

1. Describe ways you communicate with your members on a regular basis? What has proven successful/unsuccessful? Why?

Credit unions keep in touch with their members in a variety of ways. Many are active on social media mostly on Facebook or Twitter. Some have hired full-time staff or interns to manage these social media accounts. As time progresses, all envision being even more active on social media.

A few were members of the Member Activation Program and have been quite pleased with the results. Many initially thought they would receive pushback from members, but those concerns haven't been borne out in the results. The credit unions who have communicated with their members through MAP, found overwhelmingly positive response with very little or no negative response. One example including one larger credit union sent 200,000 member emails on the Stop the Data Breach campaign, and received only six or seven unsubscribes.

The most widespread answer was email communications. Most agreed that they only do these on a crucial issues. While most communication are usually geared towards products and services, more credit unions have begun to get comfortable sending out emails that are political in nature. Very few credit unions present had produced radio or TV ads.

In regards to communicating with members in general, some contend you have to build a culture of communication with members. It cannot be "one and done" scenario. It's engaging members on issues beyond the tax status like data breaches, business lending, and especially regulatory burden.

Smaller credit unions admit that have time constraints and may not always be able to communicate with members on legislative issues. If they do, the content needs to answer this big question -"how does this affect my bottom line?" It's ideal to combine legislative issue awareness with other credit union awareness/marketing pieces.

Some credit unions were located in states where bankers were actively attacking the credit unions tax status. While most believe these attacks had little effect, they agree credit unions need to be ready to fight back if the time comes. Some spoke of their experience working with their League and CUNA to get the resources required for these battles.

In regards to how CUNA can help, several inquired if CUNA can create a clearing house of educational pieces credit unions can share with members. This could be marketed as similar to the current CUNA Communities being built and used. It can be a place for CUNA staff, credit union staff, and league staff to share ideas and learn new things.

2. Do you currently educate your coworkers on political issues affecting credit unions? If not, why not? If so, how do you go about doing this?

Most agreed they need to improve on engaging their front staff. This means not just printing notices or newsletters and distributing to the staff, but educating all staff about the issues. Staff is the frontline of member communication. One credit union makes a point to sit down with new employees as part of their ongoing efforts to educate them on the CU difference. This credit union found it makes a difference because they were losing several new employees prior to initiating this policy. By educating the employees, they found they now have a stake in the credit union and they are the first point of contact in many cases. This credit union pushes payroll deduction and asks the employees to take action on advocacy issues first so they can then explain to members what the issues are all about.

While the practices at every credit union vary, all concluded it's important to keep employees & board members educated on advocacy issues. CEOs and management especially need to lead by example. Best practices including regularly updating board members on status of legislative, regulatory and political issues, communicating with staff regularly, and encouraging frontline staff participation in advocacy activities (send to GAC, take to legislator meetings, etc.). Branch managers often engage staff to participate in various action alerts and especially reach out to younger employees when it comes to social media engagement. Some members stress to their peers that it's crucial to get to know your lawmakers and build relationships. Building and manifesting these relationships can be difficult due to increased time allotted towards regulatory compliance.

3. While the PGN bi-weekly update just started, what are some issues/resources you would like to see added to these updates? What channels do you find most effective for updates?

While members liked the new format and frequency of the updates, they wanted something that was more interactive and less like a newsletter. Members wanted to see videos included as much as possible. Additionally, members wanted the issues explained as simple as possible. One overall takeaway is that the PGN update should be more than a newsletter.

In addition to the update, members expressed interest in having a more interactive toolkit. Many wanted something like a blog or sharing component where members could post questions and get feedback and comments from other PGN members. The quarterly conference calls should be less presentation from CUNA and more feedback and interaction with members. A few members used the blog & compliance community, cooperative trust as examples of possibilities. These webpages get specific information you care about instead of a dump of information

4. What is the number one issue currently impeding the success of your credit union? What are you doing to combat this? How can CUNA help?

Regulatory burden consistently seems to be the biggest issue for credit unions. Many of the smaller credit unions were especially hit hard by this. While many appreciated the new regulatory burden study, many wanted to know how they could use it for leverage. As regulations continue to grow in complexity, credit unions can't afford the staff/resources required.

Some members argued it's imperative to tell these stories to their Members of Congress during their Hill visits. The one size fits all mantra of regulations doesn't work. Credit unions vary in size. They need to target the offenders versus targeting everybody. It costs credit unions \$100K (including benefits) to hire on new staff which provides less opportunity to hire staff that will oversee additional products to members like loans.

Some argued that we should potentially look at this as an opportunity to handle regulations through other means, like CUSOs. Some leagues like Illinois now offers compliance services for credit unions who can't afford hiring a compliance person. It proves to be a constant battle because credit unions are trying to serve members but also have to face examiners. NCUA is discouraging member service by not letting credit unions to take risks, if any.

Regardless of whether you hire new staff or outsource, compliance costs still add up for credit unions. CEOs of smaller credit unions are looking for the "need to know" or 60-second snapshot of compliance information. From there, they can decide whether or not they need to look more into a particular compliance issue.

Some members mentioned their state leagues and CUNA provide good resources. Heartland Credit Union Association offers Lunch n' Learns where CU professionals can network and bring compliance questions. Members want as many tools as possible including cost analysis per credit union or member if possible. At the end of the day, credit unions are doing their best to comply with these complex regulations. It's an issue credit unions may need to activate their members on.