



## **"Practical Problem-Solving Advice for Publishers"**

### **Renaming an Association Magazine**

**© 2016 by John B. McHugh**

Two points to consider in the process of renaming your association's magazine:

1. A truism in the association business: the association magazine is usually viewed by members as the association's number one benefit.
2. Decision-making that is participative and collaborative produces the best results.

Then ask these questions.

- Who are your magazine's competitors? What are the titles of the magazines? Are these magazines published by commercial (for-profit) or association publishers?
- What title would optimize results in search engines? Key word searches?
- What are the relevant intellectual property considerations in the selection of a new title? Titles cannot be copyrighted; however, titles can be protected under trademark law and also under states' unfair competition laws. Do a trademark search and get legal advice from an IP specialist attorney to save potential heartburn down the road.
- Who are the people who have a stake in the selection of a new title? For example, consider members, advertisers, contributors, columnists, editor's staff, advertising sales, editorial committee members, subscribers, and governance.
- Who needs to approve the new title? Your boss (ED), colleagues, and, most importantly, who in governance? Remember the adage, "No surprises please."
- Does your organization have a branding strategy? How will a new magazine title work in the context of the branding strategy?
- What is your deadline to select a title?
- Along with the new title, should you consider a redesign?
- What will be your communication plan to announce the new title?

Next, assemble a task force from the above-mentioned stakeholder groups. Write a number of possible new magazine titles for consideration and put your task force to work. Agree on a new title and get the necessary approvals.

This deliberative process will take time. However, it will ensure that your new title is solid in a marketing context and, equally, get buy-in from all those who have a vested interest in the association's membership magazine.

## **Free McHugh Papers**

I am pleased to share with you 27 papers, all at my website. Also, check out the free15 ***McHugh Expert Interviews*** at <http://goo.gl/l3iyfz>.

## **About John B. McHugh and Liz Novak, MBA, CAE**

John B. “Jack” McHugh is a 40-year veteran of the publishing business. Jack has worked as an executive for Houghton Mifflin, Wadsworth, and Saint Mary’s Press. Jack is also an experienced association publishing executive. For seven years, he was Publisher and Director of Programs at the American Society for Quality and for a two-year period, he served as the Interim Publisher at the Project Management Institute. Jack’s specialties include association/nonprofit publishing, book publishing, executive recruiting, journal publishing, rights and permissions, organizational design, and startups. He is the manager of a LinkedIn™ group, *Association and Nonprofit Publishing*.

## **Contact John B. “Jack” McHugh**

Email: [jack@johnbmchugh.com](mailto:jack@johnbmchugh.com)

Website: <http://www.johnbmchugh.com/>

Phone: **414-351-3056**