

NEXT EVENT

VSAE Day
September 4, 2014
Wyndham Virginia Crossings
Glenn Allen, VA

Schedule

9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Board Meeting

11:00 - 11:45 a.m.
Reception

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.
Picnic Style Buffet Luncheon

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
Afternoon Activities including golf and yard games

REGISTER ONLINE AT [WWW.VSAE.ORG](http://www.vsaе.org)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Community Service
Innsbrook After Hours for
Alzheimer's Association
July 16, 2014
Innsbrook After Hours

AMC SIG Mini-Retreat
July 28 & 29, 2014
Hilton Garden Inn Virginia Beach

Senior Staff SIG Meeting
July 31, 2014
BBB Central Virginia

VSAE Day
September 4, 2014
Wyndham Virginia Crossings

CEO Retreat
September 8 & 9, 2014
Colonial Williamsburg

3 SIMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES TO SEE RESULTS IN 2014

“Decide where your audience is spending time and plant your flag on those sites.”

With social media, if you're not generating new leads or building stronger relationships with existing customers, then it's just a hobby. And if you're like me, the last thing you need is a new hobby. This article will offer three ways for you to see improved results with your social media efforts.

1. Fish Where the Fish Are.

Where are your customers and potential customers spending time online? Are they active on Twitter? If not, why should you be? You don't have to be on all social media sites. REPEAT: You don't have to be on all social media sites.

Decide where your audience is spending time and plant your flag on those sites. If you're typically targeting businesses, LinkedIn is probably the place you'll want to spend the most time. With over a billion users on Facebook, chances are good that some of your prospects are active on that site.

Action: Ask 10 current customers to rank in order the sites that they spend the most time on. Use Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and

Google+ as their choices. Follow up by asking how many times in the past month they've used each of those sites. You'll notice a pattern and stay focused on the sites they ranked highest.

2. Be Proud of Your Digital Footprint.

When people go to the web and do research on you, are they impressed by what they see? Do you gain or lose credibility when someone visits your LinkedIn profile? Today, most first impressions happen online. With a little bit of effort, you can control much of what they see. Here are three quick ways to put your best digital foot forward:

- a. **Have an Attractive, User-Friendly Website.** I don't care what the other social media pundits say, your website is still your most important piece of online real estate. It needs to look professional and give your visitors the info they're looking for in a clear and concise way. If there's too much clutter, too little content, or just frustrating to use, it can sabotage your efforts in gaining new members. In my new book, *Social Media Overload!* I share the five website

(Continued on page 6)

FALL 2014 EDUCATIONAL EXPO & SYMPOSIUM



Registration for the 2014 Fall Educational Symposium and Expo is now open. You do not want to miss Virginia's premier conference and trade show for association executives and professional meeting planners. Included with this newsletter is the

registration brochure with the schedule and content for the Expo. You can also visit the website at www.vsaе.org/Expo. Here are a few of the highlights of this year's Expo.

The theme for this year's Expo is "A Taste of the Future . . . Today." Attendees will walk away from the sessions with answers to the questions that keep them up at night so they can be prepared for tomorrow. They will also be able to visit exhibitors at the trade show for a taste of local flavor.

This year's keynote presentation will be

(Continued on page 5)

POWER RETREATS: IMPROVE OUTCOMES AT THE BOARD RETREAT

“The retreat should result in a team inspired to govern the organization - not just a list of new projects.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Bob C. Harris, CAE, is chairman of the Nonprofit Resource Center in Tallahassee, Florida. He provides governance resources on his website at www.nonprofitcenter.com.

Write Bob at bob@rchcae.com.

Organizations plan an annual retreat to empower the board of directors with information and inspiration. Retreats are designed to transfer information to the leadership. The schedule may include time for recreational activities or team building.

While every retreat is well-intentioned, when I ask volunteers what they expect to gain from the meeting they reply, “I hope we get to know each other better.” Their expectations are low.

When asking executives how their prior retreats went, I hear, “It seemed to be a session for the leadership to come up with new projects rather than a high level discussion of how to improve our organization,” said Crissy Hancock, Executive Administrative Specialist at the Midland Chamber of Commerce in Texas. Volunteers may view the retreat as a social function mixed with an opportunity to suggest ideas. In fact, they feel compelled

to offer new projects. Their sentences begin with, “I have a good idea...” The result is a to-do list that creates work for the staff and officers.

Heighten Expectations

Improve the retreat by setting higher expectations. Build anticipation by announcing it as a forum for visionary leadership. Schedule time for orientation and social functions but focus the most attention on discussing the mission and goals.

Try not to let conversations fall below the level of visionary leadership. Explain that board discussions should stay above the 50,000 ft. altitude. Committee work at 25,000-30,000 ft. and the staff implements the decisions at the 10,000 ft. level. Anything below that is characterized as “in the weeds.”

Jane Egan, the Executive Director at the Montana Society of CPAs said, “When our board really focused on our 5 goals, everything ended in alignment. From the mission, vision and value statements to the projects, committees and budget, we left our retreat with a road map that energized our staff, board members and volunteers. The outcome of a retreat that thinks long term is rewarding for the leadership, staff and the organization.”

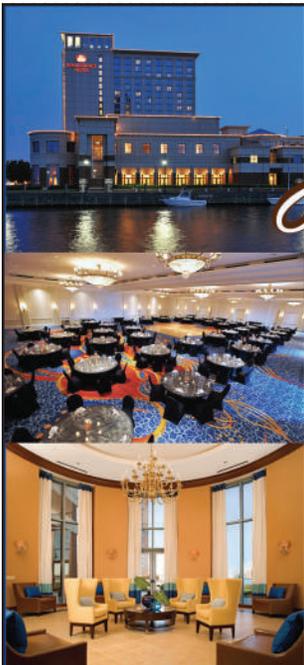
In Bartlesville, Oklahoma, the President, Sheri Wilt, IOM, stated, “When we plan our

retreat to focus on outcomes for the organization and community, and not just telling directors about their duties, everybody leaves motivated and with an understanding of how the current and future years should play out.”

Tips for Successful Retreats

- Advise attendees that the desired outcome is strategic discussion and visionary leadership. Focus on the existing strategic plan --- not adding new initiatives.
- Provide information about leadership responsibilities or a board notebook.
- Find an environment that is comfortable and avoids the temptations of office or other distractions.
- Emphasize desired outcomes. “How can our organization improve results and fulfill its mission?”
- Schedule fun breaks and social events to offer a breather from the high-level thinking.
- Take notes. What is documented is more likely to be achieved. For good ideas that don't fit in the program of work, move them to the “parking lot” for future consideration.

The retreat should result in a team inspired to govern the organization --- not just a list of new projects.



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JUNE MONTHLY MEETING EVALUATION PRIZE WINNER

Congratulations to Mr. Richard Johnstone, Jr., Executive Vice President of VA, MD, DE Association of Electric Cooperatives, who was the winner of the June Monthly Meeting Evaluation prize.

His prize was a Westin Robe from the Westin Richmond Hotel.

Don't Miss Out! Submit your next monthly meeting evaluation through Survey Monkey to be eligible to win.

VSAE HOLDS ANNUAL BOARD RETREAT

“The Board began a facilitated strategic conversation about the direction of VSAE...”

In May, the VSAE Board of Directors met at Keswick Hall for the annual leadership retreat and strategic planning. The retreat began with a business meeting of the Board where Directors reviewed the financial records of the organization and the recent and very successful 2014 Annual Conference.

At the conclusion of regular business, the Board began a facilitated strategic conversation about the direction of VSAE and the environment in which it operates. VSAE has undergone significant changes in the past three to five years. Members of the Board candidly discussed those changes and what it meant for VSAE today and in the future. The Board agreed that changes like refocusing on educational content and

changing associate member dues have fundamentally changed the brand of VSAE for the better.

Much of the conversation then focused on what this means for the future, namely how does VSAE engage the next generation of association leaders and how does VSAE continue to expand its reach among association executives in Virginia. President Richard Johnstone appointed Scot McRoberts, MPA, IOM, Maureen Dingus, CAE, Susan Motley CAE, and Courtney Fleming to a rebranding task force for VSAE's rebranding project. This group will begin its work in July to ensure VSAE's stated mission, vision, and look-n-feel all match with the brand image VSAE wishes to project in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Finally, none of this would have been possible without the retreat host, Keswick Hall. VSAE member, Debbie Dabney, Keswick Hall's sales manager, provided luxurious accommodations, amazing food, and a great atmosphere for VSAE's leadership to have in-depth discussions about how VSAE can represent association executives today, tomorrow, and for years to come.



SUBMISSIONS FOR 2014 AWARDS NOW BEING ACCEPTED

VSAE's Awards Committee is seeking nominations for the following four awards:

The **CEO Award of Excellence** is the highest award VSAE can bestow upon one of its executive members. This award is given to an outstanding association professional in recognition of his or her leadership and achievement.

The **Association Staff Award of Excellence** gives VSAE the opportunity to recognize an outstanding association staff professional for his or her contributions to their association. Criteria for this award

include high integrity, professionalism, recognition from peers, a record of success and achievement in association management, and consistent leadership and service to VSAE.

The **VSAE Associate Member Award of Excellence** allows the association community to recognize associate members who have distinguished themselves through their leadership qualities and professionalism.

The **VSAE Career Service Award** is presented to an individual outside of the field

of association management who through hard work, pleasing personality, and dedication to his or her job, has provided exceptional service over the years to the association community. This award recognizes those non-members who have distinguished themselves through their leadership qualities and professionalism.

Nominations are due by Friday, August 2. Winners will be recognized on December 6 at the Holiday Luncheon & Silent Auction. For more details or to download a nomination form visit “About VSAE” on www.vsaer.org. Nominate your peers today!

HEALTH CARE CORNER

It is important for association executives, as well as other small employers, who offer group health benefits to their employees, to understand the Virginia State Continuation of Coverage law. This law gives employees and qualified dependents the right to extend their benefits up to twelve months under certain qualifying events. This applies to employers who fall under COBRA head count requirements.



Questions? Contact:
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MAKING A DENT IN THE UNIVERSE: PUT A DENT IN MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

"If they had not done it already . . . they had it on their bucket list of to-dos. EVERY ONE of them."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Kordell Norton is a Revenue Mechanic who works with organizations who want to increase their sales, improve marketing or grow their membership.

He can be reached at www.KordellNorton.com.

A consultant friend was doing training for a large national oil industry client. The client had hired several hundred engineers of various sorts and flavors (chemical, electrical, mechanical) and they were going through a twelve week on-boarding class. The "getting to know you" session was in full swing when the consultant experienced the Making-A-Dent-In-The-Universe observation.

"Every one of this group of one hundred plus engineers had taken a year out of their career pursuits to contribute to third world countries' challenges. They had traveled overseas to help build water plants, or to make bridges, and dozens of other pursuits. Those who had not, already had it on their to-do list." The younger generation of potential association membership wants something more than to 'Just Join.'

Associations are looking at long term membership growth with a cautious and

wary eye. The sweet spot of association membership, those Baby Boomers who are at the core of membership and leadership are starting to phase out of participation. The Generation X & Y, the "Millennials" are not showing the same enthusiasm for joining.

Who is Getting the Next Generation to Join and Participate?

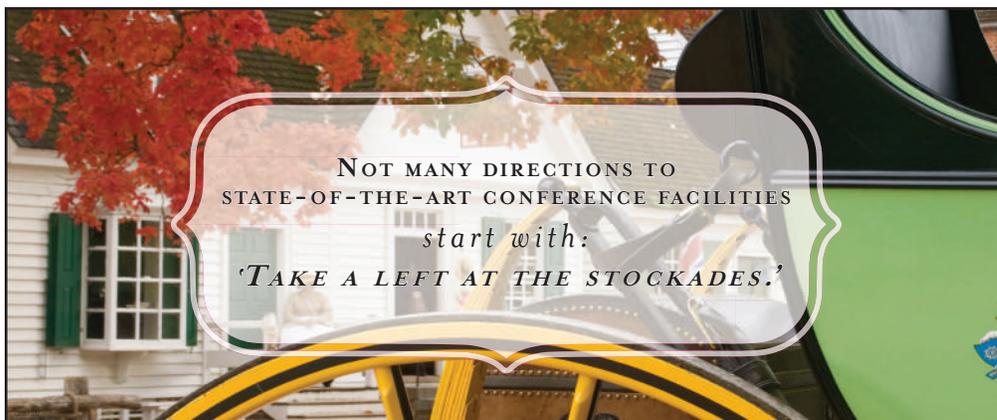
Those associations who:

1. Have two distinct marketing messages to the two large demographic groups (over 40 yrs and under)
2. Have actual programs and activities that allow the younger membership to contribute, to give back to community. These "make a dent" activities are more than show, they are serious minded goals and objectives that call for real commitment and work by those involved. If results are NOT seen and measured, then it is often seen as a publicity stunt and the Millennials can smell those a mile away.
3. Programming and events must:
 - a. Show a return on investment
 - b. Develop leadership skills of those who are participants.
4. Quit fighting technology. If you are asking attendees to "turn off your phones" then you are guilty of serious crimes against the Millennials. Instead you need to be rewarding those who bring technology into your association events, and leadership. How? That is another article.

5. Quit marketing the same old way. If many of your association presentations are being done by your own members, then shun the inbreeding of information. To get the Millennials to join the association you are going to have market differently.
6. You are also going to have to start searching out and finding the new breed of presenter who is educational, entertaining and who creates a highly interactive program. "It is a horrible death . . . to be talked to death," said Mark Twain.

While presenting recently at one state Society of Association Executives, the author observed the meeting planner facilitate a group activity that built stuffed teddy bears for children who had experienced a recent natural catastrophe. The participation started slow, but once everyone figured out how to build the bears and realized the ultimate service it was going to provide the unfortunate, the involvement was overwhelming.

The future is coming for association management and the light at the end of the tunnel is another train. If your next Friday finds you doing the same things you were a week ago, chances are you "need to get out more," to turn up the dial on innovation and creativity. Those who are intimidated by the challenges of tomorrow, who vice grip the status quo will get run over by that train in the tunnel. Throw the switch and move onto other tracks.



NOT MANY DIRECTIONS TO STATE-OF-THE-ART CONFERENCE FACILITIES start with: *'TAKE A LEFT AT THE STOCKADES.'*

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MEMBER TO MEMBER: GAINING NEW MEMBERS



Nancy Israel, MPA
Executive Director
ACEC Virginia

“ACEC Virginia has a Next Generation Committee, an Emerging Leaders Institute and partners with the University of Richmond for a Management Series. All of these activities are geared specifically towards future leaders of member firms to provide professional development opportunities within the member firms. The Next Generation Committee also created the Rising Star Awards Program for member firms to recognize employees' contributions to their company and the community that enhances the firm's ability to thrive and succeed.”

HOW DOES YOUR ASSOCIATION FOCUS ON GAINING YOUNGER MEMBERS OR NEW MEMBERS?



Craig Tolson, CAE
Chief Executive Officer
Home Building
Association of Richmond

“Younger members have different expectations from membership organizations in 2014 than earlier generations. One expectation that younger members of the Home Building Association of Richmond demand is up to the minute access to information. We're investing resources into media outlets that include social media (Facebook and Twitter) and updating our website to be mobile device friendly. Social media is here to stay. Keep in mind that a bad social media campaign is worse than no campaign at all.”

FALL 2014 EDUCATIONAL EXPO & SYMPOSIUM

FALL EXPO KEYNOTE: CONTENTED COWS STILL GIVE BETTER MILK



Richard Hadden, CSP
Co-Author of
*Contented Cows STILL
Give Better Milk*

Fact: Having a focused, engaged, and capably led membership is one of the best things you can do for the effectiveness of your association. In this presentation, speaker and author Richard Hadden will help relate the principles of Employee Engagement to Member and Volunteer Engagement – what it is; why we want it; and how to get it. Come and learn about the powerful connection between how we lead our members – volunteers and others - and the value they realize from our association in this practical, content-packed, and entertaining presentation.

(Continued from page 1)

given by Richard Hadden, CSP, co-author of the book, “Contented Cows STILL Give Better Milk,” courtesy of Powell Kohne Associates, LLC – see the box on the left for more details on his presentation. The Expo has four breakout sessions on topics such as marketing your meeting, strategic planning, engaging the next generation of leaders, and a new highly-interactive session called “The Solution Room.” “The Solution Room” is where you as the attendee control the content. Bring the questions that keep you up at night and you can participate in a facilitated discussion to find the answers. There's also an exclusive and limited seating session with the keynote presenter.

Back by popular demand, this year's event will also feature the Meeting Planner's Networking Reception the night before the Expo, Wednesday, October 1. Come network with fellow meeting planners, Expo sponsors and exhibitors.

If you are interested in exhibiting or being a sponsor, there are limited opportunities available. See page 10 for details.

Registration is open to association executives and qualified meeting planners. Register online at www.vsae.org/expo. If you have any questions, call Brandon at 804-249-2234 or write him at brandon@vsae.org.



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EDUCATIONAL EXPO & SYMPOSIUM

Join Us Thursday, October 2nd!

Register Now at www.vsae.org/EXPO

3 SIMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES TO SEE RESULTS IN 2014

“Work on those connections. I want everyone reading this to get to at least 250 quality connections, preferably people that you know.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Corey Perlman is a social media expert whose company, eBoot Camp, Inc., is a social media marketing company that builds and manages online marketing campaigns. He delivers keynote presentations and workshops.

To see Corey in action, go to [YouTube.com/eBootCamp](https://www.youtube.com/eBootCamp)
 Connect with Corey at www.coreyperlman.com
 Email Corey at corey@ebootcamp.com

(Continued from page 1)

mistakes that most businesses make and how to avoid them.

- b. Increase Your Fans, Followers and Friends.** If it's a social media site like a Facebook fan page or LinkedIn profile, nothing says small, unpopular or old fashioned than low numbers. So work on getting lots of fans to your Facebook page, connections to your LinkedIn profile or followers to your Twitter account. Always build your numbers—they matter.
- c. Improve Your LinkedIn Profile.** As far as individual social media profiles go, LinkedIn is the place where people tend

to go to check you out. Most of your information is public and your profile typically ranks well on the search engines when people search for your name. So it's important to have a professional looking profile that sells you and your association.

Action: Here are four things you can do to give your LinkedIn profile a quick makeover:

1. Upload a current photo. The key word there is *current*.
2. Work on those connections. I want everyone reading this to get to at least 250 quality connections — preferably people that you know.
3. Work on your professional summary. Your LinkedIn profile is not a resume. So your summary should not be a history of your work. Instead, share your role with your organization and some of the benefits of working with you. Talk in terms of your readers' interests.
4. Get three quality recommendations. These should be from customers who have benefited from working with you and include reasons why they value the relationship.

3. Be Known as a Thought-leader

What could you share or write about that your customers and prospects would deem interesting or valuable? You should ask yourself this question before you share anything on social media.

It doesn't matter the channel. It could be your blog, Facebook page, LinkedIn profile or Twitter feed, I want you sharing information that will benefit your audience.

Over time, you'll start to build trust and credibility with them.

This is, by far, the most effective way to sell your value and yourself. If you deliver this much great material on the web, imagine what they'll get by working with you.

If you remember nothing else from this article, remember to always **Make It About Them. It's the golden rule to seeing results with social media.**



About Social Media Overload:

I wrote this book to help people avoid the trap of being overwhelmed by all the hype surrounding social media and focus on the areas that can actually produce results.

The Book will Help You:

- Decide which social media sites you need to pay attention to and the sites you can ignore.
- Avoid website mistakes almost every business makes.
- Strengthen your reputation on Google and other 3rd party sites.
- Stay connected with prospects until they become customers.
- Generate real business results from Facebook.
- Learn powerful LinkedIn strategies to turn cold calls into warm leads.

It will serve as a roadmap for you and your team on how to increase leads, strengthen credibility, build long-term relationships, and win referral business.

Please connect with me and let me know how it has helped you! You can email me at corey@ebootcamp.com.

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WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE CAE?

You put yourself through a lot of agony for three letters. Is it worth it? Here is what six VSAE executive members had to say about the value of the certified association executive (CAE) credential.

"Having the CAE is an immediate and tangible recognition of the value you place on yourself and your profession – enhances your stature, shows commitment to the profession and demonstrates heightened leadership and management skills."

Leigh M. Dicks, CAE

President
Management Solutions & Services, LLC

"I consider the CAE the ultimate professional distinction for association executives. It not only shows that I have broad-based knowledge and expertise in association management, but shows my pride and passion for association leadership."

Tina Lambert, CAE

Vice President, Member & Public Relations
Virginia Society of CPAs

"Through the CAE certification process I met new people that will be lifelong friends, became more knowledgeable about the roles my coworkers played, and learned new techniques to engage members. However, the greatest benefit was learning to think from a different angle. I am now able to see challenges and opportunities for my association in a more holistic way."

Blake Hegeman, CAE

Deputy General Counsel
Virginia Association of REALTORS®

Want to know more about the CAE? Visit www.whatiscae.org for eligibility requirements and the application process. VSAE offers members a free study group for CAE candidates. If you are interested, contact Maureen Dingus at mdingus@vscpa.com.

"Earning the CAE designation was definitely a way to demonstrate my commitment to the association management profession. But maintaining it since it was first awarded has ensured that I stay current in the field and give back to the non-profit community."

Tom Osina, CAE, IOM

Chief Idea Architect
Non-Profit Help

"Most of my staff thought it just granted me time to goof off (when we were really studying), and then the final CAE designation meant "constantly aggravating everyone." The best part was the studying and camaraderie with 6-7 others each week."

Charlie Finley, CAE

Executive Vice President
Virginia Motorcycle Dealers Association

"Having the CAE designation tells my Board that I am dedicated to the profession of association management, applying my knowledge and implementing best practices to make VTCA the best it can be for our members."

Jan Morehead, CAE

Director of Administration and Membership Services
Virginia Transportation Construction Alliance

 **Do You Qualify?**

 **Employment**
Are you now (or have been within the last 5 years) employed at a qualifying nonprofit organization or association management company?

 **Experience**
Do you have 3 years of CEO experience or 5 years of experience at staff level in a qualifying organization?

 **Education**
Do you have a bachelor's degree or higher? Or, in lieu of a degree, do you have eight additional years of professional work experience?

 **CAE Credits**
Have you completed 100 hours of broad based development within the last five years, such as conferences, workshops, seminars,

For more eligibility information visit www.whatiscae.org

FREE ONSITE MEETING HELP AVAILABLE

Students in Virginia Tech's Meetings and Conventions Management class are available to provide on-site assistance with your meeting, conference, convention, trade show, or special event during September through November 2014. This is a required, graded laboratory assignment for the course. Students can work with you for 1-3 days without pay, but do need to receive room, meals, and auto mileage reimbursement from Blacksburg, VA.

Howard Feiertag, CMP, CHME, CHA
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HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR ASSOCIATION WOULD BENEFIT FROM A DIRECT RESPONSE COMMUNICATION AUDIT?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Scott Oser is president of Scott Oser Associates, your source for membership, marketing and implementation. Scott Oser Associates was formed in 2006 to develop customized solutions to solve unique membership, marketing, and sales challenges. They have successfully partnered with a large number of for profit and nonprofit organizations to increase their bottom-line from memberships, marketing and sales efforts. Their success is due to their extensive knowledge of numerous marketing techniques and the ability to put them together strategically to get the best results possible. Visit their website at www.scottoserassociates.com

The Director of Marketing and Communications at a DC based society has been in his position for over 5 years and even though he has tweaked his efforts over time he has a strange feeling that his direct-response program is not living up to its full potential. He just recently did some benchmarking and found that his cost per order and his response rates are pretty good compared to others in the industry but

his gut is telling him that if he doesn't switch some things up it could lead to big problems down the road. Despite his already packed workdays and limited budget, the director decided it was time to invest in a direct response communications audit, one that could help his identify what he should do to get better results.

Does this situation sound familiar? Have you been marketing and communicating with your audiences the same way for what seems like forever? Are you so overwhelmed with the day to day and the details that you rarely get time to look at the big picture? If you answered yes to either of these questions it sounds like you could benefit from a direct response communications audit and this article gives you some of the nuts and bolts when deciding if an audit is right for you.

What is a direct response communications audit?

A direct response communications audit is a comprehensive review of everything your organization does to speak to its audiences where you are asking them to do something—purchase a product, renew their membership, sign up for a conference, download a podcast, anything, in any medium where you proactively go out to members and non-members and want them to take action. There is truly not a one size fits all audit. Organizations have different goals, different budgets, different levels of staff resources, and so on.

Therefore, an audit can, and needs to be, shaped and molded in many different ways based on the items just mentioned. Some key questions to ask before you start an audit include:

1. What areas do you want to cover? Membership recruitment and retention? Meetings? Publications? How to get the entire organization to see how your marketing and communications interact and overlap?
2. How deep do you want to go? Actual conversations with members and non-members to get their perceptions and opinions on the areas you decide to cover? Internal review of materials and response rates of activities undertaken in the chosen area to determine trends, identify strengths, weaknesses and gaps, new ideas? Process and procedure review to see where you can identify shortfalls and make improvements on that side of your business? Examine your staffing and volunteer structure and see how that impacts your ability to drive response in a chosen area?
3. Do you want to handle internally or outsource the audit? There are pros and cons to both. The key benefit to doing it internally is that it forces the staff to take a very close look at what they are doing and based on that

(Continued on page 9)



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UPCOMING SIG MEETINGS

Register online at www.vsaee.org

AMC SIG Mini-Retreat

July 28 & 29, 2014

Hilton Garden Inn Virginia Beach

Senior Staff Meeting

July 31, 2014

8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

BBB Central Virginia

Emerging Association Professionals

September 26, 2014

12:30 - 2:00 p.m.

TBD - Richmond, VA

Senior Staff Meeting

October 21, 2014

8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

VA Society of CPAs

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR ASSOCIATION WOULD BENEFIT FROM A DIRECT RESPONSE COMMUNICATION AUDIT?

information develop ways to do it better. The big negative to doing it internally is that it is quite time consuming and your staff members are probably tied up doing their current job.

I see two big pros to outsourcing. Firstly, you get an outside perspective from someone with expertise in the areas you choose to address. This is a positive because they may have a level of expertise your staff does not have and they also do not play in your sandbox everyday so they have a perspective you may not be able to see since you are so close to the situation. The big negative of working with an outside firm is, of course, the fact that you have to compensate them for their time and expertise.

4. How much do you want to spend? As you can tell from the statements above you can do a comprehensive review involving primary research, a deep analysis of all of your processes, procedures, staffing, and so on, but that is much more expensive than having your internal staff review all of your marketing materials and the appropriate historical response data to see if there are things you could be doing better. I have seen truly comprehensive reviews cost as much as \$100,000 and more targeted reviews done for

under \$10,000. The key is to customize your project to your needs, including available budget.

5. How much time do you have to get it completed? Obviously the more an audit covers the longer it takes to complete. If you have a small window to work in you will not be able to do primary research so that automatically limits your options and your price. If you are looking for a ballpark estimate on how long an estimate takes I would say anywhere from 3-6 months depending on how much you want to get reviewed.

In marketing and communications it is critical to review your direct response activities and results regularly. As a former association professional myself I know what a daunting task that appears to be when you have so many other things to do on a daily basis. Unfortunately, if you don't do this you run the risk of getting stuck down in the implementation where it is very difficult to see the big picture. In a world where things are changing faster than ever this is a very dangerous place to be. My final piece of advice when it comes direct response communications audits is that if it feels like you need one done, you probably do, so go for it!

5 STEPS TO TAKE BEFORE STARTING YOUR AUDIT

Once you have BOD and upper level buy-in for an audit, here are steps for your association to get ready for a direct response communications audit. These can be used whether you do it internally or outsource.

1. Gather samples of everything you do that asks for a direct action from the recipient (direct mail, telemarketing scripts, email, website, partnerships, etc) and get it all in one place
2. Gather detailed information about these items to include audience, frequency/schedule, message, cost, production process, resource needs, etc.
3. Gather detailed response rates to every item you want to include for at least the last 2 years.
4. Gather the names and contact information of people you think will be important to this process.
5. Set clear objectives and timelines so you know where you are trying to go and when you need it done.

2014 ANNUAL CONFERENCE EVALUATION PRIZE WINNER

Congratulations to Ms. Katie Frazier,

President of VA Agribusiness Council, who was the Annual Conference Evaluation Prize Winner for 2014.

Her prize was an overnight stay for 2 with breakfast at the Omni Charlottesville Hotel.

Don't Miss Out! Submit your next evaluation through Survey Monkey to be eligible to win.

SAVE THE DATE MAY 3-5, 2015



Wyndham is the Proud Host of the 2015 VSAE Annual Conference.



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EXHIBIT & SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR FALL 2014 EXPO



Why go through the expense and hassle of inviting individual meeting planners to you when you can have VSAE bring them to your booth at Virginia's premier trade show for association executives and professional meeting planners. There are just a few booths left at this year's Fall Expo. The rates for booth space are listed below.

	VSAE Member	Non-Member
Premium Booth	\$890	\$990
Aisle Booth	\$840	\$940

There are also sponsorship opportunities, which start at \$500. At press time, there were still opportunities to sponsor a dessert station, lunch, parking, or a seminar.

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor call Brandon at 804-249-2234 or write him at brandon@vsae.org.

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PARTNER HIGHLIGHT: DOUBLETREE BY HILTON RICHMOND-MIDLOTHIAN



Now proudly flaunting their Hilton flag, the recently converted DoubleTree by Hilton Richmond-Midlothian (formerly Holiday Inn Koger Center) boasts a \$4M renovation that is quite dazzling. The 237 guestrooms have been transformed to reveal a contemporary, artistic design that lends itself well to the new brand name, and offers modern convenience blended with comfort.

Hilton brand standards are well known, and rigorous, and the DoubleTree Richmond-Midlothian doesn't shy away from offering each and every one of them to their long-term loyal guests, and newcomers alike. A warm delicious cookie at check in, is a start, and then complimentary wi-fi in all guestrooms, to make staying in touch easy. Remote printing from your room is much appreciated by business travelers who can work in the comfort of new ergonomic chairs, at beautiful new hardwood desks. The Sweet Dreams Bedding experience is famous and has been described as "like sleeping on a cloud" by guests, who often report on TripAdvisor just how very well they slept. (such is the fame of the bedding experience at DoubleTree that the beds, pillows and linens are all available on sale, online!). Gourmet in-room coffee is complemented by flavored creamers, for a delicious start to any day.

The hotel serves a "Wake up by DoubleTree" breakfast buffet each morning, offering brand -required products such as steel-cut oatmeal, greek yogurt, low-fat blueberry muffins, homemade granola, specialty-baked croissants, and organic eggs, as well as a custom omelet station with too many varieties to mention!

If meetings are the reason you seek such a

property, then there are more than enough compelling reasons to choose the DoubleTree by Hilton Richmond-Midlothian for your conference or social event. People are generally the reason that clients return, and their long-term staff (over 75% of whom have worked at this hotel for 10+ years) provide nothing less than impeccable service, from the minute you begin planning your event, until the day you leave after a successful program. 26,000 square feet of diverse space, broken down into 19 individual meeting rooms, all completely renovated and offering a quiet, professional environment in which to conduct your business, is on offer. State of the art audio visual equipment is available, along with

lightning-fast high speed internet services. The Food and Beverage team excel in providing you with an array of menu selections that cover every palate, and are presented with creativity, at affordable prices.

Midlo Bistro, the onsite, casual and relaxing café, provides new and seasonal menu items in an attractive, friendly environment. Visions Dance Club, also on-site, provides lively entertainment week-days, and live bands most weekends. The Atrium Lobby Lounge is the perfect spot to unwind, mingle, enjoy a cocktail and a snack.

Locally, the hotel is situated close to shops, restaurants and leisure activities, and all of those within five miles of the hotel can be reached via the courtesy van - a Sweet Ride - a complimentary and cheerful Doubletree service. The DoubleTree Richmond-Midlothian is within easy reach of all interstates and highways, and this central location is perfect for association meetings, where guests may travel from all directions - and the safe, quiet suburban setting is perfect for this kind of business.

The DoubleTree Richmond-Midlothian puts back some of what travel takes out, and makes every guest feel at home. Conferences are their specialty, and their goal is to ensure that every single detail is handled with care, to give the result that you expect and demand. Make DoubleTree Richmond Midlothian your next event venue, and join a long list of loyal clients who return year after year to the conference center they trust.

The DoubleTree by Hilton Richmond-Midlothian Hotel and Conference Center



Jason Whitt
Sr. Sales
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Colonial Williamsburg Gets a New Taste Studio

Colonial Williamsburg Hotels introduces their new Taste Studio. Conveniently located between the Williamsburg Inn and the Williamsburg Lodge at the Old Craft house, Colonial Williamsburg's creative, energetic chefs will inspire and delight you. The Taste Studio, a contemporary, full-service demonstration kitchen provides an intimate, fun setting to learn and share an unforgettable meal

Matthew Stanley Becomes President of Fan District Association

Matthew Stanley has become the 49th President of the Fan District Association, Richmond's largest community civic association. The Fan District Association is dedicated to preservation and restoration efforts of the neighborhood's historic infrastructure and also operates a community grants program.

The Virginia Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus Members Achieve Virginia Destination Professional Certification

The Virginia Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus is pleased to recognize the first of its members to achieve Virginia Destination Professional certification. **Cheryl Morales**, Marketing Manager for **Newport News Tourism Development Office**, completed VDP requirements and achieved the certification

on June 2, 2014. The VACVB VDP certification, started in 2012, is a unique Virginia-centric individual professional certification designed especially for Destination Management Organizations (DMO). There are two program components, a knowledge component and an experiential component.

Delaware North takes honorable mention at Virginia's 2014 Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards

Based on its first year as operating at **Shenandoah National Park**, Delaware North Companies Parks & Resorts has received an Honorable Mention in Virginia's 2014 Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards in the sustainability category. Gov. Terry McAuliffe recently presented the winners at the Environment Virginia Symposium at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington. Delaware North was selected in the sustainability category for implementing its GreenPath® program at **Shenandoah National Park**, where Delaware North operates lodging, retail and food services.

Do you have any professional or personal news that you would like to share with your fellow VSAE members in the "Around the Commonwealth" section of our upcoming newsletter? Write to nickie@vsaee.org to have your announcement included in the Around the Commonwealth.

LIMITED 2014 VSAE ADVERTISING AVAILABLE

Limited VSAE Advertising Space is still available for 2014 in the Newsletter and on our website. Don't miss out! Write Brandon at brandon@vsaee.org or call him at 804-249-2234 for more details.

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MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

David Norman, Executive Director of the National Golf Course Owner's Association's (NGCOA) regional chapter as well as the Virginia Golf Course Superintendents Association (VGCSA), moved into a new office. You can call him at 804-708-9760 or write him at dnorman008@gmail.com.

His New Address is:
 1900 Manakin Rd, Suite C,
 Manakin Sabot, VA 23103

Are you moving to a new office soon or have moved recently? Let us know by writing to nickie@vsaee.org so that we can include your new address information in Members on the Move.