



Chapter Communication and Collaboration Tools

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Communicating and engaging members is vital to the success of our chapters! Limited resources and time demand that we use cost effective solutions to get information to our audience. Our audiences includes current chapter members but also non-members who will help us advance awareness of RIM and the development of our profession.

The road map to success begins with the development of a comprehensive annual communication plan for your chapter. This plan is a documented strategy that will help keep team players on the same page, ensure your messaging is consistent with your goals and will allow you to measure attainment of your objectives.

Tailor your communication to reach each your audience. The first step that you can take to strengthen your communications approach is to define your audience(s). Know your demographics! Who are you talking to? Are you trying to reach out to members, vendors, donors, community leaders or other volunteers? The tools and communication platforms that you select for engaging and collaborating with each audience is crucial in order to achieve your objectives. What action do you want your audience to undertake as a result of your message? Is the action to attend a meeting, advance a learning objective, donate time or sponsor an event? How will you measure the results and track them over time? A one size fits all message is not likely to appeal to every audience. Choosing an appropriate communication platform helps you reach a specific audience. Do you have a website? Does your audience use social media like Facebook? How about LinkedIn or Twitter? Perhaps some don't use social media at all and prefer a newsletter via email or US Mail. Do you have a plan?

The frequency of messaging also determines your choice of communication platforms. Create a calendar to schedule your communications in advance. Every chapter has key dates that recur each year, for example; a spring seminar, membership drive or a fundraiser. A plan lets you engage your audience and generates excitement before the event and report back when the event is concluded. Create a content strategy to develop specific messages about specific topics for a specific audience. Visual and auditory content can touch emotional triggers within us that words cannot. Perhaps visual messages are better communicated via YouTube? Try your hand with an animated PowToon. Snapshots and short videos showing moments from key events will give followers more insight to your chapter. The type of message and your expected outcome will determine your choice to communicate via a social media platform or a broadcasting platform.

Lastly, check in with your audience to determine what is working! If your goal is to advance membership did your numbers increase? You can track the number of friends or the number of shares on your Facebook page. Create an event survey or annual survey to evaluate your successes and your challenges. Other ways to evaluate your success is to analyze the traffic to your website, web pages and the number of comments left by blog readers.