

ACCI COMMUNICATIONS SUMMIT

*"Serving & Communicating to your
Association's Members"*

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Facilitator's Career as Association CEO and Volunteer Director

1. 20's – BCom (UNSW), large corporates; Boards of professional association
2. 30's – Association manager and CEO of small association; Board of professional association and Chair of local community association
3. 40's – Established Associations Forum: providing education and advice to associations
4. 50's – Consolidation of Associations Forum and development of associations in Australasia and Asia
5. A lifelong "joiner"



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Get your fundamentals in order

1. "Associations are strong and getting stronger"
2. Have good structure, ideally not a federation
3. Modern constitution; Board (ideal size is 8)
4. Board to be wise, smart, not interfering and meet quarterly
5. Board's #1 job is to employ a good CEO
6. Strategic plan
7. Profits mainly from events, membership, suppliers
8. Ample financial reserves
9. Lots of capable staff, often younger and more affordable
10. Culture that active participation is valuable & advantageous



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Serving members with great offerings

1. Technical excellence
2. Standard setting and accreditation/certification
3. Communications and information
4. Conferences, exhibitions, networking and awards
5. Education and training (linked to certification)
6. Economic analysis for sector growth
7. Policy positions on issues
8. Advocate appropriately to politicians and the community



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The database at the heart of the assoc'n

1. An association's largest non-fixed-asset investment
2. Used by all staff, including the CEO
3. The hub of all information and part of the culture
4. Modern and searchable
5. and more on databases later



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Types of communications produced

(AF with Mahlab Media)

1. E-newsletter (95%)
2. Website: news update
3. Social media
4. Printed magazine (...also Letters)
5. Videos (60%)
6. Website: private social network / forums
7. Website: blogs / opinion pieces (40%)
8. Digital magazine: page-turning replica
9. Peer-reviewed journal
10. Whitepapers / e-books
11. Mobile app
12. iPad/ tablet magazine (10%)



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Survey: member communication challenges

(AF with Mahlab Media)

1. Lack of staff (50%)
2. Database capabilities
3. Creating compelling and engaging content
4. Disengaged members
5. Measuring ROI on member communications
6. Adapting to new technologies
7. *Lacking a clear content plan / strategy (25%)*
8. High production costs
9. Ageing membership
10. Declining advertising
11. Competition with other publications
12. Declining membership
13. Competition with other associations
14. Limits on acceptable advertisers (5%)



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Communications plan

"Chronic underinvestment in comm's" – Andrew Bragg

Know:

1. What content you are sending
2. What method (email, social media, print, website?)
3. Why send it?
4. To whom exactly – from database interrogation?
5. When are you sending it
6. Who is actually sending it?
7. Who will it be from?



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The database (again) at the heart

1. Members, prospects, suppliers, everyone
2. Categorise everyone in various ways
3. Involvement in activities and events
4. Segmentation of communications based on database fields
5. Consider database in light of open rates
6. Intelligently tackle unsubscribes – use these to your advantage



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Member engagement

1. First, recruit members
2. Second, send renewal notices
3. Most important, connect ongoing with members
 - Meaningful scheduled phone calls
 - Face-to-face visit
 - Email in a personal way
4. Database must track contact
5. Membership engagement is rich and rewarding and we are just starting to learn about it ☺



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Campaigns beyond the membership

1. Members want associations to promote their causes
2. Most influential industry or professional body: Pharmacy Guild? Minerals Council? Australian Medical Association?
3. If a federation, have the same name around the country eg Australian Dental Association; Australian Hotels Association
4. Thousands of associations don't consider adopting a pro-business stance: an entity needs to lead them
5. Business groups do struggle against anti-business forces but can do better through leadership and co-ordination
6. Get members to stick to message too!
7. Associations need have a voice to motivate politicians



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Summary

1. Have a strong and wealthy-enough association that provides good services
2. Develop robust position statements
3. Cleverly advocate for positions with the best possible spokespeople – hopefully CEOs who will be there for a number of years
4. Being the opposite of ‘fake news’ will bring success
5. The result of communications and advocacy is good outcomes for the association and Australia



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Thank you!

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