



COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
MINUTES
From Meeting of June 13, 2020

Members Present

Gerardo Alfonso
Pam Duffy
Ken Cooper
Richard Kimball
Karine Leblanc
Jessica Mangler
Randy Reed
Ashish Rakheja

Members Absent

Mark Hydeman
Chuck Gullede

Guests

Mick Schwedler
Nikos Giannitsanos
Osama Khayata
Tom Pollard
Anuj Gupta
Genevieve Lussier

Staff

Joslyn Ratcliff
Joyce Abrams

Motions

Motion Communications CommitteeVC1 – to approve the April 23 Conference Call Minutes
7-0-0, CV, Motion Passes

Motion Communications CommitteeVC2 – that the documents Basecamp Project Overview & Basecamp Project Docs-Files Organization-Maintenance be approved as written, with formatting consistent with ASHRAE branding, and published not just on the Committee's Basecamp project, but also on ashrae.org.
7-0-0, CV, Motion Passes

Motion Communications CommitteeVC3 – that the Communications Committee releases the Best Practices for Chapter Websites document by June 29, 2020 along with the Wix website template with the intention that these documents may be presented at future CRCs.
7-0-0, CV, Motion Passes

Motion Communications CommitteeVC4 – to adjourn the 2020 ASHRAE Communications Committee virtual meeting.
7-0-0, CV, Motion Passes

Action Items

Action Item VC1: Leblanc – Make the timeanddate.com global meeting planner available as a tool.

Information Items

1. Call Meeting to Order

Mr. Alfonso called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM ET.

2. Code of Ethics

Mr. Alfonso read an excerpt from the Code of Ethics:

As members of ASHRAE or participants in ASHRAE activities, we pledge to act with honesty, fairness, courtesy, competence, integrity and respect for others in our conduct. We will avoid conflicts of interest, and behavior that is discriminatory and/or harassing.

See full Code of Ethics at <https://www.ashrae.org/code-of-ethics>

3. Roll Call

Roll call was taken.

4. Quorum Check

Quorum was established with seven voting members on the call.

5. Review of Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and no changes were made.

6. Approval of April 23 Conference Call Minutes

Motion CCVC1 - Mr. Cooper move to approve the April 23 Conference Call Minutes, Ms. Duffy seconded. Minutes were approved with no changes and no discussion.

7-0-0, CV, Motion Passes

7. Guest Report

Membership Promotion

Genevieve Lussier, liaison from Membership Promotion Committee

Ms. Lussier shared the following items from Membership Promotion Committee:

a. Proposal from MP to Communications Committee for ASHRAE 365.

(Attachment A)

The MP committee would like to know how far can the App be used to add value to membership. Knowing that it is not linked to the membership database, how can it be used further to communicate with members?

Secretary's note: Prior to the meeting Ms. Ratcliff shared the Committee's report on ASHRAE 365 based on Membership Promotion Committee – Motion 9 (01/15/2019).

(Attachment B: Motion and Report)

b. Membership Promotion Committee has read the Virtual meeting guidance and are very happy about it. They asked if the GoToMeeting platform is available for all ASHRAE committees related virtual meetings?

Secretary's note: Prior to the meeting Ms. Ratcliff directed Ms. Lussier to the [ashrae.org/emeetings](https://www.ashrae.org/emeetings) page.

Ms. Lussier shared that, with the information above in hand, MP wants to work with Communications Committee to see if their new Motion is feasible. She suggested if the motion is not appropriate for ASHRAE 365 then perhaps there is another platform that can meet their needs and that the two committees could have a sidebar conversation prior to Chicago regarding this new motion. Ms. Duffy explained for the group's benefit, Motion 9, the background, and the report provided by the Communications Committee in response to that motion. She provided the example of landing in Phoenix and getting a ping on her phone of ASHRAE [chapter] meetings in the area and explained this information already exists on the chapter websites and there is an area on ashrae.org for this information as well. Having such a ping would require volunteers to put information in several different places; plus, the vendor for ASHRAE 365 doesn't currently have the geofencing capabilities needed for this type of capability. She stated that this would require a lot of team effort if we want one singular platform and stated that Communications Committee is committed to working together.

8. Chair's Report

Gerardo Alfonso, Communications Committee chair

Mr. Alfonso thanked the committee, stating it was a wonderful year with many changes and thanked the

team for their leadership individually.

9. Incoming Chair's Report

Pam Duffy, Communications Committee vice chair / incoming chair

Ms. Duffy thanked Mr. Alfonso for his leadership. She reported that the PAOE for next year has been approved and published soon. She shared there are a lot of changes to the Communications Committee section and noted this had been previously discussed.

10. BOD Ex-Officio's Report

Mick Schwedler, Incoming Coordinating Officer

The BOD Ex-O presentation can be seen on the Communications Committee's Basecamp project.

11. Coordinating Officer's Report

No report given.

12. Staff Reports

Joslyn Ratcliff, Communications Committee Staff Liaison

Ms. Ratcliff thanked Communications Committee for their work and invited members to seek her assistance as needed as she is a resource for them in their ASHRAE volunteer work.

Joyce Abrams, Members Council Staff Liaison

Ms. Abrams thanked the members on the call for their work and dedication. She also addressed a rumor she is aware of that the Communications Committee will be going grassroots and stated that if anyone is to hear Communications Committee is going grassroots this is not true. She also mentioned a recent motion that may be referred to Communications Committee regarding centralized training.

Mr. Cooper gave accolades to staff.

Subcommittee Reports

13. Strategic Planning Subcommittee

Gerardo Alfonso

Mr. Alfonso provided a presentation that can be seen on the Communications Committee's Basecamp project.

Mr. Schwedler gave accolades to Mr. Alfonso for the presentation.

14. Websites Subcommittee

Jessica Mangler

Ms. Mangler discussed the progress towards the website templates the subcommittee has been working on and described the plan for rollout to the committee and invited questions and comments.

- a. The Committee reviewed the Best Practices for Chapter Websites document
- b. The Committee reviewed the Wix Chapter Website Template
- c. The Committee discussed the Wordpress Chapter Website Template

Mr. Giannitsanos explained that Wordpress requires technical expertise akin to that needed for using Dreamweaver or Joomla to build a site. With that in mind, he's trying to make it as simple as possible for drag and drop and also create some shortcuts for chapter webmasters. He continued that Wordpress needs coding inherently; plus, it is like a puzzle from different developers because it has many plug-ins offered for sale; however, the free version doesn't allow templates, so the subcommittee is trying to work around that. They are putting out a guide as to how to start a Wordpress site, using a theme. Further considerations include that the menu bar without plug-ins is not mobile-friendly without additional coding. No technical maintenance has been included in the guides as those tools will need to be used by everyone.

d. Phased Release Discussion

Ms. Leblanc recommended the phasing is good, but noted with CRCs coming soon, she would love to have the templates in her workshop to walk attendees through it. Ms. Mangler offered that the phased release is intended to provide time to roll out Wix and further develop Wordpress; however, at this time the Best Practices for Chapter Websites document and Wix templates could be rolled out if the Committee votes it so. She continued that comments could then be collected and rolled into the Wordpress template, to be rolled out later. Mr. Cooper asked how this impacts chapters that already have websites and inquired about the logistics of how the rollout will happen. Ms. Duffy and Ms. Leblanc offered this would be a volunteer role within the chapter; the chapters can use the templates provided, however, the expertise for transitioning will be with the chapter. Ms. Leblanc offered that the CRC workshops could walk interested individuals through the transition as needed. Ms. Leblanc further explained that Ms. Mangler was able to pick up Wix intuitively.

Motion CCVC2 Ms. Mangler moved that the Communications Committee releases the Best Practices for Chapter Websites document by June 29, 2020 along with the Wix website template with the intention that these documents may be presented at future CRCs. Mr. Cooper seconded.

No discussion.

7-0-0, CV, Motion Passes

15. Electronic Collaboration Tools Subcommittee

Ken Cooper

Motion CCVC3 Mr. Cooper moved that the documents Basecamp Project Overview & Basecamp Project Docs-Files Organization-Maintenance be approved as written, with formatting consistent with ASHRAE branding, and published not just on the Committee's Basecamp project, but also on ashrae.org. Ms. Duffy seconded.

No discussion.

7-0-0, CV, Motion Passes

16. Social Media Subcommittee

Karine Leblanc

Ms. Leblanc mentioned that more work is needed for finding ASHRAE on FB. She also shared the virtual conference frame was created and made available by staff but wasn't initially present on the main ASHRAE social channels, so suggested that it be posted as a rule to the main channels, so they could lead by example.

Ms. Leblanc shared a way to easily communicate via video message in email using bombbomb.com and shared a video she had recently sent.

Ms. Leblanc asked the committee for comments, concerns or anything anyone has to share.

Mr. Giannitsanos inquired about whether Communications Committee has best practices for social media. Ms. Leblanc shared that this exists on ashrae.org today. She mentions it in her workshops and added that the best practices show what to post and not to post. Mr. Giannitsanos asked if there is an agreement to promise to follow the rules of ASHRAE such as avoiding commercialism, specifically that anyone posting would have to be someone known to ASHRAE and sign the agreement. Ms. Duffy stated this is covered in the ASHRAE Code of Ethics. Ms. Leblanc added that generally there are not a lot of people doing it – it's one person per chapter / region and we can reach out to DRC or person in charge of social media if something needs to be taken down and added that the contract might scare volunteers away. She suggested that we are all with goodwill here at ASHRAE and agrees with Ms. Duffy that this is covered in the Code of Ethics and added that ASHRAE is not a company. It was agreed that this could be discussed further.

17. 2019-2020 MBOs were discussed.

(Attachment C)

18. Mr. Alfonso closed the 2019-2020 Society Year for the Communications Committee and thanked the

committee and those on the call.

19. Ms. Duffy led a discussion of the 2020-2021 Society Year.

- a. Ms. Duffy welcomed new Committee members, discussed how the committee can serve Society best and set expectations for members for the year.

Ms. Duffy thanked the outgoing members and welcomed their input and thoughts and stated she plans to have an onboarding meeting in the future for new committee members in addition to reaching out individually. She reiterated that this committee serves the entire Society, even though it sits under Members Council, the committee serves the entire membership and report to them. She shared that when the committee is asked to do something, it's important that we listen. She added, recently the committee has been very tactical and she'd like to see that shift to a more strategic role this year. She mentioned that the committee has created a lot of guidance and documentation and that she would like the committee to review them this year to ensure they are available and useful and up-to-date and if not, discarded. Communication is another goal for the year: how the committee shares its resources with the rest of the Society is reflected in the 2020-2021 MBOs.

To maximize impact, instead of having subcommittees, the committee will adapt and have ad hoc committees to work on items instead of standing subcommittees.

- b. 2020-2021 MBOs

(Attachment D)

The MBOs are based on ASHRAE's Strategic Plan Points 3 and 4. Each MBO was discussed, examples were provided and the group in general showed enthusiasm about the objectives.

Regarding MBO#1, Ms. Abrams noted that Members Council has a subcommittee that focuses on the MCO, so any changes suggested to the MCO can be sent from the Committee to the Council and then will ultimately be addressed by the subcommittee.

Regarding MBO#2, Mr. Cooper mentioned that the Standards committee does a lot of micro videos for training. A motion from Region XI regarding Centralized Training that may come to Communications Committee for discussion was also discussed.

- c. Times and dates for next Communications Committee meetings were discussed. 11 AM ET was decided to be the best for all on the committee. Ms. Leblanc shared the timeanddate.com global meeting planner and Ms. Duffy assigned her the action item to make the meeting planner available as a tool.

Action Item VC1: Leblanc – Make the timeanddate.com global meeting planner available as a tool. Meeting invitations will be sent to committee members and the schedule posted to Basecamp.

20. Open Floor

Mr. Alfonso invited comments from anyone attending the meeting.

21. Adjourn

Motion CCVC4 Mr. Alfonso called for a motion to adjourn the 2020 ASHRAE Communications Committee virtual meeting. Mr. Cooper moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Leblanc seconded.

No discussion.

7-0-0, CV, Motion Passes

ATTACHMENT A

Event Platform Motion

It was moved by Daniel Chudecke

The Society create a universal platform that notifies members and non-members of all virtual events and physical events within 100 miles of their location.

Background: ASHRAE Society has long recognized that best way to get new members, and retain current members is to enhance the individual experience members have at the chapter level. 95% of members only participate at this level.

Universally, chapters struggle with the distribution of event information to current and prospective members. Newsletters and emails are lost in the pile of other such communication and countless opportunities to engage members are lost. These tools have lost effectiveness over time and like any worn out tool, needs replacement.

The most effective way to increase attendance at the chapter level (for both members and non-members) is to create a personalized experience via smartphone with user preferences that can deliver push notifications and provide event information that can be searched and filtered.

ASHRAE 365 does this extremely well for attendees at conferences. The rapid searchability for topics of in interest or merely “what’s available now” adds significantly to the participants experience. However, it is only limited to certain events.

Chapters need a universal platform to notify members of the opportunities as well. Especially with the increase in virtual events, a member could easily attend a webinar held by another chapter across the globe if the information was able to reach the audience.

Fiscal Impact:

Proposal to Communications Committee from Membership Promotion Committee

If there is one focus point that will improve the membership recruitment and retention for ASHRAE Society, it is the individual experience members have at the chapter level. 95% of members only participate at this level. Almost universally, chapters struggle with the dissemination of information regarding opportunities available to them locally. Newsletters and emails are lost in the pile of other such communication and countless opportunities to engage members are lost. These tools have lost effectiveness over time and like any worn out tool, needs replacement.

How do we improve?

As with other questions, we can look to other institutions for possible answers. One entity dependent on the communication of a wide range of information with both local, national, and international import is professional sports. Every league utilizes multiple forms of communication, but the advent of smart phones has provided the most personal experience for their customers. A single application with user preferences can notify them of any number of filterable events and league wide information. Most of the applications are free and all substantially increase the number and depth of interactions the league has with their customer.

ASHRAE 365 does this extremely well for attendees at conferences. The rapid searchability for topics of interest or merely “what’s available now” adds significantly to the participants experience. However, it is only limited to certain events.

Chapters need a universal platform to notify members of the opportunities as well. Imagine an application that let me know of all the opportunities within a programmed radius of a member’s location even if it is not my chapter? Or perhaps multiple chapters or sort by topic. A member could easily attend a webinar held by another chapter across the globe. All the necessary information would reach the customer.

In the end, its about the experience and offering as many quality opportunities to members will be towards the benefit of all.



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Joyce Abrams
Director
Member Services

jabrams@ashrae.org

TO: Megan Tosh, Electronic Communications Committee Chair
Joslyn Ratcliff, Electronic Communications Committee Staff Liaison

FROM: Joyce Abrams

DATE: February 19, 2019

SUBJECT: Members Council Referral – ASHRAE 365

During the Members Council 2019 winter meeting in Atlanta, the council referred the motion below to the Electronic Communications Committee for consideration. I appreciate your keeping me advised of your actions. Let me know if you have any questions. Thank you.

[ECC Response:](#)
[ECC happily takes on this research.](#)

Membership Promotion Committee – Motion 9 (01/15/2019):

That the Electronic Communications Committee research the feasibility and capabilities of expanding the ASHRAE 365 App by January 2020 to allow chapters, regions and Society to distribute information to members.

Background information: The Membership Promotion Committee would like to create a plan to expand the App's ability to increase member engagement. For example:

- Notifications of upcoming Chapter meetings or other activities.
- Allow ASHRAE members to see other chapters' activities when they are traveling, and within their region, in case they would like to attend.
- Ability to see member account, including dues and renewals
- Reload the schedule from last year automatically
- Download all events to outlook calendar in one click

The Membership Promotion Committee recommends that ECC solicit ideas from all ASHRAE bodies to create a Roadmap for the ASHRAE 365 App enhancements over the next 5 year timeframe.

Fiscal Impact: None.

cc: Michelle Swanson, Membership Promotion Committee Chair
Daniel Gurley, Membership Promotion Committee Staff Liaison



ASHRAE 365 MOTION REPORT

MOTION DETAILS

During the Members Council meeting at the 2019 Winter Conference in Atlanta, the council referred the motion below to the Communications Committee for consideration:

That the Communications Committee research the feasibility and capabilities of expanding the ASHRAE 365 app by January 2020 to allow chapters, regions and Society to distribute information to members.

As of November 2019, there have been over 15,000 total downloads of the app. Approximately 26% of the downloaders are known members, 14% are non-members and 60% are unknown¹. The top geographical regions for app downloads have been from North America, Asia and the Middle East.

The committee has worked with ASHRAE staff to research several options for short and long-term expansion of ASHRAE 365 and provide recommendations based on that research.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

During the research process, it was found that certain items are on the app vendor's roadmap while others are not. When items are on the roadmap, they will eventually be either available as a no-cost enhancement or can be purchased later once the infrastructure is developed. For items not on the roadmap, it's unlikely that the vendor will undertake the development, even at cost. Below are the findings and feedback based on each option researched.

- **Notifications of upcoming Chapter meetings or other activities**
 1. Operate as some commercial apps do where users, when in specific geographic locations, are notified about events/locations/information occurring in that geographic location

Although the committee feels it would be helpful for ASHRAE 365 to work in this manner, posting notifications based on a user's geographical location is not available and not likely due to privacy issues and location services having to be

enabled on each user's device (which can affect battery life). If this functionality was available, volunteer time would be required to input the events so that they could be displayed and there currently is no infrastructure to support that data entry. Volunteers already enter information into various locations – Chapter websites, newsletters and social media accounts, for example, so any ideal solution would require additional volunteer time to enter data in another place.

2. Integrate with ASHRAE's membership database to be able to build groups to target notifications to, which could be leveraged to provide notifications based on Chapter, Region, or other identifying information

The app vendor is currently working on the infrastructure needed to support the ability to integrate with an association's membership database in order to do targeted notifications. This infrastructure is anticipated to be available by 2Q 2020. Once available, a Statement of Work (SOW) can be developed to determine the cost and timeframe to create an integration. If the integration eventually occurs, ASHRAE staff would outline the quantity and type of notifications permitted, and a process for execution.

- **Allow ASHRAE members to see other Chapters' activities when they are traveling, and within their region, in case they would like to attend**

1. Add a menu item to the app that links to the page on the member side of ashrae.org that has Chapter events and meetings with a Chapter selection dropdown

Volunteer time would be required to keep this event listing up-to-date because ASHRAE staff does not know when all the Chapter events take place, or what events Chapters would want to promote. The committee agrees this functionality would be helpful; however, a process would need to be put in place for how that would be accomplished. If/when that takes place, the page can be linked to from the app menu for easy access. The committee notes that chapter websites and social media channels may also contain this information and already be updated through volunteer efforts.

- **Ability to see member account, including dues and renewals**

1. Integrate with ASHRAE's membership database to be able to see member account information

The app vendor is currently working on the infrastructure needed to support the ability to integrate with an association's membership database in order to see account information. Full account access will not be available but once a user is logged into their app account, they would be able to see certain information (yet to be determined) about their ASHRAE member account. This infrastructure is anticipated to be available by 1Q 2020. Cost to do an integration with an association's membership database is expected to be in the ballpark of \$2K–10K but actual cost would be determined once the functionality infrastructure is in place so that the vendor can provide a SOW specific to ASHRAE.

The committee notes that having an option for renewing membership dues may not be possible due to policies Apple and Google have about what they consider in-app purchases, for which they receive a commission.

2. Add a menu item to the app that links to ASHRAE's website where renewal transactions can be processed

The portion of the website that processes these transactions is not currently mobile-responsive so the committee does not recommend this functionality, as it would result in a negative user experience.

- **Reload the schedule from last year automatically**

This functionality will not be available. ASHRAE has a unique situation in which so many schedule items "repeat" every conference at the same day/time. There isn't a justification for the app vendor to implement this capability because it's not something that would likely benefit other associations. There are, however, current options that allow a user to export their entire schedule and/or all the sessions in the event schedule and send via email or save to a file, which could be referenced if necessary to create a new schedule for an upcoming event.

- **Download all events to Outlook calendar in one click**

The app vendor is investigating adding this capability as an option which, if implemented, would not cause ASHRAE to incur any additional costs. Alternative options that currently exist allow a user to export their entire schedule and/or all the sessions in the event schedule and send via email or save to a file. Instructions on how to do this are available in the ASHRAE 365 troubleshooting guide, located in the app menu.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Determine Viability for Integration with Membership Database

After the development of the infrastructure for the at-cost integration options is complete and SOWs can be provided, the committee/ASHRAE staff can determine whether integrating with the ASHRAE membership database is a viable option. Details on work so far are included in the Research Findings.

Prior to making any recommendations regarding integration, the committee recommends staff consider working with the committee to send out a short survey to Chapter and Region officers to see what functions users would be most interested in having available.

ⁱ We can only identify users based on their ASHRAE 365 account email address, so the 60% unknown data represents users who enter the app as “guests” and have not set up ASHRAE 365 accounts.

ATTACHMENT C

Communications Committee

MBOs for Society Year 2019–2020

Chair: Gerardo Alfonso **Date:** 01 February 2020

Objective	Compl. by	Fiscal Impact	Resp. Party	Comment/Status
Support ASHRAE staff to promote a smooth transition from PEC to MC for the 2019-2020 year.	6/30/20	None	ST, All	Complete
Improve committee communication with Chapter CC's by providing (2) CC updates annually.	6/30/20	None	ST	Complete
Improve committee communication with RCC's and increase RCC participation.	6/30/20	None	ST	Complete
Update content for ASHRAE membership: Best practices for Chapter Websites.	6/30/20	None	Web	Complete
Evaluate / choose new website templates for chapters.	6/30/20	None	Web	Complete
Update the formal presentation for CRC training of chapter CC chairs.	6/30/20	None	All	Complete
Update presentation for ASHRAE Membership: how to use Basecamp for chapters.	6/30/20	None	ECT	Complete
Improve usability of Basecamp for Councils and Committees.	6/30/20	None	ECT	ECT has discussed
Evaluate the RCC and Chapter CC role at CRC	6/30/20	None	ST	Ongoing
Create content for ASHRAE membership: Best practices for SM Chapters.	6/30/20	None	SM	Complete
Support ASHRAE staff to promote their social media goals for the 2019-2020 year.	6/30/20	None	SM	Complete

WS / Web = Website Subcommittee, **ECT** = Electronic Collaboration Tools Subcommittee, **SMS** = Social Media Subcommittee, **ST** = Strategic Planning Subcommittee

ASHRAE Communications Committee

MBOs for Society Year 2020-2021

Chair: Pam Duffy Date: June 11 2020

MBO #	Objective	Fiscal Impact	Responsibility	Status
1	Provide recommendations on group communication task ownership by 2021.	None	Communications Committee	June 2020 - Not Started
2	Streamline Committee's published resources by June 2021	None	Communications Committee	June 2020 - Not Started
3	Implement communication plan for key stakeholders by 2021	None	Communications Committee	June 2020 - Not Started