

ASSOCIATION ADVISOR

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President's Message

GCSAE President Mark Laskey
Construction Employers Association

A Great Big THANK YOU!

As my term as president near its end, I would like to thank the officers and directors for their support over the course of the past year two years. Your guidance, counsel and friendship were never taken for granted. Thank you for making my job easier.

I'd also like to thank the chairs and their committees for their hard work and diligence. You offered your colleagues many worthwhile opportunities and the chance to grow professionally. Thank you for your efforts and your willingness to make things happen.

Thanks are also in order to you, the members, who volunteered to serve whenever asked and offered a helping hand when needed. I'm lucky to count you as friends and colleagues.

Finally, I'd like to thank Jackie and Marcie, GCSAE's management team, for their diligence,

commitment and pride in their work. You helped steer the committees, the officers and directors in their chores and made things happen on time, with results. Thank you for making my term enjoyable.

Our annual meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 27, 2003 at Red Tail Golf Course in Avon, Ohio. Red Tail was established in 1999 and features an 18-hole Robert Von Hagge-designed Championship course that was chosen as a qualifying site for the 2002 U.S. Open. We'll start the day with a scramble and have Par Vacation Give-Aways, sponsored by the Montrose Auto Group, including a Canadian Golf Trip, a class at a Las Vegas Golf School, a PGA Village trip and the chance to win a Carnival Cruise!

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Welcome New Members

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GCSAE Schedule of Events

June 27 GCSAE Golf Outing,
Annual Meeting &
Silent Auction
Red Tail Golf Club

Association Marketing Assessments: Tools for Improving Effectiveness

Marketing assessments provide senior association executives, particularly those new to an organization or industry, with an effective way to analyze internal marketing capabilities. They can also help you quickly become educated or updated about external audiences, competitors, trends, and other drivers affecting profitability, member satisfaction, and growth.

A thorough and reliable marketing assessment produces information that also helps top-level managers make strategic and tactical decisions for the immediate and longer-term future of their associations. Here are several areas to explore that can help you assess your association's overall marketing situation.

Inventory existing market data and knowledge

Meet with staff to identify the current level of market intelligence available. Determine what, if any, statistically rigorous market research exists on the interests, needs, perceptions, opinions, and expectations of your members, customers, prospects, and other supporters or stakeholders. Does an annual market research agenda exist? How are research studies prioritized and the findings disseminated to all interested parties?

Ask your staff for executive summaries of research and analyses to “inventory” available marketing data. Also look for staff's use of formal marketing strategies and plans for product lines, service categories, and the association as a whole. Are strategies and tactics thorough, clearly articulated, and shared? Are marketing plans realistic – striking the right balance between expense dollars and revenue projections? Your association's marketing plans should also include the necessary tactical roadmaps and production schedules required to bring plans to life.

Ask staff to provide you with member and customer profiles, based on information available in your association's database. You'll quickly learn whether or not you're working with a wealth or dearth of data. Your association's database is possibly your greatest asset – or worst albatross. Investigate how staff employs the database to target audiences, reduce promotional expenses, develop new products, analyze purchasing behavior, and monitor trends among key market segments.

Examine membership recruitment and retention strategies

Does anyone on staff possess the information and research needed to truly understand why people or organizations join, renew, or drop membership with your association? How does the association interact with members after they submit the first dues payment to help ensure renewals in the future? What efforts are made during the critical first and second years of membership to educate new members on the benefits of your association? What steps are taken to encourage use of products and services, increase awareness, and build loyalty? Similarly, find out how members “exit” your association. Understanding the full cycle will help you identify opportunities for improvement.

By
John Gunn, CEO
John Gunn
Marketing Partners

Association Marketing Assessments

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Define the macro environment

Determine how well your association understands the external market dynamics affecting your ability to grow and prosper. Identify levels of competitive threat(s) and the related impact on your association's ability to achieve marketing and business objectives. Become familiar with the top five competing organizations, including a thorough assessment on how your association compares. Likewise, look for a genuine understanding of industry trends shaping the lives of your members and customers – and how your target audiences are likely to relate to your association today and in the future.

Evaluate marketing communications and promotions

Your association's marketing promotions should be well crafted, strategic, targeted, cost-efficient, and effective based on industry response standards. Be sure you are utilizing a full range of promotional channels and tactics and not relying too heavily on just one or two formats, such as direct mail and fax? Is an organizational promotion and communication calendar in place to safeguard against over- or under-saturation of specific target market segments? Do your web site and other electronic channels figure prominently into promotional plans? Look, too, for implementation of promotional coding systems that track response and test the value of outside lists.

Review brand management processes

Who is tasked with the responsibility of increasing awareness of your association as a whole – it's mission and the contributions its members make to society? Can staff explain how your association is positioned in the minds of stakeholders? Is there a clear, research-based positioning strategy in place? Does brand-related market research exist and does staff understand basic steps to transforming the “desired” image into reality? With the right types of research in hand, marketing staff should be able to speak easily and accurately about the barriers preventing your association from communicating a unified and competitive brand. (See “Creating Brand Appeal: Steps to Crafting and Implementing a New Brand Identity,” Executive IdeaLink,” November 2001.)

Measure customer interaction and service

It is important to view your association from the outside in – through the eyes of customers and prospects. Does anyone on staff fully understand what customers see, hear, and do when they interact with your association – regardless of how they make contact? What types of tracking procedures or contact reports are available to management to help identify interests, suggestions, complaints, or compliments? Are procedures in place to cross-sell products and services, collect marketing data, provide high-level customer service, and reinforce your association's brand and reputation? An effective association marketing assessment should provide a baseline service measurement as well as insights and opportunities to improve service performance.

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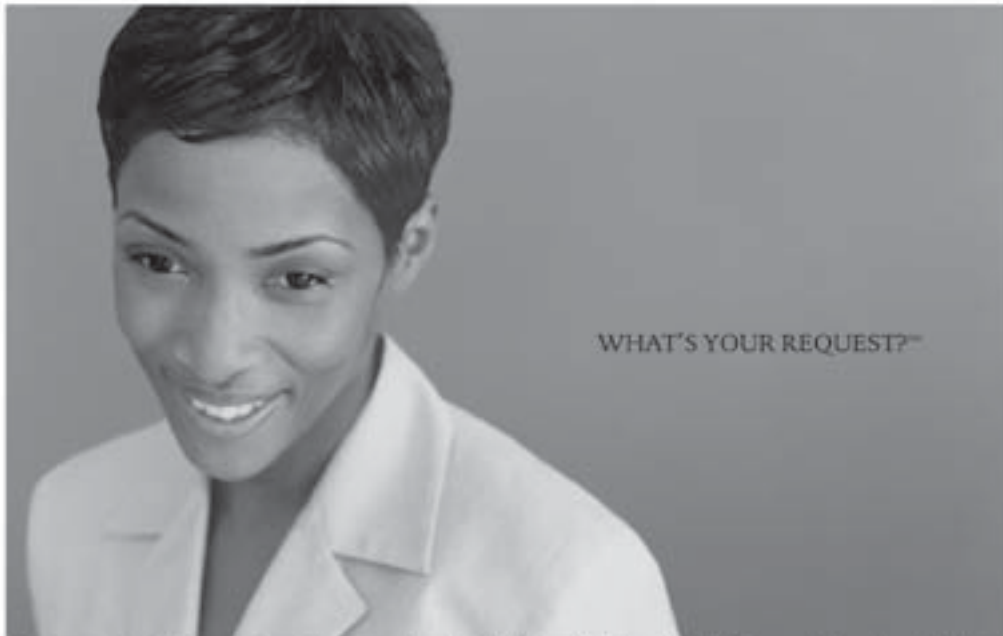
Analyze staffing and resource allocations


Someone among your association's senior management should have a clear understanding about how your organization defines "marketing" – where it begins, where it ends, who is responsible for what, and the types of marketing activities that are currently missing altogether. They should also have in mind a prioritized wish list of new marketing-related expenditures should additional resources become available. Look to industry benchmarking studies for help in comparing your association to others of similar size and scope, such as the ASAE *Policies and Procedures in Association Management* and the *Operating Ratios Report*. Whether the marketing function is centralized or

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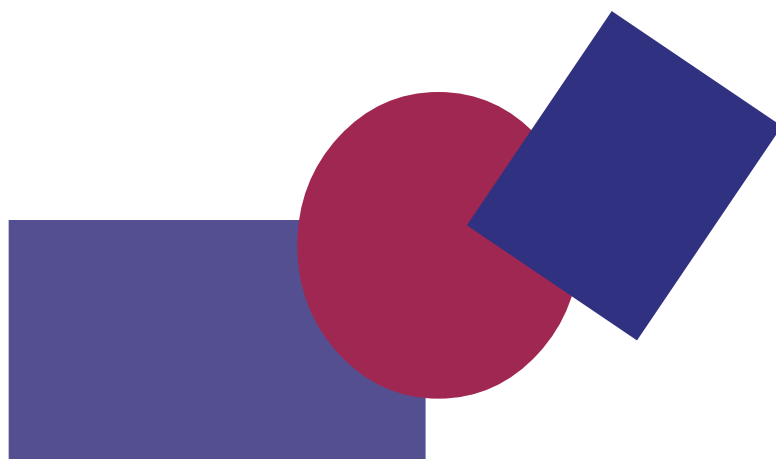
CVB All-Stars

The CVB acknowledges the effort of one hotel sales team member every quarter. A **SalesPro** is consistently stellar, and he or she faces challenge with a can-do attitude and a smile. A SalesPro may be the first to come in to work, and the last to leave every day.

SalesPros are nominated by their general managers, directors of sales, their peers, customers and the CVB. Each quarter starts afresh, with a review of all submissions for the best of the best sales executives. The winner receives an award and a night on the town with a guest.

Last quarter, we honored **Josette Sarkes**, Sales Manager from the Cleveland Airport Marriott. According to **Cathy Razzante**, Director of Sales for the hotel, “Josette is a team player who

helps each person with sales calls. She is well respected by her peers for her professionalism, attention to details, and her care and concern for our guests.” Congratulations, Josette!



John Graham Named ASAE President and CEO

With unanimous approval by the Board of Directors, John H. Graham IV was named the new president and CEO of the American Society of Association Executives, effective August 1. Since 1990, Graham has served as president and CEO of the American Diabetes Association, Alexandria, VA, the leading nonprofit health organization supporting diabetes research, public, patient and professional information and advocacy. He is succeeding as ASAE president Michael S. Olson, CAE, who announced his decision to leave ASAE in November 2002.

The American Diabetes Association has quadrupled in size under Graham's tenure as CEO, from \$50 million to \$200 million in annual revenues. The ADA has offices in all 50 states and programs in more than 800 communities nationwide. Graham successfully transitioned the organization from 53 independent, separately incorporated affiliate organizations to one nationwide organization, and changed ADA's business plan and budgeting process to improve the association's efficiency and responses to new opportunities and challenges.

Prior to becoming CEO, Graham served the American Diabetes Association in a variety of roles, including deputy executive vice president, national director of affiliate development, and executive director of the ADA's Greater Philadelphia affiliate. Graham has been an active member of ASAE since 1988, and has served on the ASAE Board of Directors from 1994-97, the ASAE Foundation Board of Directors from 2000-2003, as well as ASAE's Associations Advance America Committee and Key Philanthropic Organizations Committee, which he chaired in 1996. Graham is also an ASAE Fellow. He holds a Bachelor's degree from Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster, PA. Graham is a resident of Burke, VA.

Association Marketing Assessments

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decentralized, you should understand the pros and cons of each approach for your association. Is your association properly staffed with the right mix of marketing positions filled by qualified and effective people in each role? A thorough association marketing assessment will identify the gaps in marketing responsibilities and expertise.

Before launching an assessment, be sure you or others who execute your marketing review understand the full scope of your association's (often complex) marketplace and the "full picture" of competing demands for limited resources of people, time, and money. Spend your energy exploring the areas that matter most – as defined by your members, customers, and other stakeholders. A well-executed association marketing assessment can reveal immediate opportunities and business processes needed to help maximize your resources for best results.

John Gunn jg@gunnmarketingpartners.com is CEO of John Gunn Marketing Partners, www.GunnMarketingPartners.com, Arlington, VA, a marketing consulting firm specializing in strategic marketing and market research for associations of all sizes.

Rate Card

Ad Size	Members		Non-Members	
	Year (9x)	1x only	Year (9x)	1x only
Business Card	\$90	\$15	\$144	\$20
1/4 Page 4" x 5 1/4"	\$195	\$25	\$288	\$40
1/2 Page 4 1/8" x 9"	\$360	\$45	\$505	\$60
1/2 Page 5 3/8" x 7"	\$360	\$45	\$505	\$60

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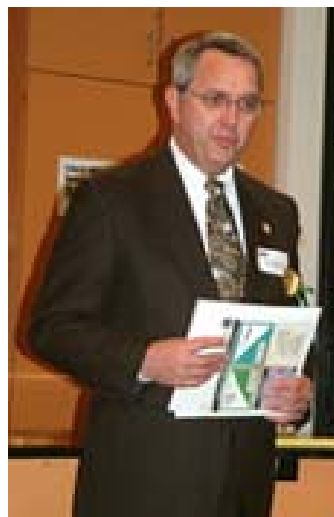
Deadline for submission is the 10th of each month.



Brian Hollering
Tri-C Corporate College

Gcsae May Meeting at the Great Lakes Science Center

GCSAE's May Luncheon Meeting featured an informative presentation on relational database management and software by Brian Hollering of Tri-C's new Corporate College. Brian compared Microsoft's Access database with some of the more powerful database programs available for on-line database and relational database use. Jim Dabrowski, also of Tri-C's Corporate College gave a brief presentation on the new college; and Bob Yun spent a few minutes speaking on behalf of the Great Lakes Science Center and all the center has to offer meeting planners and other guests.



Jim Dabrowski
Tri-C Corporate College



Bob Yun
Group Sales Manager
Great Lakes Science Center