



Affiliate Spotlight

DC Metro Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (DCMAND) Strategic Communication Improvement



In the past year the DC Metro Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (DCMAND) revamped its communication plan to be more consistent and effective with messaging to both members and the public.

Instituted weekly emails to the membership rather than last-minute one-off emails.

The communications team developed a schedule for email messaging that includes sending communications from the affiliate to members every Tuesday (unless there is no information to share). This has brought consistency in compiling announcements. Members can now expect the communications without being overwhelmed by sporadic communications.

In conjunction with this change, DCMAND switched mailing list platforms from Constant Contact to Mail Chimp, which is more cost effective and the team finds more user-friendly. After these changes, open rates have increased 5%.

Created a standardized communication form through which all Board members and committee chairs can request information be distributed through the various communication channels.

Using a form has made it easier to collect messages from the Board and committees who now know what information to provide and when. The Strategic Communications Chair can effectively track the updates and plan accordingly. [Access a copy of the form.](#)

Switched to a more effective mailing list platform.

The switch from Constant Contact to Mail Chimp has saved the affiliate money. Mail Chimp is a free provider for groups under 2000 members and its technical capabilities suit the affiliate's needs.

DCMAND also maintains an informal members' electronic mailing list that members can electively subscribe and contribute to. This list was migrated from Yahoo Groups to Google Groups. Google allows any email domain to use its platform whereas Yahoo requires users to have a Yahoo address. This migration also allowed the affiliate to purge subscribers who were no longer affiliated with DCMAND and the affiliate plans to review the new list annually to remove those with lapsed membership.

Realigned the Communications Committee under a newly appointed Strategic Communications Chair to ensure social media messaging aligned with the affiliate's mission.

The Board created a Strategic Communications Chair position to oversee the Communication Committee, which previously operated as a collective with a flat structure. The first two tasks for the Chair—in consultation with the Committee and Board Leadership—were to develop protocols for social media use and messaging, and to help develop the communications form and protocols. The Chair also has the ongoing role of helping the affiliate think through strategic partnerships.

Created a public Google Calendar.

DCMAND decided it would be beneficial to publish a public calendar of all events and meetings. Anyone can subscribe to it, and it is embedded on the website. In addition to making it easier for members to keep up with the affiliate, the Google Calendar eliminates the burden on the webmaster to maintain a list of events and remove events after they occur. Moving forward, it will also serve as an enduring form of institutional memory.

Instituted outreach to attendees after all events.

DCMAND now takes advantage of event attendees, in person and virtual, to engage with members and recruit new members. After events, attendees receive an email from the Member Relations Coordinator with upcoming events and contact information for the Volunteer Coordinator to encourage the individual to get involved. Consistent touch points and ongoing communication helps maintain loyal members.

The affiliate recognizes the importance of engaging with new members. "New member" emails are sent to anyone new to the affiliate as a way to introduce the member to the ways to maximize their affiliate membership.

These changes have clarified roles, improved communication at all levels, and reduced busy work and redundancy. For more information, contact [Hannah Martin, MPH, RD](#), DCMAND's President Elect. Visit the [DCMAND website](#).