Communication with Members

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Introduction

- By the end of this presentation you will have:
  - A better understanding of how eblasts, your website, and social media can help your organization.
  - A few strategies you can use to improve your communications.
  - A list of tools.
- Small organizations, doing a lot with little.
- *You can't do everything*.
- Ask yourself: What small actions will give the best return on your investment of time and money?
- Try those actions, and then *measure the results*. Learn, improve, and try again.

Introduction

- Eblasts (aka Mass Emails)
- Website
- Social Media
- Database
- Membership Survey

Eblasts (aka Mass Emails)

- Keep in touch
- Quick
- Inexpensive
- Convenient
- Most recent retirees have an email

Eblasts (aka Mass Emails)

<< Audience Survey >>

Raise your hand if...

- You feel like you get too many emails.

- You often delete messages without opening them.

Eblasts (aka Mass Emails)

This is common. People lead busy lives!

Most businesses average a 20% open rate.

RESDC averages 40%.

Good news! You likely have a very interested audience. So how do you deliver the content your members want?

Eblasts (aka Mass Emails)

The eblast content must be:
1. Expected and Anticipated
2. Timely
3. Relevant

Eblasts (aka Mass Emails)

Expected and Anticipated

The monthly RESDC newsletter is consistently the most opened email that we send.

- Expected
  - Expected content - regular columns
  - Familiarity increases chances it will be opened
- Anticipated
  - Arrives the same time every month
  - Contains info that members are looking forward to receiving, e.g. annual events, new member list, etc.

Eblasts (aka Mass Emails)

Timely

- Urgent news about pensions
- Event notices

Relevant
(aka what your specific audience wants in their inbox)

- Event highlights and photos
- Community events and volunteer opportunities
- Targeted Emails

Eblasts (aka Mass Emails)

Keep Emails Focused

- People skim.
  - Use headers and brief descriptions.
  - Link to further reading.
- Stick to one topic.
- Only include a few items.

Measure Results

- Open rate and click rate.
- What succeeded? What could be improved?

# Eblasts (aka Mass Emails)

Email Services

- Why it's not a good idea to just BCC everyone.
- WYSIWYG – What You See Is What You Get
- Easy to import an Excel list of members.
- Sliding pay scale.
- Some services offer nonprofit discounts.
- MailChimp – free up to 2,000 subscribers and 12,000 emails per month
- ConstantContact – free 60-day trial

Website

Most of our associations have a website…
        …but is it doing the work it should be?

An effective association website:

- Efficiently provides information people want.
- Helps convert on-the-fence potential members into members.
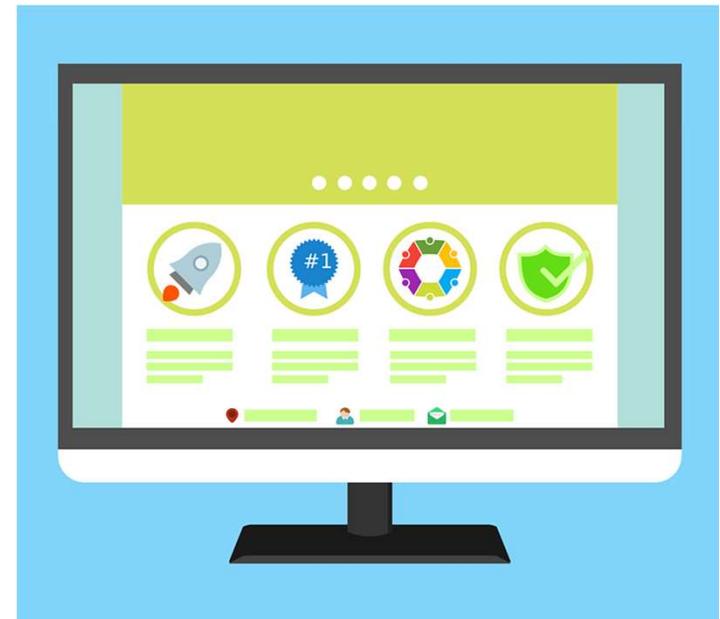
Website

- Put yourself in the shoes of a website visitor.
  - User-friendly – simple to navigate
  - Streamline – get to info quickly
  - Professional – build trust & confidence

- Two primary audience groups:
  - Potential Members
  - Existing Members

Website

- Potential Members want to know:
  - What (the organization is and does)
  - Who (is involved)
  - How (the organization will benefit them)
  - Why (it's an important cause)

- Make it easy to join.
 https://www.resdc.net/become-a-member/

Website

- Existing Members want:
  - Access to the newsletter
  - News related to pensions, retirement, and the County
  - Info on discounts and benefits
  - Upcoming events

- Some samples:
  - News Now – curated list of articles with summaries
  - Event Registration

Website

- Make sure your website is mobile and tablet-friendly.

- >50% of people access the internet on a device other than a computer.

- Even with our audience, >35% visit the website on a mobile or tablet device.
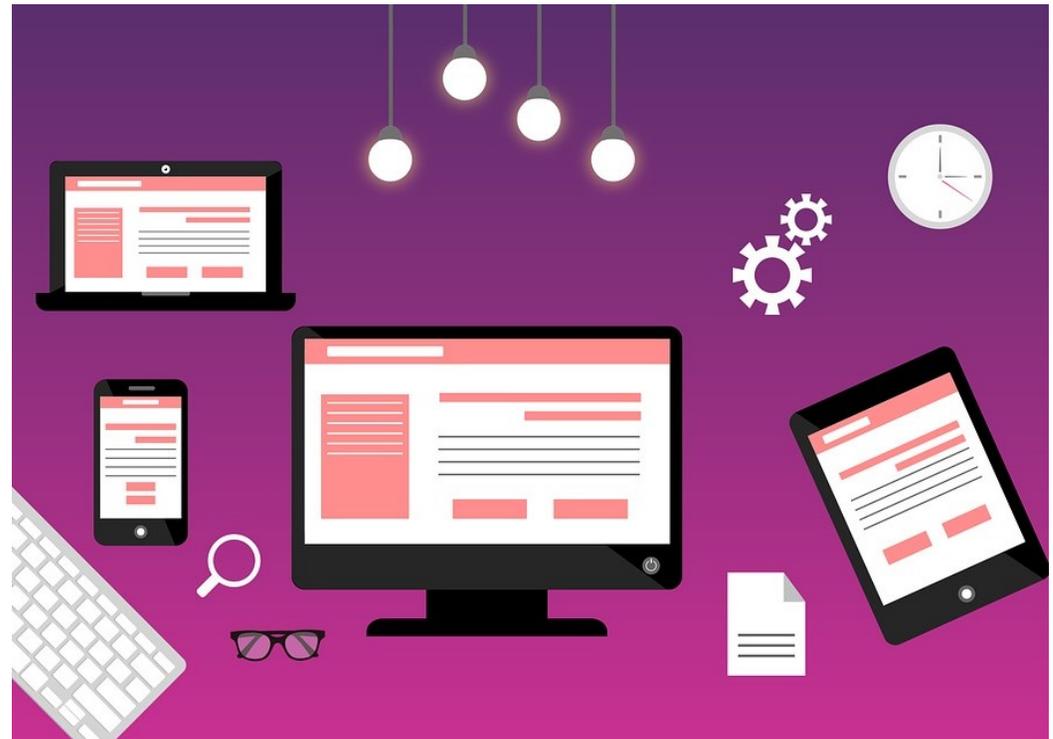
Website

- Reminder: You can't do everything.

- Redesigning your whole site is a big investment that you can't guarantee will pay off.

- Make small changes, measure results, and adjust.

- Focus on one area that could be improved, such as…

  - Become a Member

  - Home Page

  - Newsletter Archive

  - Online Event Registration

Website - Resources

- **Option 1: "Hosted" Website.**
  - Wordpress.com
  - SquareSpace
  - Weebly
  - Wix

- **Option 2: Purchase a domain and web hosting.**
  - Wordpress.org
  - Custom website

Most modern platforms allow you to make content updates without knowing code. But if you want to learn HTML and CSS, W3 Schools is an excellent resource: https://www.w3schools.com/.

Social Media – What is it?

Websites and applications that enable people to create and share content, or participate in social networking.

In other words...

Connect two or more people on the internet.

<< Audience Poll >>

Put your hand up if you...

- Have heard of Facebook
- Have a Facebook account
- Have a Facebook page for your organization

Social Media Landscape

RESDC is on: facebook   twitter   Linked in

But there are many more Social Media platforms
(platforms = websites or applications).

YouTube   skype   Instagram   WhatsApp

yelp   Pinterest   snapchat

tumblr.   Blogger   WORDPRESS

Social Media is Popular

- Facebook: 1.7 billion users
- Twitter: 313 million users

Why?

- Makes it easier to connect with people
- Free & easily accessible
- Can be general or with a specific focus
- Allows sharing – photos, videos, life events
- It's fun! 😃

Social Media – Why Use It?

- Additional way to communicate with current members.
  - About 7% of RESDC members engage with our social media. That's close to 500 people!
- Allows new potential members to find you.
- Promotes networking with other organizations.
- Share pension-positive news.
- It's free.

Social Media Doesn't Have to be Hard

- Build a team.

- Find a few reliable sources and share their articles.

- Schedule posts in advance.

- Use Google Alerts.

Database

A database is a an all-in-one solution that can…
- Store your member data
- Give you tools to email your members
- Provide a website builder
- Track event registrations

There are many different options. It's not one-size-fits-all.
- Don't get tempted to dive past the planning stage.
- Discuss and determine all your needs and goals first. Then shop around for the best match.
- Many online databases have free trials.

Membership Survey

Most of the time we are "one-way street" organizations.
We put information out to members.

Look for opportunities to get information *from* members.

When you're unsure what your members want...
    Ask them!

Tools like Google Forms, QuestionPro, and Survey Monkey make it easy to create a survey and email a link to it.

Thank You!

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