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**AN ANALYSIS OF BASIC PUBLIC RELATIONS NEEDS OF
NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATIONS**

By
Jennifer Szwalek

A Thesis Project

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May 16, 2003

Approved By _____
Professor

Date Approved 5-10-03

ABSTRACT

Jennifer Szwalek
AN ANALYSIS OF BASIC PUBLIC RELATIONS NEEDS OF
NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATIONS
2003

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Don Bagin
Corporate Public Relations Graduate Program

The purpose of this study was to analyze the basic public relations needs of non-profit associations, tiered according to association structure.

A sample of 100 non-profit association executive directors, obtained from the International Association of Association Management Companies (IAAMC), were surveyed by e-mail and in-depth interviews on their public relations needs. Twenty percent of the sample chose to participate.

Online research was conducted at the Web sites of the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) and within the Association Management Company (AMC) section, the International Association of Association Management Companies (IAAMC) and the Association Management Institute (AMCInstitute).

Research steps also were taken through a variety of research databases available at Rowan University Campbell Library.

Additional research was conducted through one-on-one informal conversations with a variety of association management personnel.

From the study, public relations needs within non-profit associations were noted based on association structure and budget and listed accordingly, thus creating a basis for composing non-profit association public relations plans.

The study reveals basic public relations needs of non-profit associations consistently vary, yet repeatedly tactical similarities among non-profit associations are found within common structural design.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

An infinite amount of love is dedicated to my mother and father for giving me the strength to find my way to complete this work. Without either of them, I would not be who I am today.

As a result of a shattering experience early on in life, which I now add to my life quilt, both my mother and father carried me when I no longer had the ability to find my way. I thank them for loving me more than any parent could and I hope they are just as proud to call me their daughter, as I am to call them my parents.

Special thanks to Drs. Bagin and Penrod and professor Litwin for showing me in the most powerful way, who I really am and what I have to offer. And for making me feel good about myself in the most humbling fashion. To each of you I owe a debt of gratitude in a way you will never know.

Selected as my high school yearbook quote, and still a literary lesson to this day....

Anything is possible, if only you believe.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Professional management of voluntary organizations, also known as the non-profit association management industry, has lasted for more than 100 years. Until recently though, the industry was not extremely well known or publicized. According to the AMCInstitute, U.S. associations and non-profits contribute approximately 10 percent to the Gross Domestic Product. And nine out of 10 adult Americans now belong to at least one association.

Much of the public is familiar only with associations such as the American Medical Association (AMA) or the American Pediatrics Association (APA). Both of these organizations and many others like them are considered stand-alone associations. Unlike the thousands of associations managed by association management companies (AMC), stand-alone associations are required to retain and maintain full-time staff for all their departmental needs and are responsible for all overhead costs.

Today more than 500 for-profit AMCs in the country manage more than 10,000 associations out of 147,000 nationally. These associations affect legislative decisions, offer expert knowledge to overseas counterparts and provide a networking of sharing to similar organizations. According to the AMCInstitute, based on association growth, the number of AMCs has increased by 40 percent since 1990, and by 25 percent since 1995.

“The expectations are a lot higher when it comes to providing services to an association of our size,” said Mardi Mountford, executive director of the Research Chefs Association, an association of more than 1,000 members. “Our board demands strategic leadership and expects more than just standard administrative services. We don’t want the AMC to manage only our annual meeting. We are looking for the AMC to design, launch, and manage high-profile programs that promote our mission and accomplish our goals.” Requests like these and many others dictate the collective knowledge design of the full-service AMC.

As a result, a full-service AMC offers associations a wide range of services including membership coordination, trade show development, meeting planning, marketing, strategic planning, financial services, executive director leadership, creative services and public relations. The AMCInstitute finds they range in size from small proprietorships to corporations with offices in several cities. “AMCs run their association clients like businesses, focusing on the bottom line, while providing them with tremendous flexibility and adaptability,” said Dee Ann Walker, CAE, chair of the AMCInstitute and president of the Walker Management Group, Inc. in Nashville, Tennessee. “An AMC provides leadership, strategic counsel and day-to-day management, giving volunteer leaders the opportunity to devote their limited time to policy, planning and leadership.”

Need

The need for this study materialized, as the researcher located no recorded previous analysis on the basic public relations needs of non-profit associations. This study attempted to compile the necessary public relations planning tactics for association management companies nationally. “By researching the public relations needs of executive directors across the country, the entire AMC industry will benefit from a benchmark in the public relations arena,” said Robert Waller, Jr., president of Association Headquarters. The sharing of resources often increases the success of an industry or community, and is the very reason that favors the longevity of this study’s results.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the appropriate basic public relations needs of non-profit associations with varying budgets. Often AMCs face the dilemma of customizing public relations plans as the acquisition of clients grows. “The rising popularity of associations hiring an AMC is not surprising,” said Walker. “We are seeing more and more elected leaders with limited time to run their associations, turning to AMCs for financial management, special events and conferences, and membership development.”

In many cases, both start-ups and long standing associations require similar public relations tactics right from the beginning, yet there is no secondary research to show these similarities. “Public relations is a necessary component of association

management, but we often waste valuable time customizing certain aspects of the public relations plan when maybe we don't have to," said Waller. According to Rich Bagin, executive director for the National School Public Relations Association, "Although many executive directors may not fully understand public relations as a strategic function, executive directors are continually looking for relevant content to help bring value to their membership. Strategy is important to help move an association forward."

In addition to determining the most basic level of public relations each association requires, the study will investigate increased public relations needs based on association structure.

Although the public relations tactics of each campaign are tailored to the association's mission and product/service(s) offered, many executive directors express some level of continuity in their management. Associations requiring AMC assistance have budgets ranging anywhere from \$30,000 to \$5 million. This study reveals the recurring connection between planning methodology, specific budgets and public relations tactics.

Problem

This study attempts to eliminate unnecessary repeated compilation of basic public relations needs by non-profit association executive directors. It allows for increased tactical precedent setting strategic planning of non-profit association public relations. This study identifies basic public relations needs of non-profit associations, tiered by association structure.

Procedures

The researcher surveyed association executive directors (ED), on a national level, to identify the association industry's basic public relations needs. The researcher initially attempted to acquire through the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), e-mail addresses for these individuals. According to the ASAE, its purpose is "To advance the value of voluntary associations to society and to support the professionalism of the individuals who lead them." Its envisioned future is "To be essential to advancing the role of voluntary associations in a democratic society and indispensable to association professionals." The ASAE would only provide mailing addresses for these individuals after they had input as to the distributed survey.

Due to the cost prohibitive nature of a survey by snail mail, and time limitations, the researcher acquired e-mail addresses for AMC presidents across the country, from the (IAAMC) International Association of Association Management Companies. The mission of the IAAMC is "To advance the business interests of association management companies and the AMC industry." These individuals were initially contacted with an invitation for their company executive directors to participate in the survey research. Positive respondents received the survey by e-mail one month later.

The researcher approached the respondents with anonymity. This is important since the researcher is known within the industry as a public relations expert for an accredited AMC and did not want to compromise the integrity of the study. For ethical reasons, the researcher offered all participants a copy of the final study results.

All information gathered was compiled into percentages tiered by participation level of public relations activities and budgetary allowance. The results were initially made available to IAAMC participants, secondarily to ASAE members by individual request and in key AMC resource publications such as *Association Management* and *Association Trends*.

Limitations

This study was limited to analyzing needs of only IAAMC executive director members. ASAE's agreement to its members, not to disclose member e-mail addresses to outside sources, forced the researcher to face lack of funding with the issue of snail mail distribution.

Contact of executive directors through IAAMC was limited to those AMC presidents who positively responded to the survey invitation, for their company executive director's participation. Acting as gatekeepers, the presidents controlled the IAAMC membership participation.

After distribution of the survey to the positive respondents of IAAMC, a staff member of IAAMC sent out an e-mail to the researcher's sample exposing the researcher to the sample group. This was after ten surveys were already received. The IAAMC member also sent out a second e-mail to the IAAMC membership notifying them the anonymity of the information they provide to the researcher is not guaranteed. The researcher contacted key IAAMC board members and staff for assistance in the matter. The particular IAAMC staff member who sent out the e-mails apologized for the

inconvenience and told the researcher to continue her study. A letter was drafted with assistance of IAAMC board members and key AMC personnel, in attempt to salvage the survey. The letter was distributed to the sample, reiterating the anonymity of the survey, support by IAAMC and the need for their participation. Unfortunately this brought no further surveys.

The researcher then contacted ten non-respondents for in-depth interviews. All were guaranteed anonymity. All agreed to participate.

Definitions

AMC – Association Management Company. A for-profit business that provides professional management and administrative services to tax-exempt or nonprofit organizations. They range in size from small proprietorships to corporations with offices in multiple cities.

AMCinstitute – The AMCinstitute serves as an information resource for associations, their volunteer leaders, media and others interested in association management.

ASAE – American Society of Association Executives. A trade organization advocate for the nonprofit sector dedicated to advancing the value of voluntary associations to society and supporting the professionalism of the individuals who lead them.

CAE – Certified Association Executive. An accreditation an executive director earns.

IAAMC – International Association of Association Management Companies. A trade organization that provides a means by which AMCs can coordinate their efforts to advance the status and scope of the association management company industry.

Snail Mail – Mail distributed through the post office, rather than electronically.

CHAPTER 2

Related Studies

This chapter provides succinct highlights of related research, as well as responses from several association management industry sources. The findings provided further foundation to necessitate an analysis of the basic public relations needs of non-profit associations.

The related research included communication with credible AMCs and association management organizations, including the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), International Association of Association Management Companies (IAAMC), Fernley & Fernley, Sumner Rider and Associates, and Smith Bucklin & Associates. The research also included correspondence with the top three association management publications: *Association Meetings* magazine, *Association Trends* and *Association Management* magazine.

After unsuccessfully locating related research from a variety of databases at the Rowan University library, significant efforts were conducted with an approach to industry colleagues and experts. Initial contact involved personal e-mails and phone calls.

The first attempt to identify related research was an e-mail inquiry to Regina McGee, editor of *Association Meetings* magazine. “The mission of *Association Meetings* is to provide our readers with useful information on issues and trends affecting the management of association meetings, trade shows, conventions, and seminars. AM is the only independently produced magazine that focuses specifically on these information needs, and thus provides readers with an "independent voice" in the area of professional event management.”¹ The e-mail response from McGee stated:

“I don’t really know anything about the public relations needs of non-profit organizations. Have you contacted Chris Vest at ASAE? He is part of the public relations staff of ASAE.”

The next e-mail inquiry was to Keith Skillman, editor in chief of *Association Management* magazine. The magazine “is a one-of-a-kind business magazine, edited specifically for association executives. It provides timely, practical information to help association executives succeed in their dual roles as manager and visionary. Articles address issues, programs, news and trends important to non-profit organizations of all sizes and scopes.”² The reply letter from Skillman stated:

“Per your request, I am writing this letter to notify you I am unaware of any empirical research related to your thesis topic.”

¹ Association Meetings. Mission Statement. <http://assocmeetings.com/rp/about/index.htm>

² Association Management. Mission Statement. <http://www.asaenet.org/magazine/>

The final association management trade publication contacted was *Association Trends*. The publication “was created in 1973 to meet the needs of a growing base of small association clients. Officers of the various nonprofit groups needed information about what other associations were doing and asked for a quarterly tip sheet about trends in association management. *Trends* became a monthly publication in 1975. Often called ‘the bible of the association community.’ *Association Trends* is read every week by association executives, chamber of commerce managers, meeting planners, nonprofit legal and accounting experts, convention and visitors bureau directors and industry suppliers of all types.”³ The e-mail inquiry requesting assistance was sent to Jill Cornish, publisher. The reply from Cornish stated:

“Your project on the basic public relations needs of non-profit associations sounds like an interesting one. I know of no similar projects that have been done/published. ”

The second tier of inquiries included AMCs and association management organizations. The first inquiry was to Judy Keel, IAAMC chief executive officer. The letter response from Keel stated:

“... you are conducting a research study done on the basic public relations needs of non-profit associations. This letter is to confirm that we do not know of any such existing analysis.”

³ Association Trends. About Us. <http://www.associationtrends.com/aboutus.htm>

An e-mail inquiry was also sent to Suzanne Pine, executive vice president of Fernley & Fernley. The reply from Suzanne stated:

“We have a copy of an ASAE publication titled *Associations Public Relations*. Please let me know if you’d like to borrow this book for a few weeks. I also want to confirm you have exhausted your resources within ASAE. Information Central at ASAE should be able to confirm that their vast pool of resources does not include any additional information on this topic.”

Receipt of this letter and the response from *Association Trends* prompted the researcher to explore the ASAE Web site for related research housed within the confines of Information Central. The research was ultimately narrowed with an inquiry sent directly to the ASAE director of industry and market research to explore the possibility of related secondary research. The reply from Steve Williams, Ph.D. stated:

“Per your request, I am writing this letter to notify you that I am unaware of any related studies to your thesis topic.”

At this juncture, the researcher contacted Suzanne Pine to obtain the referenced ASAE publication *Association Public Relations*. The compilation publication offered two articles on the established principles behind association public relations.

The first article titled, “Launching a Public Relations Campaign,” revealed necessary steps to identify the need for public relations in an association industry. Defining the need, selling the concept, laying the groundwork, planning the campaign, measuring impact and sharing the results work together as a fine tuned instrument. For those associations willing to make that leap of faith, the benefits can be significant.⁴ It’s also clearly noted, the best public relations program in the world is worthless if it is aimed at the wrong problem.⁵

Excerpted from the ASAE publication *A Sharing of Expertise and Experience*, the second article is a 22-month case study of The Vision Council of America’s plan to build a successful public relations program. In developing a public relations campaign, an association needs to know where it is prior to making any decisions about where it wants to go.⁶ The author of this article concluded research as the foundation of a public relations program to support the validity of the program budget, tactical elements and criteria for evaluation.

⁴ Helen Sullivan, “Launching a Public Relations Campaign,” *Association Management*, February 1993.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Susan Allen, CAE, William J. Wilson, CAE, “Building a Successful Public Relations Program Through Teamwork,” *A Sharing of Expertise and Experience*, Vol. 8, ASAE 1990.

A final effort was made with a phone inquiry to the AMCInstitute public relations firm of Sumner Rider and Associates and an e-mail to the world's largest AMC, Smith Bucklin & Associates. In a reply phone call from Laura Hyland, account executive for Sumner Rider and Associates, she stated:

“I am not aware of any particular studies done on your specific area of research. I would be interested to see what your findings yield.”

The researcher received no response from Smith Bucklin & Associates after repeated attempts by phone and e-mail.

The related article research, although not concretely relevant to the researcher's study, still did provide insight to the future direction and anticipated successful growth of the association management industry.

CHAPTER 3

Source Materials

The researcher investigated a variety of resources for the analysis of basic public relations needs of non-profit associations, which included: Internet search engines, the Rowan University library databases, personal interviews, AMC Web sites, association industry publications and Web sites, e-mail surveys and in-depth interviews.

Tools and Techniques

Lack of public exposure of the association management industry resulted in the researcher using a variety of key word combinations, when searching the Rowan Library databases as well as the Internet. Key words included “association public relations,” “association management,” “non-profit associations,” “non-profit association public relations” and “professional management of voluntary organizations.”

Initial research began with Internet search engines Yahoo.com, Ask.com and AltaVista.com. Additionally, the researcher visited sites of top AMCs including Smith, Bucklin & Associates, Inc. (sba.com), Fernley & Fernley (Fernley.com) and Association Headquarters (associationheadquarters.com). Rowan University Campbell Library database searches included Lexis-Nexus, WebSpirs, Digital Dissertations and AB Inform. All searches produced no relevant articles or abstracts for review.

The ASAE (asaenet.org), IAAMC (iaamc.org) and the AMCInstitute (amcinstitute.org) successfully yielded information through their Web sites. These sites provided the window to the identified need and desire for information to increase the value of AMCs across the country.

The researcher initially distributed an e-mail to ASAE in request of its executive director member e-mail list only. Guaranteed exclusivity of the study results was offered in the inquiring e-mail as an enticement for assistance. The initial reply from Mary Patterson, ASAE member coordinator stated:

“I have forwarded your message to Steve Williams, ASAE director of industry research. He produces all ASAE surveys and will probably be able to help you. I have "cc'd" Heather Clagett who manages our mailing list. She'll help if you need the list.”

The final reply from ASAE came from Heather Clagett, associate manager of client relations. Her reply stated:

“Here’s the word back from the publisher. We cannot for any reason give out e-mail addresses. This is part of our agreement with our members. You can have a mailing list at no charge but, ASAE must see the survey before we release the list to you.”

Through the IAAMC Web site, the researcher obtained an e-mail list of AMC presidents. Each president was e-mailed an invitation for his or her executive directors to participate in an e-mail survey.

Both ASAE and IAAMC frequently serve the same membership community, thus the researcher confidently chose to survey the IAAMC membership only, eliminating the international members. Additionally, the cost of snail mail and the time required to distribute a survey to the ASAE membership, was prohibitive to this study.

From the list of 112 AMC members of IAAMC, a population frame of 100 executive directors was randomly selected to receive a survey. As noted in chapter one, based on unauthorized participation by an IAAMC staff member, the researcher also conducted ten in-depth interviews from the non-respondent list of IAAMC members. The survey and in-depth interview results are found in chapter four.

Results of the survey and in-depth interviews were then analyzed for content and the response of non-profit association executive directors were tiered according to those associations that perform annual public relations tactics/tasks and those that do not. This was a needs basis analysis. Basic public relations structure was identified initially, with a secondary identification of increased public relations needs and desires.

CHAPTER 4

Research Findings

The researcher used two methodologies to obtain the following tabulated results. The first was an electronic (e-mail) survey of non-profit association executive directors who are members of the International Association of Association Management Companies (IAAMC). The second methodology was in-depth interviews with executive directors.

As noted in chapter three, the researcher distributed 100 surveys to the IAAMC membership. Ten percent of the surveys were received back. The unauthorized involvement of an IAAMC representative resulted in a series of correspondence to the IAAMC membership to raise the response rate. Unfortunately, the representative's involvement compromised the credibility of the electronic survey and no further surveys were received. The researcher then chose ten executive directors from the non-respondent list for in-depth interviews. All ten executive directors agreed to participate in the study. The following are the researcher's complete findings, both qualitative and quantitative, according to survey/interview questions.

1. What is the difference between public relations and marketing? (In-depth interviews only)

Public relations is like an umbrella. There are many facets including media and advertising. Public relations persuades people of the value of what you are doing. Public relations is a fairly intangible promotion of something or a service you may offer. It's the way your organization is viewed by the public at large. Public relations is when you go out and tell the general public about your organization or product/service. It's on a broad scale. Marketing is focused on the customer. Marketing is an attitude and state of mind, which is usually part of the overall business plan. It's the component that identifies whether a product or service can be successfully advertised. Marketing deals with business decisions and positions a product or service so more people want to purchase it. Public relations parallels to advertising.

2. Do you consider public relations an important component to your client strategic planning?

75 percent answered yes

25 percent answered no

3. How many associations do you personally manage?

75 percent manage 1 – 3 associations

20 percent manage 4 - 6 associations

5 percent manages 7 or more associations

4. Do you provide a public relations plan to your client(s) annually? If not annually, how often?

25 percent answered yes

75 percent answered no

Executive directors report it is not a high priority because the client does not understand the benefits of public relations to their industry. Executive directors also noted lack of finances of non-profits dictate the exclusion of public relations from their annual plans. If they provide a plan, but not every year, it's usually every two years or more.

5. What is your annual client(s) public relations budget?

85 percent spend 0-5 percent of the overall client budget on public relations

5 percent spends 10 percent of the overall client budget on public relations

10 percent spend 20 - 25 percent of the overall client budget on public relations

6. What is your annual overall client(s) management/operations budget?

All respondents were unwilling to reveal this figure. This did not compromise the surveys/interviews, since all respondents agreed to provide their public relations budget figures.

7. Do you exclusively represent non-profit associations?

100 percent answered yes

8. What public relations tactics/tasks do you include in your client annual planning?

For the 25 percent who answered yes to public relations in their annual planning, there are a variety of tactics/tasks offered/implemented. They included:

News releases

Association member magazine

Alliance with similar associations for shared knowledge

Newsletter (internal/external)

Web site

Survey

Content analysis

Internal flyers

Promotional material (programs/meetings/special events)

Press room (annual meetings/trade shows)

Media relations

Special events

Directories (buyer's guides/membership/trade show)

Brochures (external/education)

Feature article (scientific papers/white papers)

Prospective membership kits

Scholarships

Charitable donations

9. When first launching an annual public relations plan, what are the primary public relations tactics/tasks you implement for your client(s)?

For the 25 percent who answered yes to public relations in their annual planning, their primary tactics/tasks included:

20 percent develop newsletters/news releases/media relations

20 percent develop promotional material (annual meeting/trade show)

60 percent vote on primary tactics/tasks annually

Decisions of actual tactics/tasks varied year to year based on finances/association objectives for these respondents.

10. What tactics are later added? When? Why?

20 percent conduct evaluative research on each project to determine next steps

20 percent conduct media relations (feature articles/news releases)

60 percent implement a variety of tactics/tasks if something of interest or value will benefit the association. Respondents did not provide particular tactics/tasks.

11. What tactics seem to be the most successful/valuable for your client(s) industry?

5 percent identified trade show promotional material

40 percent don't know because they do not conduct evaluative research

Respondents cite financial restraints as the reason for no evaluation.

55 percent say those tactics/tasks that successfully build relationships

Respondents identified media relations, feature articles, newsletters and magazines.

12. What is the value of public relations to your client? Does your client understand the value of public relations?

Respondents supplied qualitative responses to this question, as follows:

Public relations is essential

Public relations is invaluable. We're our industry's best-kept secret and use this to recruit members.

Public relations creates customer buying opportunities for the members

Increased membership, which results in industry recognition

I'm not sure since we don't evaluate the tactics/tasks

Public relations is not critical

Public relations is not very valuable

Public relations is not valued as much because members get it confused with marketing. They don't know what it is.

There is a disconnect between the client and understanding public relations. The client needs to learn what public relations can do for the association and how to extract a public relations program.

My clients' industry warrants understanding the value of public relations. Some of them have significant public relations programs for their own businesses.

The value of public relations is low since it is not a main initiative.

For my new association, the value of public relations is very high.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion

Public relations appears to be a strong component of non-profit associations that clearly recognize the value of public relations, evaluate each tactic/task on the formative and evaluative level and have the proper funding to support public relations planning. These clients benefit significantly by earning membership, growth of programs and increased awareness of their industry and what they offer. This is the basis for the non-profit association's existence.

Unfortunately, this study identified most non-profit associations do not have proper funding or planning knowledge of public relations. The study sample revealed 75 percent of the executive directors felt public relations is important to their client's annual public relations planning, yet only 25 percent include it in their client's annual planning. Most agreed funding and the client not understanding public relations as the reason for exclusion of public relations from their annual efforts. Many of the executive directors took blame for the lack of understanding by each of the associations they represent.

The 25 percent of respondents who included public relations in their annual planning do so for a variety of reasons. These reasons range from direction by the association board of directors to “trendy” topics of the year to a general vote by the public relations staff. This demonstrated no continuity in what non-profit associations may consider in their most basic public relations needs. These decisions occur based on association structural need, internal vs. external efforts for the year, finances and level of public relations management.

The study revealed 85 percent budget zero to five percent toward public relations, thus supporting financial restraint as the key component to restrictive public relations efforts within the non-profit association sector. This in turn is a behavior warranted by the clients’ attitude and lack of understanding of how public relations can benefit an association, its members and the programs it supports. The study also did not clearly identify particular tactics/tasks non-profit associations implement at their most basic level of planning. However, the study did reveal, of the 25 percent of those who implement public relations each year, 60 percent consider it important enough to evaluate the program each year to determine what public relations efforts are worth maintaining or implementing.

Recommendations

Since lack of public relations knowledge is the barrier to increased financial support and structural growth of the non-profit association, the researcher recommends executive directors include public relations education as a component to staff and board orientation.

The main focus of associations is to increase membership, while developing programs and member benefits to answer the need of members. A successful integration of public relations both internally and externally will link non-profit associations to appropriate audiences.

The non-profit association decision-makers would benefit from experiencing public relations efforts that offer clear return on investment. Executive directors should invest to educate and share positive case studies of similar industries with similar backgrounds of development.

Recommendations for Further Study

The researcher recommends further study of the potential success of implemented public relations efforts amongst non-profit associations. A comparison of that study to this study would show whether or not educating the association decision-makers results in increased financial support to public relations, thus increasing overall public

relations efforts and possible continuity between budget, similar programs and implemented tactics/tasks.

Another recommendation for further study includes surveying members of the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) instead of the members of the International Association of Association Management Companies (IAAMC). This would eliminate the need to initially contact association management company presidents, requesting the participation of executive directors. Instead, the process would require additional time for the approval of the survey questions by ASAE senior management, prior to distribution to the ASAE membership.

The researcher also recommends a comparison of non-profit associations to for-profit associations. This may reveal further continuity among findings in this study as well as possible public relations tactics not yet implemented in the non-profit sector.

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