

ACCCA MARKETING PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STATUS 9-12-2019

BACKGROUND

In 2017-18 the Board approved \$24,000 to fund the development of a marketing plan for ACCCA that included a “soft re-brand” of the Association. ACCCA contracted with Jennifer Aries at 25th Hour Communications [July 2017 through March 2018] to continue the work she began in the prior year on data gathering and working with staff to develop and implement the plan.

The Plan consisted of **seven goals** and a series of related “tactics” that were designed and deployed based on the data collected. These seven goals were:

1. *Revitalize the ACCCA Brand*
2. *Identify and Promote Member Benefits*
3. *Recruit New and Lapsed Members*
4. *Retain Current Members*
5. *Create a Communications Plan*
6. *Enhance the Annual Conference*
7. *Create [related] Internal Processes for the above goals*

Here’s where we’re at today:

Much progress has been made in the first 2 years of implementing the marketing plan. Overall, the way we communicate with members and other stakeholders has improved significantly. We now have the tools to take engagement in ACCCA to the next level.

To continue our progress, we have adjusted staffing around the tasks associated with daily communications and we prioritized projects related to plan implementation using our full time, part time and limited contract personnel.

The tactical improvements described below are showing results, and the steady and consistent growth we have seen since 2017 will be leveraged in the coming year with the recruitment campaign: **ACCCA 1600 Strong: Be the One** launching throughout this month. *This campaign represents a strategic application of the tactics from the Marketing Plan to ACCCA’s bottom line [aka, Membership Growth].*

Below are the marketing tactics that were accepted by the Board in March, 2018 that are now aligned with the updated/approved 2019-20 strategic plan. They are categorized according to their status. First are tactics that are *in progress* or *not yet started*, followed by a listing of those that have already been *implemented*.

In progress/ongoing

Not yet started

Implemented

Identification of regions and distribution of regional breakdown information to members

In 2018 the marketing consultant found that based on survey feedback there was confusion among members and stakeholders about the regions and how the system is divided compared to ACCCA's 10 region structure. The Campus Contacts that fall within the regions accepted by ACCCA are identified, however it is clear that how other entities interpret a regional division of the system is extremely inconsistent and a variety of models are concurrently in use. For purposes of member or constituency regional identification, it stands that some consistency across affiliate organizations and the Chancellor's Office should be achieved.

Staff is exploring how to best achieve a general consensus among entities about regional boundaries and how to make this information widely available.

Create collateral material with refreshed brand

Assuming the ongoing need for current collateral reflecting the latest messaging and tone, materials should be curated on an ongoing basis and an assessment of what is needed for the year [our programs and benefits are essentially the same year to year] should be done and materials made easily accessible. If a Board member is recruiting someone from their college or staff is attending an affiliate event, there should be updated materials accessible on the web site.

Currently we are finalizing a dedicated page on the web site with updated materials for access on September 3rd. As we encourage our board members and campus contacts to connect others to ACCCA, these materials will be available to them.

Establish a regional workshop platform for ACCCA to supplement its core programs and increase access to training opportunities for administrators.

Guidelines for conducting regional training events were vetted by the RMC approved by the Board in 2018-19 and the first of these events was facilitated in October, 2018. Another four events are planned for 2019-20. The goal is to ensure these regional one-day events are held on college campuses and are regularly available to members and administrators as both training and recruitment opportunities.

Create First Year program to increase retention of new members beyond their first year.

A communications map with targeted information at defined points throughout the first year has been established. The map incorporates specific messaging from identified sources that include the ACCCA office, a member's campus contact, regional representative and ACCCA leaders encouraging them to get involved, access their benefits and to offer assistance

throughout the year. Once the map is tested in the 2019-20 year and adjusted, it can be removed from “in process” to “Accomplished” in 20-21.

Provide a forum for “reunion” events for program attendees as a retention measure

We employed this tactic at the 2019 conference with a follow up session for Admin 201 attendees and will do the same in 2020. Additional strategies are needed for other programs however, early planning to coordinate communications well in advance will be required.

Use member photos and testimonials for recruitment purposes

Staff has already collected some testimonials, but a plan to effectively use them in recruitment is in development along with process details. At the 2020 conference a “confessional booth” will be set up to capture these stories and make #MyACCCAStory a trending hashtag. Live tweets and Instagram posts will be flashed on monitors in the registration area.

Update promotions for training programs incorporating tone/messaging and refreshed brand

New program promotional material is being developed for use in 2019-20 as part of the current marketing contract set to be completed **by September 30**.

Identify affiliate conferences and events to target for recruitment and sponsorship. Engage board members to represent ACCCA when possible.

Annually the ACCCA budget includes funding for recruitment and outreach activities and some of those funds are used to sponsor and participate in the events of affiliate organizations. Each year staff establishes a calendar for leveraging these events, and beginning in 2019-20 Board members will be actively engaged in this process. An orientation video and related materials will be available online to any ACCCA volunteer who wants to recruit a colleague.

Add faculty and staff on leadership track as secondary target audience

Although some discussions have been initiated, this effort did not progress in 2018-19 and there are no plans to create a “pipeline” program for faculty in 2019-20. There are some challenges, primarily bandwidth to create a new program from scratch, however a pipeline program to onboard faculty into administrative roles is also a direct line to increasing membership. Staff will require a greater consensus of the Board about prioritization of this tactic to proceed.

Using research data, work with RMC to create and implement a retention plan for existing members

This tactic represents a combination of recruitment efforts that are initiated and already underway like improving benefits and communication/messaging. However, recasting these messages toward existing members to encourage them to continue as members will be on the agenda of the RMC in the coming year.

Create promotion plan exclusively for benefits using member photos and testimonials

Once the benefits review was completed in 2018-19, the strategic plan was adjusted to include the goal of re-introducing ACCCA members to their benefits. The first step in that effort was to create a column in each issue of the new newsletter devoted to exploring one benefit at a time.

The first column will run on September 3rd and will feature a detailed description of the Professional Liability Insurance benefit. Subsequent issues will feature a new benefit or a testimonial from a member who has used the benefit.

Reinstitute newsletter in short-form digital format delivered to members on a quarterly basis.

The first edition of the newsletter will launch on September 3.

Use data to identify specific attributes and repurpose them to create a new tagline that captures the essence and value of an ACCCA membership.

Through our work with the consultant we implemented the tagline: ***“ACCCA, Your Essential Career Partner”***. This tagline now appears on our current marketing brochure, the web site and all email signature blocks and other selected messaging. Strategic steps beyond this tactic would be to ensure that all staff is aware of the tagline and the conditions for its usage on a regular basis. Using it too little will be ineffective, and using it too much will make the tagline a punch line. Appropriate usage will be revisited at the annual staff in-service training in October.

Create a single “tone” and messaging; ensure personal, supportive tone with action and vibrancy.

The identification of tone/messaging was completed and is being used on an ongoing basis. **The tone/messaging was altered to direct it to the member as opposed to the community, and from the Board/leaders instead of ED/staff.** Outgoing messaging will be reviewed at the annual in-service training day with staff.

Create talking points to be used by the Board of Directors, staff, committees and consultants to support the soft rebrand

Initial talking points supporting and describing the rebranding effort were reviewed and approved. They were used at the conference and are being used on an as-necessary basis. Additional resources including a power point for presentations, updated brochures and program information are being maintained on the web site for board members and campus contacts recruiting purposes.

Create and roll out new brand plan

A refreshed look/feel/color branding scheme was launched in 2018 with new collateral/member brochure. Additional materials continue to be developed as necessary.

Identify number of managers/administrators in the system; create and implement process for identification of administrators [Annual Administrative Census]

Beginning in early 2017-18 the “Campus Contact” network was established and used to provide feedback about all administrators, managers and directors at every campus in the state. From

this data, a total number of member-eligible administrators in the system was established and member/non-member lists to quantify potential growth was developed. This “census” activity will be repeated annually in the fall so that revised recruitment goals can be annually adjusted.

Establish recruitment goals

To elaborate on the above, in 2018 a base number [4,948] of working administrators in the California community colleges was established and from that recruitment goals were calculated and subsequently adjusted. Based on historic recruitment activity, the original recruitment goal of 51% of ALL administrators in the system as ACCCA members by 2022 was deemed unrealistic, and was amended by the Board in June 2018. The subsequent goal of 3% annual growth was far exceeded and at the close of the 18-19 year, the Association had actually grown 8.75%. The 2019-20 goal is 173 members or 15% of the 2018-19 level.

Purchase *Constant Contact* subscription; create email and newsletter templates

On schedule and on time.

Establish editorial calendar and content bank

An editorial calendar is established and content will be banked as available. The tabloid style of the newsletter allows much of its content to be linked to existing content on the web site which significantly reduces the need to news-gather. Additional content is via interviews and contributed by the regions or our affiliates.

Annually identify how members value their benefits, and depending upon usage, decide efficacy of keeping specific benefits

ACCCA surveys members annually regarding their benefit usage. The member survey was reviewed by the RMC in 18/19 and they recommended a series of changes to provide better metrics that reveal how much ACCCA members *value* the benefits they have versus how much they use them, and the survey allows staff to quantify specific improvements members want.

Send information packets to Human Resources Offices/Colleges

Starting in the fall of 2019 ACCCA will collaborate with ACHRO to provide membership materials to HR offices and encourage them to incorporate this information into their onboarding processes. This will be an annual activity.

Identify alternative training options for unsuccessful applicants to ACCCA programs to keep them engaged.

This tactic was already in practice and addressed early on in the Marketing project when the revised language for the rejection letter was crafted. Established messaging is now used across all programs that includes the options of regional events and webinars as those options are expanding.

Establish timeline and process for key association communications and their distribution

This process is established and continues to be refined and updated as the overall marketing plan evolves.

Create specific conference promotion plan leading with program changes based on research/member voices/Conference Planning team

New communication tactics were prepared and deployed for the 2018 conference in a more effective way than prior years. The 2018 conference was very successful for a number of reasons, but changing the way we promote the event was one of the factors. These tactics were again used for the 2019 conference which again raised the bar, and they will continue and evolve as necessary.

- Identify data to assist with recruitment and program marketing on an on-going basis using member feedback, exit interviews with lapsed members and engaging non-members
- With Regional Council, identify topics and dates for Quick Polls to the field
- Create a plan for regular data review, identify necessary metrics and update communication plan as needed; identify needed data, collection methods, and timelines for collection
- Manage mailing lists – review and enhance on regular basis
- Develop process for onboarding new and lapsed members
- Develop process for onboarding new volunteers like co-chairs, committee members, etc.

Each of the above six tactics deal with ***data gathering, metrics and information*** and each has been incorporated into ACCCA's operation in some form. Processes continue to be scrutinized and improved. These tactics are inter-related and essential to member recruitment/retention and marketing overall.

At the annual in-service training for staff [set for October this year], each tactic will be assessed independently to consider and either update or affirm processes for information and data gathering and use to inform planning.

By the same measure, the Board and its Strategic Planning process depends on metrics and data stemming from these process to assess each specific goal and task. The Board is charged with providing a clear-eyed assessment of the success or challenge each goal/task presents. Armed with information and the broad data sets provided by staff the Board makes decisions about each of the four areas [operations, membership, PD and Advocacy] and adjusts the established Strategic Plan.