Is Sponsored Content Killing Your Credibility

A Debate
Leading Today’s Debate

- **Mike Winkleman**, Leverage Media LLC (moderator)
- **Paul Tarricone**, Illuminating Engineering Society
- **Dianne Vance, CAE**, formerly American Society of Civil Engineers
- **Maggie McGary**, McGary Associates; formerly Society of Fire Protection Engineers
- **You**
What Is This Thing Called Sponsored Content?

- Branded content
- Sponsor(ed) content
- Native advertising
- Paid posts
- Content marketing
Content Marketing, Defined

• “A strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience—and ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.” —Content Marketing Institute

• “Paid advertisements that are very cohesive with page content, assimilated into the design, and consistent with the platform behavior so as to appear seamless to the viewer/user.” —Advertiser Perceptions
Some Forms That Sponsored Content Takes

- Advertorials (print)
- Inserts/onserts (print)
- Native advertising (online)
- White papers/e-books
- Blogs
- Podcasts/Videos
- Webinars
- Event sponsorships
- Posters/infographics
- Microsites
- Social media
Why Should We Care?

• Everyone is doing it
• Stats about reader acceptance are compelling
• Potential revenue stream
• Hedge against future declines in print advertising
• More impactful and higher margin than banner ads
• Advertisers are asking about it
What Gives Associations Pause? *Theoretical*

- What will members think?
- Will boards object?
- Will editors protest?
- What about church/state separation?
- Does it undercut standard-setting?
- Does it compete with regular editorial coverage?
- Aren’t readers already overwhelmed with content?
- Is it cost-effective?
- Do advertisers want this?
What Gives Associations Pause? Practical

• How do you get it done? Who produces it?
• How do you charge? Will it undercut other revenue streams?
• How do you ensure that content is “valuable”?
• How do you differentiate it from editorial content?
• How do you measure impact?
How Are Associations Making It Work?

• **C&EN Brand Lab**—a range of products

• **ACG**—25% of magazine pages are now sponsored content, plus multi-channel

• **PCMA**—recurring rubrics and great graphics
Today’s Debate Topics Include

• Can you make it work for you?
• Should you make it work for you?
• What guarantees success? What sets you up to fail?