

Annual Report

2021-2022

PIVOTING INTO OUR
NEW REALITY.



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2021-2022

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Checkpoint Marketing for Firms

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BPM LLP

Laura Metz

Manager, Demand Generation
Armanino LLP

Randy Mowat

Partner, SVP Marketing
MNP LLP

Chris O'Day

Director of Marketing
LGA, LLP

Vision 2025

The Association for Accounting Marketing (AAM) strategic plan, Vision 2025, continues to provide clarity and commitment to our members and their firms' growth and sustainability. By providing industry-leading networking, educational resources and thought leadership to fulfill our mission, AAM delivers a unique value and collaboration not found elsewhere. With Vision 2025, we've actively and intentionally broadened our position beyond exclusively serving accounting marketers. This vision establishes our role as an association for all accounting industry professionals responsible for impacting their firm's growth and sustainability, including business development professionals and CPA practitioners.

By focusing on four priorities — growth, process, knowledge and positioning — we aim to:

- » Engage with and satisfy both new and current members
- » Educate on cutting-edge issues and trends through thought leadership
- » Provide timely learning experiences to help members facilitate firm growth
- » Develop products and services that provide guidance on industry issues
- » Build key relationships throughout the accounting industry
- » Create an operational infrastructure to meet our goals

Our long-time membership base of accounting marketers remains critical to this refocused vision as we plan for a clear future of growth and success.

“

AAM has helped me grow my career over the years by providing an excellent forum to expand my peer network, stay abreast of emerging trends, and promote the profession of accounting marketing. I strongly suggest it for anyone looking for a great investment in their firms and themselves.

”

- Greg Cole

PIVOTING INTO OUR NEW REALITY

A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Katie Cohodes
2021-2022
AAM President

Dear AAM Members,

2020 was a challenging year. What would 2021 look like? As a profession, we continued to pivot and adjust to our new reality. There were always new challenges around every corner, and we conquered them together. Our AAM members turned to each other for community and support.

In 2021, AAM expanded its offerings to members in so many different ways. In this report, you will find all the results of our year. Here are some highlights:

We launched our strategic plan, Vision 2025, which will carry us through the next few years. Each goal is outlined with strategies, tactics and KPIs, our pillars of the plan are process, growth, position and knowledge.

AAM Circles opened and took off! These are small communities of like-minded members that help foster networking and peer-to-peer collaboration. Have you joined one yet?

The Marketer's Library received a new look, too. Here, members can locate all types of shared resources. Don't miss it!

Our Business Developers Fundamentals Certificate Course successfully held its first two rounds. With the popularity of this course, we are in the process of developing more content in this format for our members.

In 2021, the AAM Summit went hybrid! Half online and half in Philadelphia. Thank you to all who attended and presented.

You wanted more education around client experience and Emerge, our virtual conference, delivered. What an engaging day of content and networking!

Looking to 2022, AAM has many initiatives planned to propel the organization and our members forward. We are excited to offer our 2022 AAM Biennial Compensation Survey, a new and more efficient volunteer committee structure, and a refreshed and streamlined AAM website. We will continue to strengthen our relationship with the AICPA and expand our reach into Canada, too.

As always, I want to thank each and every AAM volunteer and member. We would not be where we are today without you!

Sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature of Katie Cohodes in white ink.

Katie Cohodes
2021-2022 AAM President

NEW 2021 INITIATIVES



AAM Business Developer Fundamentals Certificate

In the spring of 2021, AAM launched its first skill-building certificate course exclusively for those with business development responsibilities within accounting firms – Business Developer Fundamentals Certificate Course. It was self-paced with 6-module online sessions, weekly live expert hours and a final exam. The course overview included:

- » Optimizing Your Role as a Business Development Professional
- » Building Teams for Pursuits and Client Development
- » Setting Growth Goals and Priority Targets
- » Aligning the Sales Process with How Clients Buy
- » Managing a Pipeline and Leading Strategic Opportunities
- » Coaching Teams and Individuals to Maximize Performance

The course was offered in the spring and fall of 2021 and had a total of 64 learners. It will be available again in the spring and the fall of 2022.

AAM Technology Advisory Group

In 2021, AAM formed the Technology Advisory Group (TAG) as part of Vision 2025, AAM's Strategic Plan. The group was formed to create a strategic technology plan to transform and drive the association forward, which includes evaluating the association's tech stack to identify gaps and deploy new or different technology to better serve AAM and its members.

TAG immediately went to work evaluating the association's current tech stack and quickly identified the redesign of AAM's website as a crucial need. With Board approval, TAG secured a vendor through the Request for Proposal (RFP) process and began working on the website redesign in October 2021. The new website is set to be introduced in June 2022.



NEW 2021 INITIATIVES

AAM DEI Committee

The AAM DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion) Committee officially formed in January 2021. It was the recommendation of the 2020 DEI Task Force to form the committee with the purpose of supporting the action stated in AAM's DEI Statement. In their inaugural year, the committee accomplished a great deal, including:

- » Presenting two training sessions: Defining Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Starting the DEI Journey: Tips for Getting Leadership Buy-in
- » Creating a new AAM-MAA award category to recognize firms that are making positive strides toward creating more diverse and inclusive cultures
- » Developing a DEI Toolkit that outlines helpful strategies to create a DEI program or re-energize a stalled effort
- » Offering more programming and content centered around DEI



AAM Circles

One of AAM's biggest successes in 2021 was the launch of AAM Circles, which are small communities of like-minded members who come together around a specific topic, region or role. Circles are organic, informal and unstructured. They are for members, owned by members and led by members with the goal to offer peer-to-peer engagement to share information and build networks. AAM began with 26 Circles and 235 participating members and continues to grow by adding new Circles.



BY THE NUMBERS



72% OF AAM FIRMS NAMED TO 2021 CLEARLYRATED BEST OF ACCOUNTING™ FIRMS WITH HIGHEST CLIENT SATISFACTION LEVELS

“

AAM is one of the most powerful weapons in the arsenal of any accounting marketer. The professional development is unmatched, not only the regular webinars and training programs, but the real-world experiences I've gained through committees and other AAM projects. And the network is second to none...the people are impressive, inspiring and innovative, always pushing me to be my best.

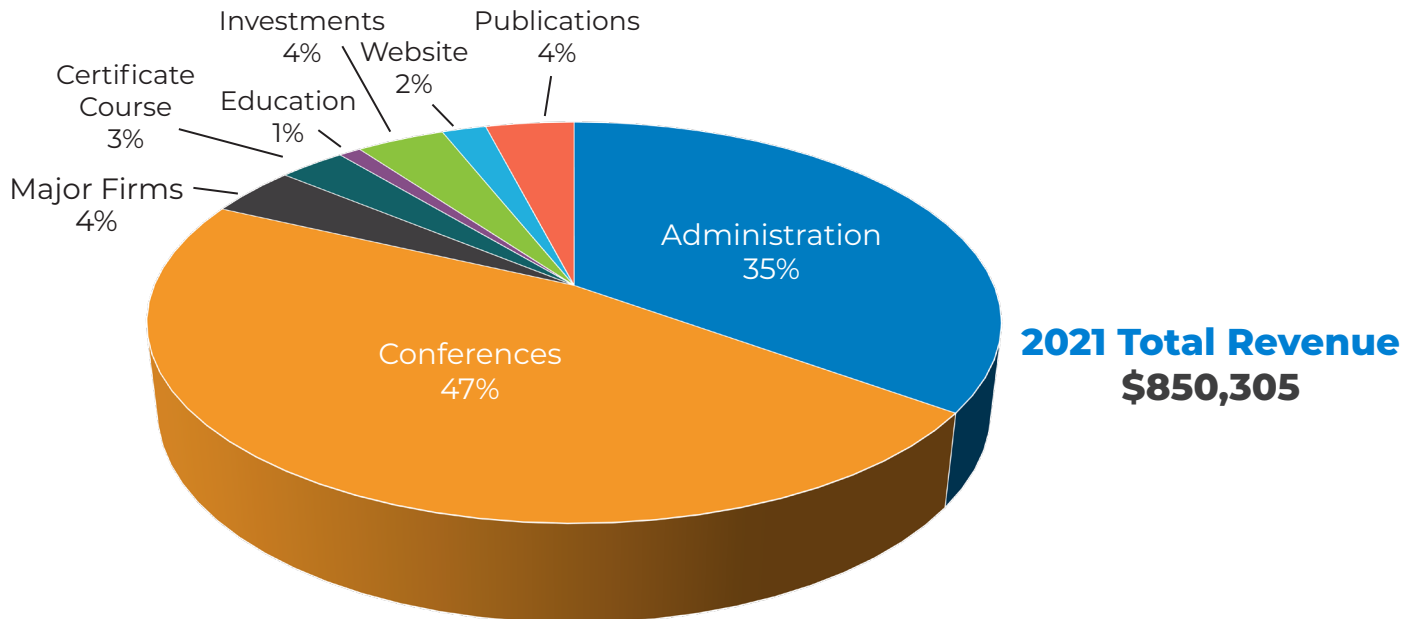
”

- Laura Metz

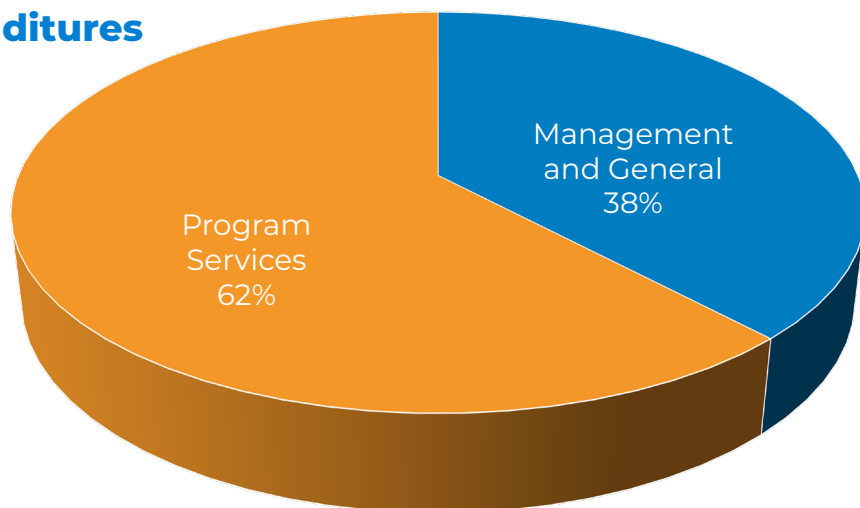
AAM FINANCIAL POSITION

REVENUE & EXPENSES

AAM is financially stable and maintains at least 6-12 months' worth of operating expenses in reserves. AAM engages with an external CPA firm annually to conduct a financial review with a formal audit performed as needed. The financial audit of the 2021 financials received a clean report with no exceptions. The last review conducted in 2020, also resulted in a clean report with no exceptions.



2021 Total Expenditures \$634,242



BY THE NUMBERS

OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS MOVING AAM EFFORTS FORWARD

Our members are some of the best professionals in the accounting marketing industry, so when they volunteer, we want to make sure we get the most out of their time. We recruit committee volunteers who are eager to share their experiences and expertise, connect with fellow members and collaborate on programs and initiatives aimed at advancing the profession. We survey our volunteers, inviting them to share their knowledge and skills, and provide them with the current committee opportunities so they can reflect on where they can make the greatest contribution to AAM. This process helps us identify the best talent to keep our committees stocked and our efforts moving forward.

Our volunteers are our driving force behind AAM and contribute far more than their time. Their ideas, insight, expertise, and passion advance the goals of AAM, not to mention the accounting marketing profession.

14

committees

168

committee members

members per committee

12

AAM Minute

Chairs: Rachel McGrew and Rachel Pompeani

11

AAM Blog (CPA Growth Trends)

Chairs: Chris Borkes and Sammi Dittloff

11

Business Development

Chair: Adam Klein

16

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Chairs: Pauline Gonnering, Carole Carlile and Siri Svay

9

Emerge

Chair: Alice Grey Harrison, Co-Chair: Jordyn Hettick

4

Finance

Chair: Ed Warren

16

Growth Strategies

Chairs: Dana Bottorff and Heather Kunz

13

Member Growth

Chair: Korby Boswell, Co-Chair: Kristina Tucker

7

Podcast

Chair: Chuck Summers, Co-Chair: Daniele Cunningham

7

Social Media

Chair: Brian Falony, Co-Chair: Rachel Hane

13

Strategic Communications

Chair: Brunella Reid, Co-Chair: Jeremy Shen

24

Summit

Chair: Beth More, Co-Chair: JoLayna Arndt

11

Virtual Education

Chairs: Gabe Tevrizian and Ty Hendrickson

14

Website

Chair: Scott Dine, Co-Chair: Sarah Hauge

*Committee statistics do not include board liaisons

COMMITTEE UPDATES

AAM Minute Committee

In 2021, the *AAM Minute* released 12 e-newsletters on topics ranging from client expectations to recruiting and marketing industry trends. The committee incorporated video into several issues by doing video interviews for the “Meet a Member” feature, as well as short videos featuring the Minute Committee’s favorite marketing things. We grew our committee by five new members and nearly doubled our total opens on email sends.

For 2022, the committee plans to experiment with A/B testing on headlines, redesign the layout of the newsletter and continue to produce great content.

- Rachel McGrew and Rachel Pompeani, Chairs

AAMplify Podcast Committee

The AAMplify Podcast Committee has had a good year, creating strong content on a variety of topics; however, the committee’s most significant achievement this year, has been a complete reimagining of the approach and strategy for the podcast. In this first quarter of 2022, the committee is hard at work putting this vision into practice and you can look forward to experiencing the relaunch in the second half of this calendar year. Big things are coming!

- Nicola Fleming, Board Liaison

Business Development Committee

The Business Development Committee hosted several well-attended BD roundtables, and committee members continue to serve as subject matter experts for the AAM Business Developer Certificate course. Our team is also actively building strategy to drive more business development involvement in AAM, and provide more value (content, networking, learning, etc.) for business BD professionals in the profession. Finally, the committee has recruited (and continues to recruit) new BD leaders into the committee.

- Adam Klein, Chair

DEI Committee

Established in 2021, the DEI Committee has accomplished several key initiatives centered on education and content. After a roundtable discussion was held with the committee members, several sub-committees addressed varying strategies. Training sessions provided AAM members opportunities to understand the language and foundational topics of DEI and hear from a panel learning how to start a DEI conversation within their member firms. An impressive DEI Toolkit was deployed to members in February 2022 with general DEI training highlighting the toolkit contents. Data analysis has begun to explore potential communication channels with the CEO Pledge for Action, as well as potential opportunities to target associations that AAM member firms belong to right now.

- Pauline Gonnering, Carol Carlile, and Siri Svay, Chairs

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Growth Strategies

Growth Strategies in 2021 pivoted its focus to themes including the client experience, areas of opportunity, best practices of future forward firms and strategies that bring results. With feature topics such as Marketing Technology for the Future Forward Firm, Metrics That Matter: KPIs That Resonate with Your Partners, and How Firms with Small Marketing Departments Can Be Successful, we continued a strong tradition of focusing on the best practices of member firms with strong marketing departments. Our liaison relationship with the AAM *Minute* Committee enabled multi-faceted treatment of many topics, and we strengthened our coordination with the Social Media and Blog committees to amplify *Growth Strategies* content and extend our reach. *Growth Strategies* continued digital-only publishing throughout 2021.

- Dana Bottorff and Heather Kunz, Chairs

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee continues to meet quarterly, with our key areas of focus on the recommendation that AAM undergo an audit for 2021 (currently on a cycle of 2 years of reviews followed by a 3rd year of audit), the recommendation of moving \$300,000 from bank accounts to investment account, and continuing to seek ideas for new revenue sources beyond dues and conferences which represent 53% of AAM revenues.

- Ed Warren, Chair

“

I so value the education, support and peer group AAM provides; when the pandemic hit, my appreciation for the organization only increased. I was particularly thankful for the creation of a virtual conference to replace the content and connection the Summit annual conference typically provides. I have never seen a livelier message board and know we all left the day having experienced valuable learning and deep connection.

”

- Nicola Fleming

“

I have been a member of AAM for years, and the people I have met through this organization will be friends for life. AAM feels like a family. My fellow AAMers have been there for me throughout my career in the accounting world, and my sanity would not have survived without them.

”

- Jennifer Cantero

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Member Growth Committee

As a committee, we continued to refine the new member outreach process by establishing an updated touchpoint schedule. We have also been tracking new member activity to ensure they are optimizing their membership. We launched and supported the Circles initiative, an incredible benefit for members. When dues renewal ended for 2022, 235 members wanted to continue with their current Circles and 63 wanted to try out new ones – a testament to how valuable and powerful these member-driven groups are. We identified and surveyed member personas with the lowest retention (marketing directors and marketing coordinators) and compiled a summary of notable findings for the Board. We launched a 45-day free trial with an outreach plan to encourage sign-ups, which resulted in 19 new members (44% conversion rate). Lastly, we had a successful member appreciation week in 2021 with live virtual events, and we are planning another awesome week for 2022.

- Korby Boswell, Chair, and Kristina Tucker, Co-Chair

Virtual Education Committee

We offered some insightful programming in 2021. Our campfires have been consistently attended and engaging with subject matter experts on each call. On the AAM High Webinars, we were able to offer a mix of topics that were more strategically aligned with AAM's editorial calendar as well as incorporated multiple sponsored webinars. Each webinar was consistently rated strongly in the follow-up surveys. Additionally, we are working to build a speaker/expert database to try to bring in fresh new speakers for the webinars.

- Gabe Tevrizian and Ty Hendrickson, Chairs

Social Media Committee

AAM social media has experienced increasing influence throughout 2021. We have grown our followers on all 4 platforms we use and our LinkedIn Group now has nearly 4,900 members. With the return of Summit to an in person event in 2022, we have seen record engagement with our posts. We are excited to see what the rest of 2022 will bring.

- Brian Falony, Chair, and Rachel Hane, Co-Chair

“

AAM is a community of knowledge sharing, thought leadership, and camaraderie where ideas and best practices are exchanged on a daily basis. Members benefit from one another and offer a form of open communication so that everyone can grow and thrive as marketers.

”

- Casey Blake

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Strategic Communications Committee

2021 was a big year for the Strategic Communications Committee. In addition to publishing our 2021 infographic, annual report and media kit, we created and launched a comprehensive, first-ever AAM style and brand voice guide, a foundational marketing pillar that will help ensure consistency and ultimately further strengthen AAM's brand. The Committee also delivered its first Member Benefit Guide, which focused on AAM's online sites, breaking down how to access and take full advantage of the main website, AAM Connect, AAM Store and more. From an operational perspective, we developed a comprehensive project log outlining all current and upcoming projects, began moving all of our projects to Basecamp for enhanced collaboration, and developed new and existing committee member surveys to identify strengths and strategically align projects.

- Brunella Reid and Jeremy Shen, Chairs

Website Committee

The website and sub-committees provided monthly updates to several different areas of the website as well as much larger enhancements including revamping the Marketer's Library and developing the Affiliate Directory. The Marketer's Library is maintained monthly and provides a library of marketing examples and related conversations around accounting marketing topics. The Affiliate Directory provides a unique searchable resource for accounting marketers to look for involved and trusted affiliate members that provide related services to accounting marketers.

Additionally, the blog and SEO sub-committee continues to see increased year over year traffic to cpagrowthtrends.com. The sub-committee created a blog submission form, updated the focus key words/phrases, and the blog submission guidelines for the 2021-2022 year. In addition to the original blog content by sub-committee members (at least two original blogs per-year per-member), the sub-committee has developed strategic cross-functional relationships with other AAM committees (*AAM Minute*, *AAMplify!*, Business Development, *Growth Strategies*, Virtual Education, and DEI) to repurpose content they created into blogs. These blogs are posted to CPA Growth Trends with the goals of gaining more visibility on the valuable content that AAM offers to accounting marketers and to drive new membership registrations.

- Scott Dine and Sarah Hauge, Chairs

EMERGE 2021



November 9, 2021



206

Number of
attendees

8 sessions
1 keynote

VIRTUAL
CONFERENCE

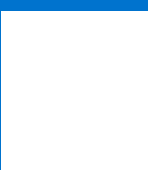
Emerge 2021 was AAM's single-day virtual conference with an upbeat and engaging vibe.

- Supported by 6 AAM Corporate Partners
- Emerge 2021 theme: Client Experience

Highlights:

- A Dynamic, Engaging Emcee: Ace Callwood
- A Fabulous Chair: Alice Grey Harrison
- Emerge Feedback Rating of 4.43 on a 1-5 scale

Chair: Alice Grey Harrison
Co-Chair: Jordyn Hettick
Board Liaison: Jennifer Cantero



SUMMIT 2021 PHILADELPHIA

Summit

POWERED BY AAM

May 24-26

338

Number of
attendees

269 Virtual
69 In-person

A hybrid
experience

Summit was a hybrid experience, with most attendees joining virtually and 69 attendees in person. Reimagined concurrent sessions organized into 90-minute content blocks were introduced, with each session building upon each other around a common topic, almost like a mini conference within Summit. We heard from many amazing speakers, including our keynote speaker Joe Pulizzi, founder of Content Marketing, who shared trailblazing ideas from the latest version of his Amazon best-seller, Content Inc.

Chair: Beth More
Co-Chair: JoLayna Arndt
Board Liaison: Nicole Sterling

AWARDS



And the winner is...

Advertising

Print Campaign

GHJ

Best 2020 Pivot

External Campaign or Initiative

Rehmann

Branding

Integrated Branding Programs:

Budget below \$99,999

Adams Brown

Integrated Branding Programs:

Budget above \$100,000

Mazars USA LLP

Logo: New or refreshed

Mahoney Ulbrich Christiansen
& Russ P.A.

Business Development Initiative

Customized Sales Initiative or Approach

Conway, Deuth & Schmiesing

Collateral and Content Marketing

Announcements/Invitations

Brochures

Walter & Shaffain

Adams Brown

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Internal or External Program or Initiative

BPM, LLP

Events

Budget below \$9,999

Budget between \$10,000 and \$24,000

Budget above \$25,000

BerganKDV

DHC

EisnerAmper

Marketing and PR Campaigns

Integrated Marketing Campaign

Integrated Media Relations/PR Campaign

Internal Communications

Nurture/Lead Generation Campaign

Recruiting Campaign

Social Media Campaign

Herbein + Company, Inc.

Windham Brannon

SVA Certified Public Accountants

Mazars USA LLP

Insero & Co. CPAs, LLP

Rea & Associates, Inc.

Video and Multimedia

Budget below \$9,999

Budget above \$10,000

BKD CPAs & Advisors

Delap

We AAM to Serve

Small Firm (1-99 employees)

Medium Firm (100-499 employees)

Large Firm (500+ employees)

MSPC CPAs

Grassi Advisors & Accountants

BKD CPAs & Advisors

Website

Budget below \$34,999

Budget above \$35,000

Larson Gross CPAs & Consultants

Anders CPAs + Advisors

92

Entries
received

The Association for Accounting Marketing's Marketing Achievement Awards recognize outstanding achievement in accounting marketing. The 2021 AAM-MAA winners were announced AAM's Virtual Award Ceremony on May 24, 2021.

Hall of Fame

Kristen Lewis

Marketing Director

EisnerAmper

Marketer of the Year

Sarah Cirelli

Head of Marketing

Grassi Advisors &

Accountants

Volunteer of the Year

Jean Geselius

Director of Marketing

Conway, Deuth &

Schmiesing, PLLP

Rookie of the Year

Katie Lyles

Events & Marketing

Coordinator

Lane Gorman Trubitt



CONTENT

The Association for Accounting Marketing produces a large variety of unique content designed to help accounting marketers gain the tools needed to help grow their practices. In 2021, AAM gave members access to the following content:

4

issues

of *Growth Strategies* addressing diversity, marketer's role, business development and the remote workforce

Growth Strategies, AAM's quarterly thought leadership journal, underwent a major redesign, both in content and design, to present content in a more useful, reader-friendly package.

12

campfires

Virtual discussions with subject matter experts and members.

14

webinars

were presented on relevant topics and pressing issues in the industry for marketers and business developers.

5

roundtables

AAM Business Development Roundtables were lively discussions offering industry trends, best practices and skill building for members performing business development in their firms.

5

episodes

of *AAMplify!* are available on YouTube, iTunes and Stitcher.



“

I couldn't be prouder of how AAM has adapted over the past couple of years. Those adaptations providing virtual and hybrid conferences and opportunities for deeper connection with AAM Circles. In the wake of George Floyd's murder, AAM convened a DEI Task Force, which is now to a standing committee. They created a DEI Toolkit, DEI webinars, and a DEI series for this year's Summit. All of this in addition to providing opportunities to network, a vibrant job board, and great opportunities to learn, connect, and grow!

- Ed Warren

”



PLATFORM ANALYTICS

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE STATS

By the numbers



1,297
followers



group
4,898
members



3,885
followers



2,884
followers



403
followers



website
visitors
27,567



website average
session duration
6 minutes
44 seconds



jobs posted
to AAM's
job bank
26



blog users
7,934



blog average
session duration
2 minutes
59 seconds





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