

EDIT

The E-Newsletter from Yankee IABC



IABC INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATORS

Yankee

CONTENT

September 2009



MARK YOUR CALENDAR: 2009 FALL EVENTS

- October 7: Flying High through Employee Engagement and Social Media All on a Low-Fare Budget (Providence, RI)



PRESIDENT'S CORNER


- Interview with Chapter President Lauren Libitz starts on [page 3](#).



EVENT RECAP



Communications measurement guru, Angela Sinickas, held a half-day workshop with a number of YIABC members and our colleagues. Read more on [page 6](#).



Thank you to all the Yankee IABC members who filled out our survey and shared constructive feedback for improving our chapter and its programs.

- Congratulations to **Renée Robertie**, Principal, August Communications, who was randomly selected to receive the \$50 gift card to Barnes & Noble.
- Congratulations also to **Beth Bryant**, Principal, BBWrites Strategic Communications, and **Alison Davis**, CEO, Davis & Company, Inc. who were randomly selected to receive a discount to an upcoming Yankee IABC event.

You can read a summary of the survey results on [page 4](#).

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: FALL EVENTS 2009

*October 7, 2009
6:00pm – 8:30pm
Providence, RI*

Flying High through Employee Engagement and Social Media All on a Low-Fare Budget

Join Yankee IABC and Millie Richter, Communications Specialist at [Southwest Airlines](#) for a special dinner presentation on Southwest's highly successful employee engagement, social media and internal communications programs.

During the presentation, Millie will discuss:

- Innovative ways to communicate to your entire employee group
- Creative ways to encourage employee behavior to positively impact your bottom line
- The role culture can play in communications – and the Southwest business case behind developing a dynamic culture
- How to strategize and develop web 2.0 campaigns that move your company ahead
- When to listen to online conversations and when to chime in
- How to use social media tools for crisis communications

For more information, go to <http://yankeeiabc.org/southwests-millie-richter-comes-to-providence/>.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Introducing Lauren Libitz, Yankee IABC President, 2009-10

By Linda Sanders

It's hard to believe that Lauren Libitz was once a college senior without a clue about what to do with her career, having majored in journalism, but then having a disappointing newspaper internship. Today Lauren is the 2009-10 President of the Yankee Chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators (Yankee IABC).

She credits the people she has met through IABC for helping her increase her communications knowledge and to advance her career. "The IABC community," Lauren says, "is strong and supportive and they will do anything they can to help others."

Discovering IABC

After college she started her employee communications career at Fidelity. She joined IABC, but limited her involvement to reading emails and newsletters from IABC – actually attending events while not knowing anyone felt too intimidating. A few years later after testing a career in market research, she returned to the employee communications field and renewed her IABC membership. Only this time, she attended events and got to know other Yankee IABC members. Later she volunteered to co-coordinate a special interest group for internal communication specialists.

(Cont. on page 4)

IABC MEMBERSHIP NEWS



Welcome New Members!

Joanne Berthiaume, Public Relations Specialist, Bose Corporation; **Ann Canning**, VP Mgr, Creative Services, Evergreen Investments; **Valeria Chuba**, Director of Communications, Foundation for an Open America; **Tim Cooney**, Member; **Stefanie L. DaCosta**, Communications Mgr, Fidelity Investments; **Barbara M. Driscoll**, Media Producer, BAE Systems; **Jessica Faulkner**, Marketing Communications, Teradyne; **Kim Hausmann**, Towers Perrin; **Deb Iaquinto**, Principal, Towers Perrin; **Caren T. Kenney**, Director of Corporate Communications, HealthMedia, Inc.; **Meghan E. Larsen**, Communications Specialist, Westinghouse Electric Company; **Christina M. Meehan**, Student; **Carl Messina**, VP Business Development, Partnership Resources; **Darlene A. Raynsford**, Director, Internal Communication, Ellis Hospital; **Neil Rhein**, President, Bull's-eye Communications; **George H. Schadler**, Student; **Jennifer Scupi**, Communications Strategist; **Kate Sohl**, Senior Mgr, Training & Communications, Cubist Pharmaceuticals; **Rick Stein**, Member.

Congratulations Members with September Anniversaries!

30 Years: **Tom Curran**, Principal, Curran Communications

25 Years: **Andrew Porter**, President, Andrew Porter Communications

15 Years: **Jan Thibodeau**, Director of Consulting, Novations Group Inc.; **Georgiann Zaglakas**, Writer/Communications Consultant; **Janice Fieldman**, Senior Mgr of HR Communications, Raytheon; **Jodi Freedman**, Senior Communications Specialist, Bose Corporation; **Kenneth O'Quinn**, Writing Coach, Writing With Clarity

10 Years: **Mike Lawrence**, EVP, Cone Inc.; **Martha Terry**, Principal, Towers Perrin

5 Years: **Diane J. Davis**, Employee Communications Mgr, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters; **Tracy McNeil**, Senior Communications Representative, Lockheed Martin Sippican, Inc.; **Craig Mitchell**, VP, Cision US, Inc.; **Brian J. Murphy**, Technology PR Mgr, Waters Corporation; **Erin K. Murphy**, VP Communications, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce; **Stephanie Murphy**, Mgr of Public Information & Internal Communications, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution; **Kirsten A. Paragona**, Director of External Communication, HCL; **Pamela F. Pearlman**, Communications Consultant, Bose Corporation



Introducing Lauren Libitz, Pres.

(Cont. from [page 3](#))

Two years ago she became the VP of membership, responsible for recruiting and welcoming members. Last year she served as President-Elect. During that time, she continued advancing and expanding her communication career. She works at MITRE Corporation, where she is involved in the company's internal communication program and in becoming a social media expert.

President's Goal: Member Engagement

As the new president, Lauren's focus is on getting members more involved in Chapter events and volunteer opportunities.

"This year I'm focusing the board's energy on *content, credibility, and connections*. I am excited to lead the Chapter, connect with members, and show how great IABC can be. Yankee IABC consists of 230 members, but we probably only know 50. My goal is to get [more members] engaged and help them to understand what IABC can do for them."

Yankee IABC will still host events and professional development workshops and communicate with members regularly. "But maybe we'll tweak it a little bit," Lauren says, adding, "We're listening to members."

Last spring YIABC conducted a membership survey ([see article at right](#)). Its results are influencing this year's choice of event topics and where functions are held, among other decisions.

"I want to connect what we do to that survey so that members know we are listening. We're making certain changes because you told us you wanted X, Y, Z. People will know that they have influence over their local chapter."

Lauren's enthusiasm for the year ahead is infectious. She wants to share that opportunity with others.

"The connections I've made through IABC have been invaluable in keeping on top of trends, hearing about best practices, and learning new skills. I'm good at what I do, but I'm better because of IABC."

YIABC Surveys Its Members for Insight on How to Keep Improving

By *Jennifer Scupi*

Our recent survey revealed that this Chapter has a strong approval rating and a loyal membership. Members use the Chapter for networking and keeping up with the industry, and would like our help with developments in online communications.

The Yankee Chapter has a long-standing membership. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of respondents have been members for over 10 years and 25% have been members for five to 10 years. 53% of respondents have renewed their membership for more than five years, showing that members see value in the group. Add another 25%, who have been members for two to five years, and the trend becomes obvious – once a member joins, he or she is unlikely to leave.

Member loyalty is likely related to our strong approval rating. Thirty-six percent (36%) were very satisfied with Yankee's programs and services, and 34% were somewhat satisfied. In particular, 42 out of 52 respondents were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with our methods of communication (the EDIT newsletter, the website, and our emails).

Thirty-six out of 52 people were very or somewhat satisfied with our professional stature or reputation. 31 were very or somewhat satisfied with the local professional development events. All of this data leads to a high recommendation rate – 57% are very likely to recommend membership to a friend or colleague.

Networking has an important role in our field, and as we cultivate our professional networks, we share that knowledge with our colleagues. By a 60% margin, people are hearing about our Chapter through colleagues or friends.

IABC is primarily seen as a way to keep up with the industry and to network with others. Out of 52 respondents, 32 said their first or second reason for joining was to stay current with industry best practices and trends.

(Cont. on [page 5](#))

Member Survey Results ('08-'09)

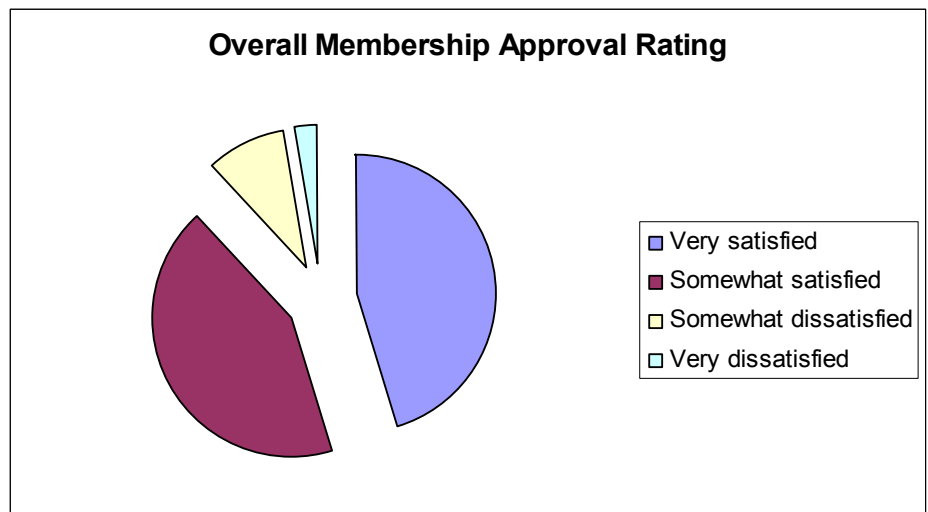
(Cont. from page 4)

Nineteen people said their first or second reason for joining was for the local professional development events and resources, and another 19 said it was to connect with other communicators in their areas of specialty.

Industry knowledge and networking are also top reasons people renew their membership – specifically, the quality of our parent organization’s resources and the connections made with other communications people.

EDIT remains the primary way our members stay in contact with the Chapter. 94% of respondents said reading EDIT is the way they have been involved Yankee IABC in the past year, while 82% visited the Yankee website and 50% attended a professional development event. Members who say they have not participated in the past year gave “lack of time” and “events held at an inconvenient time or location” as their main reasons.

Our members are loyal, but they are pressed for time. When asked if they would be interested in supporting the Chapter by volunteering, 64% said no. However, 28% did say they would copyedit an issue of EDIT and 17% said they would write about an event for EDIT or work at an event registration desk.



Email is still our preferred method of communication, but many members are showing an interest in social networking. The second choice for staying in touch was the [LinkedIn group](#); third choice was Twitter.

Web communications and social media top the list of topics we are interested in learning more about, with 46 and 44 people, respectively. Communications planning and strategy was next with 43 people very or somewhat interested, and measuring/evaluating communication impact and internal/employee communications were a distant fourth and fifth, both with 39 people.

The data on frequency, timing, and structure of events shows that, for the most part, we are already meeting members’ needs in these areas. Most of us would prefer to attend events either once a month or once every other month. We do not want to attend events in the afternoons – evenings were preferred by 33 people and a half-day morning session by 25.

As for the structure of the events, our first choice is a formal speaker-led presentation with a networking component, followed by (2) a panel discussion; (3) a networking event with no formal program; and (4) a formal speaker-led presentation without networking.

80% of respondents said that they would attend virtual events that were formal speaker-led webinar presentations, while 68% said they would attend a webinar with two or three communications professionals talking about a given topic.



Low-Cost, High-Impact Ways to Measure Communication Effectiveness

By: Carl Zangerl

Angela Sinickas kicked off Yankee IABC's program year with a bang! She engaged a roomful of communicators – IABC members and guests – in a dynamic workshop titled 'Communication Measurement on a Shoestring Budget.'

Before sketching some of her key points, I must make a disclaimer. I use Sinickas' manual, *How to Measure Your Communication Programs*, in my Communication Assessment course at Northeastern University. So I'm a true believer!

That said, Sinickas made a compelling case for the proposition that we should measure the impact of what we communicate. When we measure communication effectiveness, we're able to make fact-based decisions on how to improve our communication vehicles and campaigns. We're also in a much better position to demonstrate the value of communication to our organization's leadership.

The first part of the workshop outlined a straight-forward method for setting measurable communication objectives. Sinickas argued that we should go beyond measuring our communication activities, such as the quality and number of messages we've sent, for example. That's certainly important. But we also need to assess the impact of those activities on the perceptions and behaviors of our audiences. Do they remember our key messages? Are our channels credible? Does their behavior change in the desired way?

Where to begin? First, identify the current attitudes and behaviors of specific stakeholder groups. Then, describe the 'ideal' attitudes and behaviors that you hope to influence through communication. This step links communication with organizational performance.

Once communication goals are set, we can consider a wide range of measurement tools to assess the extent to which we've achieved those goals. Sinickas provided dozens of examples of tools that cost little or nothing to deploy. These include observational measures, informal 'pizza-lunch' focus groups, and informal surveys. She also noted that behavioral data, such as productivity, turnover, and web usage, are often available somewhere in the organization – we simply have to ask for them.

At the close of a dynamic session, spiced with anecdotes and real-world examples, Angela Sinickas urged workshop participants to adopt a measurement mindset.

Check out Angela's website, <http://www.sinicom.com>, for excellent, free measurement resources and case studies.

10 Tips for Better Communications and Measurement on a Shoestring Budget

1. **Tie measurement to stakeholder behavior**, rather than attitude or intention. Start your communications planning with what you want your stakeholders to DO.
2. **Create a "chain of evidence"** for showing communications impact. Begin with building awareness, then inform your stakeholders, then quantify the behavior change.
3. **Do "soft" research if your budget is limited**, such as asking stakeholders questions informally in the hall or break room. Though not scientific research, it can yield good info that can help shape your communications plan.
4. **Suggest a pilot project** if you're getting resistance for a full research project.
5. **Use the Readability Statistics tool** in MS Word to help convince legal and technical reviewers that their copy edits have excessive jargon, technical terms or legalese.
6. **Use relevant headlines, subheads and bullets** so readers can find the key points then dive into the details they need. Assume they won't read the whole communication word for word.
7. **Don't try to be too clever with heads or graphics**. Make sure they reflect the true nature of the copy. Angela gave an example of a headline gone awry in an internal newsletter for a cable company. Technicians saw the head "Avoiding the Charge" and didn't read it, thinking it was about customer fraud. Rather the article was on electrical safety for technicians.
8. **Test channel effectiveness** using slightly different URLs to point readers to online communications delivered through different channels.
9. **Use first class postage** to get a better measure of behaviors more closely tied to drop date of your communications.
10. **Don't rely on web page "hits"** for web measurement. HITS = "How Idiots Track Success." Hits don't tell you if they actually found what they were looking for, or what they did with the information. View time doesn't help either since they may have stepped away, gotten a phone call, etc.

- Renée Robertie

Volunteer Opportunities

Do you need a way to pump up your resume, meet colleagues, or try a new discipline? Participating in Yankee IABC is a way to continue your professional development or network with other communicators.

Yankee IABC is successful because the support of our members is strong. There are many ways to get more involved.

Reach out to members and non-members, write articles about IABC events, help at events, be part of a planning team, and more.

We respect your time, so we will discuss with you activities that will fit your schedule and match the professional development goals you are trying to achieve. And we need your knowledge and your expertise.

When you're ready, contact Pat Masterson (patomalley74@msn.com) and match your interests with Chapter activities.



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The Yankee Chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) connects more than 220 communications professionals from Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Contact us via email at info@yankeeiabc.org or visit us at www.yankeeiabc.org to learn about networking, professional development, job opportunities, volunteering, membership, and other Chapter-related business.

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