

# Chapter Management Awards Entry

## IABC/BC - Communication Management



Based on 2019–20 chapter year

## Background

Communication for an association full of communication professionals... welcome to our *Commun-inception* entry!

IABC British Columbia (IABC/BC) is fortunate to be known as one of the largest IABC chapters in the world. Our audience is diverse and represents the full range of IABC: Fellows, SCMPs, ABCs past regional chairs, international committee members, gold quill award winners, blue ribbon panelists and more. As such, we aim to model best practices in internal communication to our membership.

The challenge when communicating a variety of opportunities to a wide audience like this is time. Like those of you reading this, we volunteer our time and, more often than not, it comes in relatively short supply. With that in mind, take into account the fact that most of the volunteers who are developing our chapter programming are facing time limitations as well— a recipe for chaos. Last-minute promotional requests, not enough lead time, incomplete briefs—these are all challenges that we worked to mitigate this year.

Thanks to a team of MarCom co-directors including a returning director, and a tenacious director of Volunteer Services, we built a large strong team of volunteers to rise to the occasion. Under the direction of their co-directors, they kept our social events full, our webinars highly registered and our visual communication top-notch.

We were also fortunate to have strong membership survey data in place to inform our planning. And while we plan for and support the full range of internal communication activities, according to our membership survey, email remains the top channel for driving event attendance and programming uptake. As such, you'll see us pay special attention to maximizing this channel in our plan. We treat email as both a proactive channel—for regular membership communication— and a reactive channel—driving participation in chapter offerings where needed, depending on uptake levels.

## Portfolio SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The IABC World Conference coming to Vancouver had a positive impact on member engagement</li><li>• Strong Volunteer Services portfolio means steady stream of potential new volunteers</li><li>• 40th chapter anniversary as a chapter priority = a good excuse to celebrate and look back</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• COVID-19 stress at work</li><li>• Juggling time-sensitive workloads. Last minute requests.</li><li>• Half-baked marketing request forms. Chaotic updates.</li><li>• Basecamp can be a challenge to navigate and manage</li><li>• Website - Old. Not Secure. Tired. Clunky.</li></ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Smoothen processes and cleanup of disorganized and untidy Google Drive.</li><li>• Motivated volunteers who are ready to lead on projects - will lessen load for 2020/21 directors</li><li>• Social Platforms - Tonal shift has increased engagement (esp on Twitter, FB, IG)</li><li>• Further refine processes to nip last-min requests from other portfolios</li><li>• Volunteer workload check-ins / resources reality assessments</li><li>• Pre-planning / calendars - mapping out weeks in advance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diminishing organic social engagement (pay to play)</li><li>• Volunteers ghosting part way through year</li><li>• Competitive (not collaborative) relationship with other associations</li></ul>

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## Goals and Objectives

Associated Chapter Goal	Portfolio Objective	Benchmark	Target	Outcome or Output
<b>Grow.</b> Increase brand awareness and membership base	Increase social media followers (Twitter / LinkedIn / Facebook / Instagram) by 10%  Increase Connect newsletter subscribers by 10%	Twitter - 4,589 Facebook - 727 LinkedIn - 758 Instagram - 254  929 Subscribers	10% increase	Output
<b>Engage.</b> Increase engagement by providing valuable member & volunteer experiences	Increase Connect newsletter average open rate to 30%.	24%	30% Average Open Rate	Output
<b>Modernize.</b> Foster a culture of forward-thinking digital communicators	Increase total blogs published by 10%	9	10	Output

## Budget

1. \$300 volunteer recognition
2. \$600 website hosting
3. \$4,000 software licenses and fees

## Implementation

### Process, Process, Process!

This year, before jumping into any tactics, we dove into what we'd argue is the sexiest of MarCom activities: formalizing processes! We started at the director operational level. Oftentimes, when you have two co-directors, there can be fuzzy areas in terms of workload and ownership. So we developed a RACI chart to help clarify the accountabilities of each portfolio co-director. RACI charts, as you'll see in our work sample, plot out all areas of accountability within a portfolio, then identify who is responsible, accountable, consulted and informed on each item. In a portfolio that includes e-newsletter, website, social media, event promotion and more, this RACI chart came in super helpful. It also helped us communicate to other board directors which co-director to contact for what kind of MarCom services.

### Planning Ahead

#### Content Strategy

As an association of communication professionals, we had plenty of room to grow in terms of content strategy. This year, we started with a staple: the content calendar. We broke down content into topics and then we set expectations with the board around planning ahead and using this shared tool to guide us. Then we reinforced these expectations throughout the year.

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### Bringing Order to Chaos: Email Communication

Most leaders of large chapters will tell you that they've heard the following once or twice: *"IABC sends me so much email!"* Between IABC International, and all the programming we promote at the chapter level, there is a lot of email. So how do we utilize our most effective communication channel without over-burdening our audience. This is a channel that deserved its own specific calendar—and that's precisely what we did. We set up an internal email calendar and then socialized a new process whereby this was the first place we all looked before planning to promote anything.

### Social-Ready Copy

Asking a social media manager to read through lengthy event plans and then synthesize social media marketing copy is fully acceptable when they are doing it as a paid job. But when your social media volunteer is working 4 hours / week, you want to maximize their time. So we developed an easy-to-use social media copy template that volunteers could use to pre-draft their promotional social copy for the social media volunteers. This template clearly listed the requirements for each channel, and prompted for best practices like the inclusion of relevant hashtags and handles.

### SEO Audit

Having the resources to even consider SEO was a win for us. One of our co-directors happened to be taking a course, and implemented their learnings in their chapter volunteer role. They teamed up with a fellow classmate to audit our SEO score, and to make recommendations for keywords in future blogs. This influenced the blogs we decided to write for the remainder of the year.

## Issues Facing Us All: COVID-19 and BLM

### COVID-19

The impact of COVID-19 on our volunteers and our members was clear. Everyone was strapped for time and energy. People were getting sick; people were dying. This had a major impact on our communications. Firstly, one of our co-directors had to step back and their work had to be delegated. Then our chapter programming had to completely change. We got some feedback around the tone of celebratory chapter awards and 40th anniversary messaging being off-match for the audience experience at the time and, as a result, we adjusted our tone and content to be more supportive to our audience.

As a team, those on the board who could give the time rallied together to collaborate on the messaging for a *message from the chapter President*. Aimed at supporting and retaining members in a tough time, this message outlines the changes we'd be making to our programming, and the numerous ways we would be there to support our members. The message drew numerous positive responses from stressed out communicators.

### Black Lives Matter

Creating a safe, respectful and equitable place where everyone belongs is hugely important to IABC/BC. When forming our board, we were deliberate about finding diverse voices to shape our future. But what happens when a group of our membership is continually and systematically marginalized? What happens when this community is faced with a moment like the murder of George Floyd, starting a movement. Black Lives Matter is an important movement, a necessary one, and in line with IABC's commitment to diversity.

As a board, it was important to us that we backed up our commitment to diversity and voice our support. We want to benefit from years of black excellence among our volunteers and our board leadership in the future—and that means showing up for these members when they're in a situation like the isolation of COVID-19, plus the pain of George Floyd and the too many who came before him. See our work sample for the message we sent to members.

## How We Worked

### Volunteer Team

#### Directors

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- Rumnique Nannar, Director, Marketing & Communications (board member)
- Nicole Grima, Co-Director, Marketing & Communications (half-year)

### Direct Report Roles

- Digital Marketing Manager
- Content Specialist/Marcomms Coordinator
- Email Marketing Manager
- Website Manager
- Creative Services Manager
- Content Manager

### Agile Methodology

Because new MarCom requests came in weekly to promote IABC/BC programming, we borrowed a few principles from agile. We ultimately worked in one week volunteer team sprints. Each Sunday, we'd post the tasks for the week ahead, assign them to volunteers who happened to have available *that* particular week (because life happens and every week is different! And set our tasks for the week.

## Measurement

Portfolio Objective	Benchmark	Target	Result
Increase social media followers (Twitter / LinkedIn / Facebook / Instagram) by 10%	Twitter - 4,589 Facebook - 727 LinkedIn - 758 Instagram - 254	10% increase	Surpassed targets! <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• TW -- 4,661 followers</li><li>• FB -- 802 likes</li><li>• LINK - 951 followers</li><li>• IG - 357</li></ul>
Increase Connect newsletter subscribers by 10%	929 Subscribers		1,154 Subscribers - CONNECT
Increase Connect newsletter average open rate to 30%.	24%	30% Average Open Rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open rates average = 24.1%</li></ul>
Increase total blogs published by 10%	9	10	Achieved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10 blogs published</li></ul>

## Results

This was a high output year where we made major strides towards becoming more organized. Several key campaigns achieved high conversion, including our Rise & Yoga virtual event and our COVID-19 crisis resources campaign which achieved 30% click rate. We were more proactive this year with 10 blogs solicited from our team (Jenna, Sheldon) and outside partners/board members (Ashleigh from SFU, Melissa, Adam). We had a wonderful volunteer team that took ownership of projects, and more in-person check-ins with volunteers. We're proud to have established processes that can be instituted for years to come.

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