

Insider Insights: A 3-Part Series Based on our  
2015 Association Communications Benchmarking Study  
**PART 1: SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE, AND CONCERNS  
OVER CONTENT RELEVANCE, ON THE RISE**

**2011**



In 2011, we learned that many associations were operating in silos and believed they were doing a better job of integrating their communications programs than they actually were.



In 2012-13, we discovered that associations greatly underestimated the degree to which overload and communication clutter were preventing them from reaching their members.

**2012-2013**



**2014**

In 2014, we 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.



**Key changes for 2015?**

Social media usage continues to rise, as do concerns over creating and distributing relevant content.

**2015**



**10x  
PER MONTH**

A majority of associations communicate with members through social media more than 10 times per month. That makes content strategy a top concern.

The declining popularity of topics that have traditionally been association content staples (lobbying/advocacy, member news, event coverage) hints at how a changing member demographic is shifting the informational requirements of the association audience.



**Top Concerns**

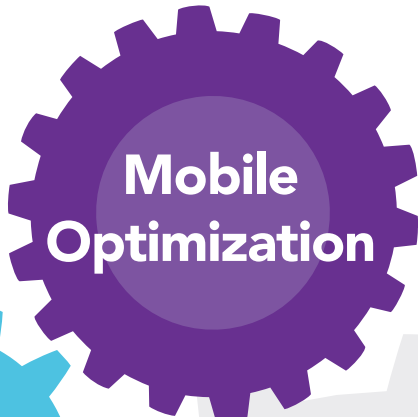
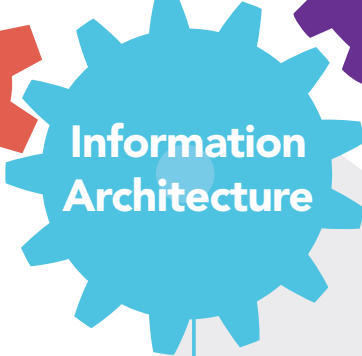
**TOP CONCERNS:**

- Content Creation
- Content Distribution

More than one-third of respondents said their single biggest communication challenge is either "creating more relevant content" (20%) or "utilizing content more effectively across all their communication channels" (17%).

**Associations made improvements in important areas such as these:**

Although concerns over information overload/communications clutter is still overall the #1 association communications challenge, it does appear to be on the decline. In addition, more associations report their communications as "above average" or best-in-class" and believe that fewer members are ignoring what the association sends them.



The inability to help members find info quickly was cited as a challenge by only 41.4 percent of respondents in 2015, down from 47.8 percent in 2014.

More than half of associations surveyed have optimized their websites for mobile

**Associations still have a great deal of work to do in areas such as these:**

The inability to communicate member benefits effectively was cited by 60 percent of respondents in 2015, up from 55.3 percent in 2014.



The inability to customize communications for different member subgroups was cited by 55.1 percent of respondents in 2015, up substantially from 45.6 percent in 2014.



The percentage of respondents who said their organization's communications were "fully integrated" dropped to 6.1 percent in 2015, from 10.4% in 2014 and 20.4% in 2011!



**How does your organization compare? You can download the full report and even take the survey yourself (with instant results!) at [communicationsbenchmark.naylor.com](http://communicationsbenchmark.naylor.com)**

Since 2010, Naylor has partnered with Dr. M. Sean Limon of the University of Florida's Warrington College of Business Administration and numerous state societies of association executives to identify and deconstruct the top communications concerns cited by North American trade associations and professional societies.

Over 700 surveys were completed in 2015, with a majority of the participants being either the association executive director, or the vice president/director of communications.