



Introduction

The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Edmonton chapter serves the city of Edmonton and area. The chapter’s membership is large in number (nearly 500) and diverse in discipline, touching all aspects of communications -- from government relations to marketing, and everything in between. There are two similar professional associations in the Edmonton area, the Advertising Club of Edmonton (ACE) and the Edmonton chapter of the Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS).

Stemming from IABC’s overall #1720 strategy, IABC Edmonton’s 2018/19 overall strategic focuses were to:

- Support IABC Edmonton members in their development at every stage of their careers.
- Continue to build the credibility for IABC and the valuable roles communicators play in their organizations.
- Demonstrate the added value of being part of a global network, while building on the strength of the local community.
- Increasing awareness of the international connections enabled through IABC and its programs.
- Aligning all activities by working collaboratively and leverage resources and efforts to enhance outcomes.
- Continue effective board governance and maintenance.

Initially launched in 2015, we see IABC Edmonton’s Mentorship program as a significant driver for several of the above strategies. We manage this program as a portfolio under the Director of Mentorship who sits on our Programming team led by the Senior Director of Programming.

As we entered into our 2018/19 board year, a number of factors for the program were proving to be difficult to manage and weren’t providing the value we wanted to be able to deliver for our members. Some of these factors included:

- Group format that had teams work on special projects rather than one on one mentor/mentee discussions.
- Project work events were dominated by students, with less than desirable participation from senior communicators.
- Non-member participation was permitted, leading to more interest from mentees seeking out job prospects as opposed to meaningful career discussions.

For the 2018/19 board year, IABC Edmonton recruited a new Director of Membership (Elizabeth Tadman-Kickham) who came with previous experience managing a mentorship program in a municipal government environment. Under her leadership, we refreshed our mentorship program to return to the one-to-one mentor/mentee relationship format.

Goals & Objectives

Goals	Objectives
Create a program that builds strong, meaningful relationships between mentors and mentees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract and retain 25 mentee applicants from a mix of career levels -- students, junior and mid-level IABC members. • Attract and retain 20 mentor applicants representing a mix of senior and mid-level IABC members.
Engage IABC Edmonton members, providing professional development opportunities seen as a true value of membership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve 80% participant satisfaction rate in the year-end mentorship evaluation survey.



Implementation

Strategies / activities

The Mentorship program ran throughout the course of the 2018/19 board year from November 2018 until June 2019.

To deliver on the goals and objectives, and the overall chapter strategies, we worked through the following strategies and supporting activities:

Goal/Strategy	Supporting activities
Reformat the Mentorship Program to return to meaningful one-on-one mentorship relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduce new application process to ensure the quality of participation and matches can be better met. ● Favour IABC members however, if senior communicators are not current members want to participate as mentors, they will be accepted. Mentees must be current IABC members to participate. ● Mid-level communicators will be utilized as Mentors for student members who apply. Senior communicators will be utilized as Mentors for junior or mid-level communicators who apply as Mentees. ● Matches complete a Mentorship Agreement to determine goals for the relationship, potential activities and preferred communications methods.
Engage IABC Edmonton members, providing professional development opportunities seen as a true value of membership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hold four events free for mentorship participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kick off ○ PD- style session with speaker ○ Capital Awards Boot Camp (IABC Edmonton’s communication awards) ○ Year-end wrap up party
Recruit high-quality program applicants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Leverage IABC Edmonton communication channels (website, social media, e-newsletter) to build awareness. ● Leverage IABC Edmonton board of directors both as mentors / mentees, and to connect with their personal networks for program promotion. ● Focus on IABC members, primarily.
Director of Mentorship maintains regular contact with program participants to continually ensure program satisfaction and awareness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Once matches made, introduce matches personally via email. ● Execute monthly check-ins with matches to ensure match is meeting expectations. ● Distribute monthly email newsletter to program participants to highlight IABC Edmonton events and resources matches can use to have meaningful conversations / interactions.
Incentivize program for mentors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mentors to receive incentives for participating in the program including discounted PD sessions and Capital Awards tickets, PD credits for SCMP/CMP Certification, and a thank you gift at the end of the program.

Execution

The execution of the Mentorship Program largely went as planned. Below are detailed highlights of a few elements from the 2018/19 program execution:

- **Kick-off event:** The kick-off event was organized in two parts. The first was dedicated to Mentorship participants only, where matches met for the first time, learned more about the program and completed Mentorship Agreements together. The second half was open to other members and non-members for IABC Edmonton Mortified, wherein attendees shared



embarrassing work mistake stories and the audience voted on their favourite story to win a prize. The premise of the event was to promote learning through storytelling as we celebrated the start of our new Mentorship Program.

- **Professional Development sessions:** We offered two PD sessions over the course of the board year.
 - Storytelling with well known Edmontonian and former journalist turned public speaking coach, Carrie Doll: Carrie generously agreed to speak for a \$500 donation to the Stollery Women’s Network which drastically helped us to reduce our costs.
 - Capital Awards bootcamp: Coordinated by the Director of Student Development Director, this session went through the process of applying for an IABC Edmonton Capital Award and the important steps to take when crafting an award winning communications plan.
- **Communication:** To keep in contact with the participants, the Director of Mentorship sent out a monthly e-newsletter which included a summary of the last event, details about the next Mentorship event, links to IABC Edmonton events, links to IABC International’s material, activity ideas for matches, and a request for feedback. Participants would often respond to the e-newsletters and provide short updates on how their match was going.

Challenges

The success of a Mentorship Program relies heavily on each individual’s commitment to the program and their mentoring relationship. As expected, some challenges did arise within a few of the matches. There were a couple of relationships in which one person (the Mentor or Mentee) stopped responding to the other.

When these situations would come up, the Director of Mentorship would work with the match to try to get their relationship back on track through phone calls and emails. If the relationship did not work out, the Director would speak with the individual who was still invested and make sure that they knew they were still welcome to participate in the Mentorship events.

Budget

This portfolio is one the chapter is intentionally managed to have a negative balance as it’s a member-value program, as opposed to a revenue generator. To effectively manage the budget for this portfolio, the Director of Mentorship offered professional development events to mentorship program participants for free, but opened the events to non-program participants and non-members, who paid a fee to attend. The wrap up event for the program was also combine with our annual volunteer appreciation event, which was budgeted for under our Volunteer portfolio.

Revenue	Budgeted	Actual
Event ticket sales	\$900	\$927
Total revenue	\$900	\$927
Expenses		
PD event venue / catering	\$2700	\$2260
Mentor recognition	\$200	\$260
Printing	\$100	\$0
Total expenses	\$3000	\$2520
Net	\$2100 (-)	\$1593 (-)



Evaluation / Results

IABC Edmonton's 2018/19 Mentorship Program made significant enhancements to the value our chapter delivers to members. Not only did the program prove meaningful to participants, but it also offered value to non-program members who could attend high-quality PD events. The improvements the Director of Mentorship made to the program also introduced efficiencies for the chapter overall -- again, delivering PD sessions open to all members enhanced IABC Edmonton's overall professional development program.

Though we did not set a specific objective for event-specific satisfaction levels, we received very positive response for the kickoff and storytelling events -- for both events, 100% attendees who completed the survey said the events were valuable to them.

Objective	Results
Attract and retain 25 mentee applicants from a mix of career levels -- students, junior and mid-level IABC members.	Exceeded: Received 26 mentee applications.
Attract and retain 20 mentor applicants representing a mix of senior and mid-level IABC members.	Met: 20 mentor applications received.
Achieve 80% participant satisfaction rate in the year-end mentorship evaluation survey.	Slightly under met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 73% respondents indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience. 91% of respondents said they would recommend the program.

Recommendations

Based on the feedback received throughout the program in addition to the overall program evaluation, the following changes were recommended for the 2019-20 Mentorship Program:

- Have matches establish who will be responsible for leading the relationship and setting the agenda for meetings.
- Host a kick-off event that only focuses on the Mentorship program so matches have more time to learn about the expectations and complete their Mentorship Agreements together.
- Be cautious seeking out potential Mentors, they should want to be a Mentor enough that they take the time to apply on their own.

Work Samples

- Work sample 1: Mentorship program year-end survey results
- Work sample 2: Monthly e-newsletter sample (January)
- Work sample 3: Mentorship program match agreement
- Work sample 4: Kick-off event photos