

# com·mu·ni·cate

verb

1. to share or exchange information, news or ideas.



en•gage

verb

1. to occupy, attract or involve  
(someone's interest or attention)

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# Why communicate with an association publication?



When it comes to recruiting and retaining members, strong associations rally their best resources: they pump up their association committees, update their websites, and capitalize on their trade journals, all of which put valuable information right at their members' fingertips.





# 1 A POWERFUL MARKETING TOOL

Top associations flourish because they not only build member value, but also broadcast it effectively. A printed publication is a great way for associations to exhibit all the benefits of membership — job postings and networking, education and training, support from lobbyists and legal experts, along with valuable professional insight — that readers will recognize. A magazine is also a wonderful way for associations to feature members' expertise, celebrate milestones, and foster member-to-member business relationships.

## 2 A CRITICAL SOURCE OF INDUSTRY NEWS AND INFORMATION

Not only does a printed publication convey so many of an association's benefits, but for many members, it is the only real connection they have to the association. If they can't make it to monthly luncheons, social activities and conventions, a beautiful, full-color magazine is one reason they'll cut checks for membership year after year, because it connects them to the value of the organization. A magazine is really the visual of what an association does, and it provides a tangible expression of value.

Professionals identify with their industry publication. They look to a trade magazine as a vehicle for networking, sharing knowledge, earning recognition, defining their profession and advancing in their careers.

So why are we so partial to print? Well, to begin with, it works. Consider the following:



### **NOT ONLY SUSTAINABLE AND PERSONAL – IT'S PURPOSEFUL.**

And it's getting even better. With technological innovations like variable data printing and targeted mailing, direct mail (think magazines) allows organizations to communicate personally, effectively and efficiently with their members.



## **EFFECTIVE.**

If you print it, they will come. There's something about the printed page that people can't ignore. Simply put, paper still works because people still pay attention to it. While junk emails are often sent straight to spam filters, 81% of consumers still read or skim their mail. Business owners are taking notice of the trend.



## **EFFICIENT.**

Small costs. Big results. Direct mail is a very efficient marketing medium, and that shows in its response rates, which are typically measured in whole, single or even double-digit figures.



## **MEASURABLE.**

By sending your message on paper, you can directly measure its response, and gain valuable information about how well it works. Then, you can use this information to track inquiries and responses, and direct your communications for future campaigns.



## **TARGETED.**

Aim, shoot — and if necessary, re-aim. While other communication efforts cast a large net on a largely disinterested audience, paper lets you market your message to only the people you choose, and deliver that message directly to their door. It's a more personal way of connecting with people based on their interests; and with variable data printing, you can even address them by name.



## **FLEXIBLE.**

Everyone likes a (pleasant) surprise. Paper is the only medium that gives you the flexibility to reach out to your customers and give them something they can touch, feel and hold in their hands. Paper can include scented panels, CDs, and more; as a result, paper has the power to touch users — and let them touch back.



## **COMFORTABLE.**

Reading a magazine at the office over morning coffee. Browsing a magazine from the comfort of an armchair in the evening. Paper gives people the choice to respond on their own time, and in their own way. It doesn't yell. It doesn't flash. It just sits, patiently, and waits to be read. Maybe that's why, most of the time, it is.



## **ESSENTIAL TO ECONOMIC GROWTH.**

Direct mail is less expensive than other media, and helps them compete with larger companies. And the same is true for associations. Paper also helps the economy on a larger scale. Mail contributes more than \$702 billion in increased sales to the U.S. economy year after year.



## **WORKS WITH OTHER MEDIA.**

Using paper along with other types of media can increase the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. Catalogs can encourage website purchases, direct mail pieces can lead to phone calls or store visits, and magazines can reinforce brand connections across many mediums.





## CREATES A STRONGER CONNECTION.

Paper and communication have evolved together — so it makes sense that people still feel a connection to it. Because we can see and touch paper, it's seen as more concrete, and it can act as a cue for memory.

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**Put the power behind print to  
work for your association.**



# 3 A WAY TO KEEP ALL OF YOUR MEMBERS IN TOUCH

The future of an association depends on its ability to meet the needs of a diverse group of people, often spanning several generations. The versatility, dependability and universal value of the printed publication have made it a crucial tool for associations of all sizes, who seek to bridge the membership gaps and deliver something for everyone.

While we're certainly living in the age of technology, the truth is that digital communications are only accessed by some, and often hurriedly. Sharing information by word of mouth at association events is effective, but still reaches only a fraction of the membership. A full 99% of magazines reach their intended recipients — and frequently enjoy a circulation between two or three people per copy.

# en•gage•ment

verb

1. to occupy the attention or efforts of (a person or persons)

Simply put, member engagement is the ongoing interaction between a member and their association in exchange for meaningful value.

## The Math of Engaged Members

- Engaged members stay four more years compared with non-engaged members.
- Engaged members spend 22% more than non-engaged members.
- Member engagement not only increases member loyalty, but also creates referrals.
- Over half of the organizations with a member engagement plan reported it helped them increase membership renewals (51%), attendance at events/webinars (50%), annual conference attendance (44%), social media engagement (34%), web traffic (31%), and non-dues revenue (25%).

When it comes to engaging members, communication is key.

Consider these numbers: more than 20% of members say they have canceled their membership or let it lapse in the last year. And when asked their reason for ending membership, 32% said it was too costly, 19% said it had too little value, 16% forgot to renew, 13% can get same benefits elsewhere, and 12% said there was a decline in benefits.

So what can you do about retaining membership? Focus heavily on member engagement.

And we can help.

Magazines are mini ambassadors that arrive on your members' doorsteps several times a year, touting value and benefits, while keeping your association top of mind.



# Are we right for you?

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We would obviously like to think that our service is a great fit for every nonprofit or professional trade association. Realistically, though, that just isn't the case! Over the years, we have found that our most successful clients share some common characteristics:



## **COMMUNICATING WITH MEMBERS IS A PRIORITY FOR YOU.**

Even though our staff does the majority of the work, your organization's commitment to communication is key in preparing and submitting timely editorial content. Relevant communication takes time and focus. If this is not on the top of your internal priority list, editorial content gets moved and overlooked, which results in a publication that is late and usually uninteresting to your membership.



## **YOU WANT TO PRODUCE A TOP-NOTCH PUBLICATION WITH LIMITED RESOURCES.**

If your office has unlimited employees and financial resources, there is little reason to outsource your publishing activities. For most trade associations, however, this isn't the case. Our service exists because our clients can't or don't want to do it all themselves.



## **THE BOARD, THE STAFF AND THE STAFF PERSON IN CHARGE OF THE PUBLICATION ARE ALL COMMITTED TO OUTSOURCING.**

Outsourcing is certainly not a panacea for the trade association world. If your organization has mixed feelings over outsourcing, the frustration on both sides can make it very difficult to turn out a quality publication on an ongoing basis. We will go to extraordinary lengths to make sure we do our part. If your association is committed to doing its part too, then the publication will probably succeed.



## **YOU HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS.**

Additionally, outsourcing is not a cure-all for problematic publications. We face the same issues in regard to publishing as your organization does. The main difference is that we have more people focused on the publishing process. However, we cannot manufacture time and we don't print money. If late editorial content was a constant problem for your organization before we became involved, or you have been completely unsuccessful at generating ad revenue on your own, chances are these issues will continue to be problems for your publication.

While outsourcing is a strategy that works well — especially in publishing — it is a strategy that thrives on collaboration between our company and your organization.





# How does it all work?

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The answer is — very smoothly! You send us your editorial content through our project management platform, along with any photos you would like included, and we'll do the layout and send you back a digital proof. Once you sign off on the proof, we print, fold, bind and address the magazine using information from your database.

Our service is designed to be a turnkey one. **Here's the best part: if your organization's publication can be supported by advertising, our sales staff will sell ads on your behalf, so there may be no production costs to you at all.** In fact, many of our clients receive profit-sharing checks from us at the end of the publishing term.

## THE TYPICAL PRODUCTION CYCLE

Day 1	All editorial submitted to us
Day 2-6	Editorial reviewed, proofed to AP standard
Day 7-8	Client proof and sign off
Day 9	Magazine goes to press
Day 10-14	Printing and bindery
Day 15	Mailing service, magazine addressed
Day 16	Delivered to post office

Within 16 business days from the date we received your complete editorial content, your magazines are at the post office, and up to two days later, a box of extra copies is in the mail to your office via two-day priority mail.



## THE FINE PRINT

Most of our clients publish between four and six issues per year. However, all clients are different. We have a few clients that publish annually and some that publish monthly. We encourage our clients to communicate at intervals that make sense for them.

Over the years we've fine-tuned how we do what we do. We want to make sure that we have enough time to do a good job, while providing our clients with a competitive turnaround time that ensures your information is, well, timely. So in adding it all up, from our doorstep to your doorstep, it usually takes about one month.



## SCHEDULING IT IN

Well, we did have to bring up the “s” word at some point! A production schedule is really the key to a magazine’s timeliness. We need a date to shoot for, and so do you.

The key to producing a timely publication is developing a schedule that works for your organization as well as ours. We will always help our clients meet their dates by providing editorial support when needed. If given enough advance notice, we can usually rearrange the workflow on our end to meet your needs. We realize that in the association world, there are frequent events and projects that sometimes make it difficult to turn in content on the exact day, as planned. We encourage our clients to keep the communication with us open, so we can coordinate with you for the best possible result.



# The new happily ever after of print and digital ...

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We think the 20-year battle between print and digital can safely be called a draw. Print isn't dead and digital isn't the overarching technical panacea to solve money and time constraints that many people had hoped for.



**One of the largest positive factors of digital magazines is that they are not competing with print editions. It has been found through many studies that while readers do prefer digital editions, they are interested in holding on to printed versions when available.**

— DCatalog



## PRINT

According to a Simmons Multimedia Engagement Study, magazines promote reader engagement in ways that the Internet and email simply can't. More people report having an emotional connection with printed material, in addition to a higher level of trust. Assuming that a magazine's content is higher quality and better filtered (which it usually is), readers will process printed information in much more depth than digital messages. A magazine typically becomes a library, coffee table or tote-bag fixture, letting members return to its pages or share it with others. The printed publication's high circulation and positive reception are also attractive to advertisers; consequently, many associations enjoy steadily increasing revenues — and potentially, profit-sharing — as a result.



## DIGITAL

Technology enthusiasts have a long history of claiming that digital communication has made print media nearly obsolete. In terms of content flexibility, instant distribution, access to analytics and postage savings, it's hard to argue with the strengths of digital editions. However, there's a flip side to just going digital. Many surveys reflect a significant decrease in engagement times — as much as 72% — from print. In other words, format matters. Readers just don't spend as much time reading a digital periodical

as they spend reading a print one. And that makes a difference when an association is positioning themselves as thought-leaders in their industries.

For many professional associations, the money thought to be saved through a solely digital exchange of information often has a very high price tag in lost membership, lost sponsorship and lost interest.



## A HAPPY MEDIUM

Despite our obvious partiality to print, we absolutely do not shun the cyber world. In fact, we're all in. All of our publications have their own online magazine website, which highlights the current issue and hosts an archive of back issues in a digital format. In addition, this page features information for potential members and advertisers about both the magazine and the association.

Our magazine websites also feature a fully built-out digital edition of each magazine which can be easily shared on social media platforms.

Together, the print version and the digital version of our client's magazine makes communication effective and far-reaching, and more importantly, our association clients can speak to their members in the way their members want to be spoken to. Which is key in today's world of one-to-one communication.



## ONLINE MAGAZINE SITES

Our view of digital content delivery is customized based on our client's needs, wants and, of course, website capacity. While we provide our clients with a magazine website, which we create and host, that has articles built out to share on social platforms, we can also simply provide a digital version of the magazine in a PDF or "flipping book" version. We can create a website banner to be placed on your home page that could be linked to the magazine website.





## EMAIL MARKETING

We also provide our clients with a digital delivery of their magazines using a custom template within a specialty email software program. We like the added security protocols that a dedicated software program has in place, along with the analytics and reporting that comes with an email service.

The custom template we create is mobile friendly and is supported across any platform. We create links in the email to the magazine site and articles.

Once the client approves, we then send out the email blast, using a list provided by the client. After the email blast has gone out, we provide a report about it.



**Print isn't a replacement for generation Z's digital lives but serves as an addition. Both millennials and Gen-Z are turning to magazines because they offer a different experience than what they're used to. Many in fact refer to Gen-Z as the "omnichannel generation," stressing the fact that publishers should consider using a combination of print and digital marketing approaches to successfully monetize this audience.**

— Chaymae Samir



# Frequently asked questions

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## DO YOU REALLY WORK FOR FREE?

Definitely not. It is true that with ad-supported magazines, our service is free to our association clients. We are compensated for our work with proceeds from advertising sales that we generate on your behalf. In most cases, our salespeople are able to sell enough advertising space to cover all of our production expenses, including postage.



## **WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE AREN'T ENOUGH SALES?**

Unfortunately, if we can't sell advertising, someone else has to pay. Usually ad sales are successful enough to cover the costs of production. However, ad sales depend on the excitement and support we receive from you and your board. Organizations that provide enough advertising leads, and are on hand for questions, are usually our most successful clients. For some of our brand-new clients, advertising sales may be sluggish at first. However, once we've published the first issue it becomes a matter of increasing the prestige of the publication, securing new ad leads, keeping our current advertisers happy, and together growing your publication.



## **WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP YOUR PUBLICATION BE SUCCESSFUL?**

First, provide ad leads in the form of a list of associate and/or affiliate members or trade show vendors. Board members can help us by encouraging the companies they work for to advertise in your magazine. Be supportive. As an organization, you have insight into the climate of your local market that our sales staff does not. Let us know who should be advertising, since this revenue pays for your publication and its full-time production staff — us.



## **HOW DO YOU DETERMINE WHAT TO CHARGE FOR ADS?**

The formula for this is simple: we total up the annual costs of the publication and divide by the number of ad pages available. Most other magazines have an ad-to-editorial content ratio of 75%. We believe that a ratio of 50% looks nicer, provides better value for the advertisers and produces a publication that has more relevance to it. The pricing is set each year with each publication. We try to manage costs efficiently enough so that we don't have to set advertising prices at exorbitant levels.



## HOW DO YOU DETERMINE YOUR COSTS?

We charge \$65 per page for graphic design and typesetting. In addition, we have a per-publication flat charge for editorial and graphics. We pay our sales staff 25% commission on ad sales and we mark up our services by a reasonable margin to cover overhead. All in all, our costs — for what we do — are extremely competitive.



## IS THERE EVER A PROFIT FOR OUR ORGANIZATION?

Yes. Many of our clients have very profitable publications and see “profit-sharing” checks ranging from \$1,100 to \$20,000 per year. However, most publications run pretty close to project cost, because the majority of our clients are looking only to defray their expense of communication with their members. Our ad prices are designed to cover the cost of publishing at a 50/50 ad-to-editorial ratio. Profit-sharing comes into play when advertising revenue exceeds the project cost for the magazine for the publishing year.



## DO ALL LOCAL CHAPTERS HAVE TO PARTICIPATE AND/OR GIVE UP THEIR OWN “LOCAL” PUBLICATION?

No. Participation in a state publication does not mean that each local chapter must give up its own magazine or newsletter. A statewide publication can serve as a tool for education, communication and mentoring between the local chapters. Statewide and local magazines or newsletters can co-exist, and do, in several of the states where we work. In most instances, however, local chapters eventually just send the information to the state publication, where a certain number of pages are reserved for their use. A statewide publication is a very powerful medium, especially in times of active legislative activity. It is also a strong prospecting tool, because we send extra copies to your communication chair each month to pass along to potential members.



## **WILL WE LOSE CONTROL OF OUR PUBLICATION?**

That probably depends on your definition of “control.” Your association generates content and your board has final approval of the publication. We don’t print until your communications chair or association executive approves the proof in its entirety (including design, content, ads, and so on). We do suggest and encourage that we all stick to the publishing schedule as closely as possible. Part of your responsibility in working with us is understanding that advertisers are paying for quality and consistency. If you don’t have anything to submit for one or more issues, we will handle it for you and you can still proof it! You make the call. We work for you.



## **ARE PUBLICATIONS EVER LATE?**

Yes, there may be times when some of our publications are late, regardless of what we do to prevent it. When editorial is submitted late from our clients, it means that the entire production run on our end is also technically late. As much as we wish we could manufacture time, we can’t. Our clients control timeliness, because a timely publication depends on timely editorial and timely final approval. We will work with you, remind you and help you compose editorial, if you need us to. But if you are late, so are we.



## **WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO OUR ASSOCIATION?**

We are your production staff. We handle all the headaches of publishing — and there can be quite a few! You get a quality magazine or newsletter without having to spend all the time putting it together. We help you through the rough spots. Boards typically serve for only a year or two, but we’re around all the time; we are the constant in your equation. Our goal is to provide you with a communication tool that will maintain your organization’s relevance, member recruiting and renewal over many years.



## **WHAT DETERMINES THE SIZE OF OUR PUBLICATION?**

There are several factors that go into publication size. First, we want the publication to be large enough to meet our clients' needs. Second, we need enough ads to cover costs. Our rule of thumb is one editorial page for each ad page. If we sell eight pages of ads then we typically publish a 16-page publication; likewise, 20 pages of ads translates into a 40-page publication.



## **WHAT HAPPENS IF WE CAN'T FILL ALL OF THE AVAILABLE PAGES IN OUR PUBLICATION WITH OUR OWN EDITORIAL CONTENT?**

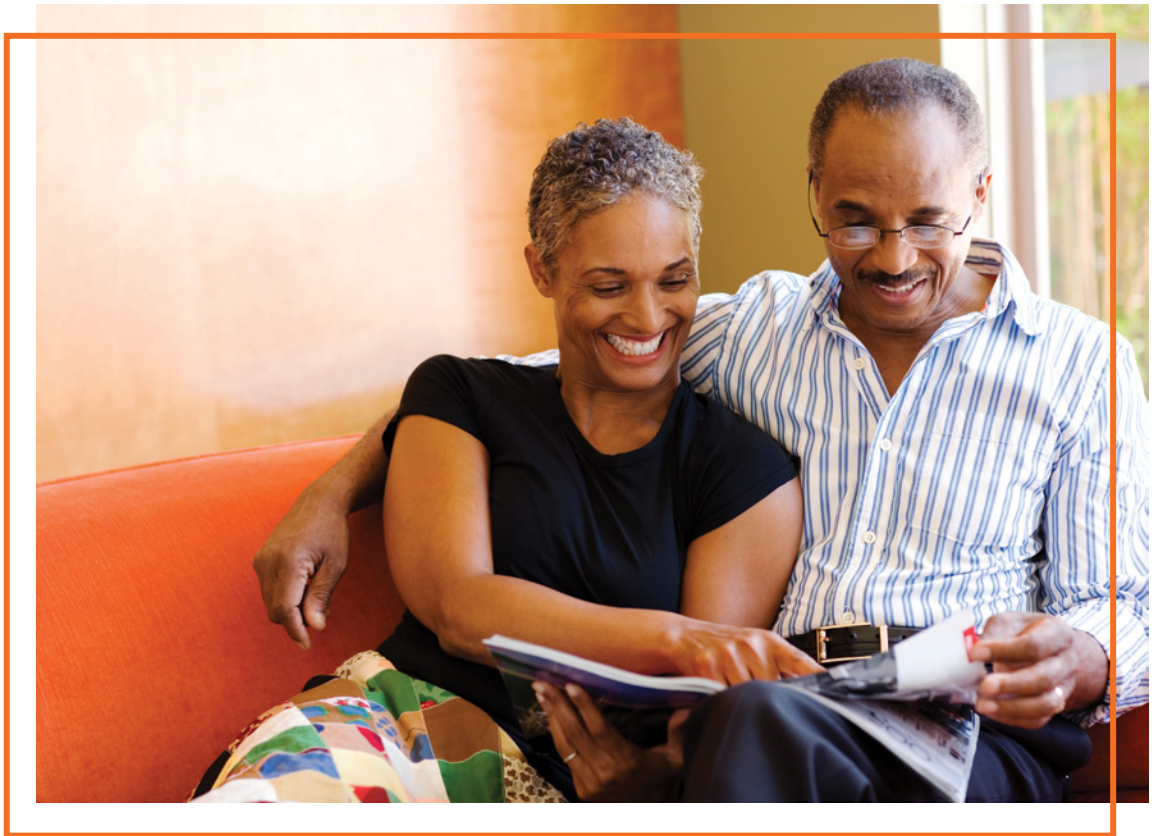
We have a great selection of industry-specific editorial that is available to your organization at any time. Our staff puts a lot of time, effort and energy into our "editorial bank," so the material is high-quality and pertinent to your readership.



## **WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE ARE COMPETING PUBLICATIONS?**

We believe that the most official publication wins, but there are few instances when this really isn't the case. An "official" trade journal of any association or organization has more credibility than a freelance publication. Now, if the competing publication is hosted by our client, things tend to get complicated. Many of our clients try to publish newsletters, digital newsletters, directories and buyer's guides, in addition to a magazine. There is usually only so much money that associate or allied members have for print media advertising. As an organization, we encourage you to give some thought to how you want to communicate with your members and what your needs are. If managed wisely, a magazine and directory can coexist, but profitability typically only comes from one print media source.





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**Our magazine is one of the few things that we do for our membership that is completely branded to us and furthers our messaging and our story. It's unique to us, and we're very proud of the magazine. Our members recognize it and look forward to receiving it.**

— John Anderson, President, NMBA

# About us

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We are a marketing and communications agency that focuses specifically on content marketing. We have a proven history of delivering publishing services – print and digital – to trade associations, nonprofit organizations (and a few professional service firms, here and there) that seek to connect with their members or clients, while minimizing the time, effort and money that often go into handling all aspects of an organization's communication strategy.

**Okay, that's the obligatory elevator pitch.**

**So, what does this mean? And here's the real question: what makes us different from all the other agencies that say they do pretty much the same thing?**

For starters, we're large enough to get the job done, and small enough to give our clients the time and attention we feel that they deserve. We don't have a receptionist; we all answer the phone. When clients call, we know who they are, and more importantly, we're all up to speed on their project and we share their passion

for their work. We're always game for a creative session. When a client starts a conversation with, "What would you think if we ...," we onboard immediately. We're a "yes" company, because we can be, and more importantly, we want to be. Happy clients make our day.

Today, "telling your story" is the buzz phrase for pretty much everything. We, however, were doing content marketing long before it was a thing, and believe us, it's a thing. These days, the world turns on quality content. It's the currency of the relevant.

Here's what we know: we're more connected, and the world is much smaller, than it has ever been. The details that make your organization, board of directors and staff not just real, but unique, is a powerful call for engagement. The truth is, people want to do business with those that they like, know and trust, regardless of how many iPhones they all have combined.

In a plugged-in world, authentic and real are concepts that matter.



**And that's where we shine.**

We're a woman-owned business (we have both WBENC and WSBO certifications), and our staff is all women. That's completely accidental; it just happened that way. We have helped clients connect for over 25 years. And over the years, we have learned a thing or two about content, relevancy and the power of engaging with your dues paying members, where the end goal is to renew, recruit and retain membership dollars.

**Call us. Talk to us about print, digital or preferably both.**



**re•tain**

verb

1. to continue to have (something)
2. to keep in one's memory

# From our clients ...

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**I am really proud of our magazine, On the Road. Our friends at The newsLINK Group, LLC have done a great job of helping UAPA put together some of the best interviews and information we have.**

— Reed Ryan, Executive Director,  
Utah Asphalt Pavement Association



**As an association, we have a responsibility to help our members break the isolation and to reinforce the feeling of connectedness that members deserve and have come to expect. We are hosting peer exchanges, maintaining an updated library of federal and state resources, and trying to help members to think about and prepare for outcomes that are possible during these highly dynamic times. Our association magazine is an important tool and central to our member communication efforts.**

— Kevin Shivers, President, PACB



“Keep the line of communication open with your members.”

# Contact us today.

We can help you tell your story.



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