

## ABOUT NAYLOR ASSOCIATION SOLUTIONS

Naylor Association Solutions is a management company dedicated to driving non-dues revenue for trade and professional associations as well as communicating and engaging with members through a variety of channels. In 2015, Dynamic Benchmarking was brought on board to create a benchmarking platform to assess and compare the communications practices of associations from across the country. A mini-platform was also created for the Naylor website to allow visitors to enter a handful of metrics and compare themselves instantly to data collected from the larger, traditional survey. In 2016, Naylor expanded the study's functionality by adding a scoring component that measures and 'grades' an association's communications practices against predetermined industry standards.

Founded in 1969, Naylor Association Solutions provides products and services that drive member engagement and revenue for more than 1,800 associations in North America. As part of that mission, Naylor conducts benchmarking studies and surveys to track and measure key performance indicators in the association space. In 2011, as part of its benchmarking initiatives, Naylor launched its Association Communications Benchmarking Study to examine the effectiveness of, and trends in, association communications practices.



These initial benchmarking efforts were managed completely in-house by Naylor's news and education communication division. Study participants entered information using an online survey tool and the resulting data was manually analyzed and compiled into static reports by an outside researcher.

"Our goal for this study was to track and measure how associations were communicating with their members and identify trends, best practices and opportunities to improve communications," says Dave Bornmann, Chief Marketing Officer for Naylor. "One of the challenges we faced

was providing a tangible means of helping respondents compare their individual performance to that of their peers and the overall industry."

In 2015, Naylor contacted Dynamic Benchmarking and, together, developed a plan to move the communications benchmarking study to the Dynamic Benchmarking platform. The initial study covered over 130 questions, with nearly all of them featuring pop-up charts to provide instant reporting of results based on data collected to date for that question.

"Associations, more than other industries, like to share – what is working well, and what isn't," Bornmann continues. "Dynamic Benchmarking took our study to the next level by helping associations immediately see how they're performing across 50 different metrics against their peers."

In addition to the full communications study, Dynamic Benchmarking also developed a custom mini-assessment tool for the Naylor website. This mini-assessment allowed visitors to enter a handful of metrics and compare themselves to the data collected in the larger study. Users answered seven questions and received immediate feedback. Naylor used this mini-assessment to instantly demonstrate the value of the study. By giving participants a taste of how they compare to their peers when it comes to communications practices, they were able to drive participation in the larger study.

Naylor featured the mini-assessment as an interactive attraction at the ASAE Annual Meeting in August 2015 to kickoff the retooled study. The mini-assessment and the larger communications study were both well-received, so much so that Naylor has since retired the mini-assessment as a promotion tool for the larger survey.

The company's customer base was pleased with the ease of use and ability to generate customized, peer-to-peer comparisons. Seeing the potential to make a substantial impact on the industry's communications practices, the Naylor team decided to add a new level of functionality to their benchmarking tool for 2016.

Dynamic Benchmarking introduced the Naylor team to a customized scoring solution which allows users to enter key performance metrics and receive 'scores' or 'grades' based on how their efforts measure up against predefined industry standards. Using the vast collection of industry data and the combined industry expertise of the Naylor staff, Dynamic Benchmarking helped form quantifiable best practices standards for various communications programs, strategies and tactics.

"Providing our customers with a tangible means of comparing individual performance to that of their peers was a great advance over previous studies," Bornmann comments. "By adding this new functionality, we are now able to provide participants with an even more meaningful experience and payoff on the time they invest completing the survey."

Now, as users enter their data, they not only have access to a variety of dynamically generated, personalized reports, charts and graphs, but they are also presented with a personal scorecard that grades their performance against these defined industry standards.

"We are excited for our survey participants to not only see how they compare to their peers through the benchmarking platform, but to also give them a chance to see how they perform against industry best practices through the new scoring functionality," Bornmann adds. "Now participants can see their own score, the median score and the best practices score all at once. They can readily see areas for improvement and determine the extent to which they are lagging behind their peers and the industry as a whole. Armed with

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*Dave Bornmann, Chief Marketing Officer*

this performance information, associations can initiate conversations within their organizations that lead to enhancing their overall communications effectiveness.”

Since its initial launch in 2015, Naylor has since refined its survey on a yearly basis based on user feedback and by analyzing the data collected using the Dynamic Benchmarking platform. This continuous process of improvement ensures that the study is collecting data relevant and meaningful to its users.

“As a study sponsor, you start to see trends year over year as to which data points are of value to survey participants,” adds Dynamic Benchmarking Project Manager, Holly Maki. “Through our platform, the Naylor team was able to see which metrics were truly meaningful to its audience as early as the first year. The team used this data to further refine its study, removing questions that were no longer pertinent or those that received low responses. This continuous improvement of the study makes it a more meaningful tool to its users and ultimately drives even greater participation and user satisfaction.”

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