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## Planning for the future of your association

October 17, 2013 - Construction Design & Engineering

In an effort to strengthen ABC's communication with members, we have undertaken an initiative to improve how we deliver association information, how members receive the information, and how members can make their concerns heard among their peers. Our communication initiative includes working with both a marketing consultant from Grapevine Marketing and a marketing and communications intern.

The strategic initiative started with a strong focus on how to improve internal communication, get more members to use the ABC website, and provide members with vital information. Our first step was to gather contact information for each department in a company in order to target future e-mails to the correct company personnel. ABC sent out an email to all our company members and included a short questionnaire asking for their company contacts. With this information, we will be better able to send each piece of information to the correct person at your company, resulting in more organized communication between the organization and our members.

Another big concern for ABC is registration and turnout for events. To improve them, the team looked at how many individuals came to an event, whether notice of the event was targeted to the right people in member companies, and whether it provided members with beneficial information. Team members also noted a lukewarm response from members on the cumbersome process of event registration through our website and decided to address it by using email registration through Constant Contact for future events.

Along with events, ABC looked at implementing a better way to provide members with beneficial information and discussed how to best present that information. We will soon be sending out eBooks that will include vital materials on a series of issues such as labor laws, safety, education, and more. ABC is also setting up a blog where members can find important updates, find links to events and registration, watch video highlights of events, and even voice their concerns or make suggestions.

In addition to our blog, ABC has improved its Facebook page, which now includes more association insight, links to important association events and registration, and more. We have also updated our Twitter, LinkedIn, and have created a YouTube account to include event highlight videos.

The idea of making improved communication with members a priority came from last year's chapter Strategic Planning Conference. The 2014 conference will be held on October 24 (dinner and networking) and October 25 (planning meeting) at the Sheraton Hotel in Portsmouth, NH. In addition to being a great opportunity for new and current leaders, members and staff to network and get to know each other better, this is also your opportunity to help set ABC's course for the coming year.

Our theme this year is ABC is "me". The reality is that each of us defines ABC and can contribute to its success. Last year we developed a two-year plan based on four key strategic initiatives; this year's goal will be to look at what each of us can do to ensure ABC's success. Facilitator Ellen

Dorian of Dorian Business Coaching will help us continue toward our goal of taking ABC from "Good to Great." This year we will again focus on membership and how our programs and services, from politics to training, translate to member value and boost our recruitment and retention.

Each year, attendees find this a powerful session that strengthens our association, the merit shop industry and individual member firms, while providing professional development for participants.

The cost per attendee is \$115 and includes breakfast and lunch. In addition to chapter leadership, any member interested in participating in the Planning Conference is welcome. Please confirm your attendance early so that we can plan accordingly.

Thomas Descoleaux is the chairman of ABC-Mass, Burlington, Mass.

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