

THE *Association Manager*

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter for Organization Leaders

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Is your website "resource-rich?"

By: Christopher T. Ruditys, CEO



In recent years, some have argued that the impact of the internet on associations as the vehicle for distributing information and resources will result in declining association memberships. With almost effortless ability to gather free information on digital airwaves, people may believe that seeking this information directly from associations may decline.

Of course, people in the association management profession will strongly debate this argument, especially in the face of the technological enhancements we see today that allow associations to operate the way they do. More importantly, we cannot dismiss the importance of an association's website on distributing facts to its members as well as to the public. In fact, on the news, many of the statistics quoted about an issue will typically come from an association.

If your association has a "resource-rich" website, maybe it is time to consider adding a "Member's Only" section. The question you need to ask yourself is, "How do I determine if my website is resource-rich?"

Any intellectual property, such as statistics, forms, monthly newsletters, membership directories, and so on, is a huge resource that you provide to your members. If these "rich" resources are available for free at your website, please consider why a potential member would join your association when it is already providing these services for free via the internet. This is not to say that you shouldn't keep this month's issue available for public viewing, because samples of your resources demonstrate why a prospective member should join your association. Once you interest the public with a sample of the resources you can supply, make sure you note that a full archive of this and other resources is available in the "Member's Only" section.

However, do not forget the importance of branding and significance of the recognition that is received by issuing statistics and

other industry information to the media and public. If a newspaper is quoting your association, for example, it builds recognition among the community and ultimately results in potential membership growth. Also, this recognition certainly adds respect for your association and for the industry. If your association does produce this type of data, be sure to issue it via press releases and/or reports to local and/or national media outlets. With two staff people who specialize in public relations, WAM, LLC is very conscience of this marketing tool.

Take a step back with your board and professional staff (if applicable) and formulate a strategy for your website. If additional website development (such as a "Member's Only" section) will occur in 2005, be sure to plan ahead for it in your 2005 budget. Please visit the "ASK WAM" section of this newsletter where an association leader asks WAM, LLC for website marketing tips.

Wisconsin Association Management, LLC Provides Its Associations These Comprehensive Services:

- Administrative & Executive Management
- Database Management
- Event Planning (Meetings, Programs, Tradeshows)
- Financial Management
- Fundraising
- Membership Recruitment & Retention
- Publications & Communications Management
- Government & Public Relations
- Web Site Development & Site Maintenance

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About Wisconsin Association Management, LLC

WAM, LLC provides superior administrative and executive services to non profit associations seeking to take their organization to the next level. With over 29 years of combined association management experience, WAM, LLC will work with your Board of Directors, committees and membership to implement programs and services, as well as alleviate the day-to-day administrative tasks that must occur for your group to be successful. We believe in **implementation**. As our satisfied clients say, "Put the administrative work in the hands of the experts and do what you do best."

Providing Innovative Management Solutions for these Associations:



"Just wanted to let you know how happy I am with the success of the conference and how pleased I am with all of you. Great job!"

-James Emden, WSA President, Badger Display Signs Inc.

"Great job on the trade show. WAM continues to provide our organization with professional courteous service which certainly has contributed to our success."

-Rich Stopczynski, CAI Treasurer

WCREW Showcase Awards Huge Success

Since assuming management of WCREW, its membership has grown by 60% in 2003 and 25% so far in 2004. Wisconsin Commercial Real Estate Women (WCREW) held their 4th annual Real Estate Development Showcase Awards Ceremony on Thursday October 21st at the Country Inn in Waukesha, honoring outstanding real estate development/redevelopment projects in Wisconsin based on merits that include job creation, economic development, creative use or reuse of space, community impact, architectural merit, minority and cultural contributions, and a project's success in overcoming significant obstacles such as but not limited to environmental contamination or severe economic constraints.

This year a record number of projects were nominated via a statewide call for nominations (32 total). Nominees, winners, WCREW members and community leaders were present at the awards ceremony, with guest attendance approximated at over 300. LaSalle Bank and the Business Journal were sponsors of the event, and a portion of ticket proceeds has been allocated by WCREW for donations to The Cathedral Center and Milwaukee Urban Gardens.



The 2004 Real Estate Development Showcase Awards Ceremony

WAM, LLC Welcomes Two New Clients

Leaders have been recognizing WAM, LLC as one of the leading association management companies in Wisconsin and the country.

We are pleased to welcome two new clients to our growing family of non-profit associations: ASHRAE and My Home, Your Home.

About ASHRAE

Wisconsin Chapter of ASHRAE®



ASHRAE advances the arts and sciences of heating, ventilation, air conditioning, refrigeration and related human factors to serve the evolving needs of the public and ASHRAE members. The Wisconsin Chapter of ASHRAE has been a thriving Association for many years, but recently decided to hire WAM, LLC as a consultant to produce its monthly newsletter, website maintenance, and database maintenance. While the volunteers have only partially outsourced their administrative functions, they have done so in order to focus their time and energy on more strategic issues for their Organization, as well as to convey a more professional appearance to its members and the community.

About My Home, Your Home



My Home, Your Home (MHYH) is a non-profit Social Service agency that opened its first receiving home doors in 1993 with a mission to keep siblings together while in transition to out-of-home care. The Organization is constantly looking for new ventures that allow it to focus on the unmet

needs of youth and young adults. In October, My Home, Your Home "outsourced" a huge initiative fundraiser and banquet to WAM, LLC for May 2005. We are proud to be affiliated with such an important community Organization, and look forward to making an impact for the youth of Wisconsin. **If your Association would like to learn more about and/or participate in this important banquet fundraising program, please contact WAM, LLC at (414) 271-9456.**

ASK WAM:

Leader's Forum

Questions by association leaders, Responses by WAM, LLC staff

If you have a question for the next newsletter, please e-mail it to info@wamllc.net.

Question: Dear WAM: It seems like our association spent thousands of dollars on our new website and no one goes to it! Can you please offer some tips for increasing traffic to our website?

Answer: This is a very extensive topic and there are professionals that specialize in this area. However, there is much that you can do on your own that will increase traffic to your website. Most importantly, your members must be familiar with your website. Constantly provide your website's URL in all publications and broadcast e-mails that are distributed to the membership.

Another important concept is keywords because they are typically what someone will search for. Put yourself in the searcher's shoes and think about what you would search for that would ultimately lead you to your association's website. To find new members, it is important that your association ranks high in relevant search results.

Keywords can be incorporated into your domain name. For example, when the Wisconsin Self Storage Association hired WAM, LLC, their domain name was <http://www.wi-ssa.org>. We immediately suggested that they switch domain names to <http://www.wiselfstorage.org>. The end result has been a significant increase in the overall traffic to their website.

Also, try to link your website with other relevant websites. Encourage each member of your association to link their website to your association's website. This helps the search engines find your website, and also helps more people visit your website after being at the referrer's website.

Other notes:

- Most associations have the suffix .ORG or .COM.
- The title of your webpage should be 5-10 descriptive words, not to exceed 100 characters.
- Singular and plural are not the same. The internet is very exact (i.e. accessory vs. accessories).
- Do not start your keywords with capitals. (MSN is case sensitive.)

Although this response discussed the importance of keywords, the content of each page of your website is more important. Be sure to use many keywords (towards the top of the page) that will help the search engine map out your website. A site map can also be particularly helpful in that regard.

Other concepts not discussed here include: directories, banner ads, email marketing, pay-per-clicks, online newsletter articles.

Question: Dear WAM: Our association does not actively lobby for our industry (mostly for cost reasons), but does have a large interest in monitoring legislative issues that may occur in specific municipalities throughout Wisconsin so that our members may deal with them on a case by case basis. Aside from monitoring larger cities like Milwaukee, Madison and Green Bay, how would you recommend that we monitor smaller communities?

Answer: We're really glad you asked this question because there is certainly a solution to your problem. Wisconsin Sign Association, one of our clients, subscribes to a newspaper clipping service through the Wisconsin Newspaper Association (WNA). Essentially, they read every newspaper printed in the state, clip out a keyword (company, its subsidiaries, plant location, special key words, and what the company or organization makes or does), and mails us the article to report to our members. For more information, e-mail Beth at beth@wnanews.com or call (608)-238-7171.



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Providing Innovative Management Solutions for Associations

For past issues of *The Association Manager*, please visit . . .
<http://www.wamllc.net/newsletter.html>.

No person can be a great leader unless he takes genuine joy in the successes of those under him. ~ Anonymous

A Friendly Reminder from WAM: IT'S BUDGET TIME!

With fall wrapping up and the weather getting colder by the day, it can sometimes be easy to overlook some of the vital functions that must occur for next year: your association's 2005 budget. Developing and implementing the annual budget is one of the most important functions of an association, yet many boards of directors do not take advantage of the full potential of this essential tool. At WAM, LLC, we believe the budget is a roadmap for the following year, and helps the Organization plan for physical growth and advancement within a community.

If your Organization has a strategic plan in place, it is important to think of the budget as the starting place for the implementation of the plan that will begin to unfold in the coming year. If it doesn't, it is okay to make the budget based on anticipated changes and make adjustments later.

New Overtime Rules Now in Effect

Source: *Association Management*, October 2004

The nation's new Overtime Security Rules took effect last month. The rules call for workers paid less than \$23,660 per year or \$455 per week to be automatically guaranteed overtime regardless of their titles or duties. Under the previous regulations, only workers earning less than \$8,060 annually were guaranteed overtime. A number of salaried workers earning above the \$23,660 threshold will also gain the right to overtime under the new rules. These salaried workers include police officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, nurses, and manual laborers such as construction workers and carpenters. Salaried workers who fall between \$23,660 and \$100,000 a year may lose overtime benefits, however. Their eligibility is now assessed by a test that determines whether or not a worker can be classified as a professional.

The Association Manager is published bi-monthly by Wisconsin Association Management, LLC to educate association leaders about running an effective non profit association. For more information about the comprehensive set of administrative services we provide to our associations, please visit us on the web at <http://www.wamllc.net>.