

The presence of four generations in the workplace and professional associations, paired with the advent of social media outlets as a dominant form of communication, suggests opportunities for improving communication strategies to better appeal to younger generations. This process improvement initiative sought to improve communication processes within a local chapter of the Oncology Nursing Society by using more diverse posting strategies that would speak to members' professional needs and included strategies encouraging members to view and engage with posts.

AT A GLANCE

- The millennial nursing workforce requires diverse strategies for communication and engagement in professional nursing organizations.
- Leveraging social media platforms can be a successful means to communicate with and promote engagement of multigenerational members.
- A pilot project employing social media strategies provided insight into the types of media resulting in the greatest engagement, specifically video postings, followed by photos of chapter members along with recent accomplishments.

KEYWORDS

millennials; social media; communication; nursing; generational cohorts

DIGITAL OBJECT

IDENTIFIER

10.1188/21.CJON.337-341

Posting With a Purpose

Improving social media strategies to communicate with younger generations

Paula Trahan Rieger, DNP, RN, CAE, FAAN, and Cathy L. Rozmus, PhD, RN, FNAP, FAAN

Professional nursing organizations serve as one of the most important resources in setting standards of care, professional performance, and competencies, and providing nursing continuing education opportunities (Levine, 2020; Lubejko & Wilson, 2019). Promoting engagement of nurses with professional organizations, particularly for the millennial generation, requires leveraging the many digital resources that nurses currently use to communicate professionally and personally (Waltz et al., 2020).

Changing population demographics affect the profession, professional associations, and the workplace. Currently, there are four generations within the nursing workforce (see Table 1), each shaped by the major influences and events during their lifetime, as well as prevailing culture and values (Case, 2019; Lipscomb, 2010; National Chamber Foundation, 2012). Millennials make up nearly half of the global workforce, and Generation Z is just beginning to enter it.

The generational diversity of the nursing workforce continues to evolve and, with it, the communication strategies to reach and engage each cohort. To ensure a robust membership, associations at the national and chapter levels must engage younger cohorts, particularly as the baby boomer generation begins to retire (Bitner, 2019). Professional associations and their local chapters must communicate in a way that resonates with these

generational cohorts so that members will see personal value in membership and participation.

This article describes a project that used a social media strategy to improve communication processes highlighting the benefits of a professional association membership, with a secondary focus on increasing engagement of millennials with that strategy (Rieger, 2020).

The Pilot Process Improvement Project

The Houston Chapter of the Oncology Nursing Society (HCONS) is one of the largest of the nearly 200 chapters of the Oncology Nursing Society in the United States, with about 1,200 members in 2018 at the time of the project. As of 2018 in Texas, 5.9% of nurses were aged 66 years or older, 18.9% were 56–65 years, 22.9% were 46–55 years, 26.3% were 36–45 years, 23.7% were 26–35 years, and 2.4% were 25 years or younger (Texas Department of State Health Services, 2021). With millennials comprising nearly 26% of the total nursing workforce in Texas, there was a large cohort of existing and potential members to engage. The social media strategy focused on three main generations: baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials (Generation Y).

In the context of the refined social media strategy, the goal was to improve communication processes to better engage members, particularly millennials, via the existing chapter Facebook page, which prior to the pilot project had an average