

2018 Chapter Management Award Application – Work Plan

Chapter: IABC Manitoba

Category: Professional Development Work Plan

Division 3: Small Chapters

Programs

Planning began for the PD program in July 2017, based on a full analysis of the IABC/Manitoba 2016/17 annual membership survey. We examined the PD priorities identified by members, the “hot topics” of interest, recommendations, and barriers from the 2016-17 year.

Our approach to PD and selecting content was 100% driven by the membership survey results and by offering topics that would appeal to different experience levels. Our planning and implementation were guided by maximizing member value and meeting diverse member needs.

In the PD section of our May 2017 membership survey, 79% of members said they wanted to “Have hot topics or sensitive issues”, and 53% wanted us to “Alternate between evening and afternoon.” The #1 barrier to attending PD events was “Day or time inconvenient.” A top priority for the PD program was “Different formats, not just luncheons.”

In terms of attendance and revenue, we kept our goals reasonable – an increase in attendance and revenue-generation. Following a highly successful 2015-16 year with low leadership retention into 2016-17, we felt it was significant to maintain momentum as opposed to over-promising and under-delivering.

While each session was a stand-alone event, we viewed the program holistically, seeking to offer relevant content in a variety of areas. Throughout the planning process, we asked ourselves, “How would someone feel if they attended all PD sessions this year? Would one topic be different from the next? How would each session respond to market needs?”

Our chapter leveraged our leadership connections to provide member value. Each member of the PD team drew from their professional networks and those of Board to secure speakers and venues at no/reduced charge, vendor discounts, and no-cost promotional opportunities.

Providing value

In response to member feedback, our chapter offered unique topics that reached a larger audience. Breakfast, luncheon, and evening events all provided networking time for career development.

Our Chapter President attended every single event, introducing himself and promoting IABC and IABC resources as career-enhancing. PD committee members and other Board members engaged with participants, sharing their career stories. In our scrolling Power Point as participants arrived

and in opening and closing remarks, we featured upcoming events, IABC webinars, benefits of membership, volunteer opportunities, and the certification opportunities.

With limited resources, we were successful in building community. Each session topic was broad enough to appeal to business communicators at all levels. The quality of our speakers ensured that throughout their presentations, they offered strategies and tactics that could be implemented by new hires and seasoned pros.

We also made sure to include speakers from different industries: economic development, non-profit, human resources, public sector (Crown Corporation and government healthcare), entrepreneurs in photography and human resources, plus an instructor/consultant in philanthropy and event planning, and consultants in personal branding/style and management, and a local marketing communications agency.

Finally, it was critical that we included IABC Manitoba's Past President in our programming. Sylvie Laurencelle-Vermette, CMP served as a panelist in one of our sessions, where she spoke to the advantage and benefit of the CMP designation.

Goals and Objectives

OBJECTIVE # 1 To hold 6-7 revenue-generating professional development sessions in the 2017-18 IABC Manitoba programming year with increased attendance over 2016-17.

OBJECTIVE # 2 To have an increase in program satisfaction over the 2016-17 year based on member survey.

Why were these goals set?

Following a highly successful 2016-17 year with low leadership retention into 2017-18, we felt it was more important to maintain momentum as opposed to over-promising and under-delivering. In terms of attendance and revenue, we kept our objectives reasonable – an increase in program satisfaction and attendance and revenue-generating.

Chapter History, Market Environment and Other Factors

IABC Manitoba is a small chapter located in the heart of Canada. The majority of our membership is based in Winnipeg, but there are a few members in rural communities. Our membership tends to hover around the 75-85-member mark, depending on student enrolment through one of our location communications programs. Our membership base is predominantly females with more than 10 years of experience.

We have a local Canadian Public Relations Society chapter in Manitoba, with a similar membership size. We work collaboratively with CPRS Manitoba on event scheduling so as to not overlap with one another.

Budget

As a small chapter, our budget is limited. We increased our ticket prices \$10-\$20 for our smaller events, and \$50-\$100 for our full-day conference. We provided discounts for members and students. While we exceeded our budget for expenses, we also exceeded our budget for revenue. For one event, we oversold our venue and provided a very basic lunch which had a strongly negative effect on our final results and will be discussed further. Clearly, we operate in a market where people expect more than what they pay for.

Revenue		Expenses	
Ticket Sales	\$7,102.31	Room Rental	\$250.00
Sponsorship	\$2,250.00	Food, Drinks, Event Supplies	\$4,896.83
TOTAL BUDGET	\$9,352.31 \$6,500.00	Service Charges: Taxes, Venue gratuities, Eventbrite, PayPal	\$812.51
		Speaker Honoraria/ Thank yous	\$462.78
		Board event tickets	\$66.24
		Advertising	\$94.84
		TOTAL BUDGET	\$6,615.39 \$4,900.00
NET REVENUE	\$2,736.92		

Methods of Communication and Transparency

We used a communications mix of digital and print to promote each event, using a build-up pattern culminating in a mini-blitz right before the registration deadline. By working closely with our Communications team, we monitored and boosted organic posts on Facebook and Twitter that were performing well with high engagement. One tactic we found effective on Twitter was to tag organizations with a strong affinity for the content we were presenting.



We also tagged micro-influencers in our tweets, such as a well-known local Creative Communications instructor and agency owner to amplify our content.



IABC Manitoba @IABCManitoba · Jan 20

Hello @kentonlarsen! Psst...we are bringing together a #Winnipeg #PersonalBranding #socialmedia #career powerhouse panel @SylVermette @LaineJubinville @StyleHunterFox @PearlAngelini...one night only. #CreComm students \$20 & grads \$45 buff.ly/2mJO5YC



A unique advantage that we maximized was the fact that our Vice-President was the Student Life and Engagement Coordinator with the University of Winnipeg's Professional, Applied and Continuing Education, which includes a marketing and public relations diploma program. She made presentations to full-time and part-time classes, and placed posters on campus.

While we leveraged committee and Board networks to implement our program, we were transparent in all our dealings that our requests for speakers and discounts were in our volunteer capacity with IABC Manitoba, and not personal favours. Our promise of benefit to participants was not explicit – we avoided language such as “guarantee” or “guaranteed results.”

Channels

- Eventbrite
- Branded graphics for each event that included LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook posts, plus website, Twitter, and Facebook headers
- Website – event post and blog posts with “sneak peek” of speakers and panelists
- 1 or 2 e-blasts to members
- 8-10 Facebook posts
- 10-15 Tweets
- Instagram posts
- LinkedIn post
- Live tweets from IABC Manitoba, PD committee members, Board, participants, and speakers
- Post-events photos on Facebook and Twitter, thank yous to sponsors and speakers, IABC Manitoba blog posts



speaker's presentation with our followers. Halfway through the year, we added live Instagram stories.

Implementation: Strategies and Tactics

Our overall strategy to implement each event was to keep costs low by leveraging committee and Board network relationships.

In terms of tactics, speakers were given a gift card honorarium ranging from \$25-\$50. Our November and February events were hosted at committee members' workplaces at no charge, while discounts were negotiated for the October, January, and April events.

Our banner was used at each event and therefore included in numerous social media posts, enhancing the IABC brand.

Session 1 – October 16, 2017 – Luncheon – 31 attendees

Communications in Changing Times with Leah Janzen Regional Director, Communications, Media, Public and Government Affairs for the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority

In recent months, major organizations and companies in our market had experienced significant restructuring, relocation, and realignment. Private, public, non-profit – no matter the sector, we knew that internal and external communications challenges came with these changes. How you communicate change can make or break how the media, the public, and even your own staff, view your organization. The session offered key insights and behind-the-scenes intel from the WRHA's communications lead.

Engaging different audiences: A major advantage to this session was that our speaker had members of her team in the audience with her, who responded to questions from the audience.

We've continued to grow our social media presence this year via our Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn pages, and continue to promote our events through those channels.

We asked our speakers to let their followers know they would be speaking at our event, which generated the highest level of engagement. We always link back to the speaker's website, Facebook page, or Twitter in our promotions. As well, we ask all board members to help promote events through their own social media networks.

At the beginning of each event, we shared our Twitter handle with attendees and encouraged them to live Tweet during the event. Multiple board members also live Tweeted and shared interesting tidbits from the

This enhanced the session's value as participants gained the point-of-view of new and mid-level communicators as part of a larger team.

Key quote from evaluation surveys: "One of the best PD communications events I've ever attended in Winnipeg AND nationally. Bravo!"

Session 2 – November 29, 2017- Breakfast – 17 attendees

Marketing Beyond Borders with Carly Edmundson, Executive Director of Marketing & Communications for CentrePort Canada

CentrePort Canada is North-America's largest inland port. More than 50 new companies are in various stages of development on more than 300 acres, representing more than \$300 million in capital investment from all over the world. Our speaker explored key elements of CentrePort's inter-cultural marketing strategy, their successes and lessons learned with special consideration for expanding beyond provincial and national borders.

Engaging different audiences: The event attracted mid-to-senior-level communicators from special interest groups in manufacturing, transportation, and economic development. A number of participants were unaware of IABC Manitoba and took part in our subsequent events.

Key quote from evaluation surveys: "Everyone was so welcoming and inviting. As a person who is new to these types of events I felt very comfortable."

Session 3 – January 24, 2018 – Evening – 26 attendees

New Year, New You: Personal Branding

Panel moderated by: by Kristin Hancock, Manager of Communications, College of Registered Nurses, IABC Volunteer of the Year 2016-17



A professional photography studio in a 19th century warehouse with exposed brick and plumbing was the backdrop for this event. Using our PD team's networks, we assembled a powerhouse panel: IABC Manitoba Past President **Sylvie Laurencelle-Vermette, CMP, Regional Communications Manager for Manitoba and Saskatchewan** with national broadcaster **CBC's Radio-Canada, Monique Andrew, aka Style Hunter Fox**, one of Canada's top fashion bloggers, **Laine Jubinville, Talent Acquisition Leader National Leasing**, and **Pearl Angelini, Co-Owner of**

Aspire Studios and Past President for the Manitoba Branch of the Professional Photographers of Canada (PPOC). We covered personal branding and style in-person and on social media in conversational style full of stories and best tips for success.

Engaging different audiences: Because it was held in the evening, this event attracted entrepreneurs and a high number of student members. We successfully recruited three students from this event to chapter leaders for the current year.

Key quotes from evaluation surveys: “Topic was awesome and relevant.” “Format was fun and easygoing.” “Venue had the wow factor.”

Session 4 – February 28, 2018 – Luncheon – 24 attendees

Hijack & Influencer Marketing Online with Jill Knaggs, Communications & Marketing Champion, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters

In 2017, Canada celebrated our 150th birthday. Our speaker presented an expert case study on making a big impact with minimal resources using a hijack marketing campaign around Canada 150 to capitalize on buzz and excitement, and actively engage influencers, education, businesses and more. She shared how to increase share of voice, employee participation and online engagement without a big spend in a step-by-step guide so comprehensive the room didn't stop taking photos of slides.

Engaging different audiences: We were truly proud that this session was led by an IABC Manitoba member who in fact approached the chapter with the idea. The event was over-sold and strongly appealed to the special interest group of not-for-profit communicators.

Key quotes from evaluation surveys: “The quick event made it easy to attend without disrupting my day.”, “Jill is an incredibly engaging speaker.”

Session 5 – April 27, 2018 – Full Day Conference – 29 attendees

Inside Out: A Holistic & Integrated Approach to Communications

Panel moderated by: by Kristin Hancock, Manager of Communications, College of Registered Nurses, IABC Volunteer of the Year 2016-17

Our second annual full-day conference was another success. **Chris Downey, Leadership & Organizational Development** spoke to bringing your “whole self” to work. **Chrystal Robert, Principal Consultant The Sponsorship Experience & University of Winnipeg PACE Instructor** discussed sponsorships from the non-profit and corporate perspective – asking and giving to optimize your brand. **Kirsten Neil, Senior Communications Officer, CBC**, showed us how to uncover hidden communications gems for authentic content marketing. Our major sponsor, **UpHouse, agency owners Alex Varricchio and Kiirsten May** demonstrated how to look outside

your own industry for messaging and branding inspiration. All panelists remained for the entire day resulting in a rich Q & A discussion to cap off our conference.

Engaging different audiences: Inside-Out attracted senior level communicators and offered an abundance of time for networking. We offered group ticket pricing, retaining and growing our relationship with our single corporate member.

Key quotes from evaluation surveys: “Great speakers – learned something new with each session.” “Engaging, useful information I can implement.”

Obstacles

We encountered two major obstacles over the year. One was a loss in revenue from allowing participants to pay at the door, approximately \$200 from one individual. For our final two events, we adapted our policy and no longer permitted pay-at-the-door.

The second obstacle was that our PD Manager stepped away from the role after three events. No replacement was available.

Measurement

We used three tools to measure our results: event attendance, event evaluations distributed and collected in-person at each event, and our annual member survey. Our Chapter President provided \$5,000 in gift-in-kind services by analyzing the evaluation data, plus designing, deploying, analyzing, and reporting on the member survey.

The event evaluations were the most valuable, as they provided immediate feedback to build on through the year. We also leveraged the positive comments from the evaluations in our sponsor asks and thank yous. This cross-function integration proved successful.

Results compared to Goals and Objectives

To our projected goal of increasing customer satisfaction, we did notice a slight drop in satisfaction from 4.3 (out of 5) in 2017, to 4.1 in 2018. We did not meet our objective of holding six or seven events. We did meet our goal of increasing PD attendance over the previous year, up to 127 from 118.

In examining the slate of events this year, we can pinpoint our February event as an outlier, which drove down our satisfaction score, and there are some concrete reasons for this:

- 1) The January event, while successful and enjoyable, was logistically very difficult for the team – catering was brought in from outside from multiple suppliers. Coordinating a panel took a lot of volunteer time as well.
- 2) In February, our PD Manager had left the team. With no replacement, we made the decision to run a very stripped-down PD luncheon, with Subway catering, at a free location. Additionally, we oversold this event, and the room was uncomfortably over

capacity. As a result, event satisfaction scores were lower, and this held over to the final membership survey score.

Improvements

The PD and Sponsorship Director roles were filled by the same person. The PD Coordinator also did double duty in Sponsorship. Our PD Manager stepped down after our third event. As a result, we missed revenue-generating and relationship-building opportunities in our community.

For 2018-19, we have recruited more leaders to support both portfolios. After not meeting our goals, we fully recognized the interdependence of PD and Sponsorship.

The most critical information we gained about our target audience is that their satisfaction levels are strongly driven by value-for-money. We cannot provide a low-budget meal, even at a low price point of \$35. Expectations are high to deliver an enhanced event experience.

We are submitting our award application for two key reasons:

- 1) We are extremely proud to have delivered a PD year 100% based on member feedback in terms of offering events at different times of day, on topics highly relevant to our market, that engaged different audiences.
- 2) We believe that our experience this year will be valuable to other chapters.

Submitted by:

Roland Pajares, MA
IABC/Manitoba Past President (18/19)
Suite 1910-360 Main Street
Winnipeg MB R3C 3Z3
E: rpajares@nrgresearchgroup.com
T: 204-989-8987