



Report to the IAM Executive Committee

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Introduction

Much of the last four months has been spent immersed in learning about the Industry and the IAM membership, and how we communicate with them.

The work to be done is clear, laid out on a road map drawn from the information gathered in the 2009 Member Survey Results. The membership told us that the Directory is IAM's most valuable publication. They read *The Portal*, the e-newsletters, and the e-blasts, and go to the website regularly. The members said we're giving them good information in the right amount and at the right intervals. But they also told us they would like more, and told us specifically what that additional information should be. And that's where the road map starts.

Communications & Member Engagement

In broad strokes, we have begun evaluating all methods of communicating with the members, examining the relevancy of the product or the method, and determining how to enhance or recreate it to serve the members better. We are also developing brand guidelines and consistency standards.

- With Joyce Dexter, *The Portal* editor, we have developed a style sheet which will ensure consistency in the editorial style of the magazine, and in the look and feel.
- We are in the process of developing consistency among the staff in terms of internal and external documents, including simple but important items such as margins, logo placement, and the formatting of our e-mail signature blocks.
- I am developing an editorial Style Guide that will become an IAM reference. It sets out grammar and punctuation guidelines, some of the writing techniques and preferences that reflect IAM's particular tone, style, and format, as well as facts and quotes we may use. It will help us speak with one clear voice when describing the Association, our membership, and our vision.
- Coming up, we will create mini-marketing plans for IAM's key programs and services. For programs such as the RPP and Shippers Guides, a mini-marketing plan could be as simple as developing a feature and benefit fact sheet; target-audience messages; inexpensive ads for publications; and a communications calendar of when and where the messages appear.

Now, to specific areas of focus.

Publications & Electronic Communications

1. *The Portal* – Members have told us they enjoy *The Portal* and find it informative. On average, we mail 2,300 copies per issue. But when probed in a survey question, the members stated they would like to read more about what other members are doing, and receive a greater amount of business information such as foreign customs regulations and new technology for the Industry.

In response, Joyce Dexter interviewed 11 members at the Annual Meeting, and we plan on profiling at least one member per issue. The issue currently on press, Jan/Feb, contains two profiles of long-time members and one profile of a new member company in Libya. The issue's feature story highlights the charitable work that our members do during the year. Twenty-eight member companies responded to the call for content and are featured in *The Portal's* focus article.

We will continue to search out content relevant to the members and have mapped out an editorial calendar for 2010; we have also begun brainstorming issue topics for 2011. We will publish this calendar in the March/April issue to allow us to begin soliciting member input and conducting topic research much earlier than in the past. Coming up are issues focused on a region—Central and South America and the Caribbean in March/April—and on technology.

With the current issue, we introduced work by two freelance writers, and you'll see that the feature story consists of the member content woven together in a one story, organized by type of charitable work and broken up by small sub-headlines. We have adjusted margins to make the text easier to read, and will likely make more small, important design changes as the year goes on, leading to consideration of a full redesign in the near future.

2. *E-Publications* – IAM e-publications include the e-Portal, e-Gov/Mil, and e-Blast. The e-Portal and e-Gov/Mil are each sent to members twice a month; as a result, IAM effectively touches members at least once a week with Industry news and government/military updates. In addressing members' requests, we are disseminating more information about member companies' expanding operations and changing personnel, and additional information on transport issues. When photos are available, we add them as appropriate.

E-Blasts are sent on an as-needed basis. The most recent communications have been on the Importer Security Filing (ISF) and its effective date, and a message about our member company in Haiti.

We have standardized the layout of these electronic communications, but we are limited in our ability to create visually appealing newsletter templates by our current e-mail software. As part of our discussions with consulting firm DelCor Technology Solutions, Inc., (see below), we will be seeking a new e-mail tool that will give us greater flexibility in the customization of IAM e-publications and the targeting of e-communications to discrete segments of the IAM membership.

Website(s)

IAM currently maintains five websites: for the Association (iamovers.org), International Shippers Association (isaship.org), AFW Scholarship Fund (afwscholarship.org), YP-35 (yp-35.org), and the

Annual Meeting (iammeetings.org). The five websites are hosted on a server at Blackburn Media, a local web-development company.

With the exception of the Annual Meeting site, all the websites were designed a number of years ago. Their age and manner of construction make them difficult to modernize, and we are limited in the types and scope of changes we can make. Therefore, IAM is planning a website redesign, concurrent with the choice of an Association Management System (AMS), to enhance design, management, functionality, flexibility, and user experience.

Such improvements will allow us to further leverage the IAM website in member communications, introducing features such as blogs, member forum, a revitalized job board, e-commerce, member's upload of photos or files for advertisements, webinars, and online registrations (this last item would be in conjunction with a new AMS system).

The timeline for bringing a new IAM website online is likely 3 to 6 months; enhancements to the other four websites would come after.

Reclassification of Membership Categories

The reclassification of the membership categories is arguably the biggest change in the Association's history, and thus merits the most care in its marketing to the members. Because the McKinley Marketing group gained in-depth knowledge of the Association and its membership during the Member Needs Survey, they have been contracted to provide assistance in creating the messages regarding the reclassification.

These messages will be carefully crafted to not just list the features of becoming a Governing or Core member; they will explain the benefits in terms of what a member company could expect to gain *as a positive outcome for their business* by electing to join a particular membership category. The major objective is to encourage Core Members to upgrade their memberships to Governing Member status. A secondary objective is the development of messages for prospective members that help them better understand the value of membership with IAM, and the benefits offered within each category.

McKinley's draft schedule for developing the marketing plan is attached; the target date for the completed plan is March 3, 2010.

New Association Management System (AMS)

Following the Executive Committee's approval at the June 2009 meeting in Orlando, Florida, IAM contracted with DelCor Technology Solutions, Inc., to initiate a search for an Association Management System that would meet IAM's needs and requirements.

The first phase of the project – conducting meetings over the course of two days with IAM staff functional groups (Finance, Membership, Programs, and Communications) – was completed on January 28. The objective of these meetings was discovery: to establish the current processes of the organization and pinpoint desired requirements of an AMS.

DelCor will use those requirements to develop criteria against which to measure possible vendors. They will then create a solicitation document that sets out IAM's requirements and arrange for

product demonstrations. (Project timeline is attached.) Taking into account the current fiscal year end date of June 30, IAM's desire to align the fiscal year with the calendar year, and on advice of IAM's auditor, expected roll-out of a new system is slated for January 2011.

The expectation, based on IAM's requirements and DelCor's knowledge of the vendor pool, is that the new system will facilitate the integration of a financial management system, member database, member communication software, and IAM's website. A chief desired result will be a system that ties all actions and transactions to one company record, allowing maximum data mining for member reports and communications.

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