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Enhancing IANA Member Communication and Engagement

Executive Summary

Bart Bowers

Problem Introduction

Advocacy is a core function of professional nursing organizations (Matthews, 2012). IANA is a vigorous advocate with regards to patient access to high quality, affordable health care (Bickel, 2017). From 2017 to 2022, 24% of CRNAs anticipate they will retire (“AANA Member Survey Data,” 2016). Traditional forms of communication utilized by IANA, such as letters and email, are not engaging recent CRNA graduates as effectively as in the past (A. Griffin, personal communication, October 11, 2017). Therefore, IANA requested help to evaluate and adapt their communication methods to improve member engagement and enhance patient advocacy capabilities.

Literature Review

There was evidence in the literature review of numerous reasons for IANA to enhance their communication strategy. Insight for improved content targeting was derived from factors influencing membership such as cost, perception of benefits, and life status. Lastly, an opportunity to improve member communication was identified based on simple metrics detailing IANA having an underleveraged social media reach.

Membership Cost

Cost of membership dues is supported by research as influencing membership decisions. For instance, membership affordability may be a concern if a potential member has a high debt load (Farina et al., 2016). Nationally, student debt has increased dramatically over the last few decades (Fry, 2014). The demands of CRNA programs often makes working during school very difficult, if not impossible (MacIntyre et al., 2014).

Communication

Evidence potentially supports the importance for organizations to use frequent communication for important messages via multiple communication mediums. For instance, a

cross-sectional online survey sample of 97 recent pharmacist graduates detailed that almost a third of recent nonmember pharmacy graduates either forget to join, pay dues, or recall receiving membership information (Taylor et al., 2017).

Perception of Benefits

The low perceived value in relation to the cost of dues has been reported by many new graduates as a reason for not joining AANA (Farina et al., 2016). While a professional organization may provide great value with benefits offered, a perception problem is created when there is low awareness of member benefits (Farina et al., 2016).

Service

The quality of customer service is a reason cited for not being an AANA member (Farina et al., 2016). Further supporting the importance of service is that just one bad experience, such as difficulty gaining access to online services, can lead to the nonrenewal of membership (Markova et al., 2013).

Advocacy

Evidence suggests that the advocacy activities of an organization may be only a minor factor for people joining an association. Results of Myers (2016) details that new members with five years or less of experience cited the top reasons to join organizations were: 34% job opportunities, 30% socializing, and 24% certifications, with advocacy and legislative efforts being only minor contributors.

Life Stage and Generational Differences

Another factor cited as important for organizations to consider when interpreting changes with membership decisions are an evaluation of life stage in conjunction with potential generational differences (Farina et al., 2016). According to a survey of 149 of those employed

by a professional organization and are responsible for updating members, many organizations could potentially enhance member communication with increased targeted communications based on member career stage and age (Myers, 2016). Results of Myers (2016) detailed that less than half of organizations account for career stage and less than a third take member age under consideration when targeting communications to engage members better.

Social Media in Healthcare

No evidence was found describing the social media platform preferences of nurse anesthetists. However, a 2015 online survey of 477 radiologists potentially provides insight on healthcare provider social media preferences with respondents results detailing LinkedIn at 45%, Facebook at 21%, and Twitter at 19% (Ranschaert, Ooijen, McGinty, & Parizel, 2016). Total results for Ranschaert et al. (2015) differed from US radiologists where platform preferences showed 47% preferring Twitter, 32% citing LinkedIn, and 15% preferring Facebook. The top overall reasons cited by radiologists to use social media were 65% to stay informed and 49% to discuss cases (Ranschaert et al., 2016). Within the US, in addition to discussing cases and staying informed, 50% of respondents cited reasons for using social media were increasing influence amongst peers and/or improving the visibility of the profession (Ranschaert et al., 2016).

IANA Social Media Presence

Comparing the number of CRNA practitioners in Illinois against simple high-level metrics available reveals that IANA's social media presence is under leveraged in terms of attempting to engage with CRNAs and advocating on public health issues. For instance, Illinois has over 1400 practicing CRNAs ("IANA Website - Home," n.d.). However, IANA's Facebook page has just over 500 likes and followers, which is approximately a third of membership

("IANA Facebook," n.d.-a). IANA's LinkedIn group has just 40 members ("IANA LinkedIn," n.d.). Since creation in 2014, IANA's Twitter feed has established approximately four hundred followers, which translates to under one-third of membership ("IANA Twitter," n.d.).

Evaluation of the Twitter feed for IANA reveals approximately two hundred tweets, which include nineteen pictures and media posts ("IANA Twitter," n.d.). There was no usage or account metrics available regarding IANA's website ("IANA Website - Home," n.d.). More advanced metrics could help identify important information regarding the effectiveness of the social media platform. However, the metrics available identify an opportunity to grow awareness and engagement within IANA membership through social media.

Project Methods

The primary aim of this project is to enhance Illinois member communication and engagement through increased frequency and variety of content on state-level CRNA social media platforms that reside on Facebook, Twitter, and the state organization IANA website. Content focused on the areas of professional advocacy, anesthesia practice, CRNA education, professionalism, patient/public education, member engagement, and entertainment. Post content medium varied as appropriate between video, pictures, and text. Content frequency varied between daily and several times a week. More content was posted at the beginning of the project and around special events.

As the methods to be implemented will be on social media, there is potential for enhanced public awareness. Because CRNAs and SRNAs may perceive the value of being a member to the organization differently based on their career stage, life status, and personalities; we anticipate frequent and varying content may improve overall interest in the organization. The implemented methods initially were evaluated using Facebook Insights and Twitter analytic to collect and analyze Web metrics. Risks were negligible for this project. To ensure content

aligned with the organization's publishing standards, the IANA public relations committee reviewed content prior to publication.

Project approval occurred at the May 18th, 2018 IANA board meeting. Beginning in June 2018, interventions were conducted in collaboration with IANA administrators for four months. On October 26th, 2018 project results were presented in person to board members in Chicago, Illinois. In addition, post implementation content and education regarding streamlined content processes were provided to the administrative content team to assist with CRNA week activities in January 2019.

Evaluation

The main outcome measures of this project were improved communication and engagement rates. The variables included frequency of social media content, varying social media content, and increased CRNA and SRNA communication and engagement via web metrics. Examples of metrics included likes, shares, follows, page views, open rate, and click-through rate. Baseline metrics for the four months pre-intervention were compared to the four months of scheduled interventions.

Analysis of web metrics detailed enhanced member engagement and communication with this project. The implementation period produced an increase in Facebook Page Likes of 7% (637 to 682) and Page Followers increased 6.9% (646 to 691). Post implementation efforts through the end of CRNA week at the end of January 2019, detailed an increase in Facebook Page Likes of 16.8% (637 to 744) and Page Followers increased 17.2% (646 to 757). Tweet impressions on Twitter increased 4% during the implementation period. It is important to note that at the beginning of implementation, Twitter was deemphasized due to a time savings decision to use automatic reposting from Facebook to Twitter. This results in unoptimized image presentation. Hootsuite allows for a reduced workload when posting content to multiple

platforms. However, extra time is still needed for platform content optimization. Lastly, LinkedIn efforts were tabled at the beginning of project implementation to dedicate resources primarily to Facebook.

Impact on Practice

Areas of potential project impact include Illinois CRNAs and SRNAs, IANA, and ultimately the public. Members of IANA can potentially improve awareness on anesthesia issues and enhance knowledge regarding practice. Providing consistent, high quality, and ongoing content to members could enhance members' perceptions of organizational value and facilitate volunteerism and donations. Also, the small number of people who do most of the work for the organization could be increased by tracking engagement to identify and recruit people to assist IANA. Ultimately, the public benefits from a stronger IANA that advocates for complex health care issues such as protecting access to quality safe care. Additionally, given that social media is a public forum, increased activity on IANA social media may lead to enhanced public awareness and education.

Predicting the long-term impact of increased frequency and variety of content through IANA social media on enhanced member communication and engagement is challenging. A major factor influencing IANA's ability to maintain regular publication of quality content requires time that is primarily dependent upon volunteers with minimal IT support. The PR committee for IANA, however, is motivated to continue the project. To maximize long-term project sustainability, streamlined processes were developed for rapid creation of quality content with consistent branding. Examples include an Anesthesia Facts template and a web form to expedite member profiles. Post implementation, the content scheduled indicates an increased rate of content production compared to pre-project levels, but below the time period during project implementation. Additionally, the quality of post implementation content has increased

with examples including member contests and leadership videos using an IANA video Facebook frame. Project replication and expansion to other state CRNA organizations is readily available through several of the content processes developed.

Conclusions

In summary, analysis of web metrics detailed enhanced member communication and engagement. Also, IANA leadership provided positive feedback on how they saw increased utilization of social media platforms were improving member contact. Content processes were created to assist with consistent brand messaging and better ensure long-term sustainability. However, the aggregation and creation of engaging content posted at regular intervals is dependent upon the efforts of volunteers that have little IT support. Project replication is readily available to share with other state CRNA organizations.

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