



The Center for Public Issues Education
IN AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Communications Materials Audit

prepared for

Florida Pest Management Association, Inc.

by

Center for Public Issues Education

in Agriculture and Natural Resources

Communications Materials Audit

Background

A comprehensive Communications Audit—an in-depth analysis of all communications vehicles—allows an organization to determine how it can best provide the information needed by its members. The findings of a comprehensive Communications Audit enable an organization to eliminate superfluous vehicles—streamlining communication with members without compromising efficiency and reach—redesigning the communication vehicles around the needs of the membership for which it exists to support and encourage.

The PIE Center team met on April 5 and conducted a thorough audit of the Florida Pest Management Association (FPMA) communications materials. FPMA provided the PIE Center team with access to the following materials to review:

Areas of current association involvement:

http://www.flpma.org/pdf_files/FPMA%20Working%20for%20You%202011.pdf

Preferred providers offering member discounts:

http://www.flpma.org/pdf_files/FPMA%20is%20Your%20Business%20Partner%202011.pdf

Membership types and dues levels:

http://www.flpma.org/membership_types.htm

Mission statement and membership services:

http://www.flpma.org/about_us.htm

Attached is the current issue of the biweekly eFlash issue and the link to archived issues:

http://www.flpma.org/eflash_archive.htm

Issues of PCO magazine, inserted into industry trade publication Florida Pest Pro Magazine and reaching all 10,000 companies and certified operators, are archived here:

http://www.flpma.org/pco_archive.htm

FPMA maintains a Facebook Fan page (210 current daily users) and a Twitter page (@FLPestMgmtAssoc, which has 46 followers), which receives posts on an almost daily basis.

Copies of association bylaws and information on association structure and governance were also reviewed.

For this audit, the PIE Center Team had the following comments, questions, and recommendations:

1. In reference to FPMA's bylaws:
 - Consider re-visiting the association's mission statement, possibly during a facilitated strategic planning session. Also, consider writing and publishing a vision statement, which states how FPMA "envisioned itself" in the future.
 - Consider reducing the number of categories (types) of membership available. Previous research with other organizations showed that members were too confused when more than five options were offered.
2. In reference to FPMA's website:
 - Who is the website designer? What is their role (i.e. just design or design and maintain)? Who does website maintenance? Who decides what information goes on website?
 - How do members get log-in information? When members log-in, what do they have access to that others visiting the website do not have access to?
 - Who is your target audience for website visitors? General public/consumers or pest control companies/members? If both, consider a separate tab for consumer information.
 - Consider re-organizing all content on the site in order to make it more streamlined. Also, consider what information needs to be on the site and accessible to members versus non-members.
 - Reduce the use of non-clickable text on the home page, as it can be confusing for visitors.
 - Consider moving the ad (that is currently toward the top right) to the bottom of the page.
 - Consider making the text one column, rather than three-column. Research shows that visitors want to see all that they need to see at first glance, so reducing the amount of text and scrolling will enhance efficiency.
 - The pest control company locator is a nice feature, but is too far down on the page and gets lost in the other text.
 - Consider enlarging the font size, as the smaller font is sometimes hard to read and would be challenging for visually-impaired visitors.
 - Also, consider changing the font colors as the green headlines are not a recommended color for use on web pages.



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- Consider an online form, where online payment for membership (such as a PayPal account) can be accepted. Previous work done for another Florida membership organization increased their membership by 20% in just four months by adding this feature to their website.
 - Although a Facebook link is included on the page, it only takes visitors to the Facebook home log-in page, not to the FPMA Facebook page. Consider adding the “F” and “T” icons linked to FPMA’s social media pages.
 - Other websites to reference as a good template: <http://www.floridacattlemen.org/>, <http://www.sunbeltexpo.com/>, <http://www.flfwa.com/>
3. In reference to FPMA’s social media use:
- The PIE Center team agreed that FPMA is doing a good job with using social media. Previous social media research that we’ve done determined that followers would like to see 1-2 posts per day with no more than 7-10 posts per week. Also, followers want the information to be relevant. After reviewing both FPMA’s Facebook page and Twitter feed, we found all posts to be appropriate and on-target.
 - Suggestions would include adding an interactive component, such as occasionally asking a question to get follower feedback and to encourage engagement. Remember, social media can be used as a two-way communication tool. A good example of this is Florida’s Natural OJ: <http://www.facebook.com/?sk=lf#!/FloridasNatural>
4. In reference to FMPA’s activities and other membership services/benefits:
- Although the PIE Center team felt like legislative and educational activities were right on-target, we will add questions to the upcoming online survey being developed to specifically ask the survey’s target audience about each of these categories.
 - Consider “re-branding” FPMA, such as creating a fresh, new, consistent look via logo, stationary, website, general membership brochure.

In the past, the PIE Center has been successful at helping organizations facilitate the development of a new strategic plan and at working with the organization’s in-house or contracted graphic designers and web designers to facilitate the updating of communications materials. Please let us know if you are interested in assistance with either of these. Obviously, once survey distribution and data analysis are completed, PIE Center staff can meet with FPMA staff and board members to discuss recommendations from the research and to determine next steps.

If you have questions, or need any further information about PIE Center services or this communications materials audit, please contact Dr. Tracy Irani at 352-273-2588 or irani@ufl.edu or Becky Raulerson at 352-273-3139 or beckyraulerson@ufl.edu.

