

**IABC/Regina 2011-12 President's year-end report
(As of June 29, 2012)**

Summary:

Due to the hard work of a dedicated, talented and motivated Board of Directors and its volunteers, IABC/Regina remains a healthy chapter with a solid membership base and a strong commitment to professional development. The chapter recognizes opportunity for improvement in many areas including growing its volunteer base, enhancing its presence in the community, leveraging corporate sponsorships, and improving the internal operations of the Board.

The following is a summary of the chapter's activities during 2011-12 in each of the four core strategies of our strategic plan.

1. Expand development opportunities for members

It was a great year of professional development for IABC/Regina. Attendance at the events was excellent, drawing a mix of both members and non-members.

During 2011-12, we focused on chapter events that had a balance between learning and networking.

The professional development team created new learning partnerships with CPRS and Brown Communications, and hosting the Dare to Lead chapter board development conference this year provided IABC/Regina with the opportunity to use national IABC keynote speakers for a luncheon event prior to the conference.

Here are just a few of our event topics from our year in professional development:

- Petcha Kutcha
- Intranet Development
- Corporate Writing Guides
- Shel Holtz half-day workshop (in partnership with CPRS)
- Where is Your Career Going? (in partnership with CPRS)
- Google (in partnership with Brown)

Another focus of our strategy was to work with other IABC/Regina portfolios to expand our membership engagement and promote professional development opportunities. Over the course of the year, IABC/Regina offered our members a variety of opportunities, including:

- Award Certification pilot program
- Volunteer Appreciation Event
- New Member Coffee Meetings
- University of Regina Student Event

2. Grow, retain and recognize volunteers and members

IABC/Regina continues to have a very strong membership base. As of June 2012, the chapter had 298 members, qualifying us as a large chapter. We also enjoy a high level of member retention, as indicated below:

Members as of June 2009	232
Members as of June 2010	245
Members as of June 2011	263
Members as of June 2012	296

In 2011-12, a new member coffee program was established. New members are invited to get together once a month to learn more about what their IABC membership can do for them, and also to network with fellow members.

A New Year's Resolution program and contest was run in early 2012 to challenge members to make the most of their membership in 2012, and to encourage members to ensure their contact information with IABC is up-to-date.

A new board structure will be implemented in the 2012-13 program year (learn more about this in the "Internal effectiveness" section below), allowing for (among other things) a larger focus on members. This new structure will allow for increased promotion of corporate memberships, recognition of member anniversaries, facilitating free professional development sessions through member draws, stronger exit survey/follow up with lapsed members, and increased benefits for retired members.

3. Build community partnerships

We began our strategy for branching out our network of community partnerships and expanding our sponsorships in 2009-10, starting with a list of potential prospects.

In an effort to better support student members and mentorship initiatives, this past year IABC/Regina facilitated the first ever Communications Challenge Mentorship Program. This program provided senior communication professionals the opportunity to guide and mentor junior IABC/Regina members to develop their skills and help solve a communications challenge for a local non-profit organization.

This year's challenge has two participant groups: Friends of the Royal Sask and STOPS to Violence. Each of these non-profits were paired with seasoned members and two junior members who were tasked with developing communication plans for the non-profits to address specific communications challenges – both happened to be focused on member engagement. Not only have these projects proved to be very successful for all involved, but the projects have also helped demonstrate the need and value of the communication profession in our business community. After their experience with the mentorship program, one of the non-profit groups have decided to hire a full-time communication professional to help them achieve their strategic goals.

4. Improve communication with members

Communication with our members continues to be a top priority for the IABC/Regina Board. This past year, our focus was to improve this even more, and reach out to as many of you as possible through different media. Some of our communication goals this past year were to:

- Increase traffic to our chapter website
Result: Since January 1, 2012, there have been 5,809 visits to the new IABC/Regina website. (There is no data available for the old website due to technical difficulties.)
- Increase member engagement
Result: In 2011-12: 78.9% rated their overall membership experience valuable or very valuable. (This is an increase from 75.7% in 2010-11.)
- Increase member satisfaction with communications
Result: In 2011-12: 90% rated the quality of communications as good or excellent. (This is a slight decrease from 90.7% in 2010-11.)

Specific ways our communication goals were achieved include:

- Revamping the website – This project was spearheaded and successfully completed by IABC/Regina's VP Technology and was key to achieving our communication goals. A functioning website has made it easier for members to access information about chapter members, events and activities. It also makes it possible to direct members to different web pages for more information.
- Creation of "What's New" emails for members, to keep them informed about upcoming events, career news, chapter activities, rewards and recognitions of our chapter and members as well as news about IABC at the national and international level.
- Development of a comprehensive member communications strategy, embracing different tools for communication with members.
- Establishment of social media communication account tools (Twitter) to disseminate information to members speedily.
- Establishment of a communications schedule, to pace information to members. This is particularly useful as members receive emails from all levels of IABC and may find it difficult to distinguish the various levels of the organization.

Other highlights – 2011-12

Financial stability

IABC Regina is currently in a good financial position. In keeping with international standards, the chapter had its financials reviewed by a Chartered Accountant. If you would like to see a copy of the chapter's financial statements, please email regina@iabc.com.

This past year, we have continued to manage our funds prudently. However, we are consistently seeing our expenses outweigh our revenue, particularly in terms of our events. Event costs have risen over the past five years, and continue to rise. While we used to break even on our events, this is no longer the case. The chapter has pursued sponsorships over the past two years as a means to reduce the cost of hosting events, but unfortunately, we are still finding it difficult to break even.

In order to continue to be a financially healthy chapter, the board has agreed that a slight increase in event fees and membership fees would help offset the cost of events and other value-adds we offer our members, now and in the future.

An email was sent to all members on June 25, 2012, asking for their vote to increase IABC/Regina membership dues by \$10, effective November 1, 2012. Members were asked to send in their "no" vote if opposed to the increase; otherwise, the Board would assume they were ok with the decision. As of June 30, 2012, three "no" votes were received, therefore the membership dues increase will go forward.

The Board has also voted in favour of a \$5 increase in event fees to help offset the cost of events and other services. There has been no increase to our event fees in over a decade. The new fee structure is: \$30 for members, \$40 for non-members and \$20 for students. This change will take effect on September 1, 2012.

As of May 31, 2012, IABC Regina has \$6,784.35 in the bank, as well as another \$8,819.97 (including interest) in long-term investments (Canada Savings Bonds) for a total of \$15,604.32. However, it's important to note that we're still waiting on \$1,525.00 in event fees from our April

event (it was \$100/person), and IABC Canada Western Region will be sending us a cheque for \$1,500 in conference subsidies, so our total funds will be going up shortly.

Internal effectiveness

The 2011-12 year ended with the same board members as who began the year – no turnover was experienced. We begin the 2012-13 year with nine new board members.

During the 2011-12 year, the Board of Directors retained its student representation from the University of Regina with a position on the Board of Directors. This position helps build student-chapter relationships, increase student recruitment and provides a student's perspective to the Board. This student representation will continue into the 2012-13 year with a new student representative taking on the Director, Student Members portfolio.

The Board maintained a schedule of monthly meetings over the course of 2011-12 with decisions recorded in the minutes.

Going into the 2012-13 board year, the Executive have made some changes to the board structure. Following the structure model of the Professional Development portfolio, both Communications and Membership now have a VP to lead the strategic direction of the portfolio, while also having various directors within the portfolio to focus on specific functions of the board and services to the members.

Within the Communications portfolio, there is a Director of Internal Communications and a Director of External Communications. Within the Membership portfolio, there is a Director of Retention, one for Recruitment, and one for Student Members. As well, the Board has reinstated a chair position for Accreditation, and is working with CPRS Regina to establish an Awards for Communications Excellence (ACE) chair role on both the IABC and CPRS boards – our local professional achievement awards.

Reputation and visibility

This year, a number of members and Board members distinguished themselves by serving at the regional and/or international level – going far and beyond to give back to the industry.

Of special note, two of our members received international recognition. Anna Willey received the prestigious international designation of [Master Communicator](#), which was presented at the Canada Western Region conference in November, and Claire Watson received the equally prestigious international [Chairman's Award](#) at the IABC World Conference in June.

It has been a fantastic year filled with new members, new programs and new ideas. Big thanks to the IABC/Regina Board members for all of their hard work this past year. I was continually impressed by their innovation, talent and dedication to the communication profession. And thank you to all IABC/Regina members for your continued support. I very much look forward to the 2012-13 program year!

For more information on this report, please contact:
Celeste Geisbauer, 2011-12 IABC/Regina President
regina@iabc.com

