



AHA

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– Katie Vaughan, Associate Director of Political Affairs

Challenge

The American Hospital Association (AHA) needed to coordinate more effectively with 52 state hospital associations, streamline Political Action Committee (PAC) reporting, compliance, and grassroots management, and ultimately reduce costs and increase efficiencies.

Solution

AHA relies on Vocus' online grassroots and PAC management software as its centralized database for keeping federal and state associations on the same page regarding campaigns, contributions and disbursements.

Results

AHA substantially reduces the amount of busywork involved in coordinating with state associations, and in doing a number of regular activities. State associations using Vocus were able to cut 95 percent of the work typically involved in coordinating with AHA. PAC donations have increased about seven to eight percent per year – now to \$3 million per election cycle - without additions to the two-person PAC compliance staff.

American Hospital Association PAC Raises \$3 Million with Team of Two

Customer Profile

The American Hospital Association (AHA) is a not-for-profit association of health care provider organizations that are committed to improving health in their communities. A national advocate for its members, AHA represents almost 5,000 hospitals, health care systems, networks and other providers of care, and more than 37,000 individual members. Founded in 1898, AHA provides education for health care leaders and is a source of information on health care issues and trends.

Challenge

From Washington to state legislatures nationwide, health care seems to be on everyone's agenda. To help ensure that health care providers' interests are considered, AHA advocates for numerous health care institutions and organizations around the country on issues like insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, labor, retirement and HIPAA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. For grassroots and political action committee (PAC) initiatives, AHA must coordinate with 52 state hospital associations, 10 of which have their own state PACs. In 1996, AHA began looking for a solution to streamline PAC reporting, compliance and grassroots management, and integrate the many state programs.

Vocus Solution

AHA selected Vocus' online software for grassroots and PAC management to bring efficiency to a number of its activities. The association relies on Vocus as its centralized database to keep the federal and state associations on the same page regarding campaigns, contributions and disbursements.

For its year-long annual fundraising campaign, AHA solicits contributions from an executive class of its membership, as well as members of an affiliated organization, the American Organization of Nurse Executives. AHA turns to state associations to handle most of the soliciting, and PAC contributions are then split between states and the federal association.

Simplifying Coordination with State Associations

Approximately ten AHA staff members across departments such as Communications and Political Affairs use Vocus, as well as 40 individuals throughout the 16 state associations that also have Vocus. State associations using Vocus enter their own contribution details right in Vocus, while all other states report their data to AHA.

With Vocus, AHA significantly reduces the amount of time it takes to process state contribution data. In fact, on average, state associations using Vocus reduce the amount of time it takes to coordinate with AHA by about 95 percent, leading AHA to heavily encourage state adoption. AHA estimates that complete state adoption would free about 1.5 full-time AHA employees from manual data entry.

"It's so much easier to work with state associations that use Vocus," said Katie Vaughan, Associate Director of Political Affairs. "It cuts down considerably on our staff time and it cuts down on errors, and keeps the data we have in Vocus more current and accurate because the states are on the ground and they know these people."

Complete PAC and FEC Reporting

With complete contribution and disbursement details in Vocus, AHA generates regular progress reports showing all state PAC levels. Seeing other PACs' progress spurs a little friendly competition among PACs and lets them know if they are meeting their annual fundraising goals.

With Vocus, AHA also completes monthly FEC compliance reporting in a matter of minutes, and virtually eliminates its risk of errors. "If all the information is there, we can file FEC reports electronically in about three minutes," Vaughan said. "If we weren't using Vocus for FEC filing, we would have to do double data entry. Plus, it won't let you file an error. I don't even know how we would handle filing without Vocus."

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Trimming Time Off Events Management

Previously, the staff spent approximately a full day each week going through paper invitations and the Web site, www.fundraisingevents.com, to identify

and create spreadsheets about relevant congressional events. Now, the staff downloads information about events from that Web site directly into Vocus.

"With the link between www.fundraisingevents.com and Vocus, that's probably one day's worth of work every week that's now been compressed into half of an hour," Vaughan said. "When we found out we could merge these two things, it was one of the happiest days for our department."

Reaching 22,000 with Interactive Emails

On the communications side, AHA also leverages Vocus' government relations software heavily to communicate with congressional staff and members, and to track legislative activity. For example, AHA can quickly look up committee rosters in Vocus instead of searching separate committee Web sites for that information.

Using Vocus Email Campaigns, the communications staff sends a daily update to 22,000 members and other interested parties. When pressing issues arise, AHA relies on the communications wizard in Vocus to reach a more segmented group of its database quickly. After communications go out, Email Campaigns provides valuable insight into how recipients responded, showing how many clicked on which options and who they were.

Results: Vocus Brings Invaluable Extra Manpower

AHA substantially reduces the amount of busywork involved in coordinating with state associations, tracking and targeting contributors, and communicating with members and reporting. Using Vocus, AHA state associations are able to reduce their coordination efforts with AHA by 95 percent. Tied to www.fundraisingevents.com, Vocus saves nearly a full day each week in identifying which events to attend. All that adds up to greater productivity for the PAC team. Without additions to the two-person PAC staff, donations have increased seven to eight percent per year – to \$2.4 million per election cycle.



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