

IPMA-HR MEMBER COMMUNICATION TASKFORCE

The charge of the 2009 IMPA-HR Member Communications Taskforce (MCT) is to assist the Association in developing effective member communication tools.

INTRODUCTION:

Initially, the 2009 MCT started with the recommendations from last year's committee. The taskforce concurred with the recommendations and focused on how IPMA-HR could use various tools to improve member communication. The committee discussed what areas would be most effective and how to best engage members using communication tools in those areas. Six areas were identified: social networking tools; forms on the website; website resources for chapters and regions; redefining the culture of the blog; website content overall; and list-servs. The committee brainstormed possible ideas around these six areas and submitted all ideas and commentary to the Chairperson. In addition, the broader IPMA-HR community was surveyed about effective communication methods through various social networking tools such as Linked-In. All these ideas were compiled and discussed among the committee to create a list of recommendations for the Executive Council.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION OF COMMUNICATION TOOLS:

Social Networking/Redefining the blog: Currently, several avenues exist for social networking: Facebook, Linked-In, a blog, and the list-servs. The committee found that the list-serves and Linked-In were the most used formats. However, there have been some concerns with the list-serves getting too much traffic and filling up Inboxes. In addition, there are concerns that the blog is dying out and a need for increased involvement by members. One proposed solution was to tie together the list-serv and blog, so discussion of issues or resources would occur on the blog and the list-serv would provide weekly updates of the discussion topics on the blog. This would re-direct discussion on the list-serv to the blog, thereby limiting the number of emails committee members receive, and ideally increase participation on the blog.

Overall, the committee agreed that activity needed to be better funneled into one place. In addition, more visibly promoting the various social networking tools on the IPMA-HR website may increase participation.

Forms on the website: The committee discussed concerns that most forms on the website must be printed out and submitted using hard-copies. This could pose a barrier to members using the forms, creates potentially unnecessary steps, and produces more paperwork for members to track. Creating more interactive forms that could be submitted electronically could mitigate these issues as well as allow members to store their completed forms electronically. This may also ultimately reduce some staff work if things are managed electronically more.

Resources for Chapters and Regions/Website content/List-servs: Committee members reviewed website content and found that there are many things currently available, however, it could be better promoted. Some feedback from the Leadership Conference this summer indicated that the Chapter leaders that attended were presented with many of the features and resources available and were quite impressed. The concern is how to enhance that to more IPMA-HR members. List-serves could also use better promotion, so members are aware of the variety that exist and what function they each serve. Committee members agreed that an article in the IPMA-HR magazine and *Bulletin* would be a good start for promotion, as well as sending an update to all the people on a list-serve about the various options. We were informed that there is an update expected shortly of the IPMA-HR website and that may be the perfect time to do some heavy marketing.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1) *Social Networking and Redefining Blog Culture:* Continue promoting IPMA-HR on Linked-In and ensure that it is easy to connect to IPMA-HR through this medium.

Consider linking the blog and list-serves together:

- Questions or topics for discussion are posted on the blog (rather than sent on the list-serve) to gather feedback and resources.
- Once or twice a week a “blog caretaker” sends an email out to the list-serve with a summary of the blog topics for that week and the questions/resources needed. The ‘blog caretaker’ may rotate on a bi-weekly/monthly basis to different members of the group, if staff resources are low.

2) *Forms on the website:* Make forms on the website more interactive, thereby allowing members to fill-out forms electronically. More interactive forms increase ease of use, look more polished, and encourage a greater response rate. In addition, enhance the ability for members to electronically submit forms through the IPMA-HR website or email.

3) *Website, Resources for Chapters and Regions, and Promoting list-servs:* Promote social networking tools on the website by creating a section that provides the various options and a brief description of them (Linked-In, Facebook, blog, and list-servs).

- Promotion should include an article in the IPMA-HR magazine and weekly bulletin to promote various resources available to Chapters and Regions. Such an article should also promote the benefits that are available on the website (careers, benefits, etc.)
- For list-servs specifically, send an email to all members that highlights the various list-servs and encourages them to join.

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