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ADVANTAGE SOLUTIONS

BOSTROM
CONSULTING ■ OUTSOURCING ■ MANAGEMENT

For Association Professionals And Volunteers

Mobilizing Your Association for Mobile Marketing

by Jeanne Sheehy, *Vice President, CMO, Bostrom*

Just when I thought I mastered the art of social media strategy…I developed integrated marketing plans, tested and tracked my Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter platforms – and I continue to stay current on developments in this ever-evolving space...

And then look what comes along: mobile marketing.
So what's so important about mobile marketing?

"Photographs used to be the item people would run into a burning building to retrieve; today a mobile phone has replaced that."
- *Jeffrey Hayzlett, CMO, Kodak, 2010*

- According to CTIA-The Wireless Association® in 2009, American mobile phone owners used their phones first for short message service (SMS) and second for voice transmissions
- ABI Research reported that the world's active SMS user base has reached 4.2 billion mobile phone subscribers
- According to Mobile Marketing Watch, there are twice as many SMS users as there are active email users
- Mobile is the first personal mass medium
- People are connected to it and carrying it – always
- Mobile comes with a built-in payment channel
- Permission-based mobile marketing can deliver response rates in the area of 25%, versus 1-1.5% for traditional direct marketing
- When changing jobs, often people keep mobile phone numbers but change email

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Back on Track: Annual Conference Comes Back Better than Ever

Imagine your association staff and volunteers have worked for more than half a year to plan your annual conference. Anticipation is at its peak: members from throughout the country are traveling to a great venue to hear exceptional speakers and learn from a variety of educational workshops. Everything is set, scheduled and ready for the opening session.

Until Hurricane Ike arrives.

Just two years after Hurricane Ike derailed its annual conference, the National Association of Housing Cooperatives (NAHC) 2010 conference was not only back on track: members said it was one of the best conferences yet.

How did NAHC navigate through the storm, move ahead and create a well-attended conference? With planning, communication and an unwavering commitment to meeting member needs.

Like any well-prepared association, NAHC had cancellation insurance, which eased the burden of canceling hotel rooms and meeting space when it became clear that Hurricane Ike was headed to Houston. Working with the hotel required goodwill and a sense of partnership. The result? The hotel offered to extend its lower rates to one of its properties in San Francisco (the location for the 2009 conference).

Meeting member needs has helped NAHC grow its conference. Location is everything for this group – as is the need to keep the conference program educational and fun. To emphasize the partnership benefits of cooperatives – and to introduce its members to other cooperative members, the 2010 conference featured a large, outdoor activity.

But it wasn't your typical activity. The event established a new world record for the largest serving of macaroni and cheese – all 2,469 pounds of it! The event was sponsored by Cabot Creamery, a cooperative of Vermont farmers. The culinary skill of Chef John Folse & Company made it happen. The "cooperative community" is just that – and building relationships with other cooperatives is valuable on multiple levels.

In addition to this record-breaking event, just two years after Hurricane Ike struck, the NAHC 2010 conference drew members from 20 states and 107 cooperatives from around the country. After working diligently to manage costs and develop a sound budget, a portion of the conference revenue now funds some of the association's work, along with an affinity program. As important as the financials, the content and programming were particularly strong, providing educational tracks on everything from training new board members to communications and marketing and learning about the latest in mortgage products.

It's clear that the NAHC annual conference is back on track – and poised for success in Puerto Rico this November.

Does your association have up-to-date insurance policies? A conference cancellation policy can protect against a number of unanticipated events such as:

- Physical damage to the premises where the event is to take place
- Extreme weather such as hurricanes, typhoons or tornadoes which prevent staging the event or attendance by many participants
- Strikes by employees of the hotel, convention centre, air traffic, public transportation and other infrastructure workers
- Withdrawal by the authorities of the obtained licenses and permits
- Late or non-arrival of items essential to the event such as AV equipment, exhibit items, etc.
- Non-appearance of a large number of participants
- National mourning
- No access to the venue
- Any other sudden and accidental occurrence beyond the insured's control which is otherwise not excluded

Courtesy: Chubb Insurance Corporation

A New Era of Megatrends?

By Ken Monroe, *Chairman and CEO, Bostrom*

Ken Monroe

How the changing political, social and communications landscape influences associations.

For some time, the mantra in management has been that change is a constant and the only certainty is continuing uncertainty. Even with strong strategic planning, testing the waters to determine any course corrections is important.

But now, what we are seeing may be a more fundamental shift. The changes occurring are more than normal business cycle fluctuations, product and service innovations, and new management innovations. In fact, we may be entering an era of megatrends that will shift the landscape more dramatically and require us to reconsider the mission and vision of our organizations and not merely the objectives, strategies and tactics. Consider this backdrop – and what appears to be on the horizon:

- Although technically we are no longer in a recession, the economy remains in prolonged malaise. Recovery is elusive: key economic drivers such as employment and housing continue to lag. The depth and duration of the economic doldrums and the wished for recovery is causing some rethinking of how(and who) regulates and manages the economy.

The 2008 election cycle ushered in an entirely new era of social media as a major force. Businesses and associations are experimenting with how to integrate and leverage these tools.

- Financial reforms passed by Congress may be a sign of the type of change that could shift the financial management landscape of many organizations. Reeling from the days of "easy" credit, today we face increased scrutiny just when we seek more credit. The stability and pipelines for our key revenue streams may need to be more robust if credit is part of our financial management mix. This will have an impact on how we build and manage the budgets of our organizations and the level of oversight required of our governing bodies.
- New health care reform will likely look different as it is implemented. That should come as no surprise: Social Security and Medicare were much more limited when first enacted. Even though there may be some retrenching as a result of today's heated political climate, it's likely that the core concept of coverage for all or most of the population will become a key element of implementation. Clearly, there will be significant implications for all organizations. In particular, associations in the healthcare sector will be directly affected as their stakeholders adjust to the realities of this reform. And all of us in the association community will feel the effects of health care reform. We understand that the health of our employees is an asset that helps determine productivity – as well as our budgets.
- "Politics as usual" might be rewritten as "politics as unusual." Will the Tea Party Movement be a driving force or no more than a historical footnote? Over time, U.S. political parties have evolved and much of the change has been prompted by unrest and so-called "third party movements." Regardless of how the current political landscape evolves, it's important to take note of some underlying themes. Transparency and accountability are no longer optional but come with practical expectations that affect the public and private sectors. For example, changes in the requirements for 990 forms demonstrate how these concepts affect associations. Further changes stemming from transparency and accountability are just around the corner.
- Communications is undergoing fundamental change. When TV became a key political campaign tool in the 1960's, supplanting newspapers and radio as the primary marketing channels, the "attention span" phenomenon was launched and "sound bite" became a communications technique. The 2008 election cycle ushered in an entirely new era of social media as a major force that was reinforced in the 2010 elections. Businesses and associations are experimenting with how to integrate and leverage these tools. While no one has a crystal ball, social media is here to stay and it will change forever how and when we communicate, share and create information. Will associations become "virtual communities?" Time will tell.

Depending on your historical perspective, one could assume that these changes bring us to the edge of a paradigm shift. Yet in the longer historical view, it is clear that we have experienced more fundamental

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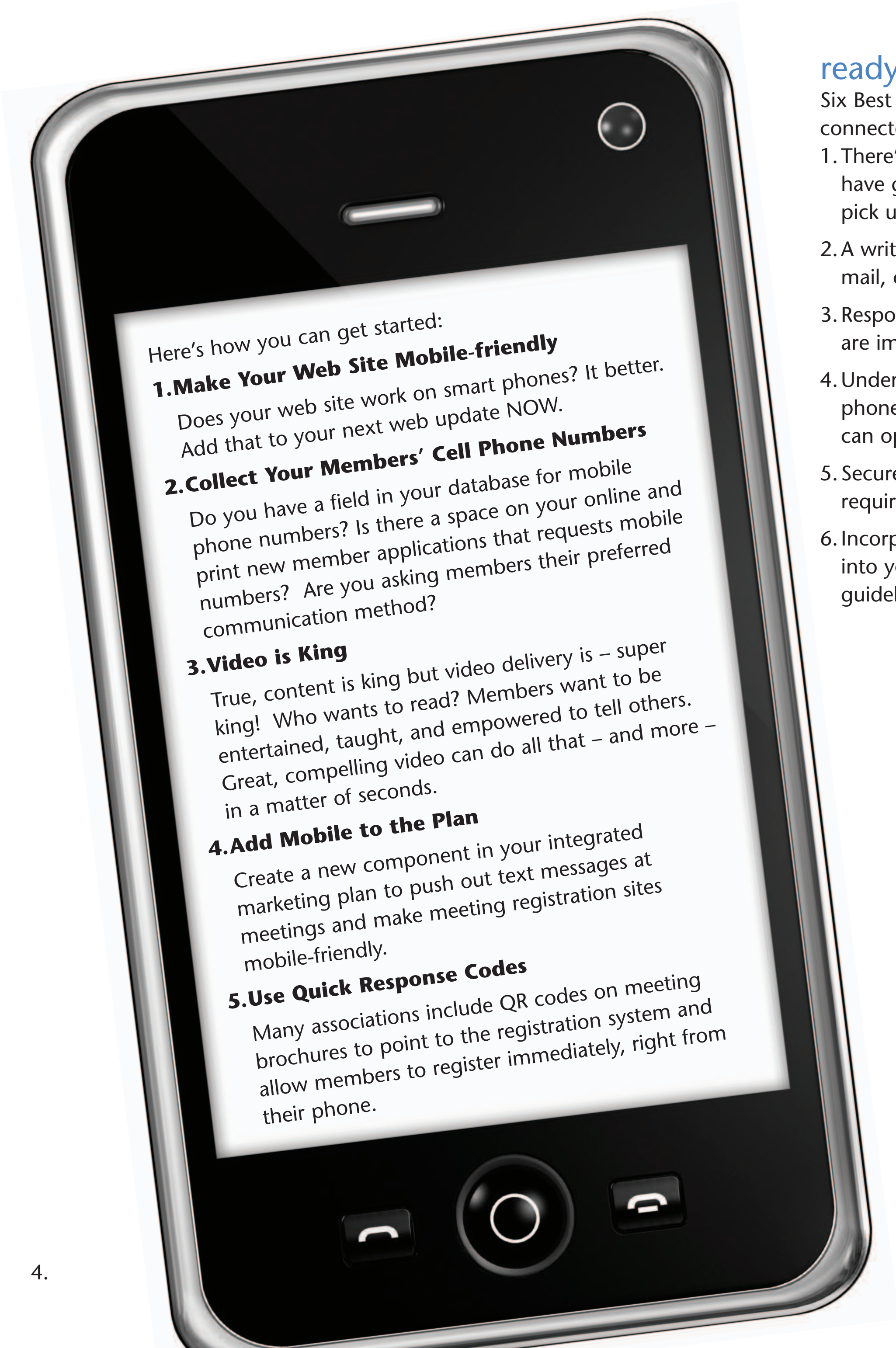
And there it is. It's already changed behavior on multiple levels and it is going to help associations become more valuable than ever before.

What!?!?

Yes. More valuable than ever before. Now you'll be able to reach members of any age instantly. You can personalize your messages, send them when your members need them and get instant feedback. You'll maintain contact with members when they switch jobs. And you can contact attendees at conferences with new information during the conference!



ready? set? go!

Six Best Practices for Customer Service in an Inter-connected, Mobile World

1. There's no substitute for talking. If the emails have gone back and forth one time too many, pick up the phone and talk.
2. A written thank you note, delivered via snail mail, can set you apart.
3. Responsiveness, courtesy (and good grammar) are important, regardless of the platform.
4. Understand the difference between feature phones, smart phones and tablets so that you can optimize your messages.
5. Secure the behind-the-scenes technology required to support your mobile platform.
6. Incorporate social and mobile media policies into your organization's communication guidelines.

Organizational Assessments: the Who, What and Why

Barton Tretheway, *CAE, Managing Partner, Bostrom Consulting Associates*

Let's start at the end with *why*. Typically, organizations conducted assessments because they had a problem – or problems – to fix. Today, we're seeing more organizations conduct assessments not because of any perceived organizational or operational problem but because they want to benchmark performance. From a results standpoint, they want to learn (or refine) best practices to be more efficient and more effective. In other words, is the organization doing all it can to maintain its position – or grow?

An organization's staff and board need to understand the purpose of an assessment and present a willingness to be open-minded. While that sounds fairly easy and obvious, it eludes some participants. And being open-minded can be challenging in good times -- and even more challenging if the assessment offers data that the Board or staff find difficult to hear.

A good assessment will:

- Present a real, objective view (and one with which Board and/or staff may not agree)
- Ensure confidentiality among interviewees and participants which might include Board, staff, funders and/or other stakeholders
- Gather and analyze recommendations and provide a summary document with options (for example, some recommendations may be premature – or require resources that have yet to be secured)

The depth of an assessment depends on its scope. For example, is the focus on governance or is it a broader look at operations? Some assessments may incorporate benchmarking data after reviewing peer organizations, to develop and assess best practices. Regardless, stakeholders need to be prepared for a frank and objective view. While assessments can be conducted "in-house," engaging an outside expert with sensitivity and experience often leads to greater candor and openness from interviewees, ultimately leading to a more complete assessment.

What happens after the assessment? Usually, the results are presented to the organization (Board, staff, funders and/or stakeholders) followed by a discussion about the outcome and next steps. Sometimes, that same outside expert will return several months later to evaluate or assist with implementation of recommendations. That follow-up allows the organization to gauge its effectiveness, serving as a useful metric.

While many look for similarities (and differences) among not-for-profit organizations and for-profit businesses, not-for-profits are really unique because of their focus on mission. It's easier to measure the bottom line than to "measure" mission. Too often, associations measure activity when they should measure the activity's results. An effective assessment can provide organizations with the knowledge and guidance they need to prosper.

A New Era of Megatrends? *continued from page 3*

change as with the industrial revolution. The U.S. experiment with democracy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century is another, as is the advent of computers in the 1960s and the Internet in the 1990s.

Are we at one of those threshold moments today? Certainly the change agents are greater in number and more fundamental than in the recent past. As we gaze to the future, helping to ensure the success of our organizations, set your sights high on the horizon. Take a long, wide and objective view because there's no time for small plans. As you make plans, consider options that may seem radical or "out there" and keep as many options open as possible until the landscape starts to come into more focus.

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ABOUT BOSTROM

Bostrom is a professional services firm offering comprehensive management, consulting and outsourcing to the not-for-profit community. For more than seven decades Bostrom has provided associations with the solutions they need to grow, stabilize, redirect, consolidate and meet challenging goals. For more information please visit our Web site at www.bostrom.com or call 312.644.0828.