



Best Practices in Communications

A GUIDE FOR CAA REGIONAL CLUB AND SHARED INTEREST GROUP LEADERS

Provided by the
A&C Communications Subcommittee

20
20



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THE A&C COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

- Alex Szabo '80BUS**
- Carla Sapsford Newman '03SIPA '03JRN**
- Esther Pang '18SPS**
- Lani Yim '20SIPA**
- Mark Clemente '08CC**
- Paul Lindberg '21SIPA**
- Stephen Elms '08SOA**
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Vice President For
Alumni Relations
and President of the
Columbia Alumni
Association (CAA)



Donna H. MacPhee
'89CC, P: '17CC

Vice President for Alumni Relations
President, Columbia Alumni Association

We live in a world that is increasingly fast paced with virtually unlimited access to information. With the click of “send”, or by viewing a “tweet”, we can communicate in real time. From America to Asia and Europe to Australia, communication is the nexus that unites us.

However, the ease and accessibility that comes with real time communication also presents a challenge. How can we engage with each other when we are often overwhelmed by information? How do we direct our communications and outreach to increase readability and deliver impact with our audiences?

The Columbia Alumni Association (CAA) acknowledges the need to respond. This Communications handbook, written by volunteers from the A&C Communications subcommittee, will help support you as leaders. Enclosed are the relevant tools and insight to find meaningful ways to connect and communicate with your Columbia University alumni community. Collectively, we can strengthen our communication with over 355,000 alumni around the world.

Roar, Lion, Roar!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna H. MacPhee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

“From America to Asia and Europe to Australia, communication is the nexus that unites us.”



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This handbook provides advice and recommendations on how best to use Email, Social Media, websites hosted on NationBuilder, and video content.

EMAIL is still the most common form of electronic communication. The Data & Marketing Association (DMA) reports that, “email has a median ROI of 122% – over 4x higher than any other marketing tools including social media, direct mail, and paid search.” Below are some key considerations for maximizing email ROI:

- Utilizing email is the most efficient way one can communicate regularly with their members. You can improve your database by gathering email addresses from registration at events. Be creative with every element of your emails to help them stand out.
- Members of your mailing list **should not receive more than one email per week. We recommend two to three emails each month** to keep alumni engaged, but not inundated with emails. The goal is to avoid unsubscribes or ‘spam’ reports which damage deliverability with certain email clients.

SOCIAL MEDIA can have a strong impact on event participation and club membership. Approximately 30% of all online media time is spent on social media activities. It is important to build a consistent social media following, which requires a commitment to consistency, branding, posting of quality content, and upcoming events.

- Post consistently, but keep in mind the adage of “quality over quantity.” Content should be relevant to your audience and elicit meaningful interactions (comments and shares). Interact with the audience by replying to other people’s posts and encouraging them to share.
- Post images of people, which receive more responses than images of places. Use a social media management tool (HootSuite, Sprout Social, Buffer, Tweetdeck, etc.) to post across channels.

WEBSITES can be used to help support your club activities and mission. Your club website is a tool you should use to promote your events, sell tickets, and give credibility to the club.

- NationBuilder hosted websites can be utilized to acquire volunteers and drive new members to your mailing list. If you have a paid membership option, your site should also feature and highlight the benefits of becoming a paid member.

VIDEO CONTENT is the most effective way of engaging an audience online. Try to find or create engaging video content in order to promote your club.

- Videos can be used on your website, social media pages, and emails. Facebook events has a feature to create a slideshow with music to create a 10-15 second video from pictures.

INTRODUCTION

Best Practices in Communication

The following pages have been researched and compiled by the Associations & Clubs (A&C) Communications subcommittee to help Columbia Alumni Association (CAA) clubs of all sizes, and anywhere on the globe, better engage their members.

This is a working and living document. With technology constantly evolving, platforms and networks improving, and people shifting the way they engage, we will work to keep this handbook up-to-date. While we've tried to include a large range of material, this handbook will not answer every question or resolve all the challenges you may face, but it should be a good foundation on which to begin.

This handbook was made by CAA volunteers in clubs across Asia, Europe, and North America. However, we welcome any feedback and input from our global CAA community of more than 350,000 alumni.

Sincerely,
The A&C Communications subcommittee

Alex Szabo '80BUS

Carla Sapsford Newman '03SIPA '03JRN

Esther Pang '18SPS

Lani Yim '20SIPA

Mark Clemente '08CC

Paul Lindberg '21SIPA

Stephen Elms '08SOA

Tania Martin-Mercado '15SPS



GENERAL EMAIL GUIDELINES

Is email still relevant? The answer is Yes.

With so many other communication channels at your disposal, it's worth asking if email is still relevant. The answer is Yes. Despite the first email being sent in 1971, it's still the most common form of electronic communication.

The Data & Marketing Association (DMA)—a trade organization for marketers—reports that, “email has a median ROI of 122% – over 4x higher than other marketing formats, including social media, direct mail, and paid search.” While CAA clubs are not advertising or marketing agencies, the purpose of email blasts is to market events and updates for your club.

Email Frequency: It is important to maintain email performance and integrity. Members of your mailing list should not receive more than one email per week. We recommend no more than two to three emails per month in order to maintain a healthy level of activity. The goal is to minimize unsubscribes and maximize deliverability (the chance that your email will land in an inbox and not a spam folder, or be blocked altogether). Try to deliver relevant content on a regular basis, but not too often in order to avoid being marked as spam (drastically decreasing your inbox delivery open rates). Make sure you are succinct, write in a genuine voice, and include only relevant information.

Email targeting: One way to reduce email volume is to target or segment your mailing list sending it only to interested audiences. NationBuilder allows you to segment your email population in order to identify certain interests with tags from previous events. For example, if you have 10 available seats left for an upcoming opera event, you can go into NationBuilder and find people who attended previous arts-related events by using tags and send the reminder email only to that segment of the population.

Subject length and content: Email trends vary. As such, the optimal subject length will increase and decrease over time according to changing spam filter algorithms. However, try to keep subjects to 65 characters or less. A mobile app may show only 30 characters. Some words are more likely to get caught in spam filters (“special offer,” “limited time,” “discount,” “\$”). Adding a sense of urgency, scarcity, or ambiguity where possible helps improve open rates and boost attendance at events. Be witty, and try to catch their attention.

'From' field: Make sure that you include the title of the club so that it is clear that the email is coming from a Columbia Alumni Club (this saves you space in the email subject).

Body content: Be as succinct and concise as possible. If your email is a monthly e-newsletter with a long list of events, be sure to use an organizing principle (chronological list, categorized, alphabetical order, etc.). If you are including information about an event, make sure to include the purpose, the location, time, date, price, and registration link.

EMAIL

Despite the first email being sent in 1971, it's still the most common form of electronic communication.

EMAIL PERFORMANCE METRICS

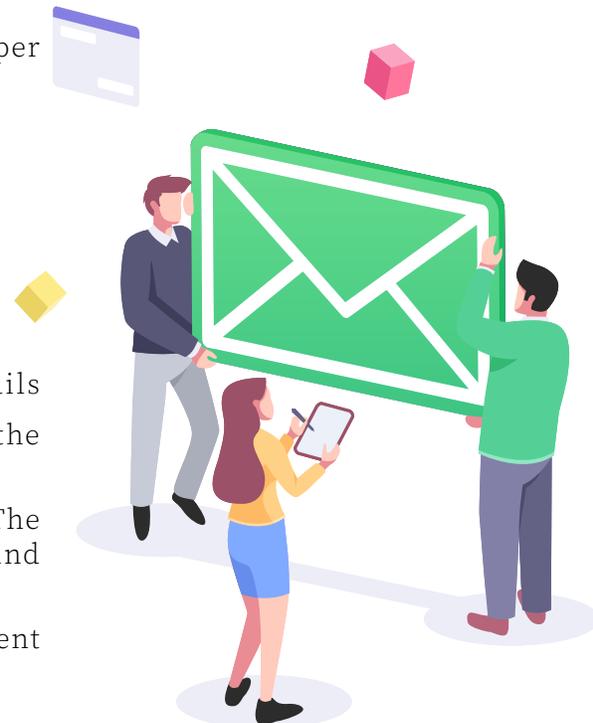
Open rates: This metric represents the number of people who opened your email vs. the total number of people it was delivered to. For a general monthly newsletter, an open rate of 20% would be considered successful, but it is possible that you see open rates as low as 10%. You can expect higher open rates for more targeted, personalized emails, such as registration confirmation emails or event reminder emails.

Click-through rates: This metric represents the number of people who opened your email and clicked on a link. Click-through rates are generally very low. For a monthly newsletter, expect about a 3-5% click through rate (CTR).

Unsubscribes: You may see an unsubscribe rate of 5% per email. Do not worry, this is normal. If someone does not want to be on your list, it is better for them to self-select to remove themselves from your distribution list. Keeping these individuals on your list would only lower your emails' performance metrics. You want to maintain an engaged audience to increase your email deliverability.

EMAIL TIPS AND TRICKS

- Use short and snappy preheaders and subject lines, use teasers where necessary
- Keep your emails short and to the point – who, what, when, where, why, and how?
- Include one clear call-to-action and one call-to-action button per email
- Buttons will drive more clicks than clickable line items
- Add links to your images
- Include social media sharing buttons
- Make sure your emails are mobile-friendly
- Preview and test your emails before sending them
- Use testing tools such as Litmus to preview, test, and monitor emails
- Personalizing some emails to come from a board member, not the club, can increase open rates
- Don't use deceptive subject lines or misleading information. The subject line must accurately reflect the content of the message and identify who the email is coming from.
- Your message must include a clear explanation of how the recipient can opt out of emails from you in the future.



EMAIL EXAMPLES

It is a CAA best practice to use a consistent **approved and University-branded logo and email template**



Columbia Alumni Association
**SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA**



Dear Friend --

Thank you for taking the time to register with the Columbia Alumni Association of Southern California (Columbia SoCal) as part of CU there! We hope you had a great holiday and are enjoying your Winter Break. If you are in the Los Angeles area this Sunday, **January 13th**, we have a great event that we don't want you to miss! Alumni from BAC-LA and Columbia SoCal will be gathering at 2:00pm for a [student-alumni mixer](#) at alumni-owned Sip & Sonder in Inglewood. [Click here](#) to register. *Note: Ticket prices include light refreshments and beer & wine (with proper ID). All ages are welcome!*

If you've already graduated, please [let us know](#) if you wish to volunteer or have suggestions on programming for the coming year. We look forward to seeing you at an event soon!

Columbia SoCal
<http://social.alumni.columbia.edu/>

UPCOMING COLUMBIA SOCIAL EVENTS:



[Los Angeles Student-Alumni Mixer](#)
Sunday, January 13 at 2:00pm
Sip & Sonder, 108 S. Market St., Inglewood, 90301



[Columbia SoCal Book Club: Becoming by Michelle Obama](#)
Sunday, February 3 at 2:00pm
To be determined



Hi David --

We hope everyone is having a festive holiday season.

Today we welcome the first official day of winter and the shortest day of the year. For the next three months short days and cold nights will be the norm. However, we hope that doesn't keep you in as we're excited to share lots with you in the new year.

Two Thousand Eighteen was one of most successful years as **we hosted 42 events over the last 12 months**. With a wide range of programming, we hope we had something for everyone. In 2019, we'd love if on your list of resolutions joining us at an event was top of the list. If you made it to one thing in 2018, we'd be delighted if next year you joined us for two (or three, or four).

Following up from a busy December—including the special screening and UK premier of the award-winning documentary **RBG**, a rockin' **holiday party** (complete with flowing drinks, great food, and piñatas), and a magical evening at the Royal Albert Hall as we celebrated a **Hollywood Christmas**—we're kicking off January with a **happy hour on the 9th of January** with Cornell and closing the month with our annual Chinese New Year dinner.

Make sure you book for our events on the [website](#) and be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for new announcements.

Please also keep in touch. Reach out at connect@columbiaclub.london if you need anything.

— Courtney (President) & Stephen (Vice President)

Join Us:

Upcoming CUCL Events for January:



January Happy Hour, Cornell Mixer | Wednesday January 9th, 18:30

Start the 2019 off in Farringdon as we co host our first happy hour of the year with Cornell. We're back at the always popular St Bart's Brewery across from Smithfield Market.

RSVP

CUCL Open Board Meeting | Monday January 28th, 18:30



"Thank you, Roams, for that motivating roar!"

Our next Open Board meeting will take place in 2019! All interested volunteers are invited to join the current Board in order to meet CUCL leadership, Heads of Committees, learn about how the Club is run and find out areas in which we need help. All interested parties should email connect@columbiaclub.london to confirm attendance.

MORE INFORMATION

Save The Date:



Lunar New Year | Thursday January 31st, 19:00

It's the year of the pig. Join us for our annual lunar new year dinner. A time to wine and dine with your fellow alumni.

Keep an eye on the [website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for more information about booking.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media Marketing:

TIPS FOR EVERY PLATFORM

Social media is everywhere these days and is only growing in its influence and reach. From platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, there are a lot to choose from. So where do you focus your time? How do you make a post? Better yet, how do you make an impactful post?

Following is an outline on social media in general and key differences between channels. We've also included some examples to help clarify .



SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

1. Become familiar with each platform and create a plan for each channel
2. Post consistently and at regular intervals, but keep in mind the adage of “quality over quantity”
 - a. Content should be relevant to your audience, entertaining, and helpful
 - b. Aim for content that elicits meaningful interactions (comments and shares)
3. Use a social media management tool (HootSuite, Sprout Social, Buffer, Tweetdeck, etc.) that will help:
 - a. Post across channels
 - b. Schedule posts in advance
 - c. Track and measure results
4. Video Content is the most effective way of engaging an audience online. Try to find or create engaging video content and promote your club with it.
 - a. Videos can be used on your website, social media pages, and emails. Facebook events have a feature to create a slideshow with music to create a 10-15 second video from pictures. These are much more effective than using individual photos.
5. Post more images (ensure that an image is always included in a link preview) and that it is high quality.
6. Interact with your audience by replying to posts, liking, retweeting, tagging, and mentioning, and promoting others to share your content
7. Give people a reason to follow you
8. Capitalize on hashtags

.....
**Social media is just a
buzzword until you come
up with a plan.**



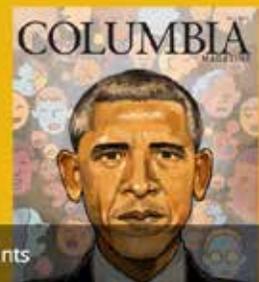
Earn 15 points

Roar-ee wishes you a FUN and safe Labor Day weekend! 🦁 :
Eileen Barroso



Earn 15 points

A future #ColumbiaAlumni leader. Welcome to Columbia, Cameron. 🤗



Earn 15 points

An oral history of the Obama years, the world's soaring extinction rates, and Hadestown director Rachel Chavkin '08SOA on the politics of Broadway — all in Columbia Magazine's NEW fall issue. Read it online. Cover art by Richie Pope.
<https://magazine.columbia.edu>

Find us on

Facebook Pages (below) are public and visible to everyone on the Internet by default. While the audience can comment on posts, the posts of the page are prioritized. Therefore, pages aren't very effective for those wanting to create a close-knit community. Rather, they are more suitable for those looking to promote their organization. Most of the advantages of Facebook pages lie in their marketability, centralized control, and extended reach. Other advantages include:

- Analytics tab that tracks follower engagement and post reach
- Ability to target event advertising toward certain demographics

Facebook Groups (facing page) are a place for people to come together and participate in discussions, post photos and share related content. Groups can be made public, require administrative approval to join, or kept private by invitation only. This makes them suitable for small or large communities. However, this comes with a trade-off, as it limits the group's reach. Like Pages, new posts by a group are included in the News Feeds of its members. Other advantages include:

- More control over the privacy of members and posts
- In terms of keeping a group active, the role of the admin isn't as burdensome as it is for a Facebook Page, due to member posts also being prioritized

More Facebook Tips

1. Develop a Social Media Calendar
2. Use bold imagery and clear language (keep the headline simple and engaging)
3. Lean on the "who" to make it personal (use a conversational, open tone)
4. Contextualize with emotional language
5. Change content types often
 - a. Photo, Video, Gallery, Link, Status, Note, Live Video, Canvas, Album, Check-In, Events



Columbia Alumni
Association 
@ColumbiaAlumniAssoc

Home

Posts

Twitter

YouTube

About

Photos

Videos

Groups



 Liked  Following  Share 

[Learn More](#)



Write a post...



Photo/Video



Tag Friends



Check in



Community

[See All](#)

 Invite your friends to like this Page

 90,095 people like this

 89,959 people follow this

 Helen Bells and 72 other friends like this or have checked in

Posts



Columbia Club of Northern California

Closed group

About

Discussion

Units

Members

Events

Videos

Photos

Files

Search this group



Joined

Notifications

Share

More

Write Post Add Photo/Video Live Video More

Write something...

Photo/Video Watch Party Tag Friends

Get started on units 1 Unit · 1 Post See units

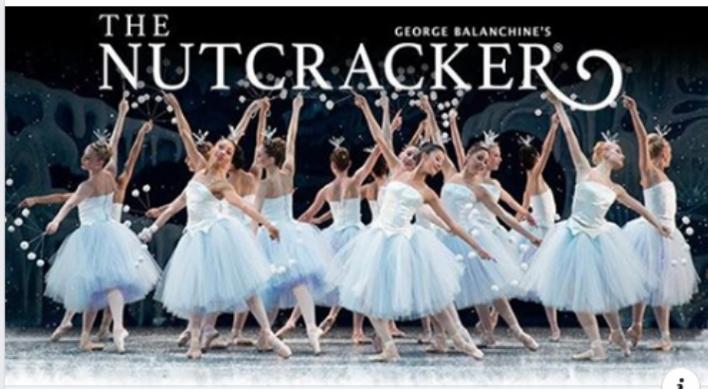
NEW ACTIVITY

Jennifer Fong is feeling festive. Admin · 7 hrs

Join Columbia, Harvard and University of Chicago alumni clubs to celebrate the San Francisco's Nutcracker ballet this holiday season!

- Date: Sunday, December 15
- Time: 6pm no-host reception; 7pm performance
- Location: War Memorial Opera House, 301 Van Ness Avenue
- Tickets: Discount tickets available through discount code. Friends and family welcomed!

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/celebrate-the-holidays-at-the-nutcracker-ballet-2019-tickets-72191170735>



EVENTBRITE.COM

Celebrate the holidays at the Nutcracker Ballet 2019!

Join Columbia, Harvard and University of Chicago alumni clubs to...

4 Likes

2 Comments

Like

Comment



Elizabeth Lee Luu *it's not Balanchine's production it's a Helgi Tomasson production <https://www.sfballet.org/.../Your-Ultimate->

GROUP BY



Columbia Club of Northern Calif... 155 like this

INVITE MEMBERS

+ Enter name or email address...

MEMBERS

1,900 Members



DESCRIPTION

The alumni-only page of Columbia Club of Northern California. Al... See More

GROUP TYPE

General

CREATE NEW GROUPS

Groups make it easier than ever to share with friends, family and teammates.

Create Group

RECENT GROUP PHOTOS

See All





   **Following**

ColumbiaAlumniAssoc 
@ColumbiaAlumniA Follows you

We are 350,000+ #ColumbiaAlumni worldwide bound by our shared Columbia connection, intellect, & drive. We believe that together we know more so we can do more.

everywhere Columbians are alumni.columbia.edu
Joined August 2008

1,552 Following 10.7K Followers

Followed by ColumbiaClubLondon, CAAFairfield, and 68 others you follow

Tweets Tweets & replies Media Likes

Pinned Tweet

 **ColumbiaAlumniAssoc**  @ColumbiaAlumniA · Sep 4
Add a little Lion to your @Spotify queue and follow the brand new Columbia Alumni channel! 🎵👑 Find the playlist of your graduating class year and listen to the songs that were popular the year you became an alum. bddy.me/34geUZg @Columbia

 USER **Columbia Alumni**

OVERVIEW PUBLIC PLAYLISTS FOLLOWERS (2)

Public Playlists SEE ALL



  1  4  

ColumbiaAlumniAssoc Retweeted

 **Columbia Univ Film** @ColumbiaFilm · 15h
Incredible news: CU thesis film DARLING has won the Best Short Film prize at the Venice Film Festival! Congrats to Saim Sadiq, Mahak Jiwani, and the many other alums and students who worked on this project! #Venezia76



You might like

-  **Barnard College** 
@BarnardCollege **Follow**
-  **SEASentreprenurship**
@SEASeship **Follow**
-  **Columbia Libraries**
@columbialib **Follow**

Show more

New York trends 

#TuesdayThoughts

#WorldSuicidePreventionDay 

World news
People share messages of hope on World Suicide ...



Switching

#TuesdayMotivation

#AppleEvent 

Show more



@twitter #howtouse

1. Don't try too hard to please Twitter [🔗](#)
2. Use an image when possible
3. Write to be read, not to be re-tweeted
4. Embrace hashtag communities, not hashtags
5. Don't peacock your stuff or overstate its importance
6. If a tweet works, tweak slightly & schedule it again
7. Tweet content other than news - mix it up with Q&As, photos, contests
8. Beware of long-term automation, know what you are tweeting and when
9. Place hashtags at the end of tweets for clarity's sake
10. Follow metrics to see what works and resonates
11. Post content regularly
12. Assign an alum who is savvy on Twitter to manage the club's page
13. Make sure you have your own unique #hashtags to see what others are posting about and to track the impact of your posts



Columbia University
@Columbia

In a [@washpost](#) op-ed, President Bollinger affirms the University's commitment to foreign-born students. Plus, what a geographer says about the [#AmazonFires](#) and the legacy of [#1619](#), in art.



We Will Not Spy on Our Foreign-born Students
In an August 30 column in The Washington Post, President Bollinger pushed back against the FBI for encouraging universities to develop protocols to ...
[mailchi.mp](#)

6:57 PM · Sep 9, 2019 · [Twitter Web App](#)



Columbia College
@CC_Columbia

Roar-ee is ready for the first day of classes tomorrow!
[#myccjourney](#)

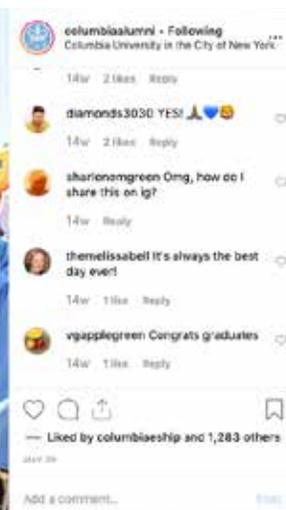
Photo: Killian Young





Instagram

1. Instagram (a Facebook product) is a visual medium - photos are prioritized on this platform
2. Find your audience & create a community with hashtags
3. Tap your community for inspiration, call out for content when appropriate
4. Create shareable spaces during events
 - a. Invite others to share the moment
5. Composition and quality rule. Only post a good photo.
6. Copy and paste text from Notes to avoid typos
7. Use captions to tell stories, credit sources and recognize the people in your photos
8. Editing a photo for enhanced brightness and color is recommended
9. Shoot in the camera app, using HDR, then import to Instagram
10. Assign a club member to take photos at every event
11. Hold regular contests where you put a call out for the best CAA-related photos or themes (such as 'find a local statue or artwork that reminds you of Alma Mater')
12. Solicit photos from students or recent alumni about their experience on campus
13. Post content regularly
14. Assign an alum who is savvy on Instagram to manage the club's page
15. Make sure you have your own unique hashtags to see what others are posting about and to track the impact of your posts





columbiaalumni

Following

More options

887 posts

17.1k followers

383 following

Columbia Alumni Association

The official Instagram account for the entire 350,000+ @columbia alumni community 🐼

linktr.ee/columbiaalumni

Followed by columbia, barnardcollege, arts_initiative + 36 more



Just Socie...



Trivia



Facebook



Twitter



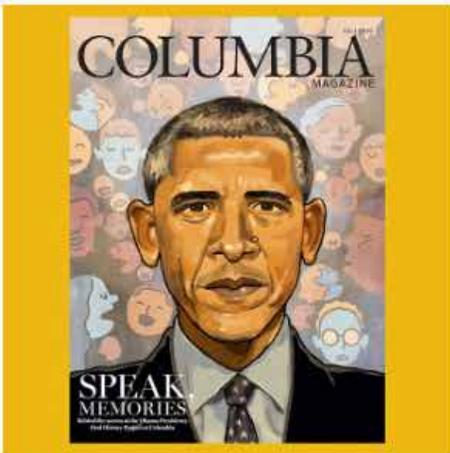
LinkedIn



Benefits

POSTS

TAGGED





CAA NEW JERSEY | COMMUNICATIONS CASE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

The Columbia University Club of New Jersey was established in 1978 by a small group of alumni who wanted to stay connected with friends and professors living in Northern New Jersey. Today, over 27,000+ alumni of Columbia University live in the State of New Jersey. Our Mission is to honor Columbia University for what it has given to us. We seek to actively enrich the lives of our alumni family living in the state of New Jersey. To accomplish our mission we host social, cultural, intellectual, athletic, and other events and programs for graduates of all of Columbia University's schools living in New Jersey. In 2018, we were given the Regional Club "Award of Excellence" by the Columbia Alumni Association for our commitment to New Jersey alumni.

MEDIA & MARKETING

Our media, communications and marketing efforts have been led by our Chief Marketing Officer, Jason DeLuca. Due to his vision and the team's hard work, we received the 2017 "Most Engaging Club Communications Award" from the Columbia Alumni Association.

Facebook: We went from 300 Facebook Followers in 2016 to 3,200+ Followers and growing in 2019. The two main elements that allowed us to grow so fast were a combination of compelling content/events plus paid Sponsored Ads.



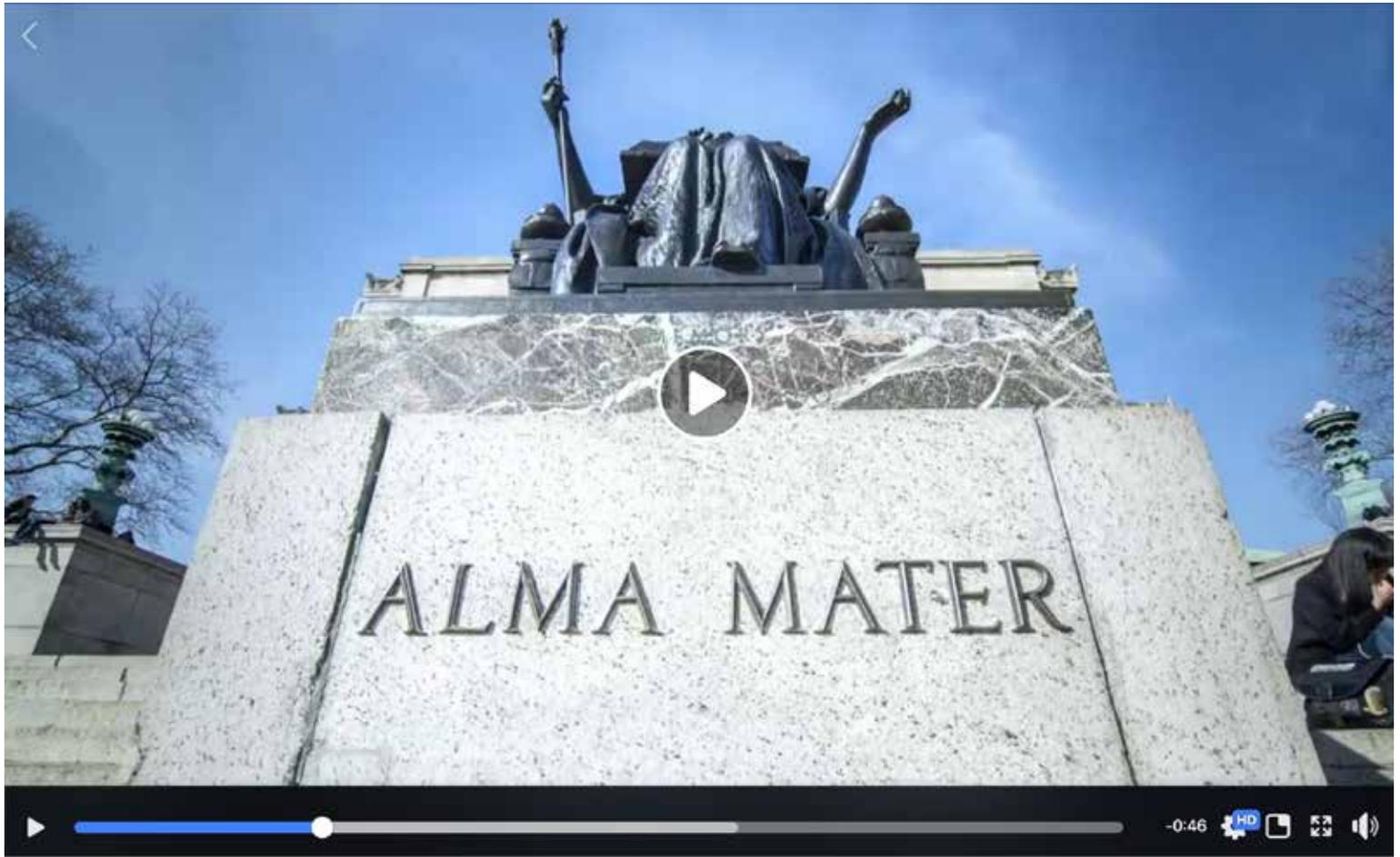
Facebook post interface showing engagement metrics and user interactions. The post is from the Columbia University Club of New Jersey. It displays 3,438 Total Likes and 3,514 Total Follows. The post content includes three profile pictures of users who liked or visited the page: Yiting Shen, Jaclyn Chu, and Sonia Kozlova. The post also shows navigation options like 'Liked', 'Following', 'Share', 'Watch Video', and 'Send Message'.

When you post a message on Facebook, only 20% - 30% of your Followers will ever see the message. Therefore, in order to reach all of your Followers, plus hundreds to thousands more alumni in your city/shared interest, you must invest some money in promoting your ads. We spend between \$50 - \$100 per month boosting events, boosting our site Followers and generating Likes. All of this contributes to helping us reach more people. Without this type of investment, we would have a very slow growth rate.

Below are our Facebook Sponsored Ad results since January. We have achieved a cost per lead of \$1.80 thus far. We typically see a cost per lead range between \$.50 - \$2.00, depending on our creative, time of year and targeting parameters. Our conversion rate, Impressions to Followers, typically ranges between .75% - 3%.



Our most successful social media content post has been utilizing the “Double Magic” video. This video and its promotion in Facebook via boosted posts has helped us achieve: 27K Views, 134 Likes. Due to this success, we utilize the video to attract new Followers via Sponsored posts.



Columbia University - Double Magic

Like Comment Share

Columbia University Club of New Jersey

135 3 Comments 28 Shares 27K Views

We don't use any other Social media channels, as we found that Facebook is the biggest, easiest and the most effective platform. It has the best advertising tools, resources and reach compared to other social media platforms.

Email: We rely heavily on our email database and the National Builder platform to effectively communicate with our members. We have around 20,000 emails in our database, 15,000 are Prospects and 5,000 are Supporters. We email our database on a weekly basis via Nation Builder to remind everyone of upcoming events. Without frequency, we do not get the participation needed to run successful events. We can't just email once a month or once a week when an event is happening, we found that it takes at least 2-3 times to get our audience's attention. The average person gets hundreds of emails a day, often several from Columbia asking for support. In order to stand out and get the attention of your constituents, you must bring them something that stands out.

Here is an example of an email we sent out for a recent Budweiser Brewery event, which had 125 people register to attend. We focus a lot of our emails on using impactful images with a short amount of text with a strong call to action. It is important to not overwhelm your members with too much information and long paragraphs of text.

We typically get an open rate of around 20%, that means 4,000 people read each of our email blasts. Over a busy week, that could add up to 12K – 15K people who we reach. Marketing effectiveness always comes down to reach and frequency. We continue to build our reach while maintaining a strong frequency so that we are top of mind to our busy alumni community.

Jason --

Good Afternoon.



Please join us tomorrow, Tuesday, February 12th @ the Anheuser-Busch Brewery in Newark, NJ for a special technology innovation presentation and tour.

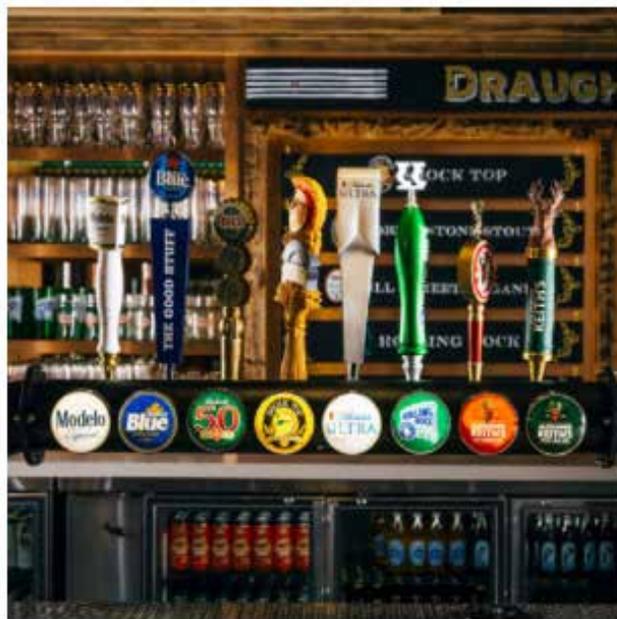
The winter weather will not stop us. We are well prepared for any snow, sleet or rain, so please join us!



Learn about the latest machine learning innovations AB In-Bev are utilizing to improve quality control.



Take a personal tour of the brewery led by a Columbia University Alum, who is also an AB In-Bev global technology director.



Plenty of food and a variety of beer will be served throughout the evening.

Anheuser-Busch Brewery
200 US-1, Newark NJ 07114

Date: Tuesday, February 12th, 2019

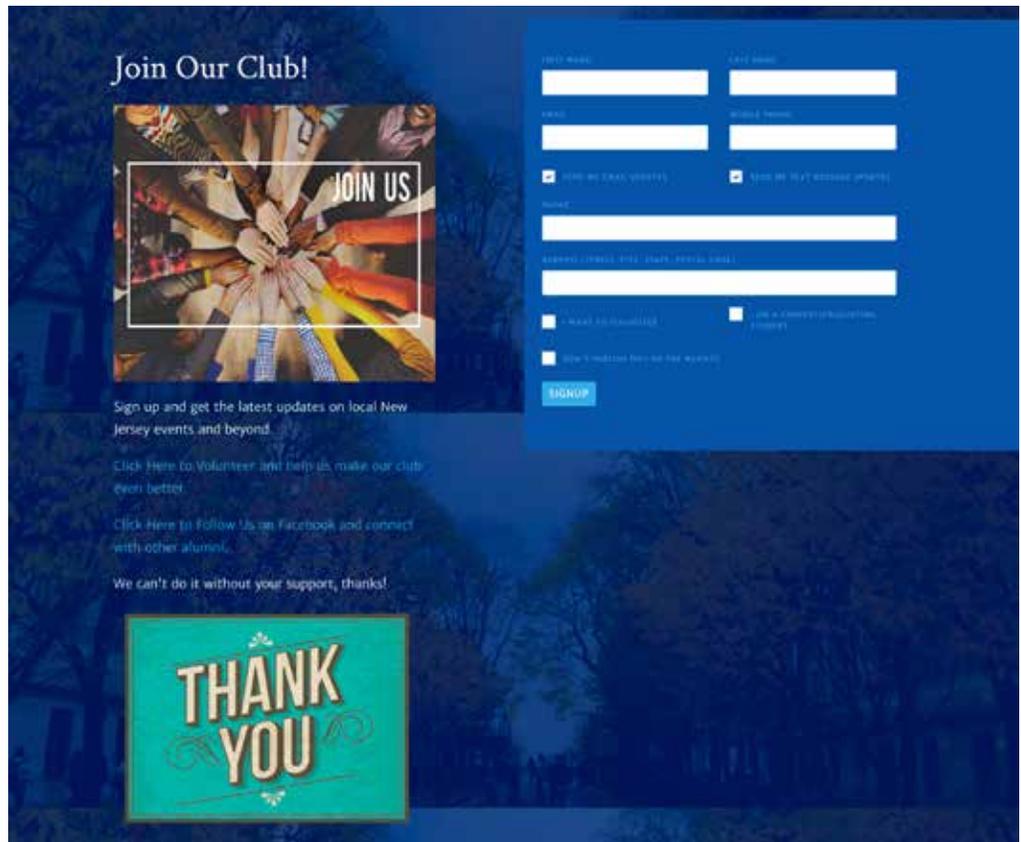
Time: 6pm - 9pm

Included: Technology Innovation Presentation, Brewery Tour, Food & Beer/Soft Drinks, Business Networking

[Buy Your Ticket Now - Register Here](#)

Website: We recently updated our site to include Join Us and Volunteer Now sections. We use them to collect names to our database and mailing list and to find new volunteers to help run and promote events. It has been effective in bringing in leads each month and we are glad we made the move to include them. It was easy to setup in Nation Builder as there are page options already setup for gathering new members and getting volunteers. Simply search the list when creating a new page in Nation Builder and you will see it.

The other main area we utilize our website for is to promote our events. Already this year we have promoted 12 events.



IN CONCLUSION

- **Social Media:** You can have a lot of impact on event participation and club membership recruiting by using Facebook effectively. Approximately 30% of all online media time is spent on social media activities, so it's a major media touch point. It is important to build your social media Followers as a way of effective communication with club members. This requires a commitment to quality content, events and an investment in sponsored posts.
- **Video Content:** Using video is the most effective way of getting people's engagement online. Try to find or create the most engaging video content available and promote your club with it. It should be used in emails, on your website and social media site. All promoted Facebook events/boosts have a feature to create a slideshow with music to create a 10-15 second video from pictures. That video is going to be way more effective than using one photo alone. Always think about how to find and best utilize video online, including having your own YouTube Channel.
- **Email:** Utilizing email is the most efficient way one can communicate regularly with your members. It is important to build your database and tag members who are the most active. Working closely with the CAA to get database updates as well as gathering emails at every event will help you grow your list. Be creative with every element of your emails to help them stand out and don't be shy about increasing your email frequency.
- **Website:** There are many creative ways the website can be used to help support your club activities and mission. Your club website is a tool you should use to promote your events, sell tickets and give credibility to the club. It should also be utilized to get volunteers and drive new members to your mailing list. If you have a paid membership option, your site should also feature the benefits of becoming a paid member.

Volunteer Now

We are always looking for volunteers to help us manage our club's affairs.



We appreciate your support and look forward to connecting with you soon.

Will you volunteer?

- I'D LIKE TO HELP HOST AN UPCOMING EVENT
- I'D LIKE TO ORGANIZE A NEW EVENT FOR THE CLUB
- I'D LIKE TO GET INVOLVED IN CLUB OPERATIONS
- I'D LIKE TO OFFER VENUE SPACE FOR AN UPCOMING EVENT
- I HAVE OTHER IDEAS!

FIRST NAME LAST NAME

EMAIL MOBILE PHONE (OPTIONAL)

- SEND ME EMAIL UPDATES SEND ME TEXT MESSAGES

PHONE WHEN IS A GOOD TIME TO CALL?

Events & Programs



Columbia Connects NYC 2019

NOVEMBER 12, 2019 AT 7PM

WHERE **Ascent Lounge**
10 Columbus Circle 4th Floor, Time Warner Building, New York, NY 10019, United States

LEARN MORE AND PURCHASE TICKETS



Wines of The World Dinner Tour

NOVEMBER 14, 2019 AT 6:30PM

WHERE **Opici Wine Bistro**
25 De Boer Dr, Glen Rock, NJ 07452, United States

LEARN MORE AND PURCHASE TICKETS



WAAM Foundation Cocktail Reception @ Quad Recording Studios

NOVEMBER 18, 2019 AT 6PM

WHERE **Quad Recording Studios**
723 7th Ave, #10, New York, NY 10019, United States

RSVP



CAA SINGAPORE | COMMUNICATIONS CASE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Columbia University Club of Singapore is the regional club for all admitted students, staff, alumni, family, and other affiliates of the undergraduate and graduate schools of Columbia University in Singapore. We have 1,615 people registered in our database, but we believe, based on data given to us by CAA, that we have approximately 1000 alumni in the region. Not all 1000 alums are registered in our database, and one of the challenges we face is reaching to all of our alumni in Singapore. We do have many non-alums registered on Nationbuilder (“NB”) as over the last few years, we have had quite a few non-alums attend our events as well (especially the mixers and academic panels).

Social Media: A major challenge facing CAA Singapore is how to effectively communicate with our diverse membership base. Recent graduates are checking their personal email accounts far less frequently, making email blasts, which have traditionally our main means of disseminating information to our members, less effective. Instagram is very popular with millennials and, for many of them, is the preferred means of communication. However, Instagram is not widely used by the whole of our alumni base.

As such Facebook and WhatsApp are the most broadly used by our members, and we have effectively used Facebook to communicate with our members about our events and initiatives, thanks to the efforts of our Communications Co-Chair and Board Member Mark Clemente. While Whatsapp is the primary means of communication among our board and committee members, we could and should use Whatsapp more effectively to communicate with our members at large.

Our Columbia Business School representatives use it to market our events to their alumni, and we could brainstorm additional groups which would benefit from such targeted outreach. We ran a family event by the pool this past weekend, and the parents have formed a WhatsApp chat group which is headed by an alum, Jane Ong, a CBS alum with younger children and the head of our family committee. Our SIPA groups also has their own WhatsApp chat group and when we need to reach out to SIPA alums, we ask our committee members to help disseminate the info.

We have a WhatsApp chatgroup with over 30 people and includes our active alums who are “leaders” and “perspective leaders”. We use this form of communication quite often, probably on a weekly basis, if not more.

We update our social media via our communication committee. Mark Clemente, our board member, is in charge of social media. All of the events that are advertised on NB are also advertised on FB. Sometimes, we send out reminders on FB as we don’t want to spam people’s mailboxes. Also, when other peer clubs want us to help market an event, we will use FB, which is a more casual form of communication for us. We will only help market events which we think our members would be interested in, and most of the ones we help market are academic in nature.

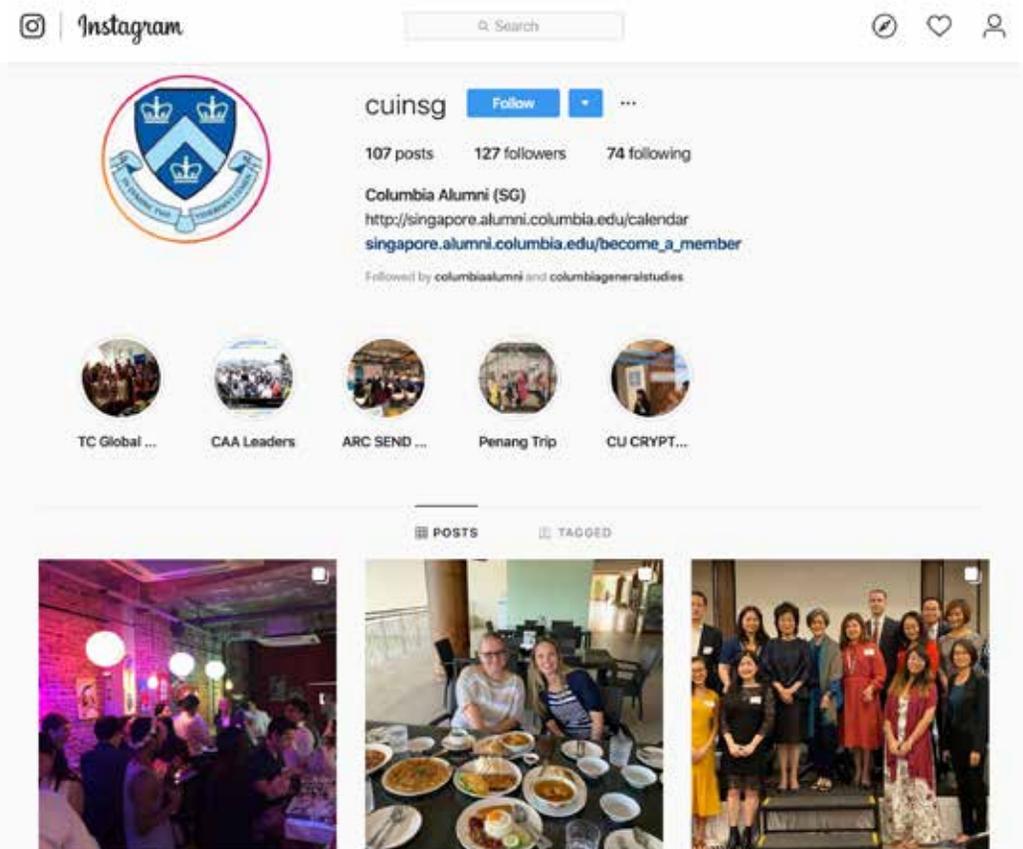
Here are some figures for FB and Instagram. A large majority of our alumni are still reached via our newsletter/e-blast, but I think with that we can still look at increasing more followers on our social channels.

Facebook:

- **Followers:** 1,054 (as of Nov 2019) grown from 684 in Jan 2018

Instagram: handle - @cuinsg

- **Followers:** 127 (as of Nov 2019)
- **Following:** 74 (as of Nov 2019)



Nationbuilder Website: Currently we send out at emails at the beginning and middle of each month. We will send reminders for large events, such as the AGM, but we do keep it to twice a month emails if possible. We used to use the calendar icon for each event, which was a nice touch for marketing purposes. However, we found it too time-consuming so we have dropped it.

The main issue we foresee in the future is getting a dependable alum to prepare our email blasts. Christian, our board member, has been a fabulous volunteer, but he is getting burned out and is looking for a replacement. We are in the process of finding someone for him to train to take over his role. This role is very difficult to fill as it is very time consuming.

Payment collection: Paypal vs. Peatix/Eventbrite

Currently our payment portal is PayPal for all credit card transactions. It has been highly inefficient to use PayPal, and we will consider switching over to Peatix or Eventbrite. The problem with Paypal is that if we run over 20 events a year, it is highly tedious to do the accounting and split the revenues out by event. Peatix keeps all the revenues together by event basis and deposits the sum into our account per event. For book-keeping purposes, it would be much easier for us.

Member Communications: To help keep channels open with our members, we set up two special email addresses through G Suite:

- caasingaporeevents@gmail.com
- singapore@alumniclubs.columbia.edu

CAAsingaporeevents is the email we use for larger events which require RSVP, such as the AGM. It's also the email we use when we do not wish to share our personal email for event purposed.

The Singapore@alum is the email address on our NB site where people send general inquiries. We do not receive email on a frequent basis from this address.

Internal Communication (communicating with your Board Members): While email serves us well to communicate with our members, we also use WhatsApp chat as some of our younger board members do not check email that frequently.

Be a part of a vibrant community

[ACTIVITIES](#)



Become a Member

The Columbia University Club of Singapore is the alumni association of Columbia University in the City of New York in Singapore. Thank you for joining us in helping to strengthen and promote the bonds between Columbia alumni here and around Asia. Life-Time Member \$750.00 for 100 years Matriculated for at least...

[Read more](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

[See more events](#)

Sake Tasting at Sequoia Sake

NOVEMBER 05, 2019 AT 7PM

WHERE **Sequoia Sake/Epiphyte**
47 Neil Rd, Singapore 088827, Singapore

[LEARN MORE AND PURCHASE TICKETS](#)

Columbia Connects/Diplomatic Dialogues: George Tumur, Mongolian Ambassador to Singapore...

NOVEMBER 08, 2019 AT 7PM

WHERE **Hilton Singapore**

[LEARN MORE AND PURCHASE TICKETS](#)

Ivy Ball 2019

NOVEMBER 16, 2019 AT 7PM

WHERE **Hilton Singapore**
581 Orchard Rd, Singapore 238883, Singapore

[RSVP](#)



CAA LONDON | COMMUNICATIONS CASE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Columbia University Club of London (CUCL) is the regional club for all admitted students, staff, alumni, family, and other affiliates of the undergraduate and graduate schools of Columbia University in London and the U.K. CUCL is the largest international CAA club with over 5,000 members in our database.

From roughly 2014 through the middle of 2016, the leadership of CUCL vacated London for a combination of reasons. During that time there was a void and other than a few minor events, little was done and active participation from members fell off sharply.

When the club was resuscitated, one of the primary goals was to expand and streamline all communications with its membership and leadership.

The following is a framework for how CUCL rebuilt their communication channels with its members to increase engagement, enrolment, and participation online and off. During the restructure of leadership all internal club communications were also revised and streamlined.



EMAIL BLAST

Currently we send out at least one monthly email newsletter that follows a basic outline including an introductory note from the club leadership, a recap of recent events and/or special news, upcoming events (active for RSVP), and save the date.

All our emails are managed through Nationbuilder as is our member list. Currently we have over 5,300 emails registered in our system that receive our newsletter. This is split between the designation of Support (2,600+) and Prospect (2,700+) with an open rate typically between 30-35%, which has remained within this range for the last two years.

Our format has evolved over the last 24 months as we now use more images, include less text (hoping to drive people to the website for additional information), and enjoying the new feature of including buttons for links.

The monthly email blast is by far the most time consuming admin to undertake but is our greatest tool to communicate with our members. In a recent annual survey, 96.7% of respondents overwhelmingly said email was their preferred way of learning about club news with 53.3% sharing they read the email fully and a further 46.7% responding they skim the newsletter.

One area we have to pay close attention is our unsubscribe list due to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)—a regulation on data protection and privacy for all individuals within the European Union and the European Economic Area. If someone unsubscribes or asks to be removed from our mailing list, we must comply or can face a fine. Fortunately, this is managed well within NationBuilder (and why we’ve not looked at an outside mail service such as MailChimp or SendGrid). However, GDPR does have other implications which will be discussed further in the following sections.

Social Media offered a few unique challenges. With previous leadership no longer involved with the administration of the club, we were unable to access some accounts. Still others were inactive or no longer serving the new needs of the club.

To make sure we were easy to find and consistent across all channels, we selected a new handle, @ColumbiaClubLon. This is now being used on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (listed in order of followers respectively).

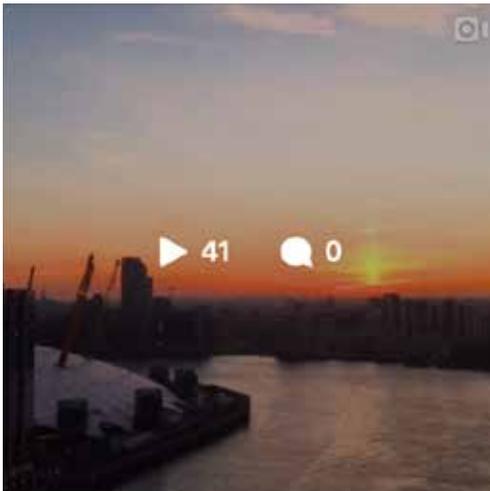
Facebook had been set up originally as a private group. However, there was a limit on the number of members allowed to join. The cap had been hit so the decision was made to create an open page and allow anyone to access the content.

We've shown steady and consistent growth for all our channels, but Facebook is the most active platform.



Page Likes from January 2017 to January 2019

Currently, the majority of the content posted is related to upcoming events. This is largely due to the audience size, type of content we have to share, and resources to manage our accounts. Facebook has the most followers but is only an eighth (0.125%) of our mailing list database. More effort and time is focused on the monthly email blast newsletter which is discussed below.





Columbia University Club of London

@ColumbiaClubLon

Home

Posts

Videos

Photos

About

Community

Events

Create a Page



Like Share

Sign Up

Send Message

Like

Comment

Share



Columbia University Club of London added an event.
31 October at 04:21 · 🌐



MON, 4 NOV

Columbia + MIT Entrepreneurs | Early Stage Startups 101

Founders Factory · London

🔄 Networking

Like

Comment

Share



Columbia University Club of London

30 October at 11:25 · 🌐

The Man. The Legend. The Astrophysicist. @neildegrassetyson '92GSAS will be on stage shortly. @columbiaalumni @columbiagsas



ABOUT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY CLUB OF LONDON

A Short Introduction

The Columbia University Club of London (CUCL) was established as a membership organisation to provid...

See more

Community

See all

👍 567 people like this

📡 619 people follow this

About

See all

🌐 london.alumni.columbia.edu

📁 Community · School

Page transparency

See more

Facebook is showing information to help you better understand the purpose of a Page. See actions taken by the people who manage and post content.

📅 Page created - 19 October 2016

People



567 likes

Pages liked by this Page

Technical Setup: A few technical bits regarding the CUCL NationBuilder website. The domain is officially <https://london.alumni.columbia.edu> (as is the standard convention for all CAA NationBuilder hosted websites), however to make it easier to share (especially at events when speaking with new or potential members) we've purchased a vanity URL— **ColumbiaClub.London**— that is set as a 301 redirect managed through CloudFlare (to help offer speed and security).

We also worked with CAA in New York to assure our site had an active SSL certificate (Secure Sockets Layer) for data transfer security and authorization. This was needed to make sure we were protected and compliant with GDPR ensuring any forms completed on our site were secure. To learn more about if a site is secure, you can visit [HERE](#).

Currently our payment portal is PayPal for all credit card transactions. At the time of implementation this was the easiest set up, however, we are looking at alternate services in hopes of finding something with smaller fees (which we pass back to our members).

Content: Since the club's restructuring, the website has gone through a major update with content. While still working within the confines of the provided template, we've worked to make it visually appealing and efficient offering a range of information on events, news, leadership, and SIGs (CVC, Tennis, Mentorship Program, etc.).

We rely heavily on the featured content sliders on our homepage to promote upcoming events. We also have a two prominent sections below that include news (our most recent newsletter published to the website) and upcoming events.

The most heavily used section of the website is for events—in 2018 we hosted 42 events! We typically try to post 4-6 weeks in advance of any upcoming program. Each listing has as much detail as possible including pricing, location, and any other information that's relevant. We work hard to make sure the associated marketing image is repeated across all platforms (i.e. website, email, social, etc.) so we stay on brand. Each event has a dedicated event email address for our members and event organizers which is discussed in more detail below.

Neil deGrasse Tyson '92GSAS | Letters From An Astrophysicist Live

This event has sold out.

Neil deGrasse Tyson '92GSAS is arguably the most influential, acclaimed scientist on the planet. As director of the Hayden Planetarium, and host of *Cosmos* and *StarTalk*, he has dedicated his life to exploring and explaining the mysteries of the universe.

Professor Tyson was born in New York City the same week NASA was founded. After a BA in Physics from Harvard, a **PhD in Astrophysics from Columbia University**, and a Postdoctoral research fellowship at Princeton, Tyson became the Frederick P. Rose Director of the Hayden Planetarium, where he has served since 1996. Neil is the host of the award-winning *Cosmos* TV series, and *StarTalk*, the first ever science-based talk show and podcast. He has over 13 million Twitter followers, among the top 200 people in the world.

“ Don't fear change. Don't fear failure. The only thing to fear is loss of ambition. But if you've got plenty of that, then you have nothing to fear at all — Neil deGrasse Tyson



WED
30
OCT
11:00

WHEN OCTOBER 30, 2019 AT 7PM - 9PM

WHERE Eventim Apollo
 45 Queen Caroline Street
 Hammermesh
 London W8 7JF
 United Kingdom

CONTACT Stephen J Elms
 event@columbiaclub.london

IS STAFF

Sorry, this event is sold out.

SOLD OUT: Neil deGrasse Tyson '92GSAS in his first ever UK event!

JOIN US!



SIGN UP

Join the Columbia Community in London

Email Address

JOIN US!

LATEST NEWS

More news



OCTOBER 04, 2019

Special Event: Jodi Kantor CC'96 and...

Sincere apologies for yet more activity in your inbox. However...

READ MORE 1 2 3



OCTOBER 02, 2019

Columbia Giving Day 2019 - New...

We normally try to limit the volume of emails we...

READ MORE 1 2 3



OCTOBER 02, 2019

October Events | Act Fast as...

Normally, this is where we offer pleasantries and write about...

READ MORE 1 2 3

UPCOMING EVENTS

Shelley von Strunckel: Astrology expert and New Era thinker...

NOVEMBER 12, 2019 AT 6:30PM

at The Royal Institution
21 Albemarle St, London W1B 3BS, United Kingdom

RSVP

Alan Howard /JW3 Speaker Series: Andrew Lloyd Webber &...

NOVEMBER 13, 2019 AT 7:30PM

at JW3 Centre
140-151 Finsbury Rd, London NW3 1ET, United Kingdom

LEARN MORE AND PURCHASE TICKETS

Alan Howard /JW3 Speaker Series: Heston Blumenthal & Camilla...

NOVEMBER 18, 2019 AT 7:30PM

at JW3 Centre
140-151 Finsbury Rd, London NW3 1ET, United Kingdom

LEARN MORE AND PURCHASE TICKETS

PRIVACY POLICY

CAA ALUMNI EVENTS WORLDWIDE

LOG IN

Sign up for email updates;

EMAIL ADDRESS

SIGN UP

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

SITE PROVIDED BY

COLUMBIAalumni ASSOCIATION

We are an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, or other characteristics. For more information, please visit <http://www.columbiaalumni.org>.

MEMBER COMMUNICATION

To help keep channels open with our members, we set up three special email addresses through G Suite:

- **Connect@columbiacub.london**
- **Events@columbiacub.london**
- **Info@columbiacub.london**

Connect@ is our main account used exclusively by the club president and vice president. This address is where all the primary outreach and correspondence is conducted.

The **Events@** is made available to any organizer running an event. This keeps communication consistent and regulated. Again, with GDPR we are very careful not to conduct club business on person email addresses. All members know that can write to **events@columbiacub.london** for a quick response and get information on any of our programming. Since launching this email address, we've seen positive response from our members and event leaders.

Lastly, **Info@** was created solely for the purposes of GDPR when we updated our privacy policy for the website in May 2018. This was so any individual could request a subject access request (SAR) asking for their personal data. CUCL would then have approximately one month from the day of the request to report back to the individual what personal data is held on them, be told whether their personal data is being processed, be told why it's being processed, be told if that data is being sent anywhere else, and be given a copy the data and details of its sourcing. For these reasons it was important to have a dedicated inbox where the Executive Committee of the club monitor for any such requests.

We also monitor and respond to queries that are made on social media (most often via Facebook messenger) but receive very few requests through these channels.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION (COMMUNICATING W/ YOUR BOARD MEMBERS)

While email serves us well to communicate with our members, our internal communications is not solely dependent on email and is spread across a few services.

Slack: Our primary channel for communication is Slack. We have approximately 20 channels that cover a range of topics from exec committee to event planning and the monthly newsletter. The channels are a combination of public and private (primarily board and finance) which allows us to monitor and regulate access the 25+ team members. This also allows us to invite any club member who is working on a particular event or initiative to join Slack and be part of the planning process. Slack also has the advantage for these members—who may only be active on occasion or seasonally (holiday planning committee) to see the entire exchange on a particular topic without worry they've been left off an email thread or missed something. Since implementing Slack as our primary tool, the club efficiency has increased notably and the ability to react to changes and feedback is streamlined.

Our onboarding has also been successful through customizations including our own Columbia inspired emojis.



:roaree:



:roar-smile:



:roar-grin:



:roar-glasses:



:roar-wink:



:roar-think:



:high-five:



:cheerleader:



:culion:



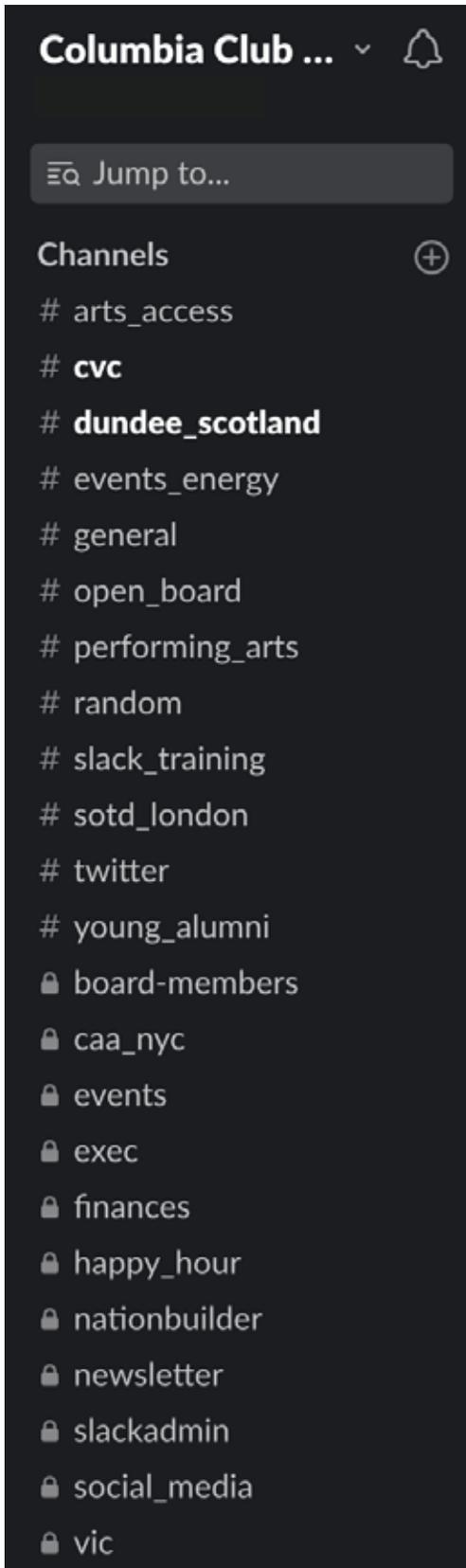
:paw:



:letter-c:



:envelope-lion:



Trello and G Suite: For project management, we rely heavily on Trello and G Suite (Google Drive, Docs, Sheets, Forms, Slides, etc.).

Trello works as our digital kanban board to help map out upcoming projects and deadlines, As with Slack we've set up a series of boards that allow access for different members (some secure others more public). This gives everyone involved in a project a clear overview of assets and deadlines. It also gives leadership the ability to track the progress of a project to assure everything is working smoothly.

G Suite is our primary toolbox. All files and assets are stored on Drive which makes sharing and access easy and secure. Project outlines, newsletter drafts, budgets, and member surveys are all easily accessed and shared between team members. We have a Slides template for presentations which we can share with outside collaborators. As our email addresses are managed through G Suite, we keep everything managed from those accounts again keeping access and private information secure. This is also an important consideration for GDPR, especially if/when we have a survey or registration list that has names and email addresses as we have to remain compliant and protected.

CLOSING

While London has made great strides in the last two years as the club has rebuilt itself, there is still much we are learning and processes we are evolving. This is a road-map of how we're working but is by no means the only way to tackle the challenges of running an alumni chapter. For many, this would be far more than needed, but for larger clubs with many moving parts and people, a process such as this may be incredibly helpful.



leaders.alumni.columbia.edu/communications 

