the association and the benefits of joining, such as the enhancement to one's career.

Q: Should a subgroup of "new" or "newer" members be established?

A: That is a fantastic idea. We have been to association events with a new member "boot camp" taking place the day before the event starts, which is a two or three hour session where there are a lot of ice breaker activities. One example is new member bingo, which helps to build an instant connection with some colleagues and the association. This also provides a platform for the association to talk about who they are, what they represent and present what they do for the new member. This lays the groundwork for those new members, who then start the conference with a nice understanding about the association and a realistic view of what the member should expect to get out of their membership.

Using subgroups, or segments, in your communications strategy is also a good idea. By building an introduction campaign for new members, you can accomplish much of what we talked about previously. This segmented campaign can tie into your weekly/monthly/quarterly emails, or it can be a feeder for your more traditional communications platforms.

Q: Do you believe that member publications should be distributed to members only, as a member benefit, or to the public also?

A: There are many factors to consider when making the decision to distribute your member publication to your members and the public. For example, if you share your publication with everyone, your publication is no longer a member benefit. However, an alternative to this would be to provide your membership publication once or twice per year to the public as part of a membership drive. This strategy not only drives engagement with the public, but it also increases the value for your advertisers while keeping the publication a member benefit throughout the year. This strategy also keeps the cost lower than if you mailed to both members and the public year-round.

Another thing to consider is your digital edition. Rather than providing this for members only, this could be open to the public while your print magazine continues to be for members only. The digital edition would serve as a membership growth tool, while providing industry relevance and leadership.

Q: How do you promote the directory to suppliers so that they purchase more advertising? Explain the value to them?

A: A great way to promote the directory to suppliers is to highlight that they're not buying an ad for one month or one quarter in your magazine; instead they're acting as a resource to your members for a whole year. If I buy the back cover of your membership directory, that is a pretty good investment for me as a supplier.

Also, if you go 100 percent online, you might lose a lot of revenue. We have yet to establish the same revenue as print directories in connection to online directories. This certainly brings about a strong case as to why you should keep the print publication.

If you don't already have folks on your team who are 100 percent dedicated to "how do I generate the revenue for my membership directory," you're also missing an opportunity to bring in more revenue.

Q: Are there any good resources for standard survey/questionnaires?

A: Naylor works with associations to develop custom surveys that address their specific challenges. With that said, there are a fair number of "standard" questions worth asking. [Contact us](#) for more information.

Q: The benchmarking study covers Facebook and Twitter. Have you looked at Snapchat or Periscope?

A: In the Benchmarking Study, we did cover the large social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube. We did not cover SnapChat or Periscope this year, however they are great topics for next year's study. If there are other topics you would like to see covered in next year's communication benchmarking study, please [let us know](#).

Q: Do you recommend separate social media identities for the association and its products (i.e.: one for association, one for magazine, one for show)? Or, do you recommend one social media identity for everything?

A: We do recommend separate identities for your products, such as your magazine or association TV, if your products have a strong following from your membership.

In connection to the [Constructor example](#) shared in the webinar, Associated General Contractors of America has their own Twitter handle and so does *Constructor* magazine. The magazine works in tandem with the association, retweeting each other's information; they follow each other and a lot of the same individuals and groups. They work really well together.

Q: It is hard to post to several social media sites per day; can you make some suggestions for doing so?

A: I recommend using technology when you can, such as Hootsuite, to schedule everything at the beginning of the week. This allows you to plug everything in and schedule each post so that you know that you have a post going out each day/multiple times per day. This addresses the need for consistency.

Certainly, if something happens that is news worthy that needs to go out immediately, you're going to make the necessary posts on Facebook, Twitter, etc. and adapt your plan as the news breaks. If you have a schedule post or tweet set, you would then login to your Hootsuite account and reschedule that post for a later time or date.

Q: Do you have a suggestion for managing a team of social media contributors so that everyone can see what is scheduled, that tweeted what, etc.?

A: When you have a team managing your social media presence, it is essential that they all work from a master social media calendar.

This makes it easy to access who is posting what, where and when, and if immediate news worthy information does come about, the person posting it knows who to reach out to in regards to rescheduling the previously planned post.

This form of content planning also works well with Hootsuite (mentioned above) since each team member can plan ahead for their posts, track them in the master calendar and schedule them accordingly.

The master calendar should live in a shared area so that there is always one live copy. If there isn't a shared documents area on your computer server in the office, Google Docs is a good substitute. If you aren't comfortable with each team member updating their own submissions, you could always task one team member to manage the document and therefore that person would also serve as a final filter to ensure that posts are spread out properly, being posted regularly and are being submitted to the master calendar for review/tracking.

For more information on social media, we recommend that you access the live recordings and slides from our June webinar, [Picturing Success with Instagram](#), and our October webinar, [Tweet So Others Will Listen: How Associations Can Maximize Their Use of Twitter](#).

If you have further questions, please contact Jill Andreu at jandreu@naylor.com.

Please note that the answers contained in this document reflect the views of Naylor Association Solutions, and are not necessarily the same views held by all industry professionals.



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