



IABC CommuniCon – 2018

Background/Event Strategy

In early 2017, the IABC Saskatoon chapter identified that there was a need for a conference targeted towards local communicators in the Saskatoon and area market. This event would not only connect communicators to one another, but would also deliver value to current IABC Saskatoon members, by offering a high-quality day of professional development.

In previous years IABC Saskatoon had partnered with the Saskatchewan Professional Marketing Association (SPMA) to co-host an annual marketing and communications conference (FUZE). The primary goal of the conference was to generate new memberships for both organizations. However, over the years, due to the different fee structures of IABC Saskatoon and SPMA memberships, SPMA saw continued growth in their membership, while IABC Saskatoon membership stayed the same. Eventually IABC Saskatoon and SPMA dissolved their conference partnership, with SPMA continuing to host FUZE. This left IABC Saskatoon with a gap in conference offerings, but also provided the opportunity to fully plan and execute a conference that would be specifically tailored to communications needs in Saskatoon and area.

This conference would provide attendees with the ability to learn more about how business communicators are evolving on and offline, as well as provide attendees with access to top-level, respected presenters, as well as local communicators that would host hands-on, breakout sessions.

The goals of the event were to:

- Deliver a high quality program aimed at professional communicators
- To generate revenue / Not lose money
- Demonstrate why communicators should be at the heart of every organization
- Learn, share best practices, network and have fun

Objectives

1. Attract a minimum of 50 participants to the event.
2. Ensure the overall event rating achieves a minimum satisfaction of 80% from attendees.
3. The IABC CommuniCon committee rates their experience as positive or very positive in being part of the event planning and participation process

Event Management

A planning committee was struck for IABC CommuniCon through a number of different means. Four of the committee members are current board members of IABC Saskatoon. Two were previous members of the board, and two members were volunteers who had expressed interest in being involved in planning a large chapter event. We were all familiar with each other in some capacity (personally or professionally), so it made for the most cohesive and collaborative planning group.

Event roles covered the important areas of:



- Event chair
- Event coordinator (including venue, catering and audio visual needs)
- Speaker/Program coordinator
- Finance coordinator
- Communications coordinator (two volunteers)
- Sponsorship coordinator
- Volunteer coordinator

The planning committee met once a month beginning in August of 2017, up until the event on October 25, 2018. Meetings were a collaborative process where we decided as a group everything from ticket prices, to speakers and topics, to the name of the conference.

Saskatoon is home to a number of large companies that deal with natural resources, and key to the communications component of those companies, is interactions with indigenous communities. The planning committee determined that indigenous relations would be a key component to the conference, touching on the topics [of truth, reconciliation and building meaningful communication relationships with indigenous communities](#). We used this as the focus for the conference, building outwards from the idea of building meaningful relationships, and started to build a conference program that covered conversational intelligence, research methodology in communications, and more. We had speakers and topics and ideas, what we needed next was to brand our event.

Event Marketing

The name IABC CommuniCon was decided upon as a way to capture the excitement and buzz related to other 'cons' like Comic-Con (comic book conference) or Def-Con (hacking conference). Once we decided upon our name, we approached local communications agency Creative Fire, to pitch an in-kind sponsorship to brand our conference. Creative Fire came on board as a conference sponsor between the Gold and Platinum Levels, providing up to \$4,000 of in-kind sponsorship for creative design and branding for the event, and an additional \$2,000 towards bringing in a high-level indigenous relations keynote speaker.

Attached are some of the graphic elements that were created for the conference, giving attendees the feeling of an "out of this world" communications experience during their day. All pieces were incorporated into electronic pieces (website, blog posts, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook promotions), print pieces (sponsor thank you cards on tables, conference agenda, nametags), and even on a pop-up conference banner.

Communications began with a soft launch of the IABC CommuniCon website in June (with no registration open). Tickets went on sale in August, and correspondingly, social communication of the event increased. This was done with promoted Facebook, Twitter and Instagram ads in IABC Saskatoon's social channels. These posts featuring branded conference content with links to the website, teaser videos from speakers themselves, blog posts from speakers and committee members, with the goal of building interest and hype in the speakers, agenda and conference itself.



Budget

Budget		Expenses		Totals	
Target Revenue		Catering	\$3,750	Revenues	\$17,625
Member Registration (30)	\$4,500	Tax/Grat	\$675	Expenses	\$17,475
Non-Member Registration (10)	\$2,750	Room Rental	\$1,500	Total	\$150
Student Registration (5)	\$375	AV Equipment	\$250		
Doorcrashers (5)	\$1,500	Advertising	\$500		
Sponsorships (Cash/In Kind)	\$8,500	Printing	\$1,500		
Total	\$17,625	Speaker Fees	\$3,000		
		Speaker Gifts	\$350		
		Volunteer Recognition	\$250		
		Student Sponsorship	\$250		
		Branding	\$4,000		
		Tax	\$500		
		Total	\$17,475		

When planning IABC CommuniCon, our committee had planned on breaking even with the conference. Registrations were priced reasonably for members (\$175), non-members (early-bird \$250, regular price \$275) and students (\$75).

As planning developed, and as we drew closer to the event date, we picked up additional in-kind sponsorship that covered things like conference A/V and printing. This enabled us to put on a top-quality conference that actually profited \$1,700.

Evaluation

Objective	Result
Attract a minimum of 50 participants to the event.	IABC CommuniCon saw 85 total attendees of which 65 were actual members/non-members/students. This objective was achieved.
Ensure the overall event rating achieves a minimum satisfaction of 80% from attendees.	Post-conference evaluation rated conference attendees as satisfied (57%) and extremely satisfied (43%). This objective was achieved.
The IABC CommuniCon committee rates their experience as positive or very positive in being part of the event planning and participation process.	See further explanation below.

When the conference ended, participants were emailed a Survey Monkey link to provide feedback on the day. Of 85 attendees, 21 completed the survey. The survey was used to measure the success of our conference objectives (above) regarding overall satisfaction level and to gather feedback for future planning.



Members of the IABC CommuniCon planning committee convened a month after the event, to debrief each volunteer's overall experiences. All seven volunteers gave valuable feedback on how to improve the planning and implementation of the event for next time, and nearly all of the volunteers indicated they would be interested and available to organize the next IABC CommuniCon event in 2020.

AGENDA



8 : 00 AM - 9 : 00 AM

Registration & Networking

Take this time to connect with fellow attendees and to set your email autoresponder to out of office!

9 : 00 AM - 10 : 15 AM

Opening Keynote: Walking on eggshells while I attempt to not break the egg (the relationship)!

What does Indigenous history, colonization, and truth before reconciliation have to do with me in my day to day, business communicator, community engagement role?

By Dr. Patricia Makokis, Director, Indigenous Programs, University of Alberta

10 : 45 AM - 12 : 00 PM

Concurrent Breakout Sessions

Introduction to Conversational Intelligence™ – Having the right conversations in high trust organizations

Explore why conversations are so important and find out how they work. Discover why 90% of conversations miss the mark and get tips on how to improve your own.

By Marielle Gauthier, Owner/Principal, Redworks Communications

Building better campaigns with methodologically sound research

Roland Pajares will discuss some of the most popular market research techniques used to design, test, and evaluate the effectiveness of digital and traditional communications campaigns.

By Roland Pajares, Research Assistant, NRG Research Group

See reverse for afternoon agenda



International Association
of Business Communicators
Saskatoon

iabcsaskatoon.com

Visit www.iabccommunicon.com for comprehensive session descriptions

12 : 00 PM - 12 : 45 PM

Lunch

Time to refuel the rockets for our next orbit.

12 : 45 PM - 2 : 00 PM

Case Study

“Everyone stepped up.” Key lessons for professional communicators in the wake of the Humboldt tragedy

Heather Miazga was the clinical director on call at Royal University Hospital the night of the tragic bus crash involving the Humboldt Broncos. Her assessment of the health system response? “Everyone stepped up”.

By Kim McKechney, Executive Director, Community Engagement and Communications, Saskatchewan Health Authority



CREATIVE FIRE



2 : 15 PM - 3 : 15 PM

Indigenous Relations Panel

Featuring local experts from multiple sectors, will pull threads from the opening keynote by Dr. Patricia Makokis for further discussion on how business communicators can better engage, communicate effectively and build trust with Indigenous communities.

Betty Ann Adam, Writer and Journalist;

Ken Smith, Manager, Corporate Affairs, BHP;

Candace Wasacase-Lafferty, Director, Indigenous Initiatives, University of Saskatchewan;

Gilles Dorval, Director, Aboriginal Relations, City of Saskatoon;

Moderator: Priscilla Wolf, Communications and Media Relations, Saskatoon Tribal Council

3 : 15 PM - 4 : 30 PM

Closing Keynote: Reputation management

In this keynote presentation, John will focus on how professional communicators can advise leaders on the best use of digital strategies for managing volatile or breaking crises.

By John Larsen, GM and Executive VP, Edelman Canada



An example of the IABC CommuniCon branding being applied to keynote speaker John Larsen, to help promote the conference via social channels and the website.



The main graphic created by Creative Fire to brand IABC CommuniCon.



The opening of IABC CommuniCon, with the room full of conference attendees.