



Beth A. Bowman



Erin Aylor

ASK THE COMM PROS



Kimberly Flores

ACCE called upon the expertise and insight of the 2018 Awards for Communications Excellence Grand Award winners to learn about their communications activities and the trends that deserve your attention. Here are their responses. Read more at www.acce.org/commtrends.



Matt Morrow



Angela Sanchez



Joe Pellman



Lindsay Touchy





David L. May

What is the one thing your chamber did over the last year to more effectively communicate your vision, mission, goals and priorities to your membership and other key stakeholders?

DAVID L. MAY, CCE, CAE, IOM

**President & CEO
Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce (Colo.)**

We initiated a Bringing Business Home campaign (BringingBusinessHome.org) to emphasize the importance of business to a strong quality of life. By featuring chamber members who contribute at their job, in their neighborhoods and in the community, we can connect to our mission: “proactively empower[ing] business people to build a community where business can thrive and citizens are proud to live.” The campaign also contributes to the Bold Voice of Business initiative, which is part of the chamber’s five-year strategic Northern Colorado Prospers (NorthernColoradoProspers.com) campaign. Through this initiative we aim to serve as the voice of business to advocate the perspective of business.

BETH A. BOWMAN, CCE, IOM

**President & CEO
Greater Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce (Texas)
Irving Economic Development Partnership**

We believe our member-investors are our best spokespersons, so we continue to roll out and enhance our Global Ambassadors program that prepares and challenges our board members to promote Irving and the chamber at every opportunity. The program, a partnership with the city, convention and visitors bureau, Las Colinas Association, school district and arts, includes training and a communication speaker’s guidebook filled with key messaging, facts, anecdotes and communication techniques for promoting the chamber as well as Irving as a business hub and a great place to live, work and play. The goal is to equip community leaders with tools to ensure powerful messages, consistency and effectiveness in telling the Irving-Las Colinas story.

JOE PELLMAN

**Director, Marketing & Communications
Indy Chamber (Ind.)**

The most impactful thing the Indy Chamber has done over the last year, from a communications perspective, has been returning to the basics: strategically submitting op-eds to local and national publications on relevant and trending topics. These opportunities help us make the business case for everything from inclusive economic growth to public health and give us a platform to highlight our members as the subject matter experts and civic leaders they are. This content can then be repurposed on our website, in newsletters and on our social media platforms. As the voice of the business community, it doesn’t serve our staff or our members to stay silent on things that affect business and talent.

ANGELA SANCHEZ

**Vice President of Communications
Little Rock Regional Chamber (Ark.)**

Our highly successful Love, Little Rock campaign is a great example of how we were able to communicate our vision and priorities for our region to the entire nation. Rather than pursuing an opportunity that wasn’t a good fit, our tongue-in-cheek “breakup letter” to Amazon, beginning with the now-famous line “It’s not you, it’s us,” allowed us to celebrate the city’s resources and benefits with site selectors and C-suite executives alike. Starting with a full-page ad in the Washington Post, owned by Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, on the RFP deadline, “Love, Little Rock” has since been featured or mentioned in over 1,000 pieces of print, online and broadcast news coverage totaling more than one billion potential impressions.

MATT MORROW

**President & CEO
Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce (Mo.)**

We develop and distribute a monthly recap video entitled “Your Membership Investment Matters.” In the video, I speak directly to members about the successes, programs, events and initiatives which have taken place over the previous weeks in our four areas of strategic focus. I always tether the message back to how we can do all of this because of their investment in chamber membership. I emphasize how our activities and programs increase opportunities for member businesses and how they strengthen local economic growth, even if the member is not able to attend or participate directly.

What communications trend(s) should chambers be monitoring to ensure they communicate value in an innovative and modern way?

ERIN AYLOR

Vice President of Marketing Charleston Metro Chamber (S.C.)

Communications need to be relatable and personal, utilizing storytelling as a powerful tool. Stories should be more emotional and customized so that we are connecting to build trust, which will enhance engagement. Examples of this include using member influencers to amplify and elevate your voice, replacing traditional press releases with conversations and appealing narratives, nontraditional social media channels such as Instagram and Snapchat and using market research to develop relevant content.

LINDSAY TOUCHY

Vice President of Marketing & Communications Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce (Texas)

With today's younger generation and emerging technology raising the bar for the customer experience, the Galveston Regional Chamber closely monitors social media and digital advertising through different media channels, including online newspapers, digital billboards and social media advertising. To ensure our brand stands out, we are adding more visual communications like graphics and videos. Each of our events and programs consists of a different audience, so we use targeted advertisements for each event via social media and/or GEO fencing to attract customers and create a personalized experience. As a result, 2018 was our most successful year for events!

JOE PELLMAN

Director, Marketing & Communications Indy Chamber (Ind.)

Chambers of commerce are often seen as the cheerleaders for their communities, and while there's nothing inherently wrong in fulfilling this role, sometimes a community's challenges are downplayed or overlooked in content and conversation. Over the last few years, the Indy Chamber has not shied away from discussing difficult topics affecting our region, shifting the narrative from roadblocks to opportunities for all in our community to succeed. I suspect more regions will adopt a similar mindset in 2019.

ANGELA SANCHEZ

Vice President of Communications Little Rock Regional Chamber (Ark.)

If Facebook has been the focus of your social media efforts in the past, as it has been for us, you've probably noticed an alarming decline in engagement. This is due to a change in Facebook's algorithms—giving posts from Friends higher value than brands or pages. With that in mind, we advise giving more attention to other social media channels and marketing methods to deliver your message. Consider trying social messaging—particularly to engage millennials—through SMS messaging for a personal touch.

KIMBERLY FLORES

Director of Public Relations & Communication Salt Lake Chamber (Utah)

To really see the value in our various campaigns, such as the Clear the Air Challenge, Tax Modernization and tackling the Housing GAP, the Salt Lake Chamber felt it was time to once again invest in media monitoring services. We now have the ability to track our mentions, but also see how our well our campaigns are performing. The reporting makes it easy to show our executives and board members the impact of our marketing efforts.

Visit www.acce.org/ACE18 to view and be inspired by the award-winning entries of all the 2018 Communications Excellence (ACE) Grand Award winners: Champaign County Chamber of Commerce (Ill.); Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce (S.C.); Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce (Colo.); Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce (Texas); Greater Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce (Texas); Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce (Mo.); Greater Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce (Ind.); Indy Chamber; Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce (Ark.); Round Rock Chamber (Texas); Salt Lake Chamber; Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce (Mo.); Wilmington Chamber of Commerce (N.C.). Learn more about ACE at www.ACCE.org/awards/ACE 