

Spring 2003

IMCA Update

Official Publication of the Insurance Marketing Communications Association



President's Message

Fran Harding
Zurich North America

Dear IMCA Members:

Events during the past year have presented me with frequent reminders of both the extent and the speed of change affecting us all. Forces outside our control seem to change the dynamics of our business (not to mention our personal lives) almost daily. As communicators, our challenge is to embrace and adapt.

Living in the "information age" means resources to make our jobs easier are everywhere. But while working alone and navigating the information superhighway is one way to sharpen skills, it may not be the best way to connect. Or to build a network.

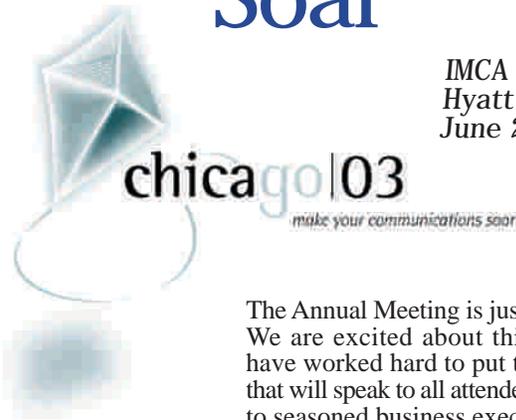
That's why you should consider Insurance Marketing Communications AssociationSM! IMCA's annual meeting is on the horizon. And now is the time to register. From June 21 - 24, 2003, your insurance friends and colleagues will be in Chicago for the Annual Meeting and Showcase Awards. Join us!

During the meeting, general sessions and workshops will feature a variety of topics. With this lineup, you'll come away with ideas and suggestions that can be used immediately. The cornerstone of our meeting, the Annual Showcase Awards, will give you insight into what your colleagues are doing. Entries will be displayed throughout the conference and the winners will be honored at our Awards Banquet on June 24.

You know the value of networking. There will be plenty of opportunities to socialize with your peers. Interested in being a volunteer? Good. The Board of Directors is eager to hear your ideas. So why not take this opportunity to recharge, reconnect and regroup. Don't you owe it to yourself to attend? See you in Chicago!

Make Your Communications Soar

IMCA Annual Meeting
Hyatt Regency Hotel
June 21-24



The Annual Meeting is just around the corner. We are excited about this year's event. We have worked hard to put together a schedule that will speak to all attendees from newcomers to seasoned business executives.

We have extended the early bird rate of \$695 until May 15, 2003. Register now to take advantage of this savings! We also offer a one-day rate for June 23rd (includes the Showcase Awards banquet) to accommodate those individuals who want to view award winning work as well as participate in a portion of the meeting.

We offer several ways to register for this event as well as secure your hotel accommodations!

- Use the registration form contained in your meeting packet
- Use our secure, online registration form
- Download and fax the registration form on our website at www.imcanet.com

For questions concerning the meeting, contact Meeting Registration Chair Cora Barran at (323) 964-8997 or Temie Seibert at (704) 543-1776.

Communicating for Change

By Angela D. Sinickas, ABC, www.sinickas.com

Problem: I've talked with a number of communicators who are perplexed at how to find measurable behavioral changes to chart against their communications. The problem is often that they started in the wrong place, determining messages independently of identifying behavior changes aligned with company goals. Instead, you need to make messaging and channel selection the last steps in developing your communication strategy instead of the first.

Solution: The following are 10 steps to connect your work with changes in your audience's actions.

10 steps to connect your work with changes in your audience's actions:

1. Identify which bottom-line organizational goals, initiatives or programs communication could impact the most.
2. For a particular goal, determine which groups of stakeholders could take different types of actions that would better lead to the goal.
3. For each stakeholder group, interview the relevant supervisors and managers to understand what actions those stakeholders are currently taking and what they should be doing ideally. Probe for the types of measurements that the operation is already conducting relative to those behaviors.

(Continued on next page)

Beware! PowerPoint® is a Flawed Software

By Robert Vallee, President, Public Speaking Consultants Inc.

The design of the typical PPT template creates a liability for presenters and for those nice people who prepare presentations for them. Here is the nature of your dilemma.

You prepare PowerPoint and paper-based presentations for other communicators in your organization. Your presentations are designed for advisors/agents who use them in client-oriented presentations and meetings. You want your presentations to be effective, clear, relevant, modern and presenter-proof. You also want your presentations to satisfy the information requirements that are critical to your target audiences' productivity needs.

However, you have been misled by PowerPoint's instructions. Look closely at PowerPoint's instruction to you as a writer and/or presenter. For instance: the typical template opens with the instructions: "click to add a title". That, ladies and gentlemen, is from academia and not from commerce which screams for clarity and conclusiveness. The instructions send you in the wrong direction and, as a result, most writers and presenters today are creating speaking notes with additional speaker notes that, in turn, make live presenters redundant.

What should it be, you ask? The modern approach is to enter a conclusive statement, headline or point which, in turn, will be confirmed by the body of the template. In law, this is called the "claim followed by its specifics or proof" template. Too bad, the Microsoft® techies and designers got it wrong.

It gets worse! The template also instructs you to "Click to add text". As such, writers and presenters enter speaking notes around which they will elaborate and expand. How antiquated, slow and boring!

The end result is that presenters read aloud the contents of their PPT presentations to an educated audience who can read without assistance. Your target audiences are not enjoying the long standing and boring habit of being read to by subordinates or vendors. The software should accelerate the transfer of information to your audiences with clarity, ease and relevance.

So you are invited to undo the damage. Join us in Chicago. Discover O.P.T.4.M.O.R.E.©: Outstanding Presentation Techniques for Modern Overachievers Ready for Excellence! Learn how to do this in a keynote address and apply it as well in a workshop led by Robert Vallee. Find Robert at www.vallee-presentationcoach.ca.

Wanted: New IMCA Members

REWARD: \$75 PLUS entry into a drawing for one free registration to our 2003 Annual Meeting in Chicago

IMCA has launched our new member campaign as part of the overall "Making Things Happen" initiative. There has never been a better time to join IMCA! We are excited about our new and robust website as well as many initiatives we have underway to enhance member benefits.

We recently mailed our "Image" brochure to non-member companies. Now we are asking for your help! We feel our current members are our best "advertisement". You can speak first hand to the benefits you and your company receive from IMCA. And for a limited time, we are willing to pay \$75 for each paying member you recruit for us! Plus, we will add your name to a drawing for one free registration to our 2003 Annual Meeting in Chicago. The drawing will be held on June 15, 2003.

For more information, contact IMCA Membership Chair Reg Pierce at (610) 408-8022 or Temie Seibert at (704) 543-1776.

Communicating for Change

(Continued from previous page)

4. Conduct focus groups with members of each stakeholder group. Discuss with them several topics:

- a. Why do they do what they do currently.
- b. What it would take for them to start taking the new actions identified through your supervisor and manager interviews.
- c. What types of knowledge or information they would need to be able to change their behavior.
- d. The best way for them to receive this information.

e. What attitudes might affect their behavior. Ask this in terms of: "If you had all this new information, is there anything else that would still keep you from taking the new actions?" At this point, you'd be probing for "belief blockages" that could inhibit their behavior. For example, they might say: "If I do what they're asking, it would create problems for our customers (or for another department)," or "Why bother? Next month management will want me to do something else."

f. What would it take to change their existing negative beliefs on the topic, if anything.

5. Conduct a survey of your key stakeholder groups to identify the current baseline levels of their existing knowledge and attitudes you identified in focus groups as being critical to the desired behavior change.

6. Start collecting operational management's measures on the current levels of the behaviors, both desired and actual.

7. Design your communication campaign to integrate the knowledge and belief messages you identified as critical to the behavior change. Use the ideal communication approaches the focus groups listed as the best ways to gain the needed knowledge and change their beliefs.

8. Do mini-surveys of your stakeholders' knowledge and attitude levels on the key messages, timed to coincide with your communication interventions.

9. Chart for management the changes in the stakeholder behaviors versus changes in their knowledge and attitudes, indicating the timing of your communication interventions. You might also measure desired behaviors that were fine to start with to make sure they haven't accidentally been negatively affected.

10. Quantify the financial value of the change in behaviors, and take full credit for it!

In order to connect the work we do with operational outcomes, we need to know the business dynamics of our organizations, understand our audiences and work closely with operational management.

When we do this effectively, we become more valuable communicators whose work is aligned with business goals. We create a seat for ourselves at the business table instead of waiting to be invited in.

IMCA Headquarters have moved:

IMCA
P.O. Box 473054
Charlotte, NC 28247-3054
(704) 543-1776
(704) 543-6345 Fax
E-mail: tseibert@imcanet.com
Website: www.imcanet.com

Contact: Temie Seibert
Executive Director

Please update your records.

