



*It's All in the Mix:*  
**Communication Audit  
Helps to Determine  
the Right Lineup**



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Connecting Great Ideas and Great People

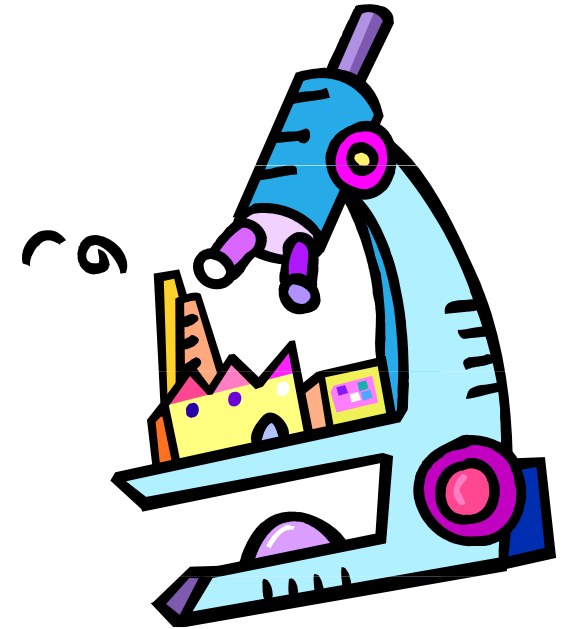
# The Communication Challenge

- Evolving print/electronic options
- 24/7 cycle
- Financial/resources pressures
- How to get heard???
- How to provide value and customized content
  - How to ensure communications support association goals?
- Other challenges & concerns?




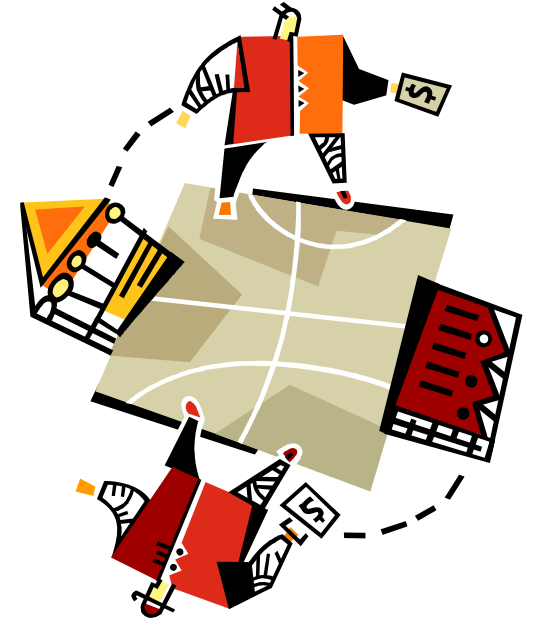
# Communication Audit

- What is an Audit?
- When do I need it?
- How to conduct?
- How to leverage findings for results



# Communication Audit

- Big picture review of member communications 
  - Address member information needs/preferences?
  - Support association goals?
- Refinements to communication efforts



# Communication Audit

- Messages clear and consistent?
- Right format for readers?
  - Print/electronic—readers' habits, preferences
- Overloaded with messages- fatigue?
  - Anyone reading? Value?
- Brand and identity of organization clear?



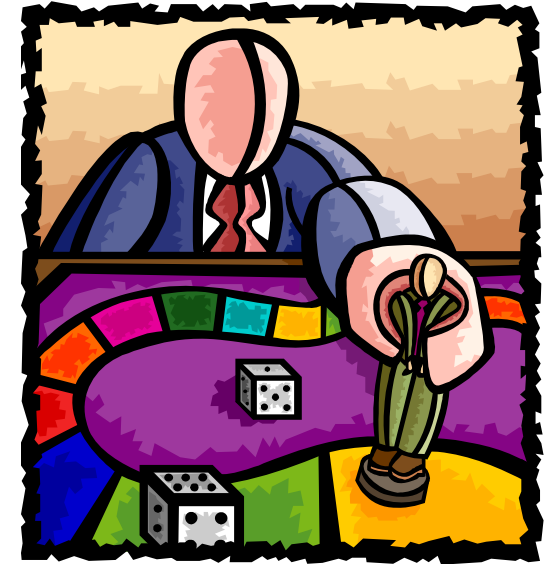
# Elements of Communication Audit

1. Scan of all member communications
2. Identify communication challenges, barriers, opportunities
3. Seek member feedback (quantitative data)
4. Environmental scan—competitive market
5. Analysis of data and implications
6. Strategies to refine communications to better support—member needs & association goals
7. Communication Strategic Plan



## Possible outcomes

- Adjust content, topics/focus
- Eliminate/combine publications
- Launch new pubs
- Brand and graphic identity
- Organizational restructure—email gatekeeper, mapping, social media



- Plan for reassessing
- Organization-wide Communication Strategic Plan

# Case Example: AWWA



American  
Water Works  
Association

- Challenge of multiple publications
- Declining readership
- Erosion of brand and image
- Communication Audit leads to changes—  
in primary communication vehicles



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# Refining the Mix

- Multiple publications to single
- One-touch communications
- News, professional resources, research, marketing
- More “must read”
- Less “spam”



Before you jump in...

## What to consider?

- Time and resources required
- Statistically valid data
- Interpreting data—lead v. follow?
- Value of objective overview. Benchmark against industry standards
- Implementation 



- Organization-wide buy in
- Phased plan for changes/refinements
- Phase 2: Develop Communication Strategic Plan



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# WWYD?\*

*\*What Would You Do???*

## ■ Case Study 1: Individual membership

- 6 e-newsletters, 3 journals
- No centralized marketing/communication
- Member e-mails 2x/day
- Membership declining

## ■ Case Study 2: Trade association

- Trade association with corporate execs
- 3 newsletters, 1 magazine, dated Web site
- Whether to move to social media? Suspect members moving there
- Increased market competition, growing sector, effectiveness of brand?



# Lessons Learned...next Steps



- Watch for warning signs
- Leverage communications for success
- Commit to big/small steps for improved communications—no sacred cows!
- Member data: key to insights
- Marketing/e-mail review
- Organization culture and overall plan



# Contact Information

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