

Application: Communication Management			
Chapter	IABC Ottawa Division 1 - Large	Chapter Board Term	July 1 to June 30
Region	Canada East	Timeline	1 July 2019 - 31 December 2020
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1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

With over 200 members, IABC Ottawa brings together communications, marketing and creative professionals to develop skills, create connections, and learn about best practices all within a welcoming, active and diverse community.

Our Value: IABC Ottawa focuses on connecting you with the people and insights you need to thrive in your career. Whether you are a communicator, marketer, or creative professional, we connect you to the opportunities, resources, people, and information you need to advance.

Our Benefits: Joining IABC Ottawa means you enjoy unparalleled access to events and programs that hone your strategic communication skills and expand your network with the following benefits: monthly professional development events, our Members Connect Mentorship Program, Free Monthly Member Meet Ups, Networking Nine Events, Professional Certification, Volunteer Opportunities, and Jobline.

Chapter History/Challenges: Established in 1976, the Ottawa chapter of IABC has a rich history of striving for effective chapter management to benefit our members, community, and leaders. Despite stable finances and membership growing, we had a few challenges in the season that impacted doing everything to the degree that we would have liked, including: **1. Maintaining steady board member & chapter engagement. 2. Balancing member-only events that provide member value, while extending our reach to untapped audiences 3. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on overall program delivery.**

2. OVERVIEW

IABC Ottawa has traditionally focused its communications plan around promoting upcoming chapter professional development events and membership month at the international and chapter level. It has relied heavily on its Facebook, Twitter and e-newsletter to communicate with members and the local communications community. With the recent introduction of a LinkedIn business page and an Instagram account, the Marcom portfolio during the 2019/20 year focused on increasing the amount of content it developed and shared to **build community among the early, mid and senior career professional groups on each social media platform.** A social media management tool was purchased to assess month-over-month growth and identify areas of opportunity to grow the following and engagement on each platform.

3. GOALS & OBJECTIVES

In collaboration with the Board, a social media strategy was developed to identify tactics and an execution plan for engaging members and the broader community. Several objectives were determined: (a) Refine the current Marcom social media guide, last updated in 2012, (b) Create a social media request form to streamline portfolio communications, (c) Create a stock photo image library with photos and videos from previous IABC Ottawa events and activities, (d) Purchase a social media management system, (e) Increase social media followers and engagements, (f) Develop evergreen blog posts, and (g) Distribute a monthly newsletter.

To measure the success of the plan we developed key performance indicators for the 2019/20 season: (i) Distribute 10 newsletters, (ii) Develop monthly social media analytics reports, (iii) Grow our social media followers by 2% each month, (iv) Create 10 blog posts, (v) Update the Marcom social media guide by the end of the season, and (vi) Create a stock photo image library by the end of the season.

4. BUDGET

At the beginning of each season, the Board holds a strategic planning session and develops an operational budget to support these goals. For the 2019/20 season we budgeted \$2,800 to execute marcom activities that support all of the chapter's portfolios. This included the purchase of a social media management system, digital advertising spend to promote key campaigns/initiatives, website hosting, design tools, and an email marketing system. For the start of the 2020/21 we budgeted \$1,100.00 to execute Marcom activities due to a completely digital program as a result of the COVID pandemic, with the focus on maintaining our new abilities to connect with members and promote the chapter to the communications community in Ottawa.

5. IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

Overview: New this season the Marcom co-chairs recruited and trained new volunteers and assigned each volunteer a specific portfolio. The team held monthly meetings to discuss ways to contribute to National/International Days of Observe that were relevant to IABC's mandate, and integrated a social media management system to develop a monthly flow of frequent and unique content. Marcom and Website worked in parallel by coordinating strategic rollouts of new content across all digital media platforms. Challenges: The Marcom portfolio is one of the heaviest portfolios in the chapter as all other portfolios funnel information through the chapter's social media channels. This has caused: high-volunteer turnover, periodically inactive social media accounts, and infrequent newsletters. Then with the pandemic these challenges became amplified as volunteers weren't able to commit time to the portfolio the way they had before as they were dealing with new stressors as a result from COVID.

Training and Process Development:

Social Media Management System: Using the social media management system that was previously implemented, IABC Ottawa's digital platforms were frequently analyzed for trends and opportunities for content development and membership engagement. The tool would also support the marcom team with scheduling content based on best practices within the industry and identify opportunities for additional engagement with our current members and prospective members.

Marcom Request Form: In September 2019 the Marcom request form was revamped from a Word document to a Google Form and was reintroduced to the Board to help the Marcom volunteers have autonomy over their work and to support the co-chairs with dividing up incoming tasks. It also helped the other portfolios identify what information was needed to promote their activity/initiative across the chapter's digital media channels (WS#1).

Training Package: By June 2020 the Marcom co-chairs developed a training package to help onboard new volunteers. The package was a comprehensive, multi-page document that new Marcom volunteers would be briefed on before starting their role. It included: (i) overview of roles, (ii) approval pipelines, (iii) explanation of tone and style on social media and in the newsletter, (iv) how to provide live coverage of an event on Twitter and Instagram, and (v) where to search for timely stories/learning opportunities for social promotion. This helped set the volunteers up for success in their roles (WS#2).

Internal Program:

Member Survey: Member feedback is actively sought out and every summer a member survey is distributed to members to help inform the upcoming season. The member feedback survey sent to members June 2020 received over 60 responses, which asked members how they wanted to receive information. A majority of people identified a newsletter and LinkedIn as the best ways to engage with them.

Social media: With a new digital media strategy, developed in fall 2019, the goal was to create more content for our members to engage with on social media. On a monthly basis live social media coverage during board meetings, event recaps and recordings (if programming was digital), and questions posed to the members

helped pull the curtain back on Board-level decisions and provide members the opportunity to engage directly with the leadership team and the volunteers.

Newsletter: Continuing on the success from the previous system, a high-level schedule was developed in fall 2019 determining the dates each month a member newsletter would be distributed to over 200 members. The newsletter consisted of: (i) periodic updates from the President, (ii) upcoming member-only events, (iii) member profiles and board spotlights (iv) a link to the monthly The Voice podcast episodes, (v) details about professional certification information sessions and exams, (vi) volunteer of the month, and (vii) a recap of IABC International and Canada East Region news. It was a collection of the latest news and information members may be looking for (WS#3).

External Program:

Social Media: At the start of each month the marcom team would brainstorm (in person and by video call) upcoming National and International Days of Significance and tie timely campaigns to recruitment opportunities. By creating unique content tied to trending days on social media, such as National Volunteer Week or National Grammar Day, we would aim to increase the reach of IABC Ottawa's name to online audiences who haven't heard of the chapter before. The hope would be to grab their attention and pull them in to wanting to know more about the chapter. We also developed and shared monthly Board spotlights to highlight the expertise of leaders from the chapter and source and share timely articles and posts from thought leaders from different IABC chapters and communications professionals from around the world. This helped strengthen the chapter's online credibility and the work tied directly to the third IABC pillar of "advancing the profession."

Website: During the summer of 2020 the Website, Marcom and Membership portfolios collaborated on a new website structure, designed with a member-first focus to make information easily accessible. A dedicated working group revised web text and imagery to reflect the newly developed value proposition and used photography taken at past events to highlight the diversity and range of our members. This new format was mobile friendly and took a bold approach to communicating the member value of IABC. We also integrated a comprehensive events calendar on the website to allow people to easily see what upcoming events we had planned.

Branding:

Social Media Guide: By May 2020 the Marcom co-chairs rewrote the chapter's social media guide, which hadn't been updated since 2012. The guide was a comprehensive, multi-page document that was based on IABC's ethics and brand and IABC Ottawa's bylaws and policies to help ensure all content being distributed across our platforms followed the same tone and style. The guide had multiple sections, which included: (i) a list of all current social platforms, (ii) who can speak on behalf of the brand online, (iii) types of acceptable content to post, (iv) target audiences, (v) language and tone, (vi) creative assets in terms of colours and typography, and (vii) ethical guidelines and what to do if you see someone using our platforms that are harassing or non inclusive in nature. The Board reviewed the guide and approved it and it was distributed to all incoming Marcom volunteers (WS#4).

Imagery: In fall of 2019 new social cards were developed using the IABC brand guide as a starting point, that helped brand IABC Ottawa online and provide consistent and clear communications to the community about who IABC Ottawa is and what they stand for. All materials were in compliance with accessibility standards as defined in Ontario, Canada which helped reaffirm our commitment to inclusivity. A stock imagery library was also developed and maintained during the 2019-20 season to help the Marcom and Website portfolio keep track of their in-person/digital photography and use the imagery on all IABC Ottawa materials. This highlighted the diversity and uniqueness of members and prevented us from using generic stock imagery.

Hashtags: For every single event unique print-outs (for in-person) and PowerPoint templates (for digital) were developed to encourage members and the broader communications community to engage in online conversations. The hashtags: #IABC Ottawa and #IABC OttPD were tracked in Hootsuite and engaged with by one of the Marcom volunteers. During the CMA reporting period, over 100 conversations happened beneath these hashtags.

6. MEASUREMENT & RESULTS

Objective A: Refine the current Marcom social media guide (OBJECTIVE MET)

- Onboarded and retained five volunteers from the end of the 2019/20 to the start of the 2020/21 season (four for the Marcom portfolio including a new: Director of Email Marketing, Director of Corporate Content, Director of Blogging and a Director of Website Management for the Website portfolio.)
- Two volunteers joined as a result of the relationship between IABC Ottawa and the local college.

Objective B: Create a social media request form to streamline portfolio communications (OBJECTIVE MET)

- Streamlined communications at the end of the 2019/20 season for all six portfolios, which allowed us to use the new event feature on the website for our members.
- Gave Marcom volunteers more autonomy over their work.

Objective C: Create a stock photo image library (OBJECTIVE MET)

- Frequently used by the Marcom portfolio at the start of the 2020/21 season to allow for consistency of imagery. All templates now pull from this stock imagery and it is maintained on a monthly basis.

Objective D: Purchase a social media management system (OBJECTIVE MET)

- 10 social reports were developed during the 2019-20 season to highlight key insights.
- Findings impacted how content was created and positioned online for members.

Objective E: Increase social media followers and engagements by 2% (OBJECTIVE ALMOST MET)

- Social following increased significantly during the 2019/20 season: (i) Twitter: 47791 followers (up from 4657) (ii) Facebook: 1301 followers (up from 1273) (iii) LinkedIn: 400 followers (up from 188) (iv) Instagram: 292 (up from 180).
- During the 2019/20 season there was an average of 1% engagement each month on the chapter's social media channels.

Objective F: Develop 10 evergreen blog posts (OBJECTIVE ALMOST MET)

- 2019/20 Board members developed Board Spotlights that were shared across all social platforms.
- A list of topics - September 2019: Emotional intelligence; October 2019: Mental health; November 2019: Finding your career path; December 2019: Managing up; January 2020: Networking; February 2020: Leadership.

Objective G: Distribute 10 newsletters (OBJECTIVE MET)

- Distributed: September 2019, October 2019, November 2019, December 2019, January 2020, March 2020, April 2020, May 2020, June 2020, July 2020 to over 200 members and over 1,000 communications professionals in Ottawa.
- All newsletters had an average open rate of 25% and a consistent click-through rate month-to-month.