



Strategic Communication Audit

Preliminary Communication Audit Report: Audit Alerts

Conducted by

QuestCom Creative Communication Services

for the

The American Podiatric Medical Association

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Although the final report will provide the lengthier documentation and evidence to support the recommendations provided in this report, the counsel is extensive and comprehensive—meant to be considered and implemented over time. The strategic communication planning includes the consideration of the budgetary and personnel resources that will be needed to successfully implement the plan. It is assumed APMA will prioritize by need and importance how communication resources are expended.

Staffing and budget allocations for communication should be evaluated annually to ensure program effectiveness.

Preliminary Report Purpose Statement

This preliminary report is intended to deliver those recommendations that have arisen from the audit process that the APMA may consider and act upon in the immediate term, prior to release of the final report. Pending the publication of the final report in February, this presentation of “Audit Alerts” was composed at the request of APMA leadership so they can begin building the foundation for the implementations to come.

Preliminary Report Contents

Abstract.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Synopsis of Findings.....	7
(Observations/Recommendations: Immediate Initiatives)	
Abridged Outline of Final Report.....	
Working List of Overall Recommendations.....	
Report References.....	

Abstract

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This study presents the results of an external communication audit of the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA). Founded in 1912, the American Podiatric Medical Association, headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, is the largest organization of its kind, representing a majority of the estimated 15,000 podiatrists in the country. In addition to the national headquarters, APMA is comprised of 53 state component locations throughout the United States and its territories, as well as affiliated societies. APMA employs 60 staff members at association headquarters. The mission of the organization is "...to advance and advocate for the profession of podiatric medicine and surgery for the benefit of its members and the public." Further, APMA seeks "...to continue to be the leading professional organization and unifying force in the field of podiatric medicine and surgery." (*APMA Strategic Plan, July, 2009*). APMA also works to ensure the stability of podiatric medicine by increasing nationwide awareness of foot and ankle health through public education and legislative advocacy.

The audit assesses APMA's external communication policies, practices, capabilities and needs in the context of systems theory and external relations strategic planning theories. It also examines internal communication policies, practices and infrastructure inasmuch as they influence and drive the external messaging. The findings of the audit identify who APMA considers its target publics and how well they are reaching their intended audiences. The results also indicate in which areas APMA's current communication systems is meeting or not meeting the objectives of the organization and the needs of its

members. The study concludes with a series of recommendations for how APMA can improve its communication system.

Introduction

APMA Executive Director and CEO, Glenn Gastwirth, and Deputy Executive Director, Jay Levrio, as well as the APMA Board of Trustees are committed to improving communication to the members of the American Podiatric Medical Association. This audit was contracted for, approved and supported by the leadership as part of a dedication to enhance communication effectiveness and clearly demonstrates their vision, desire for innovation and willingness to risk change in order to improve opportunities and resources for all APMA members, potential members and the public at large as well as ensure quality of the workplace culture at the Bethesda headquarters.

APMA spreads its message through an extensive array of external communication instruments including a Web site, a magazine, a peer-reviewed journal, brochures, eNews, other newsletters, direct mail, occasional webinars and other publications. The research questions answered in this audit address whether APMA's external communication materials are meeting specific objectives and goals for each publication and for the organization as a whole. The research questions include:

- 1) Is APMA's external communication system reaching its intended publics?
- 2) Are the target publics receiving the intended messages?
- 3) Are the messages achieving the objectives of the organization as outlined by the Strategic Plan?
- 4) What can be done to improve communication not effectively reaching or resonating with the intended publics?
- 5) Are there new methods of communication that need to be developed, adapted, or eliminated to meet organizational objectives or to target different audiences?

To help answer these questions, the researcher consulted systems theory, an organizational theory that takes a holistic view of an organization's communication structure. (Cragan & Shields, 1998; McQuail, 2000; Daniels, Spiker, & Papa, 1997). Using this framework, a communication audit was conducted on APMA's external communications.

A communication audit is defined as:

Complete analysis of an organization's communication—internal and/or external—designed to 'take a picture' of communication needs, policies, practices, and capabilities, and to uncover necessary data to allow management to make informed, economical decisions about future objectives of the organization's communication. (Kopec, 1982, p. 24).

The APMA audit followed several integrated steps to answer the research questions including (1) an analysis of the forces influencing APMA communication practices; (2) interviews with selected members of staff, BOT, state components and leadership; (3) focus groups that delve more deeply into existing challenges and point toward potential solutions; (4) a comprehensive survey of members designed to assess how they use APMA's communication vehicles; (5) objective review of marketing and promotional materials, including newsletters, e-newsletters, publications, Web sites, social media and other extant data.

Synopsis of Findings

One Clear Voice

This audit's primary finding is that APMA is in need of a quality initiative to organize, consolidate, streamline and enhance its communication function designed upon best practices and processes that are made formal and visible to every department. Every goal of the strategic plan and every objective of Vision 2015 is critically dependent on the unity and competency of APMA's messaging.

Flow of information and knowledge is currently primarily one-way and relies heavily on text. APMA needs less content and more collective conversation with membership. They need to use their enormous intellectual capital to build social capital, a collective resource built on recurring exchanges among members.

The need exists to change from the scattergun approach to a **communication consultancy** (The **APMA Communication Department** and a network of **Key Communicators**) that provides an aggregated platform from which to drive unified deliverables and tighter alignment to strategic planning while providing members across the state components with an integrated, unified, interactive communication platform.

APMA's "voice" or brand must be strengthened to communicate its major purposes as distinct from other specialty associations. All representatives of APMA must be stewards of the message, and all messages must be spoken to members and potential members, as well as the public in "**one clear voice.**"

Communication Commendations:

APMA is a progressive organization, open to evaluation and committed to change.

This communication audit can mark the start of a new era for APMA—one in which , organization reshapes its communication function to adapt to the information age. It is rare to find an organization that attempts to manage all phases of communication as a functional, strategic activity and even more unusual to “encounter an organization that performs periodic and formal appraisals of the general communication system for the purpose of maintaining and developing the effectiveness of this vital interaction-influence function” (Greenbaum, Hellweg, & Falcione, 1988). This audit makes evident the vision of the current leadership and the auditor has made every effort to document the audit processes to enable future assessment to be handled internally and routinely. Organizations presently able to cope with other progressive management systems should find that communication management is a natural step forward. Clearly, APMA is ready to take the step of making the systems changes that move communication to the leadership and management level of the organization.

APMA has a skilled, hard-working staff with core competencies that lead to high quality products and services.

APMA is grounded in an exceptional degree of professional commitment, a history of competence and dedication, and has generated an enormous amount of intellectual capital and an extensive variety of tools, systems and programs made available to the membership. The workplace culture is one of consistent cheer and near tenderness in which the principle-centered staff can thrive and handle their tasks well. Throughout the focus group and interview sessions, it was obvious to the researcher that, from staff to members to leaders, there is a solid base of support, pride and community in the organization. An inherent integrity shared by most everyone builds a necessary rigor around projects and initiatives.

APMA has a well designed, ambitious strategic plan.

APMA is well positioned to develop a sustainable communication infrastructure that drives tighter alignment to its strategic plan and Vision 2015 (Appendix 2). They are ready to manage communication as a strategic business process by developing a unified “communication consultancy” within the organization that marries APMA’s identity with specific communication programs and promotes their ability to speak in “**one clear voice**” to their membership.

APMA’s government is clear and consistent, providing tradition and security in support of its mission.

Although such solidarity can simultaneously be a weakness and a strength, the complex network of governance works to keep the APMA well-resourced, stable and solvent which makes for an exceptionally content climate, enabling optimal staff relationships. This can be a promising environment for organizational change.

APMA is dedicated to staying current and investing in the next generation of podiatrists by communicating the value of membership to young and potential members.

Although the organization’s demographic is decidedly aging, APMA has focused a great portion of its resources and effort in support of its youngest members and toward recruitment of new students into the practice of podiatry.

APMA is aware of the prevalence of social media and the rapidity of change that characterizes Web 2.0 and seems poised to integrate this platform into its communication matrix.

APMA needs to harness the idea of a matrix, but the communicators are well positioned to do so.

Communication Challenges and Recommendations:

Challenge: *Lack of communication strategy, planning and principle is at root of the challenges faced in developing a communication platform that enables an interactive relationship between APMA and its members.*

Simply generating more information does not constitute an effective communication effort. PR guru John Budd's maxim is "Waxing a car doesn't make the engine run better." Effective communication is planned, supports the organization's strategic directions, and focuses on **involving** people as well as informing them. The greatest need identified by the audit is for an annual, strategic communication plan that drives planned, systematic, comprehensive, two-way communication. The communication plan should be tied directly to APMA's strategic plan and Vision 2015 and take into account each audience segment. The plan should also drive the creation of templates and rubrics that formalize communication processes and make it possible to improve on processes and practices over time. Without a plan, it will be increasingly difficult to create an open dialogue and deliver messages that are important to audience segments, and build will APMA membership into the future.

Recommendation:

Create a written communication strategy and plan, approved and adopted annually by the Board of Trustees that reflects organizational priorities and sets forth key messages that may be lost in the day-to-day communication that can overwhelm the staff.

The plan can dramatically increase the efficiency and effectiveness of communication efforts and provides a vehicle for reporting on progress and demonstrating accountability through evaluation criteria built into the plan. Perhaps most importantly, the communication strategy is an avenue for everyone to view all

deliverables and messaging as a whole—as a **portfolio** of unified products that everyone helps create. A well-defined plan, and plans for individual projects, build understanding and staff involvement and identify in advance opportunities to collaborate instead of duplicate. The plan is the template that will allow the APMA to tell the story of the organization in “**one clear voice.**”

Challenge: *Nearly all staff members are communication conduits to membership, with little due process or direction regarding how the deliverables are related to each other, redundant or superfluous. Much messaging is carried out by those who are not professional communicators, and the communication staff is either unaware of the message being sent, or is not asked for help or input. This lack of oversight and unity also disables the process of collaborating and “cross pollinating” messaging across departments.*

The sheer number of people who send direct messages to the membership was a surprise in the audit process. This is not inherently a problem, if “mass communication” is aligned with APMA goals. However, communication products need to be brought together so they can be considered together. Communication staff reports that although they are sometimes consulted on individual department’s messaging, most often people work in isolation. When asked, not one current director of any department could identify the consistent process they undertook to produce and vet material. The processes were informal and undocumented, leading, at times, to poor quality control of deliverables. Often, approval happened through the corresponding committee, with every member having equal editorial voice. This is the single most inefficient way to vet messages. The Director of Publications was formerly the communication “catch-all,” as well as serving as Managing Editor for the APMA News and as ineffective as that job description was, the vacancy in the Director position has illustrated how disjointed the APMA communication portfolio really is. These issues were evident in the audit: a reoccurring theme among staff members, almost unilaterally, is that although they used each other as resources and found colleagues always willing to help, everyone “owned” their own content to the point of being defensive,

and little opportunity existed to collaborate—none of it built into the communication system. Another recurring theme was that too much APMA content was “fluff” as if more were better.

Recommendation: *Change the platform used for membership communication at APMA to a “Portfolio Platform” meaning the deliverables, from planning to publishing, are gathered into a formal collection.* A unified production process would be in place:

- **Key communicators** will be identified in each department. They can rotate or not, and won’t necessarily do all copywriting, but will serve as the conduit to editorial planning. (This also builds in employee development of all department members.)
- **Message Matrix:** Monthly editorial planning meetings, attended by key communicators, will be held to identify their messaging needs for the coming month and develop the message matrix. A messaging plan for each department will be distributed among attendees in advance of this meeting so meeting time is optimized. A message matrix identifies:
 - Who needs to know? (audience segmentation)
 - What do they need to know? (content management)
 - How should we tell them? (media management)
 - When should we tell them? (timing)
 - What do we want them to do? (call to action)
- **An Editorial Calendar** will be maintained with touchstones of collaboration built in. This solves a myriad of issues, from duplicating content to media monotony to overloading the APMA audiences with more information than they can use. Even more progressive, the process will enable the “cross fertilization” between departments that will unify the membership messages. The quality of deliverables, given the increased collaboration and the rigor of the media matrix, will begin to increase and not be perceived as “fluff” by members.

Challenge: *Quality control of content is not a formal process integrated across all departments; copy submitted for publication is not “clean” and slows down production resulting in missed deadlines.*

Outside of the department that produces JAPMA, not one department could show me any due process for content management, any formalized workflow, or any templates or rubrics to ensure quality of content being produced. APMA does not have a style guide or a set of graphics standards. (JAPMA has a well-developed style guide and a designated production workflow.) During the duration of the audit, this caused a few major blunders (a large print job going off with a major punctuation error in it; amateur newsletters being distributed full of errors; web content being uploaded as PDF files without having been proofed by the web editor) . Communication staff has repeatedly identified that they received significant amounts of copy that is not “clean” and having to do further editing on their own slows down the production process of publications and wreaks havoc on deadlines. The more holistic issue this presents is that APMA cannot achieve unity unless deliverables have the same look and feel, and, more importantly, have been part of a portfolio plan that drives quality control.

Recommendation: *Compose a style guide, a set of graphics standards and a universal quality control rubric.* The auditor has spent time during the audit collecting examples of style guide issues and developing entries intended for the APMA guide, using Associated Press style. Development of the APMA Style Guide should be a collaborative project undertaken by all designated communicators. A quality control rubric can be developed simultaneously and in conjunction with the guide. Department’s key communicators will hold content against the rubric before submitting it to the portfolio for release.

Challenge: The communication staff (under prior leadership) has been designed around seemingly haphazard promotions and outdated workflow patterns, resulting in lack of designed leadership.

There's no one best way to structure the communication function, but the focus should be on the fact that communication exists to promote organizational strategy, culture and vitality. APMA has looked at their existing staff and projects and then tried to organize around them. That's backwards. Instead, as what are the needs, the complexity, the culture, the basic products and processes and organize around them. That being said, it is critical for separate communication functions to be brought together to develop integrated strategies; there needs to be the coordinating mechanisms of the portfolio platform, the network of key communicators, and the quality control measures in place to ensure that messages, delivery timing and strategies and staff expertise are aligned and leveraged.

Currently, the four departments, Publications, Public Relations (PR), Journal of the Podiatric Medical Association (JAPMA) and Student Recruitment and Marketing (SR&M) are roughly grouped as the official APMA communicators. There is significant confusion (even with the existing SR&M Director) around how marketing is defined, and why it is coupled with student recruitment. Further, JAPMA is a publication, yet is set apart as its own division, versus joining the Publications department. Student recruitment can't benefit from being part of APMA's other educational efforts when it is so separate from them and from the student organization (APSMA). Further study of how the educational efforts and the corresponding departments of APMA might be harmonized would be advisable and more in alignment with strategic objectives and Vision 2015.

Meanwhile, the existing communication staff is overwhelmed by the day-to-day needs in such a large member organization to the detriment of strategic thinking and sustainable practices. Considering the size of the membership and the infinite methods that technology provides to communicate with members, the number of staff and amount of resource devoted to communication is too limited.

While the recommendation is to devote more resources to communication, this does not mean APMA needs to dramatically expand the number of staff in the department, but rather increase some staffing allocations and create a staffing structure designed on sound communication principles and objectives versus a somewhat haphazard arrangement based on personnel promotions and temporary reassignments.

A Model for the APMA Communication Function: *From Fragmentation to Cohesion*

Recommendation: *Create a Communication Department to reflect the central communication function. (See “APMA Communication Department, Figure 1, page 17).*

Challenge: *The communication function lacks leadership and thus organization and centrality critical to achievement of APMA goals.*

Overwhelmingly, the single most recurring theme of the audit was that the APMA communication function needs leadership—not just management. At first, it seemed that this theme was emerging repeatedly because of the absence of the Director of Publications, but as the integrated audit activities ensued, it was clear that the communication function lacked centrality and network so vital to its future success. An extensive number of interviewees and focus group participant stressed this again and again. Communication research seems to support this idea: it suggests that today’s organizational communication “...always requires a central function at the highest level. A central and integrated communication department is helpful for creating synergy and consistency in communication and for optimizing the [organizational] image management. Academics and practitioners alike state the communication needs to be run by a C-level executive, reporting directly to the CEO. A study done among 16 major organizations in the Netherlands found that the companies with strong identities and brands also had centralized and highly positioned communication functions (Körver & van Ruler, 2003).

Recommendation: (Phase One) *Establish a centralized leadership position to manage the communication function—a Chief Communication Officer.* In many organizations of APMA’s member size, there is a senior communications professional who serves as the strategic communications counsel to the CEO, board and top administration, and who attends all cabinet, delegate and executive level meetings in order to provide advice and input on communication aspects of emerging issues. This position is responsible for overseeing all functions of the communication department, including marketing, public relations, publications and web content management.

Recognizing the addition of such a position is a budget consideration, APMA will need to consider it in terms of its priorities and overall needs in light of the goals set forth in the Strategic Plan and Vision 2015. The audit observed vacancies in the departmental and executive structure that may easily allow for this position to be part of the executive team.

(Please note: this was a function formerly and ostensibly fulfilled by the Director of Publications at APMA, who was, unfortunately, also the Managing Editor of the *APMA News*.)

Key job responsibilities for the Chief Communication Officer should include:

1. Develop an annual strategic communication plan inclusive of all communication departments’ initiatives and direct the staff in its implementation.
2. Establish all communication protocols including the portfolio platform, the departmental key communicators, the quality control rubrics and the editorial calendar.
3. Manage the APMA Communication Portfolio.
4. Develop specific communication plans for major changes, initiatives or projects.
5. Provide communication training workshops for staff, state components and other constituencies.
6. Provide communication counsel the executive directors of the state components.
7. Plan professional development activities for communication staff.

8. Develop a crisis/contingency communication plan.
9. Serve, in conjunction with the Director of Public Relations, as the liaison to key community leaders and organizations, including professional communication associations that recognize exceptional communication work. (IAC, IABC, AAPR, etc.)
10. Develop member/stakeholder engagement strategies to increase involvement.
11. Implement research and evaluation techniques to enable routine assessment of the communication program.
12. Assist the CEO by providing background information and support for building strategic alliances with associations and medical organizations.
13. Write speeches and presentations for leadership when needed.
14. Develop the communication department budget

Recommendation: (Phase One) *Realign and consolidate the communication staff structure so that it is designed around an evolved definition of communication, as well as the principles and workflow that support its objectives.* Things like publications and public relations are all subcategories of the integrated, overarching, interactive process in which we participate: communication. Positions that have been peppered throughout, such as advertising (which could be moved to the Development Department, but attend editorial calendar meetings) and student recruitment (which could be a component of an Education Department) only cloud the communication function. This audit needs a working definition of marketing to assess the positioning of that function, but perhaps it is better defined as outreach.

Challenge: *The Web site is managed completely offsite (aside from once per short weekly visits) by a part-time consultant who publically acknowledges she does not have the expertise or the affinity for Webmaster responsibilities. This has resulted in a marked degree of staff disenchantment and wasted talent on the Web team.* In a detailed interview, and subsequent written correspondence, the current Webmaster (still identified formally as Database Manager) has indicated that she herself believes the Web site to be stagnant and is overwhelmed by the “constant demands” of the Web team. The team, on the other hand, meeting monthly during fairly tense sessions, feels that their inquiries and ideas are met with consistent resistance. As one staff member/Web team member said:

“Currently there is no uniform process for posting content on APMA’s Web site. In addition, there is not a Web site expert or thought leader in house to provide staff with Web site advice or technical support. Considering the Web site’s enormous communications role, it is suggested that a Web administrator be hired in lieu of part-time consultants to ensure better functionality and content management of the site. The administrator could serve not only as in-house, Web site technical support, but also bridge the gap between the association’s technology and new media needs.”

Recommendation: (Phase One) Establish a **Director of Electronic Media** on a full-time employee basis. Perhaps retain the consultant as a database manager, or a project manager, which she has identified as her true strengths. The Director of Electronic Media must be an ambitious visionary with leadership qualities who can lead the Web team into the next generation of internet users. (This may be needed in addition to an IT manager, but this position focuses on technological content and usability versus internal systems.)

****Those involved in managing and designing the Web site must work from requirements, not from technology restraints.***

APMA Communication Department

- Public Relations Speicalist
- Director of Publications
 - Managing Editor JAPMA
 - Editorial Assistant
 - Editorial Assitant
- Managing Editor APMA News
 - Creative Director
- Director of Electronic Meda

(Figure 1)

Challenge: Isolated workflow results in diminished collaborative capacity sometimes resulting in workflow inefficiencies, duplicate efforts and wasted resources.

Currently, the many internal communicators across departments operate in silos and have a wide variety of reporting relationships and accountabilities as well as varying levels of experience and expertise. In addition, a large number of external agencies produce material for internal purposes. As a result, there is a proliferation of inconsistent messages, a myriad of communication channels and many different organizational identities. The sense of ownership of material often causes staff to miss the big picture. It was difficult to estimate the cost of communication and impossible to demonstrate the return on investment – or in the case of APMA’s purpose, return on the individual.

The audit interviews revealed that even those generating content believe it to be stagnant, sometimes superfluous and often duplicate across deliverables. Content is uploaded to the Web site or provided as filler in a newsletter or alert routinely instead of strategically. APMA’s guiding communication principles must change the communication platform from one of information to one of interaction. Content is not communication. The medium is not the message. The need to make communication two-way between APMA and its membership has been a consistent theme uncovered by the audit, especially evident on the Web site as compared to analogous websites. Repeatedly, internal interviewees and focus groups contended that the vast majority of content they generated or observed, while perhaps of high quality, was under-utilized or not visible or practical enough to the average member. “How do we get members to READ what we write?” echoed throughout the audit, as if reading were the sole way today’s podiatrist would utilize information, and if everyone needs to read and utilize information in the same way. In addition to aligning our expectations with knowledge of our audience segments, part of the publication rubric for disseminating information must be, “What is the call to action or implication of this information?” and the resulting questions: “Where and when is this information going to prove most useful and who is most likely to need this information?” Forming solutions to energize APMA’s volume

of intellectual capital will surround the publication process with the necessary rigor to create a two-way channel from organization to membership.

Recommendation: *Develop Protocols and Policies* that would make best communication practices sustainable and consistent (i.e. the Message Matrix mentioned before).

Recommendation: *Utilize and model interactive communication* by restructuring director and all-staff meetings to be times of dialogue and interchange, versus information dissemination. Send a memo in advance outlining the department's update and utilize time together in a more valuable way.

Challenge: *The APMA brand identity needs strengthened in light of recent developments with specialty organizations and changing demographic.*

APMA seems at a crossroads when it comes to defining their true identity as distinct from other professional organizations of its kind. This critical component of messaging must be refined; it is clear that APMA has set specific goals and is guided by an expertly developed strategic plan, but focus groups and interviewees scrambled for the “elevator pitch” about how APMA has evolved to be the organization it is, and how it is distinct and not in conflict with specialty organizations, such as the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS). Whereas the process is underway to clearly define and communicate the newly established surgical affiliate, American Society for Podiatric Surgeons (ASPS), it is unclear how that might change, in even a subtle way, the way APMA is organized and what “brand” of association it truly is.

Recommendation: *Develop brand identity beyond logo, including a tag line for the organization, versus the latest PR campaign. Weave the brand identity into all current messaging using the new communication structure.*

Challenge: *The scope of this audit could not include an in-depth assessment of APMA's current publishing and production function, but it is an integral component of the strategic communication plan.*

Recommendation: *Consider a publication audit.* Publishing Audits for magazines provide a complete analysis of magazine management, editorial, advertising, circulation, design, and production and deliver recommendations. Strategies and tactics include:

- **Management Review** (assessment of management of the publication and staff structure)
- **Editorial Assessment** (examination of editorial mission, market positioning, editorial content, and editorial style)
- **Advertising Program Analysis** (examination of market share, rate structure, media kit, marketing materials, sales structure)
- **Circulation Review** (review of current circulation vs. potential circulation, comparison with competitors, options for paid vs. controlled circulation, etc.)
- **Design and Production Analysis** (assessment of design and layout and how it presents editorial content, analysis of production flow, etc.)
- **Printing Efficiency Analysis** (includes type of printing, use of color, paper, press configuration, postage, etc.)

Strategic Communication Audit Final Report: Working Outline

(This is provided to offer a glimpse of the detail that will be included in the final report. The actual outline is more detailed yet, and drills down into the specifics of each area.)

- I. Cover Page
- II. Table of Contents
- III. Introduction
- IV. Assumptions
- V. Study Parameters
- VI. Resource Materials
- VII. Executive Summary
- VIII. Profile of the APMA
- IX. Research Methodologies
 - A. Focus Groups
 - B. Interviews
 - C. Document Review
 - D. Membership Survey
 - E. Web Site Usability Testing
- X. Processes and Procedures
 - A. Critical Incident Reference
 - B. Mention Prominence
 - C. Snowball Sample
 - D. Delphi Technique
 - E. Descriptive Research and Statistics
 - F. Confidence Interval
- XI. General Observations:
 - A. Focus Groups
 - 1. Young Members
 - 2. Board of Trustees
 - 3. American Society of Podiatric Executives
 - 4. Students of Podiatry
 - 5. Members at Large (pending)

6. Members at Large (pending)

- B. Interviews
 - C. Document Review
 - D. Membership Survey
 - E. Web Site Usability Testing
- F. Specific Observations: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
- 1. Web site
 - 2. New media
 - i. Facebook
 - ii. Blogs
 - iii. Webcasts
 - iv. Podcasts
 - v. Video Optimization
 - vi. Twitter
 - vii. RSS feeds
 - viii. Chat Rooms
 - ix. Bulletin Boards
 - x. Wikis
 - xi. Newsgroups and List-serves
 - 3. State Component Member Communication
 - 4. Legislative Advocacy
 - 5. Annual Meeting
 - 6. Public Affairs
 - i. Publications
 - 1. APMA News
 - 2. APMA eNews
 - 3. JAPMA Journal
 - 4. APMA Alert
 - 5. State Advocacy Report
 - 6. Footprints
 - 7. Today's Podiatrist Campaign Deliverables
 - 8. State Component Communication
 - 9. Departmental Communication
 - 10. Letters
 - 11. Newsletters
 - 12. Calls to Action
- G. Specific Observations: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (continued)
- 7. Public Relations
 - 8. Marketing

9. Student Recruitment

10. Governance

- i. Board of Trustees
- ii. Committees
- iii. House of Delegates
- iv. Staffing Structure
- v. Realignment of Communication Staff and Graphic Design: 2 Paradigms

11. Internal Procedures

- i. Meetings
- ii. Directors
- iii. All-Staff
- iv. Committees

12. Human Resource Management

- i. Intranet Resources
- ii. Training, Job Descriptions and Evaluation
- iii. Communication Policy
- iv. Leadership Line-of-Sight
- v. Encouraging a Rigorous Environment

XII. Recommendations and Implementations

- A. Now Initiatives
- B. Short Term Initiatives
- C. Longer Term Initiatives
- E. Follow-up Measurement
- F. Pulse Surveys

XIII. Personal Summary and Auditor Biography

XIV. Future Audit Resources

XV. References

XVI. Appendices/Tables

XVII. Acknowledgements

Preliminary Recommendation List

Develop a strategic communication plan.

Make communication strategy a management function.

Develop a communication management position and establish management processes.

Implement APMA Branding that reflects Vision 2015, counteracts competitive threat and aligns with SP.

Increase opportunities for face-to-face communication toward achieving major SP objectives.

Develop agendas for internal meetings; send memos beforehand with “updates”; use time to interact.

Develop elevator pitch and teach it to everyone involved in the APMA

Form a Key Communicators Network (Ambassadors).

Develop a Speakers’ Bureau

Expand, unify and improve state component newsletters; require APMA logo

Develop APMA graphics standards manual

Develop APMA Style Guide

Do annual readership surveys of all major publications

Add a feedback option to Web site

Develop communication protocols: email protocols, Web upload protocols, telephone protocols, voicemail protocols, etc.

Develop new role for Web Team; perhaps make it a committee managed by the Webmaster.

Return current Webmaster to database management responsibilities and project consultant

Hire full time, onsite Webmaster who has both technical and content management knowledge along with significant ambition for future of the site

Hire IT assistant and interns to work with Webmaster

Include current computer support people in web management to develop best practices and contingency plans.

Establish Creative Director position.

Hire graphic design assistant and onsite web editor

Hire APMA Managing Editor, full time, onsite

Change Assistant Editor position to Editorial Assistant

Utilize Multi-View/Brief software for eNews and Alert – allocate to Editorial Assistant

Hold annual retreat/advance for editorial planning sessions to:

Establish editorial calendars, interface publications, formulate deadlines, update procedures, style guides and graphics standards and evaluate work flow

Move to a “portfolio management” paradigm of content management from publications to Web site

Develop workflow matrix using template provided in audit report

Develop message matrix using template provided in audit report

Hire full-time Chief Communication Officer

Hire Communication Director (backhouse editor, manager of public affairs)

Hold leadership training sessions with component executive directors

Hold communication training sessions with all with Admin web privileges.

Hold communication protocol sessions with all staff.

Distribute a regular staff newsletter in hard copy edited by the CCO

Hold annual calendar of editorial meetings

Roll out Yahoo Messenger software office-wide.

Adopt a blog for CEO, CFO, Board President, etc.

Develop and institute employee orientation program and broaden training efforts to include protocols; develop an in-service curriculum for new employees, shadowing in various departments, etc.

Develop Regent Fellow program that dovetails with a mentorship program to encourage migration from leadership positions and committee chair positions, etc.

Adopt a “project brief” template requirement for all material uploaded to web; proposal that must go through Communication Director and Web Editor

Redesign Alert and rename it to reflect its nature as a digest.

Consolidate advertising positions; reallocate to Development department and eliminate it in publications.

Establish monthly “cross-pollination” meetings between departments

Establish a Cross-Department Placement program.

Implement an Employee Suggestion Box

References

(Please note: this reference list includes only references used/cited in the preliminary report. A complete list of resource will be included in the final report's references/works cited.)

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