Global Network,
Local Contacts

Public Relations Plan Book
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“The way of the world is meeting people through other people.”

– Robert Kerrigan
History
The Richmond chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators is a professional organization that links area communicators to a global network of more than 16,000 members in 70 countries. IABC Richmond was founded in 1955 and is the longest running professional organization in the Richmond metropolitan area with over 70 members in 39 companies. Recently, IABC Richmond faced challenges in member recruitment as well as engagement and participation among current members. The lack of visibility and awareness among area business communicators and students has contributed to a steady decline in membership.

Campaign
A communications campaign will focus on generating awareness among key publics, including business professionals, college students, and inactive members. The campaign goals will include rebranding the organization, increasing participation among current members, and increasing membership. Campaign messages will focus on highlighting the unique features that differentiate IABC Richmond from other communications organizations. These features include its international network and the variety of professional backgrounds among its members.
Executive Summary

Theme
The central theme – Global network. Local contacts. – was developed to highlight IABC Richmond’s international network, a unique aspect of this organization that sets it apart from other professional organizations. The second part of the theme emphasizes the importance of the local business communicators who belong to the organization and attend its events. These professionals can help other IABC Richmond members through networking and knowledge sharing.

Social Media
To increase the visibility and engagement of IABC Richmond, a new website and social media campaign has been created that will focus on two objectives. The first objective is to increase traffic on the organization’s website. If communications professionals and students who are currently unaware of the organization visit IABC Richmond’s website, this will help achieve the ultimate campaign goal of increasing membership. The second objective is to build relationships with business professionals and students. Current members will also be encouraged to participate in IABC Richmond’s social media initiative.

Other tactics
Other tactics include an in-person initiative, a comment campaign in which IABC Richmond members will comment on popular Richmond blogs, and the formation of networking groups to encourage inactive members to participate in organizational events and initiatives. The campaign also calls for the development of a mentorship program, the creation of a student chapter, and interest meetings to be held on university campuses across the Richmond area. These tactics in combination with the new website and social media campaign will increase awareness of the IABC, increase member participation, and prevent the further loss of current members.
IABC Richmond is the Richmond chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators. It is a global network of professionals that links communicators in the fields of PR, marketing, corporate communication, public affairs, advertising and more.

IABC Richmond is lacking a unified online presence and is losing members. It needs to increase its membership numbers and membership involvement.

These issues relate to:

• Poor economy
• Increased competition from other professional organizations
• Low visibility of the IABC among potential members
Opportunity Statement

In its current position, IABC Richmond has an opportunity to rebrand itself as an all-encompassing professional organization with global networking opportunities.

Through a rebranding effort, IABC Richmond can establish itself as an organization for communications professionals on all experience levels.
Problem Statement

Both internal and external communications need to be overhauled in order to recruit new members and prevent further loss of current members.

IABC Richmond also needs to more clearly define its unique selling proposition and benefits.
Research Objectives

• To gather information from VCU students in communication – related fields to determine what causes them to join professional organizations. This will be done through focus groups.
• To gather data from Richmond area communications professionals to determine what causes them to join one professional organization over another. This will be done through focus groups and a survey.
• To gather data from current IABC members to determine why they joined and the extent of their involvement.
Primary Research

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
SURVEY FOR BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS

The purpose of our survey was to gauge business professionals’ attitudes toward communication trade organizations as well as to determine their awareness of the IABC. An online survey was developed using surveymonkey.com. To reach communication professionals, students of MASC 439 joined communication trade organizations such as PRSA Richmond, AMA Richmond, Richmond SHRM, Social Media Club of Richmond, and Richmond Ad Club through their LinkedIn accounts. Each student sent a message with a survey link to 30 professionals belonging to the various organizations on LinkedIn. The students were assigned different letters of the alphabet. To prevent professionals from receiving duplicate messages, the students only contacted those with last names beginning with the assigned letter. A total of 79 business communication professionals answered the survey.
SURVEY RESULTS
ATTITUDE TOWARD PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
Business professionals overwhelmingly believe that trade organizations can help them reach goals in their field, with 94.9 percent of respondents indicating this in the survey.

When asked about the cost of trade organization membership, 78.1 percent of respondents chose somewhat expensive, neutral, and somewhat inexpensive. The fact that responses are concentrated evenly in the middle of the graph suggests that business professionals believe the price of trade organization membership is fair and appropriate for the benefits received.

Over half of respondents, 55.7 percent, indicated that being a member of a professional organization is easy in terms of meeting membership expectations and making time to participate. Only 15.2 percent of respondents said that trade organization membership is difficult.
ATTITUDE TOWARD INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
The majority of respondents have a positive attitude toward international organizations. Exactly 62 percent of business professionals who responded to the survey indicate that they would be willing to join an internationally-oriented professional organization. However, a smaller number of respondents, 50 percent, indicate that belonging to a trade organization with international resources would be beneficial for them. Only 11.4 percent indicate that they would be unwilling to join an international organization, while 25.6 percent do not believe that international resources would be beneficial to them. This suggests that while an international focus is becoming more important as a result of globalization, professional organizations should continue to pay attention to local issues as well. Striking a balance between local and global focus is important.

REASONS FOR JOINING A TRADE ORGANIZATION
The top reason for joining a professional organization is networking, with 70 percent of respondents choosing this option. Continuing education was the second most popular choice, with 29 percent of respondents selecting this answer. This suggests that while continuing education is important, networking is the most important motivation for business professionals to join trade organizations. Only 1 percent of respondents chose volunteer opportunities as a reason to join a trade organization, suggesting that this is not a major motivation for business professionals.
AWARENESS OF IABC AMONG RICHMOND BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS

Overall, 61 percent of respondents indicated that they had never heard of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). This suggests that lack of awareness is a large problem for the organization as a whole in the Richmond area.

A greater number of respondents, 71 percent, did not know that there is a Richmond chapter of the IABC. This means that 10 percent of people who had heard of IABC International still did not know that IABC Richmond exists. This underscores the idea that lack of awareness is a huge problem among business professionals and probably among other groups, such as students, also.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

FOCUS GROUP OF BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS

The purpose of this focus group was to gather in-depth knowledge and understanding of the reasons behind business professionals’ attitudes toward trade organizations, motivations for joining them, benefits received, and favorite types of events attended. Other questions probed their opinions about the importance of having access to international resources, mentorship programs, campaign themes, and the visual identity of various communication trade organizations.

To reach communication professionals, students of MASC 439 joined communication trade organizations such as PRSA Richmond, AMA Richmond, Richmond SHRM, Social Media Club of Richmond, and Richmond Ad Club through their LinkedIn accounts. The research team and account executive created a schedule of possible dates and times for the focus group using doodle.com. To prevent professionals from receiving duplicate messages, they divided the alphabet into thirds and only contacted those with last names beginning with their portion of the alphabet.

Students sent a message with an explanation of the focus group, the location, and a link to the doodle schedule to 60 professionals belonging to the various trade organizations on LinkedIn. The business professionals could click the link, then select the dates and times that worked best for them. The research team and account executive chose the date and time with the most participants, then sent messages to the professionals confirming their attendance. They sent messages to the remaining professionals informing them that they would not be needed and thanking them for volunteering. A total of 6 business communication professionals attended the focus group.
FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

1. Chris Gatewood is an attorney for Bay Harbor. He handles media law, intellectual property for trademarks and copyright, social media, corporate law, and startup for entrepreneurial businesses.

2. Anne Paschke is the Public Relations Manager for UNOS. She mainly handles media relations, but does a little bit of everything.

3. Lee Weiseger is co-founder and partner of the Titan Group, which is an HR consulting firm. He holds a master’s degree in human resources.

4. Cliff Sleeman is the president and owner of Communication Strategies, an Internet marketing development company. He works with clients in the United States and four other countries, handling media and production work.

5. Shade Wilson is the Director of B2B marketing at Snagajob. His background is in digital and direct response marketing, primarily working in niche industries. He has learned various PR skills over the past few years related to trade publications.

6. Casey Quinlan is a media, PR, and branding consultant. She is the author of a book titled Cancer for Christmas. Most of her work is in healthcare and IT.
**FOCUS GROUP RESULTS**

**Question:** How many of you belong to a trade organization related to your field?

All participants, except Shade Wilson, belong to at least one trade organization. Anne Paschke was previously a member of the IABC, but switched to PRSA. Like all lawyers, Chris Gatewood is a member of the State Bar, but also belongs to several other voluntary associations. They include the Richmond IP Law Association and ABA. Lee Weiseger is a member of SHRM, the Richmond Compensation Association, and the Virginia Council of CEOs. A former member of the IABC and the Richmond Television Association, Cliff Sleeman is currently a member of the American Marketing Association. Although Shade Wilson is not a member of a trade organization, he is involved with SHRM through his work and is looking into joining the AMA.

**Question:** What benefits do you receive from the organizations you are in?

Everyone said that networking was an important benefit in a trade organization. Anne Paschke noted that networking is particularly important for independent practitioners who need to find new business. She said that she used to be very active on the board of IABC, but she saw a lot of the same faces over and over because she knew that they were there looking for business. Continuing education was also a popular benefit from trade organizations. Chris Gatewood said that education in best practices and updates in a particular field help professionals to stay current. Cliff Sleeman said that networking and continuing education were very important, but emphasized that trade organization members should take the opportunity to join different committees and learn new skills.

“One of the things that I’ve seen and encouraged in folks is trying different roles or jobs within the organization to learn new skill sets. That way you get to network with people involved in different industries, but at the same time, you get to learn some techniques and other tricks that you have not been exposed to previously.” – Cliff Sleeman
**Primary Research**

**Question: What are your thoughts on accreditation from particular organizations?**

Only two of the participants answered this question. Lee Weiseger said that accreditation is a validator that pushes people to stay current. Professionals have to take certain courses, attend events, and go through training in order to receive the credit. He believes that it helps people to stay current whether they want to or not. Anne Paschke agreed that accreditation was a good thing. However, she said that she knows several PR practitioners who earn the accreditation, then pay their dues only to keep their ABC or APR.

“It’s a qualifier, a validator, in my opinion. I think it pushes people to stay current.” — Lee Weiseger

“If you’re out there looking for a job, maybe it’s the edge between you and another candidate.” — Anne Paschke

**Question: What benefits do sponsorships bring to the organizations?**

The participants agreed that annual revenue is an extremely important benefit from sponsors. Casey Quinlan said that the best way to secure sponsorships for events is to start with an annual sponsorship, then allow the annual sponsors to pick from a variety of options for the events. The facilitator provided an example in which Adobe is a sponsor for AIGA and provides graphic designers with discounts on Adobe software purchased through the trade association. Everyone agreed that benefits such as this could be important depending on the members’ needs and what industry they work in. Lee Weiseger gave an example of a benefit in which some organizations such as the Virginia Bankers Association have a large benefits group that service member groups and trade organizations can join for benefit purposes. Anne Paschke said that benefits such as these may be more important to independent practitioners, especially for insurance purposes.

“Discounts on services and products that members can get through negotiating with big vendors is a power that a trade association can bring.” — Lee Weiseger

“I suggest starting with an annual sponsorship model, then offer them a menu of options that they can pick and choose from rather than chasing the dollars for each event.” — Casey Quinlan
**Prompt:** I want to show you five different website homepages. They are local trade organizations in Richmond. What do you like or dislike in terms of content, layout, navigability? Does anything catch your eye? Is anything missing?

**AIGA:** Everyone agreed that this website was too cluttered and did not communicate the purpose of the organization. They thought that three columns of text was too busy. The visuals distracted them so that they could not see what the organization was about. Shade Wilson said that he did not know where to look first and foremost, and the little calendar bothered him. He also noted that a newsletter format such as this would not work for the homepage of a website. Everyone also agreed that the poor website layout was probably a byproduct of design by committee. When working in a committee, it is difficult for one person to take over and make the hard decisions. Shade Wilson noted that when everyone has something they think is important, 20 things hit the front page.

“I don’t know what it stands for. It’s very busy, and I don’t see any branding. Sometimes the graphics become too important, and you lose the message.” – Anne Paschke

“You need one single purpose as quickly as possible. In there somewhere, there’s probably some great message as to what they do and why I should care, but I didn’t see it.” – Shade Wilson
AIGA Richmond Turns 21!
(and you get the gifts)

EVENT
DECEMBER 1, 2011
AMERICAN TOBACCO CENTER

AIGA Turns 21! (and you get the gifts) On a cold November night way back in 1990, a little organization was born, and AIGA — the professional association of design...

VIEW DETAILS

VOICE: AIGA JOURNAL OF DESIGN
Collages with Friends: Khoi Vinh Launches Mixel
The former design director for NYTimes.com wants to ignite the circuits in your brain centering around visual creativity, and he's doing it with a social art-making app for tablets called Mixel.

VIEW MORE »

AIGA RICHMOND ANNUAL SPONSORS

Thanks to our sponsors! Your support makes our work possible.

- Circle S Studio
- ITCC
- CO + LAB
- Aquent

When you become a sponsor for AIGA Richmond, you get exposure to a prime target audience. Area graphic designers and the creative people who
AMA: Everyone agreed that this website was too cluttered and did not communicate the purpose of the organization. They thought that three columns of text was too busy. The visuals distracted them so that they could not see what the organization was about. Shade Wilson said that he did not know where to look first and foremost, and the little calendar bothered him. He also noted that a newsletter format such as this would not work for the homepage of a website. Everyone also agreed that the poor website layout was probably a byproduct of design by committee. When working in a committee, it is difficult for one person to take over and make the hard decisions. Shade Wilson noted that when everyone has something they think is important, 20 things hit the front page.

“I’m making an assumption that their biggest driver is to get you into the next meeting because that’s what they emphasized.” – Shade Wilson

“They give props to the people who pay them, but it’s also a nice, clean page that looks easy to navigate. They’ve got three main sections.” – Anne Paschke

“It leads with the big box about the next event. That tells you it’s an event-driven organization. As long as that’s true, that makes sense.” – Chris Gatewood
Primary Research

January 2012 Luncheon
Living Social
Thursday, January 19th at 11:45AM
Jason Rozenblat, General Manager - DC, Living Social

From collegiate members to executive-level marketers, the AMA-Richmond Chapter offers something for everyone working in the marketing industry.

AMA Events
Learn about upcoming luncheons, special events, social events and learning opportunities.

AMA Membership
Want to join the AMA? Learn about how the AMA can get you connected and improve your skills.

AMA Volunteers
Get involved as an AMA volunteer. Learn about the many opportunities to meet people and make a contribution.
PRSA Richmond:
Everyone agreed that the large size of the ‘Join’ and ‘Renew’ buttons suggest that PRSA is mainly focused on membership more so than events or anything else. Shade Wilson said that the site did not offer him benefits or tell him why he should join. Lee Weiseger and Chris Gatewood also agreed that the homepage did not tell them enough information about the organization. Even so, Gatewood thought it was the best website so far and that the buttons to join and renew should be prominent. He suggested that listing bullet points under the buttons with just a word or two talking about benefits such as education, networking, or career advancement would be beneficial. Cliff Sleeman said that the buttons to join or renew should be prominent and were an appropriate size if the organization was in the middle of a membership drive. However, the buttons should not be that large most of the time.

“The challenge that I saw in that is it says ‘join’ or ‘renew,’ but I wasn’t sure why I should. I wasn’t sure what I was going to get out of it. It seemed the benefit element was missing.” – Shade Wilson

“A number of the features are cut off. They’re not sized properly for the splash page.” – Anne Paschke

“I like the fact that it’s a big button, but if it’s there all the time, that may be a little bit overkill. It could be handled in a different way but still made prominent. For a professional association like this, making it easy to renew is very important.” – Chris Gatewood
IABC Richmond:
The participants said that they liked the simplistic design of the website, but agreed that the homepage was too text-heavy. Anne Paschke suggested putting a few lines about the event on the homepage and allowing visitors to click on it if they want more information. She also said that the site did not entice her to click on the blog calendar at the right. The participants suggested that putting the mission statement at the top was not very creative, but said that it was definitely direct and told site visitors what the organization was about.

“I like the top; I think it’s good and direct. I would suggest that after that, it gets a little text heavy.”—Shade Wilson

“It’s too much detail about the meeting. They could splash, then have you go somewhere else for more detail. The other thing I wasn’t impressed with was the blog of the months to the right. There’s no real enticement to go to those.”—Anne Paschke
October Program & Luncheon with IABC Chair Adrian Cropley

**Topic:** Making Managers Better Communicators

**Date:** Thursday, October 6, 2011  
**Time:** 11:45 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.  
**Location:** H&A Architects & Engineers | 4880 Sadler Road, Suite 300, Glen Allen, VA 23060  
| Click here to view map  
**Cost:** $25 for members and full-time students; $30 for non-members.

Register: Click here to register now.

Managers are our key channel for communications in any organization today; are they however the best equipped to deliver effective communication? Do we train them? Do we actually support our managers?

In this session we look at how as communicators we can improve the communication skills of our line managers in their business. You will gain an understanding of the key role managers play in organizational communication and develop the knowledge and skills to build a compelling business case for line manager training.

In this session you will explore:
- what employees expect from their managers
- a concise model of employee communication needs
- building a business case for manager communication skills training
Primary Research

Richmond SHRM:
Everyone agreed that the webpage needed to tell visitors more about the organization, including what the letters SHRM stand for. Cliff Sleeman said that when he goes to a website, he needs to know that he landed on the right page. Sleeman also noted that the consistent font size prevents any one thing from standing out. The other participants agreed with this, saying that nothing on the page grabbed their attention. Shade Wilson said that SHRM’s calendar of events was easy to understand.

“Well, I’m a member, and it struck me that it doesn’t really tell you what it’s about.” – Lee Weiseger

“The font size is pretty consistently the same, so there’s nothing really important on that page. Everything is of equal weight.” – Cliff Sleeman
Primary Research

Question: What are some of your favorite events that you’ve been to in your professional organization or professional events in general? What did you like about them or not?

The participants discussed events from different organizations as well as some techniques the organizations use to entice people to attend. Casey Quinlan, who is on the board of the Richmond Technology Council, said that breakfasts have the highest rate of attendance among their regular events. However, the awards gala and golf outing that happen once a year earn much more revenue for the organization. Shade Wilson said that the biggest problem for him is simply finding time to get away from the office to attend meetings. He suggested holding meetings every other month or once every three months rather than monthly, saying that this would make the meetings more impactful. Anne Paschke acknowledged that organizations sometimes struggle to find good speakers to fill monthly meetings. Cliff Sleeman said that national speakers hired by AMA were very popular with members of that organization.

Cliff Sleeman and Anne Paschke both discussed the fact that more people attend off-site meetings as opposed to on-site meetings. Sleeman described popular events among members of the International Television Association (ITVA) in which the organization got a bus to take members to see different television production stations. The bus was loaded with beer and pizza, and everyone could network while on route to their destination. Anne Paschke said that when she was with IABC, events held at a member’s organization generated higher attendance.

“The organizations could test meeting less frequently, making them more impactful. Instead of once a month, maybe once every couple of months, maybe once every three months. Whatever it is, focus on making each one as impactful as possible instead of trying to fill a calendar every month.” – Shade Wilson

“In IABC, monthly meetings are not included in the local fee, and they have a hard time getting people to come. PRSA, it is included in your local fees, and there’s always a good number of people at the meetings.” – Anne Paschke
**Primary Research**

**Question:** The client that we’re working with is an international organization. It offers an international global network where you can give anyone a call in any country who is in your organization. Do you think international connections could benefit you in your business?

Everyone agreed that international networks are a growing interest because businesses need to expand their markets. They said that an international organization would be much more popular now than it was ten years ago. Chris Gatewood said he deals with law firms in other countries on a regular basis. Shade Wilson gave an example of the importance of drawing on global advice, saying that he knows someone who is trying to figure out how to open an office in London. He said that as time goes by, an organization offering international networking will be more and more attractive.

“As time goes on, more and more businesses are looking to move out of regional to national, move out of national to international, so I think that will be a growing interest.” — Shade Wilson

“International networks are more important now than they would have been ten years ago when I was in IABC. As you said, it’s going forward, just getting more and more important as the world’s a smaller place.” — Anne Paschke
Primary Research

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

FOCUS GROUP OF STUDENTS

The purpose of this focus group was to gain an understanding of VCU students’ attitudes and opinions regarding trade organizations such as IABC Richmond. Question topics included student motivations for joining trade organizations, the visual identity of various organizations, and IABC Richmond’s mission statement.

Professors in the VCU Mass Communications Department were asked to e-mail their students, explaining the focus group and encouraging them to participate. Students in business courses such as HR and marketing as well as communication courses such as public relations and advertising were e-mailed directly and asked to participate in the focus group. An incentive of free pizza and soda was given to the students who attended the focus group.

Focus Group Participants:

1. Elena Thomas – Creative Advertising Major
2. Brandi Thompson – Creative Advertising Major
3. Stephanie Yatco – Creative Advertising Major
4. Lois Wilkinson – Public Relations Major
5. Michael Rosendale – Business Major
FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

Question: What would motivate you to join a trade organization?

The participants said that holding special events with guest speakers would encourage them to join an organization such as IABC Richmond. They said that they wanted to learn from experienced communication professionals. The students also said that benefits such as internship opportunities, networking opportunities, and resume workshops would make it worthwhile for them to pay to join a trade organization. They also discussed Friday Forums, a weekly event open to advertising students that features guest speakers who are well-known in the advertising industry.

“If I could find an internship or job through the organization or they had helpful speakers, I would definitely be willing to pay money to join.” – Michael Rosendale

Question: What do you think of these mission statements?

IABC Richmond’s mission statement was criticized for being too long, boring, and redundant. It failed to catch anyone’s attention and did not make the organization stand out from the others. The participants said that the term “business communicators” was too vague and should be clarified. They also said that IABC Richmond should emphasize its international network because this benefit may appeal to potential members. Finally, the participants liked bulleted mission statements because they were easy to read and highlighted the organizations’ benefits.

“That mission statement is boring and does not make me want to join. It’s the longest sentence ever.” – Stephanie Yatco

“Communications, communicators, communicate…it [the mission statement] repeats that way too much. What does it mean? It’s so generic.” – Elena Thomas
Question: What do you think of these three logos? Compare the logos of competitor organizations with IABC Richmond’s logo.

All five of the participants were familiar with the PRSA, but only one participant had heard of the IABC. Four out of five participants had heard of the AMA. All of the students criticized IABC Richmond’s logo. They suggested that the logo represented the Virginia Beach area because the wave is a prevalent icon throughout that region. Even so, IABC Richmond’s logo was more popular than the PRSA and AMA logos.

“It [the IABC logo] makes it look like we are in Virginia Beach. I guess they are trying to do River City, but it doesn’t make sense. It’s the best one so far, though.” – Lois Wilkinson
Primary Research

Prompt: Compare the websites of Richmond PRSA, AMA Richmond, and IABC Richmond.

PRSA Richmond’s website was very popular with the students. They said that it was easy to navigate, professional, and attractive because of the colors and images. By contrast, the participants criticized IABC Richmond’s website, saying that the blog format was unprofessional and too wordy. They said that the homepage was not inviting and did not encourage them to explore the website further.

“Why would the site be in blog format? That’s so unprofessional and such a turn off.” – Elena Thomas
Secondary Research

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS
• Many fields represented
• Includes business, PR, sales, HR, etc.
• Insights that cross disciplines
• Long history in Richmond
• International network
• Competitive global edge
• Mentorship program
• New business opportunities

WEAKNESSES
• Text-heavy website
• Member involvement is low
• Low social media presence
• Minimal communication plan
• Hard to subscribe to emails online
• High fees in comparison to competitors
• No student chapters

OPPORTUNITIES
• Educate members in new technology
• Educate new members about freelance contracting
• Twitter page has plenty of followers - Build on that
• Re-brand organization
• Start a student chapter
• Large member list
• Many untapped publics = New Members

THREATS
• Members become inactive, losing more members
• Competing organizations (PRSA, AMA, etc.)
• Leadership positions not being filled
• Difficulty adjusting to changing technology
• Negative word of mouth
Secondary Research

Audits

CURRENT STATE
IABC Richmond’s Twitter account is strong with a large fan base and frequent posts. However, there are many missed opportunities across social media and website platforms:
- Facebook page and group not condensed
- Relatively few members and conversations on LinkedIn
- No easy way to subscribe to e-news
- Website utilized more as a blog

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
Audits for other IABC chapters in the U.S. found that more successful chapters (Minnesota, Houston, DC Metro) had more opportunities for networking and conversation as well as events specific to niche groups and current topics. Other chapters also have exclusive job banks for members and extensive use of social media to push A.B.C. accreditation.

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE
An audit of the IABC Richmond chapter’s structure showed that in addition to the current lack of officers, the chapter might consider a reorganization of duties. The VP of Programs appears to be a much bigger job than the other VP positions. The job duties of the VP of Membership and VP of Communication seem to overlap.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS
Audits of other local professional organizations (PRSA, AIGA, SHRM, AMA) revealed that they provide tangible benefits to members as well as career-related events and lectures. For instance, the AIGA provides discounts on Shutterstock and Adobe, while AMA offers member-only special interest groups. All local chapters of these organizations use social media and their websites to communicate a clear message and recruit new members.
Secondary Research

Competitive Audits

PRSA of Richmond (http://www.prsarichmond.org/)
- $175 per year.
- Dues include meals at monthly speaker programs, access to membership and media directories, member rates for local professional development and Virginia PR Awards programs and more.
- VCU has student chapter. (PRSSA)

Members of Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), have the access to a wide range of benefits that enhance knowledge of the public relations profession and provide resources to increase marketability. They network with colleagues and professionals, obtain access to internships and jobs around the country, and gain leadership experience.

Benefits: Educational Programming in which you are educated, fellowship and networking, recognition through award programs, accreditation preparation programs, public service, professional interest sections.

AMA of Richmond (http://amarichmond.org/)
- $225 first year, $245 renewal.
- $95 for college students.
- Membership includes a subscription to Marketing News, one additional publication of their choice, and membership in a Special Interest Group of their choice. Richmond Chapter membership dues of $50 will be added to this membership level for a total of $275 for the first year and only $245 for renewals.
- Student chapter at VCU.

Benefits: Gain vital information and find mentors (students), make connections, network, get industry news, online resources, online community, career management support, access to webcasts and podcasts, access to AMA library, discounts on national conferences, job postings,
Competitive Audits

**AAF – American Advertising Federation (www.aaf.org)**
- Connects members with the entire advertising community.
- Great opportunities for networking, education, and discounts.
- AAF educates members on the latest trends in advertising, marketing and government issues with a variety of annual programs. Attendance at the AAF National Conference, Joint Government Affairs Conference, Legislative Training Sessions and the Mosaic Forum provide members with the information necessary to stay current and competitive in the industry.
- No Richmond chapter.
- No VCU chapter.

**Benefits:** AAF membership allows members access to discounts on the tools that are needed to stay current and successful in the industry. Special discounts are available to AAF members for services ranging from subscriptions to trade publications to shipping to web and telecommunication services.

**ABC – Association of Business Communication (www.businesscommunication.org)**
- Sustaining Members ($100 US)
- Active members ($80 US)
- Electronic: ($60 US)
- Retired members ($30 US) are ABC members who have retired from the business communication profession.
- No chapter in Richmond.

**Benefits:** Members receive print copies, electronic access, and subscriptions to the Journal of Business Communication and Business Communication Quarterly. Members are split into geographical locations, network and meet valuable contacts, and have access to member-only portions of the ABC website.
Objectives & Tactics

Expand

a.1) To increase awareness by 10% among Richmond area communications professionals of the IABC Richmond chapter by May 31, 2012.

a.2) To increase social media contacts (likes, fans/followers) by 10% by May 30, 2012 date.

a.3) To increase inquiries about membership by 10% among college students by May 31, 2012 date.

a.4) To increase membership by 5% by May 30, 2012

a.5) To increase traffic to the IABC Richmond website by 10% by May 30, 2012.

a.1.1) To send 660 messages to LinkedIn accounts in the Richmond area related to communications by January 13, 2012.

a.2.1) To make LinkedIn group open and have more engaging current events topics in discussions.

a.2.2) To improve posts, discussions, and engagement on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn by January 13, 2012.

a.2.3) To create a Facebook contest by February 8, 2012 date.

a.3.1) To distribute IABC cards to students on university campuses by February 8, 2012.

a.3.2) Hold four student interest meetings on university campuses.

a.4.1) Email VCU professors links and info about IABC to send to students

a.5.1) To comment on Richmond area business and communication blogs with a link to IABC Richmond’s website by January 8, 2012.

a.5.2) To post messages on Craigslist with a link to IABC Richmond’s website by January 8, 2012.
**Objectives and Tactics**

Rebrand

b.1) To launch a new website for the Richmond IABC chapter by November 14, 2011.

b.2) To increase favorable opinions of the current IABC brand image among students and professionals by May 30, 2012.

b.3) To increase tangible benefits to members.

b.1.1) To create an easy way to sign up online for e-mails before becoming a member by February 8, 2012.

b.2.1) To e-mail VCU professors links and information about IABC Richmond to send to students by February 8, 2011.

b.2.2) To create a mentorship program for students by February 8, 2012.

b.3.1) To send e-news to current members telling them to check out the new face of IABC Richmond by December 12, 2011.
Objectives & Tactics

Increase member involvement

- **c.1)** To increase member attendance at IABC Richmond events by 10% by May 2012

- **c.2)** To increase favorable opinions of benefits offered among IABC Richmond members by 20% by May 2012.

- **c.3)** To find 1 sponsor for an event or activity by May 3, 2012

- **c.4)** To fill vacant officer positions by December 14, 2011.

  - **c.2.1)** To establish networking groups for members by November 14, 2011.

  - **c.3.1)** To create a sponsorship recruiting packages and sample letter by December 14, 2011.

  - **c.4.1)** To increase board activity to be more engaging/encouraging to members by January 2, 2012.
Key Publics

This campaign will target three key publics: business professionals, students, and current members of IABC Richmond who are inactive in the organization.

Business Professionals

This campaign will target business professionals of all experience levels who work in the greater Richmond area. These communicators hold jobs in various fields such as graphic design, public relations, marketing, human resources, and advertising. Business professionals are employed by large corporations, regional companies, agencies, publications, schools and universities, and nonprofit organizations. Specifically, communicators on LinkedIn who are interested in other trade organizations are an untapped source of potential members for IABC Richmond. These professionals are all eager to advance their careers and achieve professional goals through networking and continuing education.

The diversity of this audience could provide a wealth of knowledge and networking opportunities to IABC Richmond. Communicating to this public may increase membership and attendance at IABC Richmond events, which would have a positive impact on the chapter’s rebranding efforts.
Communications will also be targeted to undergraduate and graduate students at four different universities in the Richmond area. These universities include VCU, University of Richmond, VA Union, and VA State University in Petersburg.

*VCU* messages will be targeted to students majoring in public relations, strategic and creative advertising, human resources management, marketing, global marketing management, communication arts, graphic design, and visual communications.

*University of Richmond* majors will include rhetoric and communication studies, marketing, and business management, which includes an HR concentration.

*VA Union University* students majoring in mass communications, business management, and marketing will be targeted.

*VA State* communications will be geared to students majoring in mass communications, visual communication art and design, management, and marketing. Community colleges will not be included because they lack mass communication programs.

College students are continuously searching for networking opportunities as well as organizations that they can join at school. They want to find potential career opportunities and learn from business communicators who will provide connections to the professional world. By targeting messages to students, IABC Richmond can build a relationship with future professionals who may join the organization and remain members after graduation. This would increase membership at the professional level.
Key Publics

Current Inactive Members

IABC Richmond currently has over 70 members working in 39 companies throughout the Richmond area. These members work in fields such as public relations, marketing, and human resources. Most of the current members do not attend IABC meetings or participate in any other ways.

Current inactive members play a fundamental role in enhancing the brand of the IABC. It is critical to understand why current members have become inactive and develop communications that will increase participation. Current members already have knowledge of IABC Richmond. If they become active, they could help to increase awareness of the organization among business professionals. Without active participation from current members, it will be more difficult for IABC Richmond to attract new members.
The key theme of this campaign was developed to highlight IABC Richmond’s international network, a unique aspect of this organization that sets it apart from other professional organizations.

The second part of the theme emphasizes the importance of the local business communicators who belong to the organization and attend its events. These professionals are willing to help other IABC Richmond members through networking and knowledge sharing.
Key Messages

Business Professionals:

“Expand your network locally and globally.”

This message was chosen based on primary research results from the business professional survey and focus group. The majority of professionals indicated that networking was their primary motivation for joining trade organizations. Survey results also indicated that approximately half of professionals believe that international resources would be beneficial to them, while the other half prefer local connections. This suggests that striking a balance between local and global focus is important. Focus group results confirmed this when participants said that local issues are important, but international networking is growing in popularity.

By pitching this message to business professionals, IABC Richmond will send the signal that this organization can provide them with the benefits they need to be successful. IABC Richmond offers business professionals the opportunity to develop their career and achieve professional goals through networking. With over 70 members working in 39 companies throughout the Richmond area, IABC Richmond is an ideal organization for business communicators to expand their network of social and professional contacts. Business communicators who desire global connections can easily obtain them through IABC Richmond.
Students:

“Universal answers to local questions.”

The key message for students reflects the central theme by tying together the ideas of universal and local. However, this message mainly emphasizes obtaining answers and advice from experienced business communicators, a benefit that students said they would be willing to pay for. By pitching this message to students, IABC Richmond will send the signal that it is a friendly organization in which members can provide reliable, knowledgeable answers to student questions.

This message was chosen based on results from the student focus group. Participants said that the opportunity to learn from members would encourage them to join an organization like IABC Richmond. They also said that networking with business communicators and receiving helpful advice from them would make it worthwhile to pay dues.
Members:

“Share with and learn from the global network.”

By pitching this message to current members, IABC Richmond may encourage them to increase their participation in the organization. The sharing and transfer of knowledge is a key benefit of becoming a member of IABC Richmond. From seasoned professionals who have been in the communications industry for over 20 years to recent graduates experienced with technology and social media, members of IABC Richmond have diverse backgrounds. This diversity allows them to share knowledge and learn from each other. Receiving this message may remind members of the benefits that they can enjoy by attending meetings and participating more in the organization.
**Evaluation**

This campaign will be successful if the listed objectives are met by the cutoff dates assigned to them.

Awareness of the IABC Richmond chapter should increase by 10 percent among Richmond area business communication professionals who have LinkedIn accounts. The cutoff date for this objective is May 31, 2012. Success for this objective can be determined by conducting a survey among business professionals through their LinkedIn accounts.

The IABC board members should follow the same methodology and use the same survey created by the research team when completing the primary research portion of this campaign.

The additional survey questions unrelated to awareness will be useful in monitoring any changes in attitudes among business professionals over time.
Another objective was to increase social media contacts by 10 percent by May 30, 2012. IABC Richmond currently has 19 fans on its Facebook page and 283 followers on Twitter. This objective can be measured simply by looking at the home page of these accounts. The objective will be met if the number of Facebook fans and the number of Twitter followers each increase by 10 percent by the cutoff date.

Based on the objectives, traffic to IABC Richmond’s website should increase by 10 percent by May 30, 2012. The website monitors the number of people who visit the site, meaning that board members can measure this objective simply by checking this information.

Inquiries about membership from Richmond area college students and business professionals should increase by 10 percent by May 31, 2012. This can include inquiries at interest meetings and events as well as by e-mail and on the website. The number of IABC members should increase by 5 percent by May 30, 2012. If all of these objectives are met, then the campaign goal of expanding the organization will be achieved.

Other objectives include launching a new website by November 14, 2011 and increasing favorable opinions of IABC Richmond’s brand image by May 30, 2012. The first objective can simply be completed by using the new website for updates and redirecting all of the previous URLs so that they point to the new site. If these objectives are met, then IABC Richmond will achieve the campaign goal of rebranding the organization.
**Evaluation**

Google Insights displays search volume patterns across specific regions and can tell IABC Richmond how often people search for the organization.

Board members should:
- Go to http://www.google.com/insights/search/
- Type IABC in the search box
- Select United States from the drop down menu that says Worldwide
- Click the Search button

Here are screenshots of the resulting page. If the campaign is successful, IABC Richmond should appear in the Rising Searches box in the bottom right of the page.
## Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACEBOOK CONTEST</th>
<th>“Worst Business Tweets”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$49.00</td>
<td>For one Premium Contest</td>
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<td>$69.00/yr</td>
<td>Unlimited Premium Contests</td>
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| SURVEY MONKEY    | $25.00 /month Premium Survey Features |

| VISTAPRINT BUSINESS CARD | $10.00  | 500 Business Cards |
|                         | $9.00   | 250 Business Cards |

| GIFT CARDS FOR CONTEST & RECOGNITION REWARDS | $200.00/yr | Distributed throughout the Year |
In its current position, the IABC has an opportunity to rebrand itself as an all-encompassing professional organization with global networking opportunities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January 2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Launch communication campaign</td>
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<td>3. Increase board activity to be more engaging; encourage board members</td>
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<td>6. Make LinkedIn group open</td>
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<td>10. Send messages on LinkedIn</td>
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<td>11. Send messages on LinkedIn</td>
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<td>11. Send messages on LinkedIn</td>
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<td>12. Send messages on LinkedIn</td>
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<td>30. Send surveys to members regarding functionality</td>
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<td><strong>Sunday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>31. Create job posting page on website and invite IABC members</td>
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## Appendix 55

In its current position, the IABC has an opportunity to rebrand itself as an all-encompassing professional organization with global networking opportunities.

### February 2012

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March 2012

- Establish a competition and awards ceremony program
- Increase tangible benefits to members
Appendix 57

In its current position, the IABC has an opportunity to rebrand itself as an all-encompassing professional organization with global networking opportunities.
May 2012

- Find 1 sponsor for an event or activity
- Increase traffic to the new IABC Richmond website
- Increase membership by 10%
- Increase favorable opinions of the current IABC brand image among students and faculty
- Increase member attendance at IABC events
- Increase social media contacts
- Increase awareness by 10% among Richmond area communications professionals
- Increase inquiries about membership by 15% among VCU students
- Increase favorable opinions
IABC MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The program would begin with a meeting where young members would be paired up with older members. The one-on-one interaction will give them a more personal connection and make the new member more comfortable. While this program seems like it would be time-consuming and difficult to accomplish, it would really be as simple as exchanging contact information between a veteran and new member. They can exchange contact information however they would like, but the point of the mentorship program would be to give the younger member a trustworthy outlet that could help him with business situations that he may not know how to handle.

Example situations:
- How to ask for a raise at work
- Handling a firing
- The proper way to settle disagreements between employees

The mentor and mentee should preferably be from different business fields so the younger member will get advice and information from someone who has a different perspective of his or her problem. Since many new members may have never been part of an organization of this kind, this will also make it easier for them to transition into being a productive member of IABC Richmond.

This program will be beneficial to both IABC Richmond and the incoming new members. During the mentorship period, the mentees will become familiar with IABC Richmond and its members, improving their problem solving skills in the workplace. Once they complete the program, they will be able to mentor other new members that want to join the organization. It is important that IABC Richmond shows that it cares about its members and is not just looking to increase its members.
**CRAIGSLIST POSTINGS**

Craigslist can be used as an unconventional way to increase awareness of IABC Richmond and attract new members. The idea is to post ads under many different sections of Craigslist and find ways to tie those posts back to IABC Richmond’s key messages regardless of the subject heading they are listed under. In order to appeal to the key publics of students and business professionals, the posts should name local and global networking as well as receiving helpful advice as important benefits provided by IABC Richmond. The goal is to catch people’s eye regardless of whether they were looking to join an organization or not.

**Example:**

*Subject:* FOR SALE

*Subheading:* Free

*Post Title:* Free Business Advice!

*Post Information:* The Richmond chapter of IABC (International Association of Business Communicators) is looking for new communications professionals to be part of its organization and is willing to give business advice and networking opportunities to all of its new members for FREE. All you have to do is visit our website at iabcrichmond.info and click “Join/Renew”. Follow the steps listed and you will be on your way to multiple global networking opportunities!
Appendix 61

In its current position, the IABC has an opportunity to rebrand itself as an all-encompassing professional organization with global networking opportunities.

Free Business Advice (Richmond)

Date: 2011-11-28, 4:23PM EST
Reply to: sale-bacqe-2725211571@craigslist.org

The Richmond chapter of IABC (International Association of Business Communicators) is looking for new communications professionals to be part of its organization and is willing to give business advice and networking opportunities to all of its new members for FREE. All you have to do is visit our website at iabcrichmond.info and click "Join/Renew". Follow the steps listed and you will be on your way to multiple global networking opportunities!

- Location: Richmond
- It's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests

PostingID: 2725211571

Copyright © 2011 craigslist, inc.
FACEBOOK CONTEST FOR STUDENTS

Creating a Facebook contest targeted to students is a strategic tactic with multiple purposes. The contest and its promotion will increase awareness of IABC Richmond among students, generate interest among students, and increase traffic to the chapter’s social media accounts. An interesting contest in conjunction with useful, current content on the Facebook page could encourage students to connect with IABC Richmond on Twitter or LinkedIn, visit the chapter website, and possibly attend an interest meeting to learn more about the organization. In the best case, students may become interested enough to start a student chapter, increasing student membership in the organization.

The proposed contest is called “Worst Business Tweet” and asks students to write the worst imaginable tweet that any business could post on its Twitter account. An example is “@Larry should make sure his pants are zipped for the next meeting.” This type of contest would be quick and easy for students, sparking their imagination. However, in order to encourage them to enter the contest, IABC Richmond must provide an incentive in the form of a prize. The prize must be good enough to make it worthwhile for students to make the effort to enter a contest. We suggest offering a $25 gift card for Starbucks or another popular business. The contest should also have a cutoff date. After the cutoff date, IABC Richmond can judge the entries and select a winner. One question in the contest should ask the students for an e-mail address so that IABC Richmond can contact the winner. E-mail the winner and ask him or her for a mailing address where the gift card can be sent. Select another winner if the first does not answer in a week.

All contests should abide by Facebook’s Promotions Guidelines. The most notable regulation is that all contests must be located on a tab. Posting a contest to the Facebook wall is a violation of the Promotions Guidelines for which an account can be deleted. This is why it is necessary to include a question that asks for respondents’ e-mail addresses. IABC Richmond must release Facebook from any responsibility for the content of the contest, disclose that respondents are providing information to IABC Richmond and not to Facebook, and acknowledge that Facebook has nothing to do with the contest.

To reach the students, IABC Richmond should send an e-mail pitch to communication professors at various universities in the greater Richmond area. This pitch should provide information about the organization, ask professors to spread the word to their students, and include the e-mail message that IABC Richmond wants to send to students. Professors can either forward or copy and paste the message into a separate e-mail to send to students. A list of professors from VCU, University of Richmond, VA Union University and VA State University. This list is divided by university and subject.
Appendix 63

FACEBOOK PROMOTIONS GUIDELINES
Date of Last Revision: May 11, 2011
These Promotion Guidelines, along with the Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, the Ad Guidelines, the Platform Policies and all other applicable Facebook policies, govern your communication about or administration of any contest, competition, sweepstakes or other similar offering (each, a promotion) using Facebook. If you use Facebook to communicate about or administer a promotion, you are responsible for the lawful operation of that promotion, including the official rules, offer terms and eligibility requirements (e.g., age and residency restrictions), and compliance with regulations governing the promotion and all prizes offered in connection with the promotion.

1. Promotions on Facebook must be administered within Apps on Facebook.com, either on a Canvas Page or an app on a Page Tab.
2. Promotions on Facebook must include the following:
   a. A complete release of Facebook by each entrant or participant.
   b. Acknowledgment that the promotion is in no way sponsored, endorsed or administered by, or associated with, Facebook.
   c. Disclosure that the participant is providing information to [disclose recipient(s) of information] and not to Facebook.
3. You must not use Facebook features or functionality as a promotion’s registration or entry mechanism. For example, the act of liking a Page or checking in to a Place cannot automatically register or enter a promotion participant.
4. You must not condition registration or entry upon the user taking any action using any Facebook features or functionality other than liking a Page, checking in to a Place, or connecting to your app. For example, you must not condition registration or entry upon the user liking a Wall post, or commenting or uploading a photo on a Wall.
5. You must not use Facebook features or functionality, such as the Like button, as a voting mechanism for a promotion.
6. You must not notify winners through Facebook, such as through Facebook messages, chat, or posts on profiles (timelines) or Pages.
7. Ads may not imply a Facebook endorsement or partnership of any kind. Ads linking to Facebook branded content (including Pages, groups, events, or Connect sites) may make limited reference to “Facebook” in ad text for the purpose of (1) fulfilling your obligations under Section 2 and (2) clarifying the destination of the ad. All other ads and landing pages may not use our copyrights or trademarks (including Facebook, the Facebook and F Logos, FB, Face, Poke, Book, and Wall) or any confusingly similar marks, except as expressly permitted by our Brand Usage Guidelines or with our prior written permission.
CREATE NETWORKING GROUPS FOR MEMBERS

The creation of networking groups is a successful practice that has been implemented by other IABC chapters including IABC Minnesota, the 2011 Chapter of the Year. These chapters place members of similar experience levels or professions together in what are called networking groups or strategic interest groups. The chapters hold monthly meetings and social events for all of the members, then provide several smaller events open only to a specific networking group. For example, IABC Minnesota holds New Professional Events to discuss best practices with communication professionals that have less than five years of experience.

The purpose of the networking groups is to target activities and messages to a specific group of members that may find the messages more useful than others would. For example, senior professionals with 15 years of experience may not be interested in hearing about basic best practices. Holding exclusive events and targeting messages to a niche audience will increase benefits offered to members, which may lead to an increase in member attendance.

IABC Richmond should hold quarterly Welcome Events for new members and those deciding whether to join. During these events, speakers can discuss the benefits of joining and answer audience questions. IABC Richmond should develop a New Communicators Group for professionals with less than five years of experience as well as a Senior Communicators Group for professionals with 15 or more years of experience.

The Senior Communicators Group would be similar to IABC Minnesota’s Mastermind Groups and IABC DC Metro’s Senior Communicators Council. In these chapters, about 6-8 members with 15 or more years of experience meet to brainstorm ideas, discuss career-related topics, and provide career support for each other. This provides seasoned professionals with the opportunity to obtain advice from peers. Rather than organizing an event for this group, the IABC chapters connect the senior members with each other and allow them to decide when to meet on their own. IABC Richmond should follow this model for the Senior Communicators Group.

The IABC chapters of Minnesota, DC Metro, and Houston all hold events open only to independent practitioners. IABC Richmond could create a Freelance Group in which independent practitioners could meet monthly to discuss finances, insurance, tips on marketing strategies, and client care. Freelancers share common challenges, and a networking group created specifically for them would provide them with the opportunity to assist one another.
HOLD INTEREST MEETINGS ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES TO START A STUDENT IABC CHAPTER

The purpose of holding an interest meeting is to generate enthusiasm for starting a student chapter of the IABC that will be affiliated with IABC Richmond. One interest meeting is needed on each of the four university campuses in the Greater Richmond area so that it will be convenient for students to attend. These universities are VCU, University of Richmond, VA Union University, and VA State University.

At least two members of the IABC Richmond board should be present to talk about the organization, its mission, and the benefits that students will gain by joining the organization. The board members should stress the key messages created for students, which are learning from professionals and having their voices heard. Board members should discuss networking opportunities, telling the students that business communication professionals who belong to the organization will be glad to answer any questions they may have.

During the focus group for business professionals, former IABC member Anne Paschke described IABC Richmond as an intimate group. She said that it is easier for members of IABC Richmond to develop relationships with each other than it is for members of other trade organizations to develop relationships because the meetings of other organizations are more impersonal. The board members could share this observation with students, using it to emphasize the idea that students’ voices will be heard in IABC Richmond as opposed to getting lost in the shuffle of other trade organizations. This would be the ideal time to explain the modified mentorship program in which students are paired with a business professional who can answer his or her questions related to tips for landing a job, best practices, or how to deal with a tense work situation. Instead of requiring in-person meetings, this program is primarily based on e-mail communication.

At the interest meeting, handouts with information on an upcoming IABC Richmond event as well as instructions on how to start a student chapter should be distributed to students.