

Developing Your Roadmap for Success:

Findings from the 2015 Association Communications
Benchmarking Study



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TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION



- Today's communications landscape
- Key findings and trends from Naylor's Association Communications Benchmarking Report
- Recommendations for bringing clarity to your communications strategy

FINGER ON THE PULSE

Creating a two-way dialogue through the *Association Adviser* media brand, combined with our industry-wide benchmarking study, allows us to develop deeper insights to help you be more effective.

2015 Benchmarking Survey Participants:
Number of Surveys Completed: 704

Majority of Respondents: Executive Director,
Communications VP/Director





SOCIAL MEDIA FREQUENCY



In 2015, social media frequency surpassed traditional online communications, and improvements were made in “cutting through the clutter” and targeting/segmentation. Associations still struggle with content relevancy, communication integration and using data advantageously to learn more about their members.

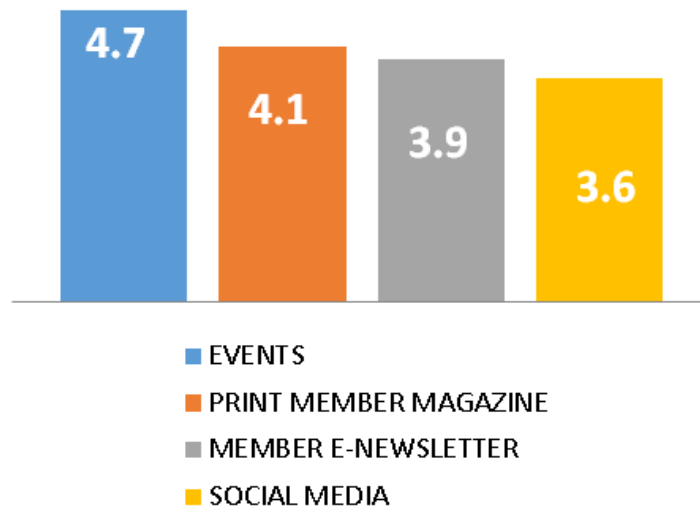
In 2011, associations believed they were doing a better job of integrating their communications than they actually were.

In 2012-2013*, associations greatly underestimated communication overload and clutter.

In 2014, we found that associations that integrated their communications are more effective when engaging members.

SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

Highest Value Communication Vehicles



Associations are communicating more frequently through social media than any other communication channel, yet roughly one-third of respondents report they are still trying to formulate their social media strategy (32.5%), and in comparison with other channels, it still ranks at the bottom...but it's gaining traction.

Year-over-year change in perceived value of association social media

(ranked by 2015 most valuable)

	2011	2014	2015	1-year change	4-year change
SOCIAL MEDIA OVERALL	3.35	3.54	3.57	+0.03	+0.22

INTEGRATION NOT AS STRONG AS IT ONCE WAS

Selected trends in association communication integration, 2011 to 2015

	4 years			1 year		
	2011	2015	CHANGE	2014	2015	CHANGE
Associations that consider their communications fully integrated	20.4%	6.1%	-14.3	10.5%	6.1%	-4.4
Associations that consider their communications "somewhat integrated"	50.4%	56.0%	+5.6	55.0%	56.0%	+1.0
Subtotal (all or partially integrated)	70.8%	62.1%	-8.7	65.5%	62.1%	-3.4
Communications not yet integrated, but planning to	9.9%	10.9%	+1.0	9.7%	10.9%	+1.2
Not integrated	19.3%	27.0%	+7.7	24.8%	27.0%	+2.2

N = 674 in 2011; 1,031 in 2014; 704 in 2015. Source: Association Adviser and Naylor Association Solutions, 2015.

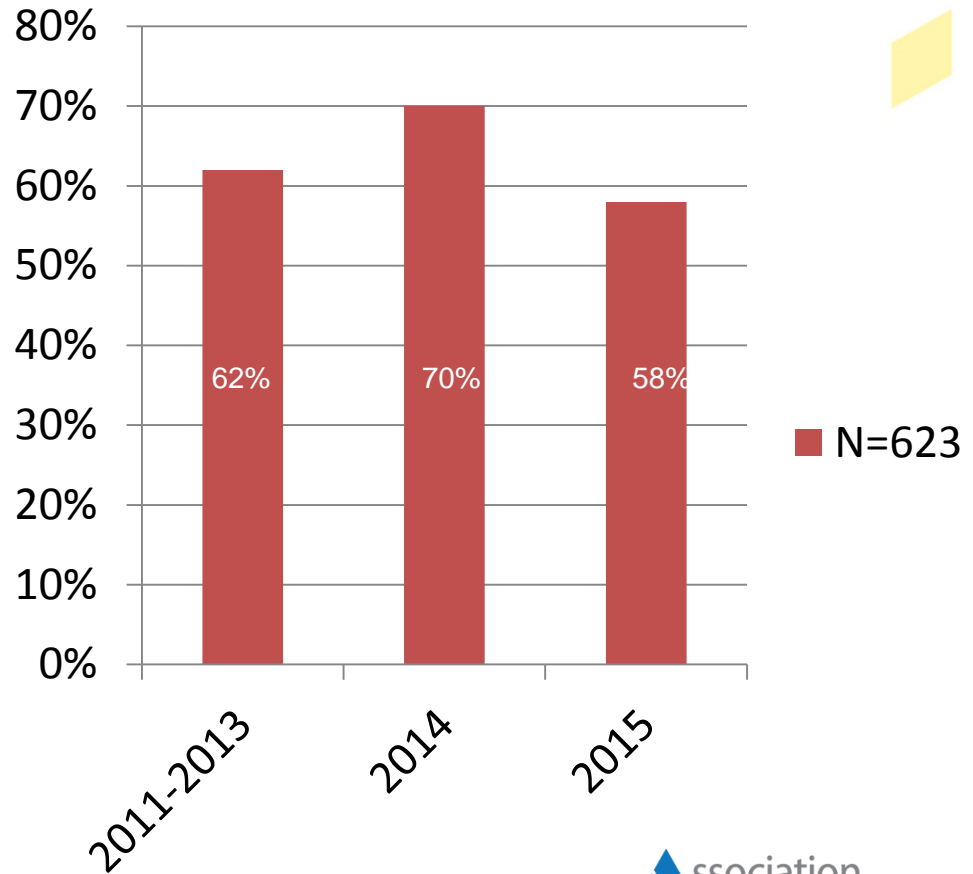
Please note: rounding errors <> .1% may occur.

- negative trend
- positive trend

AN UPWARD TREND



Association executives surveyed who believe members read less than half of the information the association sends them.



N=628. Source: Association Adviser and Naylor Association Solutions, 2015.



POLL QUESTION



Does your association produce a printed membership directory?

- Yes
- No



MEMBER DIRECTORIES HOLDING THEIR GROUND



Nearly three in five (59.4%) respondents agree that their membership directory is a valuable resource for association members – with one-third (32.3%) strongly agreeing.



Nearly 3x as many people believe their print directory is a valuable resource to suppliers vs. those who recognize difficulties with staff time and technology.

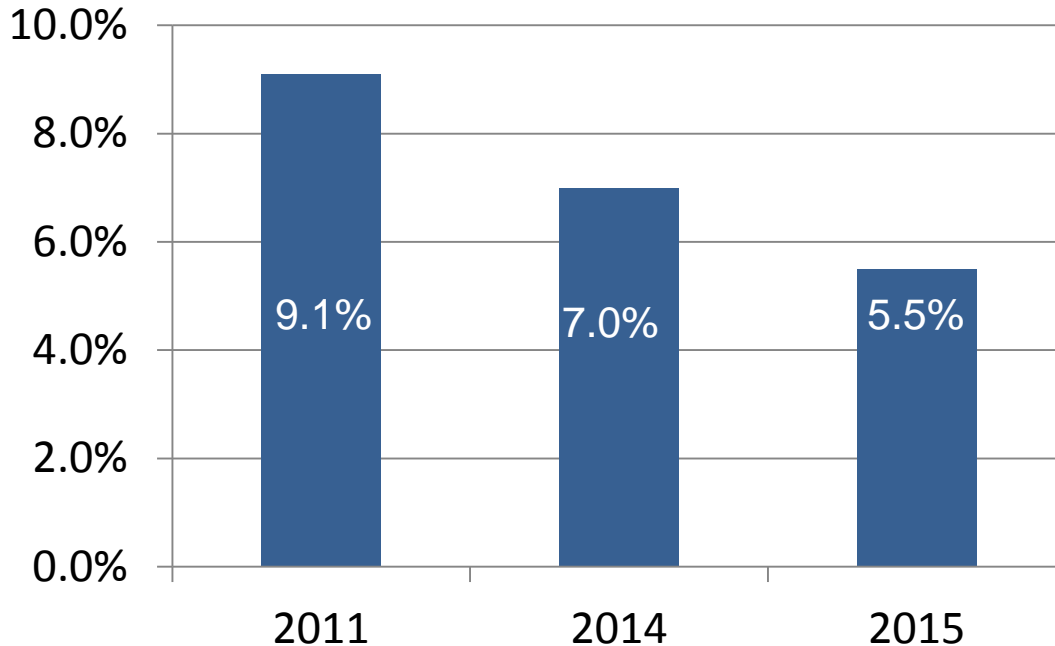
**Based on results of 2015 Association Communications Benchmarking Survey.*



BEST IN CLASS

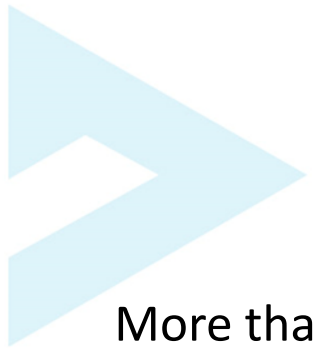


Rate Communications as Best in Class Relative to Peers



About half of associations (55%) self-rated their member communications “above average” or “best in class”
Only one out of 18 associations (5.5%) believe their communications are truly best in class – a decline since 2011.

N=915 in 2014; 628 in 2011; 632 in 2015. Source: Association Adviser and Naylor Association Solutions.



TOP CONCERNS



More than one-third of respondents said their single biggest communication challenge is either:

- “Creating more relevant content” (19.5%) or
- “Utilizing content more effectively across all their communication channels” (16.5%)

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (64.6%) believe that engagement with their communications would increase if they

- “Really understood the types of content members expect.”

CHANGE IN STAFF SIZE

Data suggests a slight increase in full-time staffing for association publishing and content creation teams since 2014, and fewer associations trying to get by with only one staff member (or none).

- 41.7% of associations feel understaffed overall
- 43.5% feel their publishing/content creation teams are understaffed
- 43.6% feel their social media teams are understaffed

N=703. Source: Association Adviser and Naylor Association Solutions, 2015.



TOP MEMBER COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

Positive Changes

- Combating information overload: 4% improvement vs. 2014
- Overcoming technical barriers to reach members: 0.2% improvement vs. 2014

Opportunities for Improvement

- Communicating member benefits effectively: 3.7% decline vs. 2014
- Customizing communications to member sub-groups: 8% decline vs. 2014

No Change

- Engaging young professionals

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





SMALL ASSOCIATIONS ARE MORE LIKELY TO...



- Feel their communications have shown little or no improvement over the past five years.
- Feel they need to develop a real mobile strategy.
- Feel they need better social media engagement.
- Feel they need to integrate messaging consistently across all communication channels.





MIDSIZE ASSOCIATIONS ARE MORE LIKELY TO...



- Think about how to engage new and younger members, but less likely to offer young professionals access to their communication staff or committees.
- Think about how to utilize content across all channels, and how to better deliver content that's targeted to member preferences.
- Measure the effectiveness of their communications.



LARGER ASSOCIATIONS ARE MORE LIKELY TO...



- Report having trouble engaging newer members.
- Blame technology shortcomings for their inability to customize member communications.
- Not offer young professionals a seat on their board.



WHAT'S AN ASSOCIATION TO DO?



ASSESS – TOP RECOMENDATIONS



1. Build better content and greater engagement by asking *what* they want and *why*.
2. Take a closer look at who your stakeholders are and what they are telling you – and what they are not – to uncover areas for improvement and set your goals.
3. If you don't have a social media strategy, create one.
4. When it comes to your digital communications, make every message count.
5. Stop under-utilizing video. Yesterday.



ASK MEMBERS WHAT TYPE OF INFORMATION THEY NEED/WANT

2011 Rank	2014 Rank	2015 Rank
1. Industry news/trends	1. Lobbying/advocacy	1. How-to/best practices
2. Lobbying/advocacy	2. How-to/best practices	2. Career/professional development
3. Career/professional development	3. Industry news/trends	3. Industry news/trends
4. Member news	4. Career/professional development	4. Lobbying/advocacy
5. Coverage of industry events	5. Actionable data	5. Actionable data

N=524 in 2011; 842 in 2014; 704 in 2015. Source: *Association Adviser* and Naylor Association Solutions. Please note: rounding errors <> .1% may occur.

DETERMINE WHICH ACTIVITIES ARE LIKELY TO GENERATE THE MOST R.O.I.

Upgrade Options	2015 Response	Percent Change
Improve quality of existing communications	53.3%	-0.6%
Upgrade publishing tools, technologies or processes	47.0%	-0.7%
Hire more staff	46.2%	+2.2%
Develop a real mobile strategy	39.2%	+5.4%
Put more muscle behind social media	31.9%	+1.0%
Launch new communication vehicles	26.7%	-2.6%
Other	5.8%	n/a

Note: Total exceeds 100% due to multiple response option.

N=835 in 2014; 704 in 2015. Source: *Association Adviser* and Naylor Association Solutions, 2015.



REMEMBER: IT ALL WORKS TOGETHER!



Communication	Rating	1-year Change	4-Year Change
Events	4.71	+0.6%	7.3%
Online/digital	3.94	-3.1%	-0.2%
Print	3.81	-5.0%	-4.0%
Social media	3.57	-0.8%	+6.6%

N=524 in 2011; 842 in 2014; 704 in 2015. Source: *Association Adviser* and Naylor Association Solutions, 2015. Please note: rounding errors <> 0.1% may occur.



POLL QUESTION



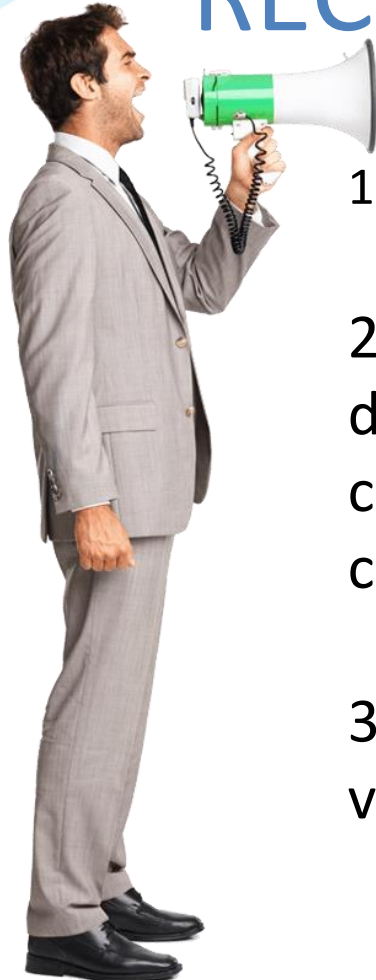
Do you integrate print and digital communication on a regular basis?

- Yes, always.
- Yes, but could do a better job with it.
- No

INTEGRATE – TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

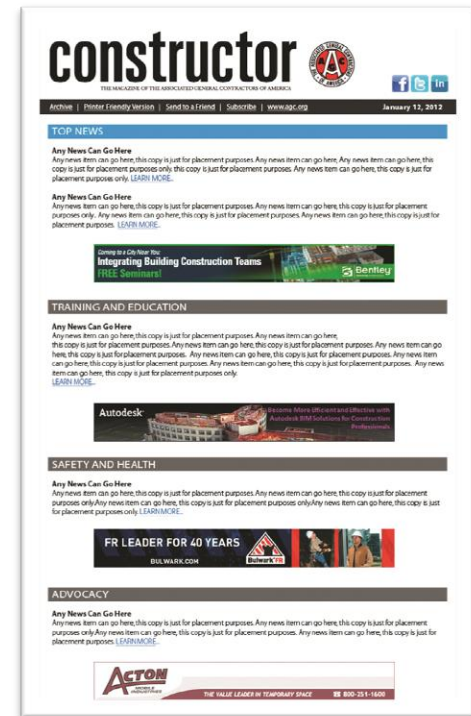
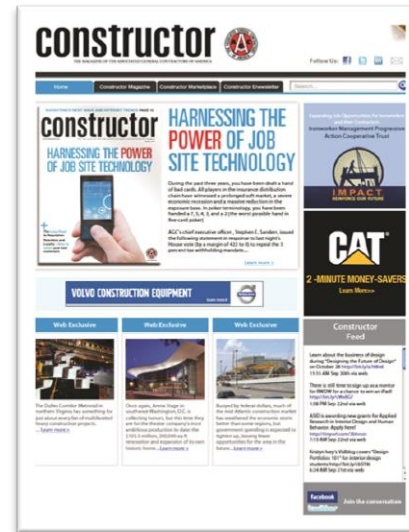


1. Designate an Ambassador of Integration.
2. Review available communication vehicles and determine how much more powerful a message can be if it's repurposed across multiple channels.
3. Make sure your content and communication vehicles are ready for consumption on the go.

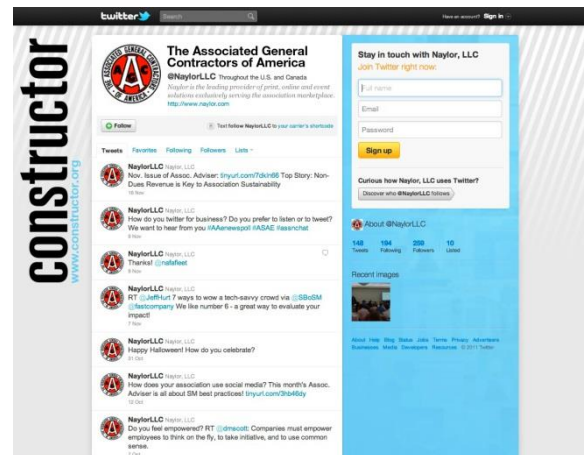


INTEGRATE

Constructor Website



Constructor Social Media

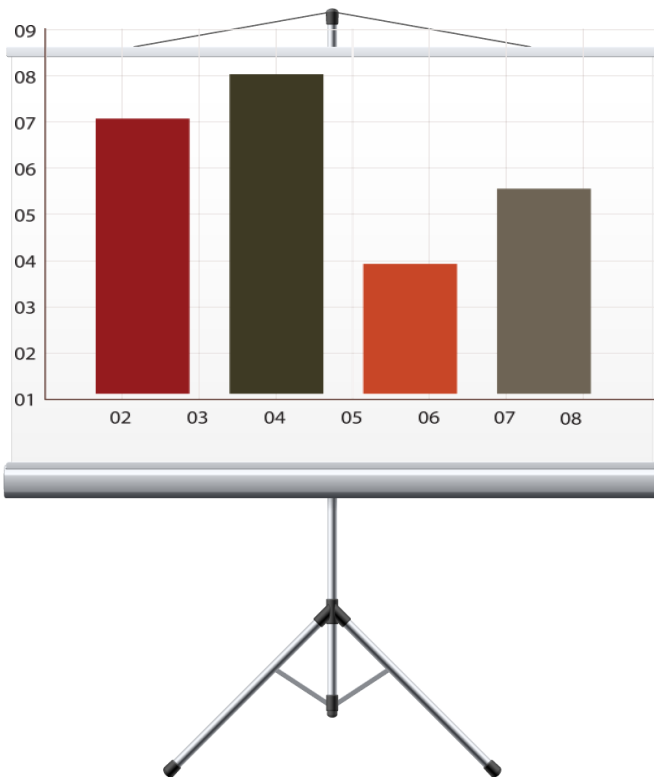


Constructor Magazine Print and Digital

Constructor eNews



MEASURE – TOP RECOMMENDATIONS



1. Don't wait to measure – incorporate it as an everyday practice.
2. Track your results, and if you didn't perform well in certain areas, make changes immediately.



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