FIRST STEP RESOURCE · SECTION 6

Association *in Balance*

Association Visibility Action Plan

How to be found by the people who need you most

If the people who would most benefit from your association have never heard of it, you do not have a marketing problem. You have a visibility problem. They are not the same thing, and the fix is simpler than you think.

For boards, executive directors, and volunteer leaders · **Be findable. Then be worth finding.**

THE VISIBILITY GAP

Marketing to members is not the same as being visible

Most associations communicate constantly. Newsletters go out, social posts are published, event emails are sent. But almost all of that communication goes to people who are already members. It does nothing for the practitioner in your field who has never heard of you, is not following you, and is not on your list yet. Visibility is about being found by people who are not looking for you yet.

The genius moment in this plan

Your members are your best visibility asset, and most associations never activate them. One member who mentions your association in a conference presentation, tags you in a LinkedIn post, or tells a colleague about a resource they got from you reaches more of the right people than a month of your own social posts. You do not need a bigger audience. You need your current audience to talk.

Three visibility channels, ranked by speed

FASTEST

Member word of mouth

Ask your most engaged members to do one visible thing: share a resource, mention the association in their bio, refer one colleague. Give them something specific and easy to share and most of them will do it.

STEADY BUILDER

Content your industry actually searches for

One blog post, one FAQ, one resource that answers a question people in your field are already typing into Google. Not a newsletter. Not a member update. Something a non-member would find useful and find you through.

LONGER BUILD

Presence where your industry gathers

Speaking at events your members attend. Being quoted in industry publications. Showing up in the places where your ideal member already is, before they know they need you.

YOUR FIRST STEP

The visibility audit: can they find you?

Before you build any new visibility strategy, find out what someone would actually find if they went looking for you right now. Most associations are surprised by how little comes up.

Do this right now

- [ ] Open a browser you are not logged into. Search your association name. What shows up on page one?
- [ ] Search the main topic or credential your members care about. Does your association appear anywhere on the first page?
- [ ] Search "association for [your industry]" or "membership for [your profession]." Are you findable by someone who does not know your name yet?
- [ ] Look at your last five social posts. How many were directed at non-members versus existing members?
- [ ] Ask one member: "How would you describe our association to a colleague who has never heard of us?" Write down exactly what they say.

What you found when you searched

Be honest. This is your baseline.

The one channel you will activate first

Member word of mouth, searchable content, or industry presence. Pick one. Start there.

The specific thing you will do in the next 30 days

Not a strategy. One action. One post, one ask, one article, one conversation.

Visible to your members but invisible to everyone else?

Visibility is one of six dimensions that determine whether an association stays in balance and keeps growing. If people who need you cannot find you, let's talk about where to start.

Schedule a Complimentary Ecosystem Check-Up

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