

# Building a Strong Association Culture Through Strategic and Thoughtful Communication

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**A**t the heart of any healthy culture is great communication. We often focus on how to communicate effectively, but we tend to forget that it is just as important to foster strong connections and a sense of community. Clear and consistent communication helps reinforce your organization's values, reiterates your association goals and creates a sense of belonging that builds meaningful relationships among members—all of which are crucial for cultivating a positive, engaged culture in which both staff and members thrive.

If you take advantage of the communication vehicles that are available to today's associations with a spirit of engagement and a commitment to community, you can build a culture in which staff will thrive while members engage and grow. Learn how you can elevate your association's culture through these communication tools and tactics:

## Develop a Consistent Voice

Make sure your association has a clear and consistent voice across all communication channels—emails, newsletters, social media, and website. Your voice is your trademark and a frontline representation of the culture you wish to cultivate and maintain.



## Leverage Your Mission and Vision

Every message sent should reflect your organization's values, goals, and tone. This helps everyone align with the shared vision and mission and reminds members of what the association stands for. Develop a style guide that includes voice, tone, and design standards. This way, anyone writing on your team will be able to follow the same set of guidelines to ensure consistency, which will then help to shape the culture you desire.

## Use Storytelling to Connect

People connect with stories. Share experiences directly from your team and members—whether it's about successes, challenges, or how the association has benefited them. This could be done through a regular series in your newsletter or even through a social media series featuring photos or video content. The visual side of storytelling is just as important as words, so prioritize gathering content such as real video and photos that fit the culture you are trying to build.

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## Celebrate Achievements

Whether it's professional milestones or hard-earned awards, public recognition of accomplishments within your associations help to foster pride and engage members. Celebrating these wins reinforces that your people are valued and appreciated. This is another tactic that can easily be added to your existing communications calendar, whether it's a print publication, a social media series, or some combination of both.

## Showcase Diverse Voices

Make sure your communications reflect the diversity of your membership. Feature stories from members with different backgrounds, experiences, and locations. This promotes inclusivity and strengthens the feeling of belonging across your association.

Consider creating a member speaker's bureau to track which members are comfortable speaking or writing on various topics related to your industry. This could be as simple as a spreadsheet that tracks names, contact information, and preferred topics, making it easier to ensure inclusivity.

## Engage Your Members

Encourage more interaction and input from your members through communication channels. Regular surveys and polls help you gauge members thoughts and opinions.

You can also ask members to contribute content. This gives them a greater sense of ownership and eases the burden on staff to write everything. This could be reoccurring columns or guest content that rotates to different members.

At Bellwether Public Relations, we not only champion these communication tactics for our clients, but



also embody them within our own team culture. As a strategic communications agency, we lean heavily on these principles, guided by our core values of excellence, teamwork, growth, and harmony. We believe that fostering a supportive and healthy internal culture is foundational to delivering exceptional work externally. By prioritizing open and transparent communication, celebrating team successes and aligning every interaction with our mission and values, we create an environment where our team members feel valued, motivated, and empowered to thrive. This intentional approach to internal culture mirrors the strategies we recommend to clients, proving that strong communication is not only a tool but a catalyst for meaningful connection, engagement, and long-term success.

In the end, your organization's culture is defined, curated and disseminated through the communication tools you have at your disposal. Find the ones that work for your association and leverage their utility to engage, connect, and inform your members by building a culture they will all want to belong to.



To learn more about how communications can reinforce culture or Bellwether Public Relations, contact Andrea at [akerbuski@bellwetherpr.com](mailto:akerbuski@bellwetherpr.com).



### *Meet Andrea*

**ANDREA KERBUSKI, APR** is vice president at Bellwether Public Relations where she oversees team development along with account management and project management for her clients.

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