

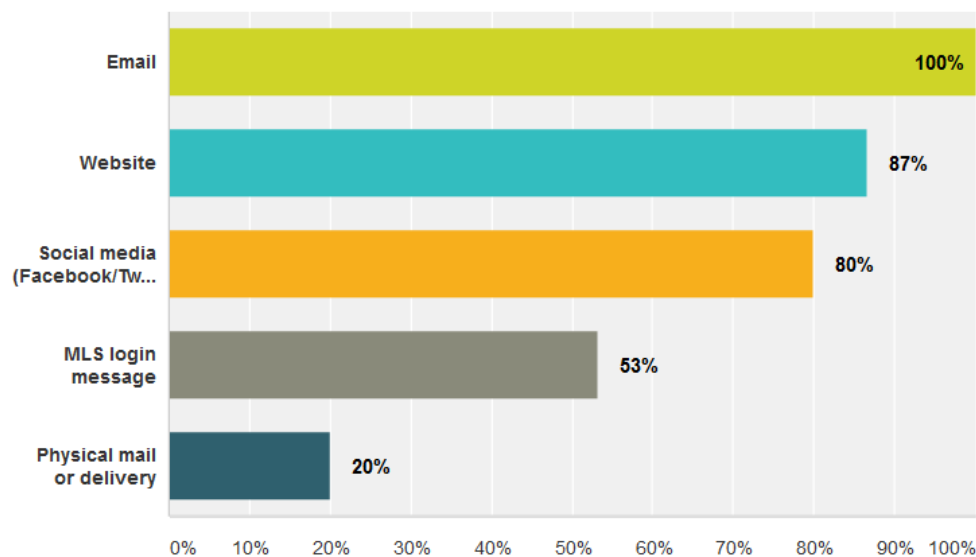
Communications Survey Summary

In May of 2015, the communications staff who had participated in the Mission:CONNECT* project determined that the next step should be surveying other local associations in Arizona to assess what member communications vehicles they were currently using and if locals had an interest in some type of collaborative effort.

The survey was sent to all Arizona AEs, who were encouraged to have any communications staff provide input. Fifteen of 20 solicited responses were received. In view of the very small sample, these results are only descriptive of the overall group's opinions and are not necessarily definitive.

Ron LaMee
AAR Senior Vice President, Research and Communications
July 27, 2015

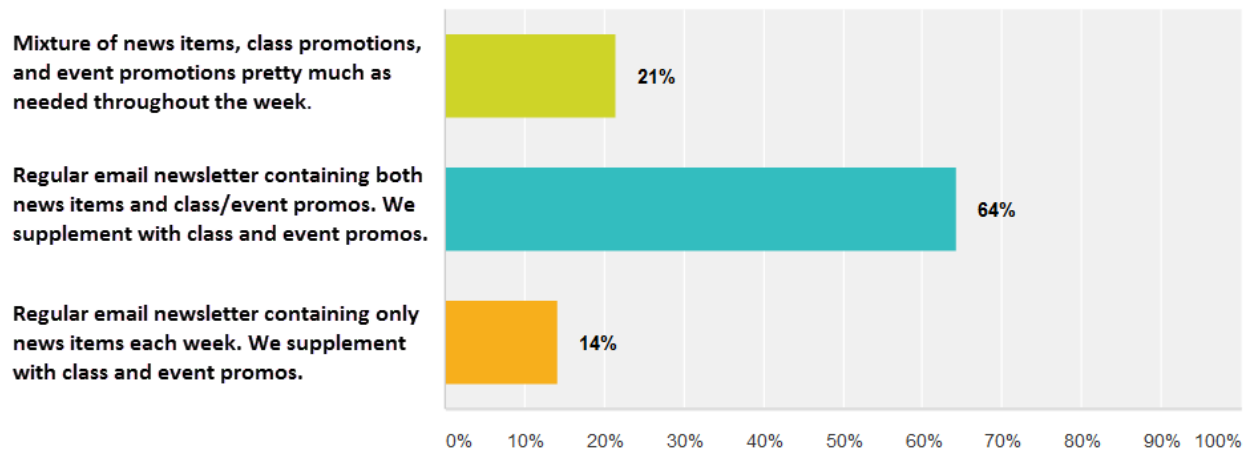
Q1: What methods do you use to get critical information out to members? (check all that apply)



Summary and comments:

Email is the most common method used, followed closely by the association website and social media. When conducting member surveys the last few years, I have routinely asked members “What is the best way to get critical information to you?” For about 95% of our members, email is their preferred channel—much higher than any other method. This suggests that our focus on email is appropriate, although other channels may be needed to reach certain members.

Q2: Please check the description which best matches your member email practices

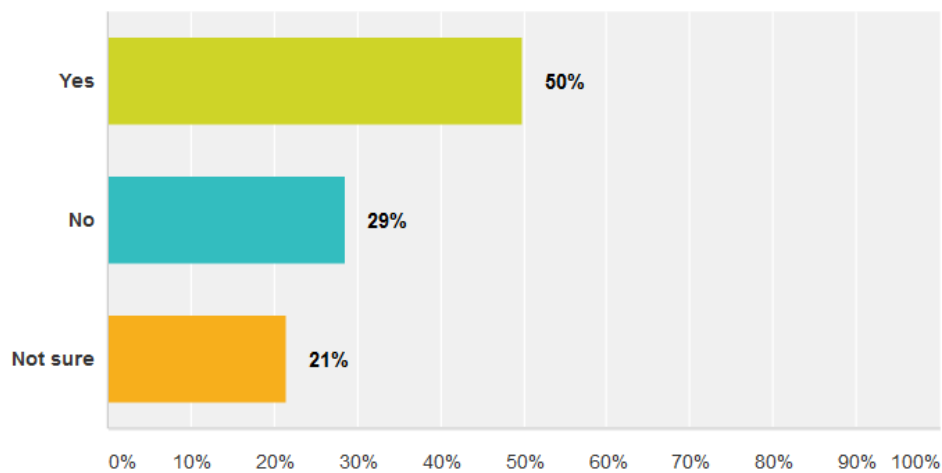


Summary and comments:

In this question, we were attempting to determine whether local association emails tended to be a regular “e-publication” or followed a more “as-needed” approach. These results indicate that two-thirds of local associations send a regular e-newsletter with a mix of news and class/event promotions.

AAR sends a weekly e-newsletter called the *Arizona REALTOR® Voice*, which contains legal and regulatory updates, business tips, market reports and advocacy issues; rarely will an item appear about a major event like our Spring Convention or Leadership Conference. Emails promoting AAR classes and events are sent as needed, primarily to carefully-targeted member sub-groups.

Q3: Do you believe that your emails are getting ignored because members receive emails from too many other REALTOR® groups?



Summary and comments:

This question looks at whether AEs think that the email volume of other REALTOR® groups (AAR and NAR) is causing members to ignore their messages. About half believe that to be true. An interesting follow-up question might be, “How many emails do you think your members receive each week from AAR and NAR”?

In general, AAR believes that unwanted email from vendors is a much bigger concern to members than email sent by other REALTOR® organizations. NAR has done a good job over the last few years in combining messages and providing members with options to choose what they wish to receive.

The typical AAR member will rarely receive more than two emails from AAR in any given week: the *Voice* and a targeted promotional message. However, AEs and local and state leadership may receive a dozen or more messages each week from AAR, including Basecamp, committee updates and individual emails. This may contribute to the impression of email overload by AAR.

Q4: Do you sometimes worry that you are sending too many emails?

Responses	Response Percent
Yes	73%
No	27%

Summary:

Following the line of inquiry of the previous question, this question has AEs consider their own association’s email volume. The majority are concerned about the amount of emails they send.

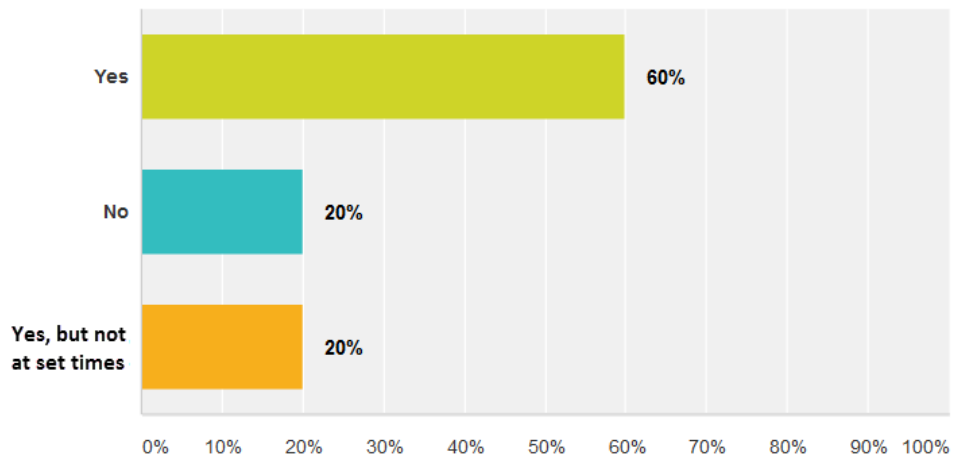
Q5: How do you determine what topics to send emails about and when to send them?

Summary and comments:

This question was open-ended, so there was no easy way to display results. Over half indicated that they send event and education reminders as needed to get additional sign-ups. About a quarter focused primarily on information needed for members to conduct business and send it in a newsletter-style format. Another 25 percent chose topics based on what seemed important at the time and sent emails as needed. In many cases, AEs are relying on their experience and knowledge of their members to make choices, while a few try to apply metrics to making content decisions.

By analyzing member survey results and web metrics, AAR has established guidelines for what we send in the *Voice*. *Voice* metrics reveal that higher open rates occur when we send our e-newsletter on Tuesday mornings.

Q6 Do you send out a regular member email newsletter? This would include PDF newsletters attached to an email as well as e-newsletters.



Summary and comments:

Sixty percent of our Arizona local associations regularly send an e-newsletter and another 20% send e-newsletters as needed. Twenty percent do not use email newsletters. As noted, AAR sends out the *Arizona REALTOR® Voice* once each week.

Q7: On the average, what percentage of your email newsletter content consists of promotional items? Promotional items are notices about classes, social events, etc.

Summary and comments:

This question prompted respondents to enter a figure; only ten people responded. The answers ranged from 5% to 90% with an average of about 60%. This means that on average, over half of the email content locals are sending to their members consists of promotional items.

The *Arizona REALTOR® Voice* rarely contains a promotional message. When it does, it’s usually limited to a banner-type ad at the bottom of the page. It should be noted that promotional messages about AAR classes and events are sent out by departments other than Communications.

Q8: What system do you use to distribute your email newsletters?

Responses	Response Percent
Commercial company like MailChimp or Constant Contact	50%
Convio	25%
From the association’s mail server	17%
MLS email system	8%

Summary and comments:

Half of the respondents use third-party bulk email systems like Constant Contact or MailChimp. Several continue to use Convio (NAR’s REALTOR® Action Center system) and several send messages through their association mail server or via their MLS.

AAR continues to use Convio. Although we like the fact that member data is automatically updated (usually), the system is unnecessarily complex, slow and difficult to use. We are also exploring third-party systems at this time.

Q9: What type of content do you put in your email newsletters? (check all that apply)

Responses	Response Percent
Events - local activities being sponsored by the local association	100%
Classes - CE activities you are sponsoring	92%
Community involvement - what members or the association are doing for the community	83%
Advocacy - what the association's doing to protect members and private property rights	75%
Legal/Risk Management - staying out of trouble with new laws and regulations	67%
Business tips - improving business	58%
Association business - committee and Board meetings	58%
Market trends - what the local market is doing	33%

Summary and comments:

Classes and events dominate the content of locals’ newsletters. At the bottom of the content scale is “market trends,” yet AAR's research indicates a very strong demand by members for market trends and analysis. In areas where regional MLSs are found, market reports may be deferred to the MLS; in smaller areas, there may be insufficient resources to provide market reports. To meet this need, an alternative for the local association may be to turn to the RPR Association Dashboard for customized market data reports which may also be presented to local media to meet core requirements.

Q10: Where do you get topics and content for your email newsletter? (check all that apply)

Responses	Response Percent
Activities, events and classes on my calendar	100%
NAR emails, website, etc.	91%
Items brought to my attention by members	64%
AAR emails, website, etc.	64%
Local news	46%
Internet	36%

Summary and comments:

Content for most local association e-newsletters is strongly driven by upcoming events and classes. A significant amount of topics or content comes from NAR and AAR as well as topics brought to AEs by members.

Based on its formula for content, AAR concentrates on content in the areas of risk management, advocacy, business tips and market reports. A significant amount of our content is developed in-house. For example, as the new TRID forms have been released, AAR has used content about those forms written by Scott Drucker, Esq., and Risk Management Chair Martha Appel.

Q11: How do you decide when or how often to send an email or e-newsletter?

Responses
Based on a master marketing communications calendar
Experience and analytics
As needed
Always the 1st and 15th
Weekly and more often if the topic requires it
As issues or events dictate, but always try to send something at least once a week (or post to internal webpage or blog)/
Board members voted, Friday of every week.
We send monthly on the 1st of the month
Importance of information. Event timing.
A/B testing through our email provider. Sundays at 10am are the best for our newsletter. How often - we try not to do more than 1 or 2 a week in addition to the newsletter, and the ones we do are targeted (ie not sent to the entire membership)
It is regularly scheduled.
E-newsletters are sent every Monday afternoon. Emails are sent only on an as-needed basis.
As needed

Summary and comments:

As shown above, Arizona locals use a variety of methods to determine the timing of their e-newsletters.

When AAR eliminated its monthly, printed newsletter, it duplicated the format in a monthly electronic version. Based on discussions among members and staff, plus rationale from our Mission:CONNECT* work, AAR again changed its format in August of 2014 to the smaller, more topics-driven, weekly *Voice*.

Q12: How do you decide what message or content to send in an email or e-newsletter?

Verbatim Responses
Urgency, importance, need to fill seats, etc.
Testing and evaluating
Format that has been set up and what is important and beneficial to our members
Whatever is topical at the moment or something important comes up
Try to keep it brief and include links whenever possible

Arbitrarily
I typically decide what is most important that our members should be aware of. President sends me items as well
Local Association information, classes and chamber events
Importance of information. Event timing
Collaboration between staff, leadership and communications team
Mostly it is based on what is either upcoming (events, holiday closures, dues, etc.) or what is currently relevant (news items, political issues, etc.). Priority is given to items with the greatest temporal proximity
Sometimes get suggestions from Board President and other members, plus I look for things that I think would help the members' business

Summary and comments:

Arizona locals often use upcoming classes and events as content in their e-newsletters. As noted in the comments to Question 10, AAR's *Voice* focuses closely on four types of content which members have told us they value in numerous surveys. These types were validated by our work on Mission:CONNECT*.

Q13: Do you do any tracking of email or newsletter open rates or other metrics? If so, what?

Responses	Response Percent
Yes	60%
No	27%
Would like to, but not sure how	13%

Summary:

About three-quarters of the locals responding stated they already do or would like to track metrics. Those who do, use systems built into their email system.

Q14: Do you think it would be worthwhile to know what topics other Arizona locals are covering with their emails or newsletters?

Responses	Response Percent
Yes	53%
No	13%
Not sure	33%

Summary and comments:

A slight majority of locals indicated that knowing the topics others are covering would be useful. For the third who weren't sure, it's very possible they might agree, "It depends on what that would involve." A collaboration process was suggested as part of the Mission:CONNECT* project. It would seem logical that we begin a discussion among AAR and locals which identifies the desired outcomes for such a collaboration and means for accomplishing it.

Q15: If you answered "yes" to the previous question, would you be willing to commit to posting the topics you're publishing every week or every month?

Responses	Response Percent
Yes	67%
No	25%
Not sure	8%

Summary and comments:

Interestingly, more individuals responded to this question than answered “yes” to the previous question. While some locals may be unwilling or unsure about posting their topics, two-thirds are willing to do so.

Q16: Please feel free to comment about member communication issues you have or communication issues you feel AAR can help in addressing:

Verbatim Responses
I would prefer to get strictly necessary, informative emails from NAR & AAR instead of the social media of people talking back and forth. I have enough on my plate and don't need to dig through a mass of conversations going back and forth such as basecamp. I worry that I might have missed addressing a members' question that needed attention.
Cannot get enough agents to open and respond to emails
I signed up for Mail Chimp during our busy season and have not had time to setup or figure it out. This may be something if I run into problems, I could use some help.
I would like to include a newsletter in a regular email and possibly our website but would need help in setting one up. I am not sure the best way to communicate w/ members-email seems to work. We do have an association meeting every week & that helps get the word out; 25 to 50% of primary members attend.

Comments:

For context, the above comments were provided by small locals. With regard to the first message, I too suffer from “Basecamp Overload.” I’ve found that I can adjust the settings in my personal account to customize which Basecamp groups I receive email from and how often I receive them. If you need some help in changing your settings, please contact me, Ron LaMee.

* Mission:CONNECT was an NAR-sponsored project charging us to “change the way your state and your local associations reach members with time-sensitive and relevant information.” Arizona and New Jersey were selected to participate in this project. Through most of 2014, AAR worked with AEs and staff from SEVRAR, WeMAR and PAAR to conduct research and develop methods of improvement.