

# Division 1: IABC Edmonton Chapter Innovation

## Introduction

The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Edmonton chapter serves the city of Edmonton and area. The chapter's membership is large in number (nearly 500) and diverse in discipline, touching all aspects of communications -- from government relations to marketing, and everything in between. There are two similar professional associations in the Edmonton area, the Advertising Club of Edmonton (ACE) and the Edmonton chapter of the Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS).

Stemming from IABC's overall #1720 strategy, IABC Edmonton's 2019-20 overall strategic focuses were to:

- Continue to advance the communications profession in Edmonton, Alberta by building greater connections between the chapter and other industries, and by providing meaningful and valuable experiences for our members;
- operate a high-performing, highly engaged board of volunteers who all drive toward providing member value; and
- increase awareness and meaningful connection to IABC beyond the local level (i.e., nationally and internationally).

## About IABC Edmonton's Innovative Chapter Management Tool

With a large distributed board of over 20 people, chapter leadership quickly realized that, in order to ensure effective and sustainable chapter governance for the current year and into the future, we would need to develop a foundation of coordinated tools and processes to support portfolio strategic goals, and contribute to creating a rewarding volunteer experience for board members.

In order to action this effectively, two major steps were taken:

- 1) A Senior Director, Special Projects role was created and given to an individual with a keen and fulsome knowledge of how to build intranets and working systems for organizations;
- 2) A cost-free platform that was already attached to the current Google systems used by the board was identified as an easy, turnkey solution for this non-profit, volunteer-driven organization. This was done under the Google for Nonprofits program; and
- 3) All board files and emails were migrated, and an intranet was created -- making the volunteer experience seamless, and the information transfer process streamlined.

## Goals & Objectives

Goals	Chapter strategy alignment	Supporting objectives
Develop a foundation of coordinated tools, processes and operational insight to support overall and portfolio strategic goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance Profession</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To have 100 per cent of IABC Edmonton's Board of Directors adopt the use of the new Google platform (email and drive system) by the end of the board year (June 30, 2020).</li> </ul>
Ensure effective and sustainable chapter governance for the current year and into the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Communicators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To have 100 per cent of IABC Edmonton's Board of Directors adopt the use of the new Google platform (email and drive system) by the end of the board year (June 30, 2020).</li> </ul>
Contribute to creating a rewarding volunteer experience for board members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Connections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To have 100 per cent of IABC Edmonton's Board of Directors express satisfaction with the new Google platform system by the end of the board year (June 30, 2020).</li> </ul>

## Implementation

The implementation process involved navigating through steps outlined by Google, and then figuring out how to roll the new suite out to the board. This is how we did it:

1. We applied for an account with Tech Soup, which pre-qualifies non-profits for discounted software and technology resources, and proved our non-profit status under the Alberta Societies act by providing our Certification of Status.
2. With a valid organization registered with Tech Soup, we applied for the Google for Nonprofits program. This involved a series of qualification rounds and additional information
3. Finally, we were approved and given our Google for Nonprofits account, which provides indefinite free G Suite accounts for unlimited users with 30GB cloud storage each, professional email addresses at our domain (name@iabcedmonton.com), shared drives, Gmail, Calendar, Drive, etc, and video conference for up to 100 people with Google Meet. These G Suite licenses are the full commercial versions and include a full suite of admin and security tools and granular access control.

Once the platform was established, we needed to get our information, resources and -- most importantly -- people migrated to the system.

We coordinated with our 20+ person board and supported them through moving to the new accounts. We migrated all documents to the new location and closed down access to the old files. We then designed a system of shared drives with different permissions -- one locked down private drive for board information and a second public drive which can be used to share documents with volunteers, members and the public.

Once the migration was complete, we were able to focus on creating a centralized intranet site for board members. G Suite afforded new opportunities for board collaboration and information sharing. Information in the board drive is organized by portfolio to make it easy for those who are creating the content, but this makes cross-portfolio collaboration more difficult, especially for new board members. We used Google Sites to create a private board intranet, bringing together commonly referenced information into a few carefully curated pages. This serves as additional context and a record for future boards.

## Challenges

- **The cobbler's children often go without shoes:** The board was previously not structured to be able to address internal work logistics and communications -- ironically, given this focus was the lion's share of some board member's day jobs. Dividing some of our focus onto ourselves was a mindshift for much of the board, as our focus has always been primarily on our members.
  - Solution: It was important that leadership illustrated how streamlining internally would benefit members by providing a more seamless transition between boards; an easier handover between portfolios, minimizing disruption; and a better volunteer experience through strengthened institutional knowledge.
- **Old habits die hard:** Many board members have been with IABC Edmonton for nearly a decade. Changing the way things work -- down to a separate email address -- was tough for some, as many were accustomed to a certain style of working.
  - Solution: Consistent key messages around the importance of using the provided solutions, including email, were key in moving the needle on adoption rates. Additionally, all board emails were sent and meetings were scheduled using only the tool, meaning board members needed to access these resources in order to do their jobs. We were able to monitor those who logged into their emails, and provide additional supports for those who did not log in to ensure they had what they needed to be successful.

## Budget

	Costs		Revenue	
	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted	Actual
Registry fees (pulling Certification of Status)	\$35	\$35		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$35</b>	<b>\$35</b>		

## Evaluation / results

Objective	Objective met?
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To have 100 per cent of IABC Edmonton’s Board of Directors adopt the use of the new Google platform (email and drive system) by the end of the board year (June 30, 2020).	Yes - 100% of board members successfully adopted the system
To have 100 per cent of IABC Edmonton’s Board of Directors express satisfaction with the new Google platform system by the end of the board year (June 30, 2020).	Yes - as expressed through monthly check-ins and ongoing surveys

## Work Samples

Work sample #1: Intranet Main Page