

E-Magazine

2019 Winner: Institute for Credentialing Excellence

Entry Title: Credentialing Insights

Project Overview

The Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) is a leading developer of standards for both certification and certificate programs and is a provider of information on trends in certification, test development and delivery, assessment-based certificate programs, and other information relevant to the credentialing community.

ICE's premiere publication, ICE Digest, had been a leading voice in the credentialing community for six years. However, with heightened competition for readership in this intense information age, ICE decided to analyze its approach to delivery of its high-quality content. Previously, ICE Digest had been delivered as a PDF quarterly and then as an electronic magazine with a more attractive graphic approach. Building on that evolution and the reputation for high-quality content, ICE management decided to change the approach to the content and re-brand ICE Digest to the Credentialing Insights content hub in 2018.

Credentialing Insights now houses all past, current, and future ICE content and is delivered in a user-friendly online platform. The audience of Credentialing Insights is ICE members and non-members interested in learning more about credentialing.

Goals/Objectives

"ICE's motivation for updating the electronic magazine to a content hub to was increase awareness of ICE and its role as a thought-leader in the credentialing field. With ICE Digest, ICE only had four scheduled touchpoints to share written content with members annually. In addition, receiving feedback in that format was challenging for engagement, and limited interaction between ICE Digest and the ICE web site and social media platforms.

To address these challenges, ICE decided to develop a microsite (or content hub) to provide a central destination for individuals to consume content in a variety of formats. It would be more visually appealing, easier to navigate, and provide an opportunity for easier engagement with ICE through the website and social media channels. In addition, the microsite would also allow for more frequent updates of content, which would reinforce ICE's position as a thought-leader in the credentialing field.

ICE management, with input from the members on the ICE Editorial Committee, developed three specific outcomes to achieve through the updated approach: •

- Increase readership to enhance the understanding of credentialing in current and potential markets

- Increase sharing of individual articles through social media by readers, creating an enhanced online presence for ICE
- Increase in ICE's promotion of credentialing content and resources to keep ICE's information fresh and relevant in today's fast-paced environment

While the project was initially developed as a loss-leader, ICE has set a long-term goal of adding sponsorship and advertising opportunities to Credentialing Insights. This would add value to the sales portfolio but is dependent upon achieving increased readership and sharing of articles that advertisers would require."

Strategy/Tactics

In January 2018, ICE launched the redesign phase of the project. In collaboration with marketing, design, and administrative team members, we performed a needs assessment, developed a microsite that addressed our goals (improved navigation, frequent content posting, and ease of sharing information), and implemented a readership survey. Once the design was complete, we identified key messages critical to retaining current and attracting new readers. "Credentialing Insights is the same, trusted resource you knew as ICE Digest – now with a new look and streamlined user experience." ICE developed a launch campaign incorporating key message and focused on achieving three goals. We developed a rollout with frequent messaging (seven total for rollout), followed by consistent messaging through the end of 2018. We utilized email to drive messaging (our members' primary way of accessing information from ICE), reinforced by social media to nudge readers into sharing content. To reinforce the new design of Credentialing Insights, ICE developed an email newsletter to draw attention to new articles each month, while also creating familiarity and awareness of the new format. All communications incorporated the messaging theme of quality content in a new format.

ICE officially launched Credentialing Insights with email and social media in March 2018. In the first three months, we followed our plan, with email serving as the primary platform for announcements, reinforced by frequent social media messages to educate readers how to share articles, become a future contributor, bookmark favorite articles, and share comments and start conversations with readers. For our consistent messaging, we selected the same day each month to send a spotlight email sharing recent content, plus highlights of previous ICE Digest articles, to emphasize our message of the same trusted resource, now with a new look and streamlined experience.

Social media supported these efforts by announcing articles as published.

Success Metrics/Results Achieved

Increase readership

In 2018, Credentialing Insights had 4,537 total users on the site, a nearly 250% increase as compared to the 1,323 total readers ICE Digest saw in 2017. This dramatic jump in readership indicated that moving from a quarterly digital magazine to a regularly updated content hub was indeed the right decision for ICE's content strategy.

In addition, Credentialing Insights had 6,875 sessions, with the average user viewing 2.5 articles per session. This indicated readers were spending quality time on the site and found the content engaging enough to read more than one article per visit. Readership increased in part thanks to third party shares, too. For example, one organization shared out a link to the Credentialing Insights interview of their CEO, boosting views to the site. This also validated ICE's decision to shift its content to a more shareable format.

Increase sharing of individual articles through social media

By switching to a new format ICE found increased engagement on Twitter:

- 1100% increase in retweets of articles, from 1 retweet in 2017 to 26 retweets in 2018
- 308% increase in impressions, from 3,439 in 2017 to 10,599 in 2018
- 317% increase in engagements, from 35 in 2017 to 111 in 2018

Increase in communication for more frequent release of content from 2017 to 2018, ICE increased our messaging of new content:

- 275% by email
- 650% increase in tweets specific to credentialing insights
- 247% by LinkedIn
- 120% by Facebook

A sample comment from a reader reads: "I appreciate what you do and I really like the direction ICE's communications, including the journal, are heading. Thank you." We will continue to evaluate the responses to the readership survey and other metrics for continued improvement of this important content."

Learn more

[Click here to view:](#)

*Credentialing Insights Communication Plan ICE Digest
Credentialing Insights Launch Email*

Association Website:

www.ascb.org