



Journalism Education Association

Communication Audit

March 31, 2025

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1. Executive Summary

The Journalism Education Association (JEA) continues to expand its digital presence, with notable growth in several key areas. This communication audit is a comprehensive review of an organization's internal and external communication strategies, channels and practices to evaluate their effectiveness, reach and impact, ultimately aiming to identify strengths, areas for improvement and strategies to enhance overall communication.

This communication audit identifies, JEA's channels of communication as social networking sites (Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn), email marketing, print communication, JEA's website, JEA listserv/JEA Forum and in-person events. These communication channels help execute JEA's mission and vision efficacy. The purpose of this audit is to explore trends in user data, identify valid methodologies for communication efficacy and outline key behavioral, awareness and attitudinal goals.

2. Organizational Communication Goals

JEA's mission, vision and core values

Mission Statement

The Journalism Education Association supports free and responsible scholastic journalism by providing resources and educational opportunities, by promoting professionalism, by encouraging and rewarding student excellence and teacher achievement and by fostering an atmosphere which encompasses diversity yet builds unity.

Vision Statement

The Journalism Education Association is a dynamic, adviser-focused organization serving a diverse media community. To develop and support effective media advisers, JEA must protect scholastic press and speech freedoms of advisers and their students; provide an environment that attracts, develops and retains the best educators in the profession; build diversity at the scholastic and professional levels; promote and demonstrate educational use of the latest technologies and provide innovative, consistent and quality services.

Core Values

- Pedagogy
- Advocacy
- Innovation
- Community
- Excellence

Communication goals

In communication science, it is elusive to measure a stimuli's (dependent variable) impact on a person (independent variable). Therefore, social psychologists have simplified the study of communication outputs to three main areas communication can have an impact on; behavior, attitude and perceptions (Kelman and Eagly, 1965). Furthermore, JEA can utilize this framework to organize their communication outputs. For this communication audit, we operationalize the independent variable as people, stakeholders, volunteers, members, etc... and the dependent variables as JEA's communication channels, outputs, programs, products and services.

Behavioral goals — goals relating to change in independent variable's interactions with JEA.

- Retention members
- Member engagement
 - Key performance indicators — followers, newsletter subscribers, website traffic, website duration
- Enhancing user experience through programs, resources and tools

- Increase registration for conventions
- JEA Store Views/Purchases
- Increase fundraising and giving
- Increase traffic to JEA website
- Increase membership
 - Active Members (2,382 – pulled Jan. 15, 2025)
 - Administrator/Non-teacher 1-year – 0.55% (13)
 - Affiliate 1-year – 0.59% (14)
 - Associate 1-year – 3.53% (84)
 - Associate 2-year – 0.17% (4)
 - Complimentary Individual – 0.5% (12)
 - Complimentary Institution – 0.04%(1)
 - Emeritus Teacher/Adviser 1 year – 1.13% (27)
 - Emeritus Teacher/Adviser 2 year – 0.76% (18)
 - Emeritus Teacher/Adviser 3 year – 0.21% (5)
 - Institution 1-year – 1.13% (27)
 - Lifetime Teacher/Adviser – 13.45% (320)
 - Student 1-year – 0.84% (20)
 - Teacher/Adviser 1-year – 76.85% (1,829)
 - Teacher/Adviser 2-year – 0.25% (6)

Membership drill down by state is provided in the Q1 analytics report.

Awareness, outreach & public relation goals — goals that directly impact independent variable's knowledge of JEA.

- JEA awareness
- Identifying target publics and communicating this to all audiences*
 - Prospective (Newsletter subscribers, Dropped members, social media followers)
 - Advocates — (Committee chairs, state directors, board members, volunteers and donors)

*Publics are not mutually exclusive, publics can overlap (i.e. an advocate, committee chair can also be an active member).

- Relationship and community building with opinion leaders, influencers, donors, stakeholders and press
 - Program awareness and information (Partner Projects, JEA Curriculum, Awards, Outreach Academy, C:JET, Certification, Mentoring, Digital Media Library, Student Press Rights Center and more. . .)
 - Internal vs. External press kits and resources
 - Feedback loop
 - User generated content campaign
 - Member survey

- Convention survey
- Program survey
- Membership Drive

Attitudinal and comprehension goals — goals that directly impact independent variable's perception toward JEA.

- Education and membership benefit comprehension
- Prospective membership comprehension of JEA's culture
- Survey methodology (Qualtrics) to measure target audiences' attitudes, behaviors and perceptions toward JEA.

It is important to mention that behavioral, awareness and attitudinal goals are not mutually exclusive. Essentially, JEA's audiences are not monoliths and are better conceptualized as fluid who can flow in between different communication goals. As an example, a new member can have a low comprehension of member benefits; a frequent JEA store shopper might not have a membership; or a nonmember might have a high awareness of JEA's programs.

Audience Analysis

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "employment of news analysts, reporters and journalists is projected to decline 3 percent from 2023 to 2033." In addition, "employment of high school teachers is projected to decline 1 percent from 2023 to 2033." The volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity of these marketing trends support the further analysis of JEA's market share to help the organization remain competitive.

High school journalism educators, from the newest to the most experienced, make up the majority of the 2,500 members of Journalism Education Association. A secondary audience includes professionals — college librarians, yearbook printing companies, college journalism education leaders, state and regional association directors. In subsequent sections of the communication audit, there will be more information on JEA's audience demographics.

3. Communication Channels & Platforms (Internal and External)

In 2025, JEA has its first quarter metrics report ([here](#)). The metrics report provides a high-level overview of social networking site metrics, audience demographics (like age, gender and location), general website metrics, membership numbers and respective JEA program reports. In the report, social media engagement remains strong, particularly on Instagram, which saw a 19.94 percent increase in followers and LinkedIn, which experienced an impressive 40.95 percent growth, indicating increased interest from professional educators and industry stakeholders. Facebook also demonstrated steady growth at 4.05 percent, reinforcing its value in reaching established journalism communities.

Additionally, JEA's newsletter subscriber base saw a significant 17.3 percent increase, surpassing 21,700 subscribers, reaffirming email as a critical communication tool. The introduction of Linktree has also improved content accessibility, generating 366 views and 274 clicks since its launch in Q4 of 2024. However, while these areas show positive momentum, website traffic declined by 19 percent, highlighting a need to assess site usability, content relevance and SEO strategies to improve visitor engagement. Similarly, X (Twitter) followers saw a slight decline of 2.56 percent, suggesting potential shifts in audience engagement on the platform. A key demographic insight reveals that nearly 70 percent of JEA's audience consists of women aged 34-54, emphasizing the importance of refining messaging and tailoring content to better engage this core group of journalism educators.

The following section lists JEA's communication channels that help execute the mission and vision. Each section lists key performance indicators relevant to tracking engagement.

- Website (jea.org) — average session duration, page views, clicks and bounce rate.
 - Structure, accessibility and user experience
 - Content quality and updates
 - SEO performance
- Email Marketing — sends, opens, clicks, and subscribers.
 - Frequency, readability and engagement rates
 - Effectiveness of calls to action

- Social Networking Sites — followers, likes/reactions, number of posts, views, comments, shares/saves and clicks.
 - Follower growth, engagement metrics, post performance
 - Content strategy and alignment with goals
 - Platforms (Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube)*

▪ Facebook audience demographics ▪ 18-24 – 3.1% ▪ 25-34 – 18.7% ▪ 35-44 – 26.4% ▪ 45-54 – 26.3% ▪ 55-64 – 15.5% ▪ 65+ - 10% ▪ Facebook 69.5% Women, 30.5% Men	▪ Instagram audience demographics ▪ 18-24 – 22% ▪ 25-34 – 18.6% ▪ 35-44 – 22.4% ▪ 45-54 – 24.2% ▪ 55-64 – 8.7% ▪ 65+ - 4.1% ▪ Facebook 70% Women, 30%
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*There are more social networking site metrics provided in the Q1 metrics report.

- Print collateral — number of ads, membership distribution list and page views.
 - C:JET Magazine – distribution, readership and feedback
 - Other printed materials (e.g., brochures, event programs)
- In-person — number of convention attendees, number of sessions, number of program sponsors and pageviews
 - Promotion of National High School Journalism Conventions, SIPA, CSPA and other regional workshops
 - Effectiveness of event materials, speaker promotion and post-event follow-ups

Communication Channel Map

(Uses and Gratification Theory)

Uses and gratification theory proposes that there are five different reasons why individuals use media; cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, social integrative needs and tension-free needs — previous research supports online consumption of social networking sites have determined these as legitimate types of content (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Ruggiero, 2000). It is a common theme for organizations to adapt to multiple user needs, however, JEA's output communication primarily focuses on social interactive and cognitive needs.

The most frequent age range for JEA's audience social media presence is women, ages 34-54. It is important to note women make up nearly 70 percent of JEA's audience. This data is congruent with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) research, which shows 77 percent of teachers are women, while men account for about 23 percent (Schaeffer, 2024). Over 98 percent of email opens are completed on a desktop. The most popular website traffic sources JEA's audience is using consist of Windows, Mac, iOS, Android, Google Chrome and Linux, respectively. Therefore, the research supports JEA's primary target audience as high school journalism and media educators ages 34-54.

The following chart is a breakdown of which social media and communication channels are most often used by each target audience.

Channel of Communication	X	Instagram	Facebook	LinkedIn	Newsletter	Print/Mail	Website	Listserv/Forum	In Person
Target Audience									
Journalism Advisers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
High School Students	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
University Students	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
University Faculty/Staff	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Parents/Legal Guardians	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Journalism Organizations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
JEA Alum (Convention participants, NSMC winners, etc...)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Keynote speakers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Journalism affiliate organizations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Yearbook Companies	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X

Channels of Communication Key

X = best practice to use the communication channel to reach target audience

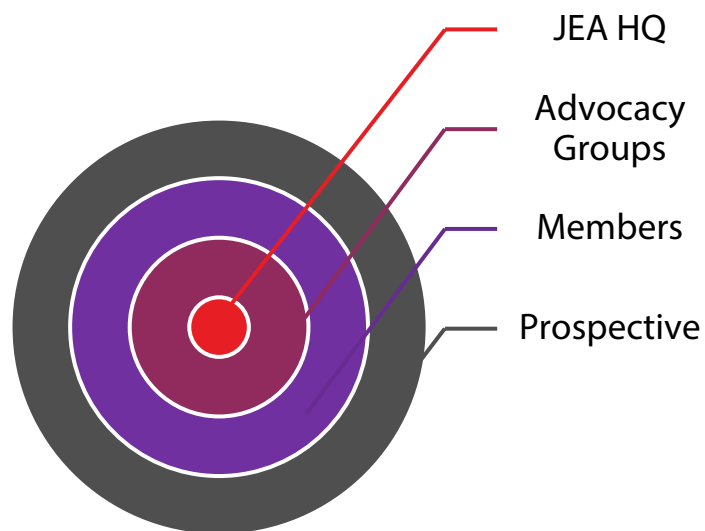
X = secondary communication channel to reach target audience

= not ideal platform for intended target audience

Communication Organizational Chart

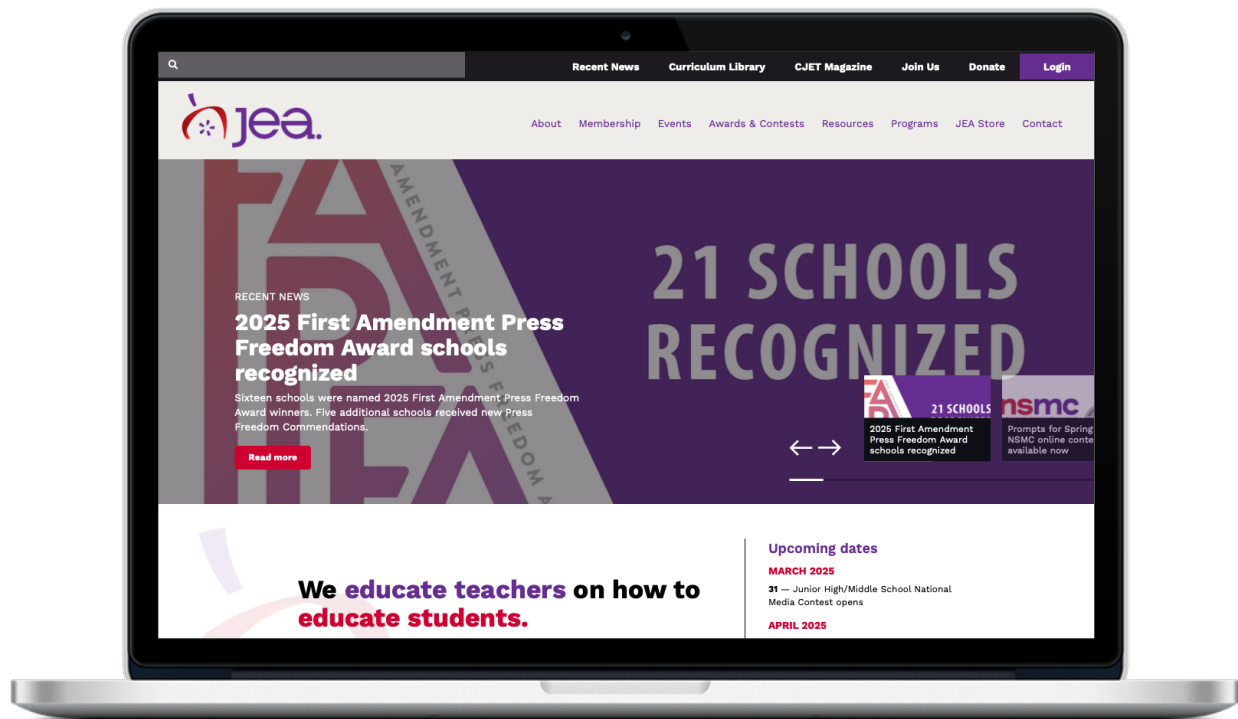
Schein's Model of Organization Culture

JEA's organizational structure aligns closely with Schein's Model of Organizational Culture, which identifies three core levels that shape an organization: behaviors and artifacts, values and underlying assumptions (Miller, 2009). At the outermost level, visible behaviors and artifacts include JEA's branding, communication strategies and engagement with members through conventions, awards and professional development opportunities. Moving deeper, JEA's core values—such as advocacy for press freedom, educational excellence and community-building — drive decision-making and guide interactions within the scholastic journalism landscape. At the deepest level, underlying assumptions—such as the belief in journalism as a pillar of democracy and the commitment to empowering educators—serve as the foundation of JEA's mission and culture. This layered approach ensures that JEA's communication structure is not only strategic but also deeply embedded in its purpose, reinforcing a cohesive and effective organization. It is important to note in Schein's model that both culture is carried out in people, physical items, events, products and services.



Miller posits there are obstacles organizations face with an "onion" structure — namely, communication breakdowns, slow decision-making and reduced agility. Despite these, organizations can continue empowering transparency, collaboration, engage employees and adaptability in a changing environment to overcome these obstacles. Another tactic is to create a task force to help interdisciplinary groups focused on specific projects, such as improving member engagement or expanding digital resources.

Website (Jea.org)



JEA's homepage presents a clean, professional layout that emphasizes its mission to support scholastic journalism through education, advocacy and community. The top navigation includes sections for membership, certification, events, curriculum and awards, guiding users to key programs and resources. A central hero image and rotating carousel with taglines reinforce the JEA's values. Additional sections promote upcoming conventions, contests and curriculum highlights. The design is straightforward and information-focused, offering clear pathways for journalism educators and students to engage with JEA's services. The static nature of the content suggests opportunities for more dynamic interaction and storytelling. These include:

- Use real student/advisor photos to create a personal, relatable vibe.
- Data visualization, number of members, contests held, scholarships awarded, certifications earned—builds credibility and pride.
- Add more actionable language to the website, "Become a Member," "Get Certified," "Enter a Contest," and "Find Resources."
- Incorporating a live feed of tweets, Instagram posts or news headlines keeps the homepage fresh.
- Incorporate quotes, photos and links to full stories.

- Encourage user-generated content for contests, galleries, or project showcases.
- Offer a prominent way to subscribe for updates and email marketing.
- Help new users discover how JEA fits their goals (e.g., “Are you a student or teacher? New to journalism or experienced?”).
- Use of Adobe stock imagery and User-generated content to help tell the story of what happens behind the scenes.

Social Networking Sites

JEA's social media presence plays a vital role in amplifying the organization's mission to support free and responsible scholastic journalism. Through platforms like Instagram, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and LinkedIn, JEA engages its diverse community of educators, students and industry partners by sharing timely updates, educational resources, member spotlights, program announcements and advocacy efforts. Each platform is tailored to reach specific audience segments — from the visually driven storytelling on Instagram to the professional networking and thought leadership shared on LinkedIn. With strong growth in followers, particularly on Instagram and LinkedIn, JEA's social media strategy emphasizes accessibility, community-building and celebrating excellence in journalism education. This ongoing digital engagement strengthens JEA's brand visibility while fostering meaningful connections and empowering advisers and students nationwide.

- LinkedIn - @journalism-education-association
- Facebook - @journalismeducation
- Instagram - @journalismeducation
- X - @nationalJEA
- Linktree – journalismeducationassociation

Trends in social media:

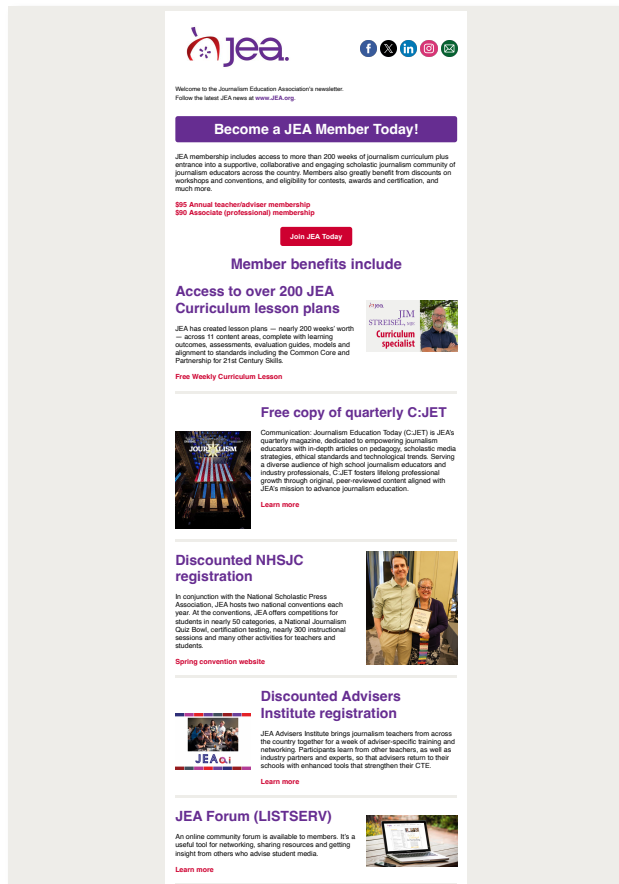
- Instagram followers had a 19.94% increase from Q4 2024 (2,859) to Q1 2025 (3,429)
- Facebook followers had a 4.05% increase from Q4 2024 (4,514) to Q1 2025 (4,697)
- LinkedIn followers had a 40.95% increase from Q4 2024 (398) to Q1 2025 (561)
- Linktree implementation has proven successful with over 366 views and 274 clicks since we launched it last Nov.
- X followers fell 2.56% from Q4 2024 (4,618) to Q1 2025 (4,500)

Recommendations to increase engagement:

- Continue working with program areas and cross-promotion opportunities.
- Consider reallocating efforts, if engagement continues to decline (X), or adjust content strategy to fit evolving platform dynamics.
- Continue monitoring social media engagement key performance indicators and adjust content based on efficacy.



Email Marketing



JEA Nonmembers Newsletter
March 19, 2025



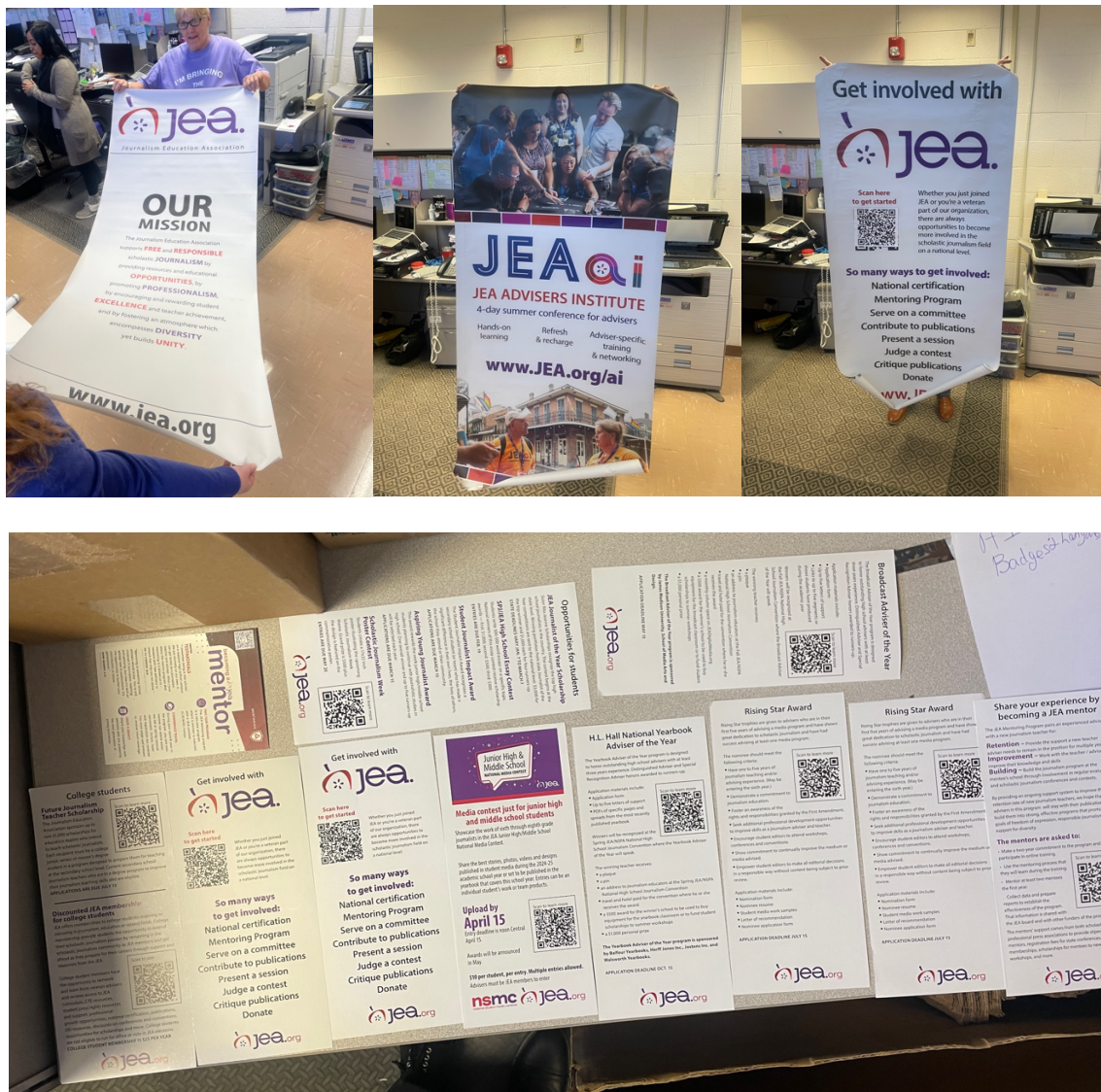
JEA Members Newsletter
March 5, 2025

JEA's email marketing strategy includes a bimonthly members newsletter and a monthly nonmembers newsletter. The JEA Members Newsletter serves as a comprehensive communication tool highlighting recent organizational updates, upcoming events, student opportunities and valuable resources for journalism educators. Relevant sections typically include contests, national high school journalism conventions, curriculum, contests and other time-specific programs throughout the year. With over 21,700 subscribers, JEA's newsletter database has a 46 percent open rate. Interestingly, over 98 percent of email opens are completed on a desktop computer. JEA's email marketing is a key selling feature with the promotion of external opportunities. Making JEA's email marketing a well-rounded mix of internal updates and external enrichment. The ways to increase engagement of JEA's email marketing:

- Transition email marketing platform from constant contact to growth zone.
- Feature a rotating "Member Spotlight" or "Advisor of the Month."

- Include short testimonials or quotes from students who benefited from contests or programs.
- Use consistent and brightly colored buttons for call to action (e.g., "Register Now" or "Submit Work").
- Ensure every section has a clear next step, link or call to action.
- Include behind-the-scenes photos from the board or past conventions.

Print collateral & in-person



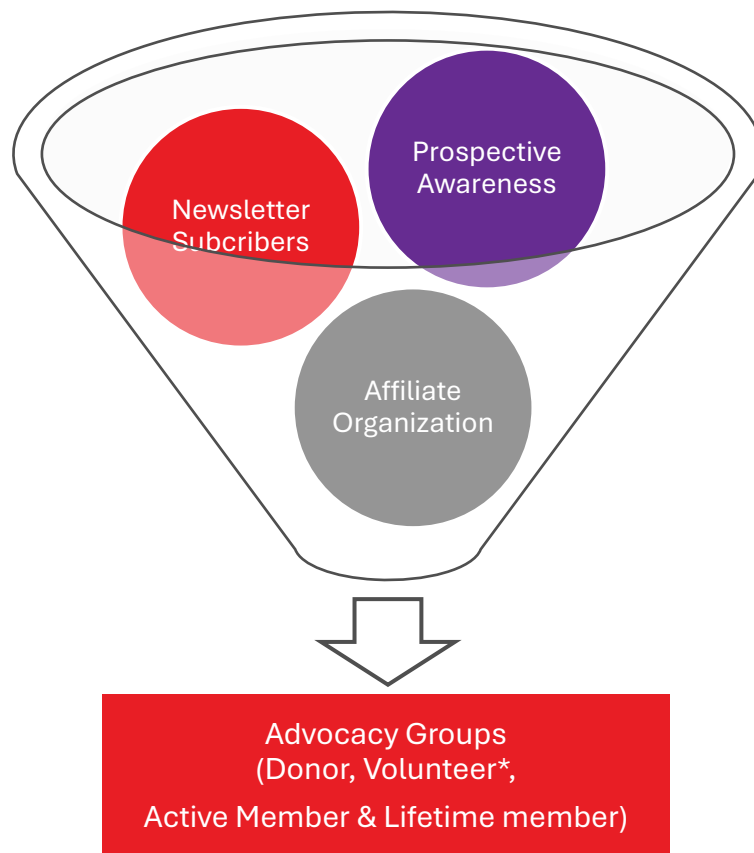
Here are a few examples of JEA marketing collateral (fliers and banners). The print collateral is handed out during in-person events like JEA's convention, partner projects, advisers institute and other events. The banners are used during larger-scale JEA events. Overall, the print materials are consistent in design and relay important information to the reader. However, there are a few updates to help increase engagement and readability.

- Design hierarchy – Some text appears small, which may make it difficult to read quickly at events or conferences. Important sections (deadlines, eligibility, benefits) could be emphasized with color or bold text to stand out more.
- Including a QR code, adding a short call-to-action (e.g., "Scan to apply" or "Learn more about this award") can improve engagement.

- Currently, the materials are text heavy. Adding icons (e.g., engaging images, calendar for deadlines, a trophy for awards) can help break up the text.
- Alternative layouts – a folded brochure or a summary sheet may be more portable than multiple separate flyers.
- Incorporating a short success story or educator testimonial could add a personal touch and encourage more engagement.

JEA Membership Funnel

A marketing funnel represents the journey potential members, sponsors or participants take from initial awareness of JEA to active engagement and long-term commitment. At the top of the funnel, broad outreach efforts—such as social media campaigns, newsletters and website content—build awareness and attract journalism educators and supporters. As they move down the funnel, targeted messaging, valuable resources and engagement opportunities (like webinars, workshops and conventions) nurture interest and encourage deeper involvement. The decision stage focuses on converting interest into action, whether through membership enrollment, event registration, or sponsorship commitments. Finally, at the advocacy stage, JEA fosters long-term relationships by delivering ongoing value through professional development, networking opportunities and advocacy efforts. A well-structured marketing funnel ensures that JEA effectively reaches and sustains a dedicated community of journalism educators and allies.



*Volunteer is an umbrella term which constitutes groups of folks such as committee chairs, state directors, board members, etc...

Retention of advocacy groups is critical. JEA supports advocacy groups through programs, resources, tools and events. It is important to develop working relationships with advocacy groups to manage their needs and expectations. Given JEA's staff size, bounded rationality, meeting every demand is not feasible, which makes survey methodology critical to assess trends.

4. SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Established Reputation: Founded in 1924, JEA is a trusted leader in scholastic journalism education.
- Strong Membership Base: Approximately 2,500 members, including journalism educators across the U.S. and internationally.
- Diverse Educational Offerings: Curriculum, certification programs (CJE, MJE), mentoring and other professional development opportunities.
- Major Events & Conventions: conventions and competitions (NSMC, Quiz Bowl, Scholastic Journalism Week) enhance visibility and engagement.
- Advocacy & Press Freedom: Strong partnerships with SPLC and other organizations to support student press rights.
- Print & Digital Resources: C:JET magazine, curriculum resources and online databases provide value to members.
- Strategic Partnerships: Collaborations with organizations like NSPA and other journalism education groups amplify impact.

Weaknesses

- Limited Public Awareness: While well-known in the journalism community, JEA may lack broader recognition outside of its core audience.
- Financial Dependence on Membership & Conventions: Revenue relies heavily on membership dues, convention attendance and sponsorships.
- Resource Constraints: A relatively small staff limits the capacity for expanding initiatives and programs.
- Engagement Gaps: Some states and state directors are as active, leading to inconsistent engagement across nation.
- Technology & Digital Adaptation: Need for continuous improvement in digital offerings, such as website navigation and social media engagement.

Opportunities

- Expanded Digital Engagement: Increased use of webinars, podcasts and online courses to reach a broader audience.
- Growing Interest in Media Literacy: Rising concerns about misinformation create opportunities to position JEA as a leader in media literacy education.
- Enhanced Industry Partnerships: Strengthening relationships with media organizations and tech companies to provide more resources and funding.
- Alumni & Legacy Engagement: Developing stronger ties with JEA alumni for mentorship, fundraising and brand advocacy.
- Grant & Sponsorship Expansion: Seeking additional grants or sponsorships to diversify revenue streams.
- International Growth: Expanding outreach to journalism educators beyond the U.S. to increase membership and impact.
- Career & Internship Support: Strengthening job and internship placement resources for students and educators.

Threats

- Declining Scholastic Journalism Programs: Budget cuts and administrative decisions threaten journalism programs in federal funding of schools.
- Competing Educational Organizations: Other journalism or media education groups could attract potential members.
- Shifts in Journalism Industry: Rapid changes in digital media, AI and newsroom layoffs may impact how journalism is taught.
- Economic Uncertainty: Recession or funding cuts in education could affect membership, sponsorships and convention attendance.
- Legislative Challenges: Policies restricting press freedom or limiting student expression could undermine JEA's advocacy efforts.

5. Audience & Stakeholder Feedback

- Surveys, interviews and analytics from JEA members, students and educators
- Trends in member engagement and satisfaction
- Key insights from social media and website analytics

6. Recommendations

- Develop an integrated marketing communication plan for 2025 - 2028 which includes a membership drive, membership feedback survey, a yearly calendar and a user-generated content campaign.
- Continue to monitor analytics for program effectiveness and feedback loop for informed decision-making.
- Increase awareness of JEA programs and membership benefits by partnering with affiliate organizations to cross-promote events, resources and programs.
- Organizational structure to avoid confusion from advocates and general confusion on roles/responsibilities provide an editable organizational structure chart of all the program areas with subcommittee information.
- Roll out JEA brand guidelines and make updates to digital and physical collateral - the website, print collateral and email marketing. This includes creating a comprehensive brochure of JEA rather than several printed materials.
- Including more adviser-voice and student-voice (quotes, photos and testimonials) in JEA's communication strategies.

7. Conclusion

This communication audit provides a comprehensive analysis of JEA's internal and external communication strategies, identifying strengths, challenges and opportunities for growth. Key findings highlight JEA's strong digital presence, with notable engagement on Instagram and LinkedIn, as well as a highly engaged email subscriber base. However, areas such as website traffic and X engagement present opportunities for strategic enhancement.

The evaluation of JEA's communication goals, audience demographics and marketing funnel underscores the importance of tailored messaging, multi-channel engagement and a data-driven approach to outreach. While JEA has a well-established brand and mission-driven communication strategy, improvements in SEO, user experience and content optimization can further strengthen its impact.

To enhance effectiveness, recommendations include developing an integrated marketing communication plan, implementing targeted membership drives, refining analytics for program effectiveness and strengthening feedback mechanisms to ensure continuous improvement. By leveraging data insights, fostering engagement and refining communication channels, JEA can

continue to support and expand its community of journalism educators while reinforcing its mission and core values.

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