

The Ways and Means

M A R K E T I N G F O R A S S O C I A T I O N S

Mastering Association Communications: A Checklist for Effective Outreach

You know better than anyone that effective communication is the lifeblood of your association. But how do you ensure your message not only gets out but truly cuts through the noise and resonates with your members?

We created this checklist to give you a clear, repeatable system for success. "Mastering Association Communications" is a guide to help you ensure every email, social post, and newsletter hits the mark, drives action, and strengthens your community.

Instructions

Go through each section and note which of your communication efforts are meeting the criteria.

Part 1: Set the Foundation

Before you start writing, you need a clear plan to help you get a clear understanding of what you're trying to achieve and who you're talking to.

1. What are your specific goals for this communication?
Our main goal is to: _____
Our secondary goal is to: _____
2. Who is your audience? (Select the primary audience for this message):
 - ☐ Members
 - ☐ Specific industry sector or committee
 - ☐ The general public
 - ☐ Government or advocacy audience
 - ☐ A different group
3. What is the key takeaway?
The single most important thing you want your audience to remember:
The key message is: _____
4. Is your message relevant and valuable to the audience?
Can you answer this question from your audience's perspective?
 - ☐ Yes, the value is clear.
 - ☐ No, it needs refinement.
5. Is your organization's voice consistent?
How consistent is your organization's tone across all channels?

Tip: Instead of just stating your goals, ask yourself what's in it for your members. Framing your message around a clear benefit makes your communication far more valuable and compelling.

Part 2: Reach the Right People

Where you share your message is just as important as the message itself. This section helps you choose the best platforms to reach your audience.

6. Are you using the most effective channels?

Check the platforms you're using for this message and ensure they align with your audience's habits.

Channel	Target Audience	Used for this Message?
Email	All members, targeted lists	☐ Yes
Social Media	Young professionals, public	☐ Yes
Website	All stakeholders, new visitors	☐ Yes
Direct Mail	Hard-to-reach members, specific campaigns	☐ Yes
Press Release	Media, public	☐ Yes
Webinar/Podcast	Engaged members, thought leaders	☐ Yes
Other:_____	Other: _____	☐ Yes

7. Are you leveraging multiple channels for important messages?

Use a combination of channels to maximize reach and frequency.

- ☐ Yes, we use a multi-channel approach.
- ☐ No, we are relying on a single channel.

Tip: Segment your audience and use the channels where they are most active to ensure your message is seen and heard by the right people.

Part 3: Craft Your Compelling Message

Craft a message that will truly resonate and drive action.

8. Is your headline or subject line interesting and clear?

A good headline should be both enticing and informative.

- ☐ Yes, it grabs attention and explains the content.
- ☐ No, it needs a refresh.

9. Is your content concise and tailored to your audience?

Use industry jargon to demonstrate expertise, but only when your audience will understand it.

- ☐ Yes, it's concise and uses appropriate terminology for our audience.
- ☐ No, it's too wordy or uses jargon that is not well-understood.

10. Are you using visuals to enhance your message?

Images, videos, and infographics make your communication more engaging.

- ☐ Yes, our visuals support and strengthen the message.
- ☐ No, we're not using enough visuals.

11. Is there a clear call to action (CTA)?

What do you want the reader to do next?

- ☐ Yes, the CTA is prominent and clear (e.g., "Register now," "Renew your membership").
- ☐ No, the CTA is not prominent or is unclear.

12. Has your content been proofread?

A single typo can harm your organization's credibility.

- ☐ Yes, it has been proofread by at least two people.
- ☐ No, I'm the only one who has seen it.

Tip: To ensure your visuals support your message and brand, define a clear and consistent imagery style for all your communications.

Tip: Your Call to Action (CTA) is one of the most critical elements. Make it specific and benefit-driven: "Secure your seat at the Annual Conference."

Part 4: Language & Localization

For associations serving a bilingual or multilingual audience, this step is crucial for building trust and ensuring your message is accessible to everyone.

13. Is your communication available in the preferred language(s) of your audience?

- ☐ Yes, all important communications are translated or created in each key language.
- ☐ No, we rely on a single language for all communications.

14. Is the translation or content localized, not just a direct translation?

Localization adapts your message to cultural nuances.

- ☐ Yes, our content is adapted for each language and culture.
- ☐ No, we use a basic translation.

Tip: To ensure consistency and accuracy across all communications, create a glossary of key industry terms, titles, acronyms and jargon in each language. This glossary ensures your team and any external translators use the correct, approved phrasing every time.

Part 5: Drive Impact & Measure Success

The final step is to see how your communication performed. This section helps you track your success and plan for the future.

15. Are you encouraging interaction and feedback?

Give your audience a way to connect with you and each other.

- ☐ Yes (comments, questions, polls).
- ☐ There's an opportunity for more interaction.

16. Are you tracking the performance of your communications?

Metric	How We Track It	Are We Tracking It?
Email Open Rate		☐ Yes ☐ No
Click-Through Rate (CTR)		☐ Yes ☐ No
Social Media Engagement		☐ Yes ☐ No
Website Traffic		☐ Yes ☐ No

17. Are you analyzing results and adjusting your strategy?

Use your data to make smarter decisions.

- ☐ Yes, we use data to inform our next steps.
- ☐ No

18. Do you have a plan for responding to inquiries and feedback?

A timely response shows your members you value their input.

- ☐ Yes, we have a clear and timely response plan.
- ☐ No

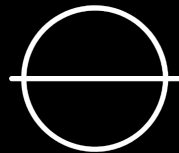
Tip: High open rates with low click-through rates often mean your subject line is great, but your content needs a clearer call to action.

Ready to move beyond the checklist and build a powerful strategy?

This checklist is just a starting point. If you want to dive deeper into your communication strategy or tackle specific challenges like member recruitment, event promotion, or raising awareness for your sector, we should talk.

Our team has poured their decades of experience and insights into developing a suite of resources that address common challenges faced by associations: from member recruitment, engagement, and retention to generating new revenue and building your reputation. We're offering these as a way to contribute to your success and demonstrate our commitment to helping associations grow.

We're here to help associations achieve their marketing and business goals. Connect with us for a quick chat to discuss your needs, and we'll schedule a time that works for you: [Connect with Us](#)



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