

Competencies for Association Communication Professionals

ASAE Communication Professionals Advisory Council

The Communication Professionals Advisory Council (CPAC) has delved into the implications for communication professionals of the ASAE ForesightWorks Drivers of Change during the past three years. Examination of those drivers of change have brought forward specific communications challenges that point to professional competencies that association communication professionals should have.

DRIVER OF CHANGE	CHALLENGE	COMPETENCY	SUGGESTED READING/LEARNING
Declining Trust	Associations must help identify problems for their industries/professions before they occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication professionals must lead in risk management assessment of professional/industry threats that may affect association members. Develop a crisis communication plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to Create an Effective Crisis Media Plan Reinforce Your CEO's Social Media Savvy
	Confirmation bias and misinformation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct regular stakeholder research. Identify and eliminate potential bias in organizational communication. Develop materials or toolkits for dispelling bias. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conscious Style Guide How to get people to overcome their bias BBC Future How to Shift Your Communication Strategy to Build Trust and Inclusion
	Rise of algorithms to filter content and distinguishing popular from factual.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a working knowledge of how algorithms are collecting, analyzing, and publishing content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does The Algorithm Tell The Whole Story About Your Content?
	Filter bubbles, misinformation, and the rejection of expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify methodology for distinguishing verified, credible facts Establish consistent process and format for presenting information to members and other audiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook Fake News in the Post-Truth World Harvard Business Review Knight Science Journalism Fact Checking Site The Demon Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark Carl Sagan

Shifting Environment for Content	Address the expectation of personalization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use behavioral data and other sources to analyze best channels, topics and platforms to use to deliver most relevant content to each member and measure/evaluate results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't Let Poor Personalization Harm Your Email Marketing Strategy
	Lack of collaboration and prioritization across the organization will result in attempting to communicate everything to everyone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in senior level strategic planning to prioritize and focus communication and activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Effective Content Strategy Includes Everyone
	Communications must be proactive, and should participate in planning at the executive level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication professionals must understand activities and goals of every department activity, and serve as an arbiter or translator to help the organization meet overall strategic goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Association Content Strategies for a Changing World Three Essentials for an Effective Communications Team
	Create emotional connections with target audiences via video and other content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use stakeholder and other research data to ensure understanding of segmented target audiences' wants and needs. Secure staff- and/or partner-provided video production skills as part of overall content strategy. Participate in the content lifecycle from start to finish. Analyze results. 	
Next-Gen Professionals	Understand the value-driven needs of next generation members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use empathy to understand what is important to key audiences such as next-gen professionals and an increasingly diverse set of stakeholders. Leverage relevant communications channels and spokespersons. Identify emerging leaders and ensure understanding of organizational culture and expectations so they can participate and progress in career. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boost Next-Gen Diversity with a Multicultural Communications Strategy Engage Next-Gen Professionals to Spread the Word About Your Industry
	Values-based divisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote diversity and inclusion. 	
	Digital skills often have a short shelf life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define new skills as a competitive advantage. Develop training for multiple learning modules. 	

<p>Nichification</p>	<p>Specific skill set needed to understand and deliver on each platform.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate which existing and emerging platforms will be valuable. • Deliver messages and tell stories across different media that connect with priority audience segments. 	
<p>Diversity, Equity and Inclusion</p>	<p>Target diverse constituents as audiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for belonging, not just being included. • Leverage diverse, relevant spokespersons. • “Know what you don’t know.” • Foster conversations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Inclusive Leaders Sound Like Harvard Business Review • Texts to Table, Podcast and community
	<p>Provide communication expertise to C Suite, staff teams, and members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continually educate c-suite about emerging platforms, best practices, and needed skill sets. • Demonstrate impact through understandable metrics. • Relate the organization’s profile and challenges to market-wide trends and technology. • Visibly represent the organization’s values and mission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to Hold Your Company Accountable to Its Promise of Racial Justice, Harvard Business Review • Words Matter: Ensuring Inclusive Communications
<p>General Leadership</p>	<p>Organizational silos prevent effective holistic communications.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster audience knowledge and empathy across the organization. • Ensure consistent, multidirectional messaging (peer to peer, top down, bottom up). • Allocate time to understand challenges other department heads face and leverage communication in support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Alignment: How Communicators Can Change the Face of Leadership IABC article and white paper
	<p>Internal audiences are important stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop messaging for staff as well as external audiences. • Promote and use emotional intelligence to lead. 	
	<p>Secure executive-level buy-in of communications plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster cross-departmental collaboration and awareness so everyone can do their job better and programs have greater chance of success. • Efficiently engage leadership in messaging and communications strategy. • Enact new business models and advise on change management to support strategic plan. 	



Establish communication processes and procedures to reduce unplanned campaigns.

- Use persuasion to create a collaborative product development process.
- Create a teamwork mentality with all departments to improve likelihood of hearing about projects as early as possible.