



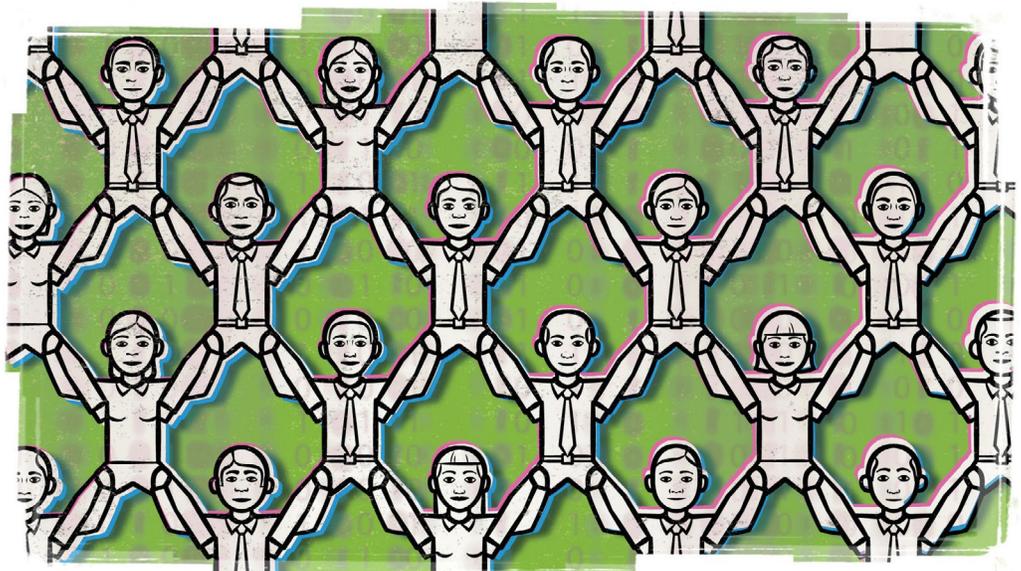
TWIRLING TIGER® MEDIA CASE STUDY

how to

create a membership publication that strengthens a brand and builds a stronger community

CLIENT: (ISC)²

(ISC)² is a Clearwater, Fla.-based global information security professional organization with more than 125,000 members. Its mission is to create a more safe and secure cyber world.



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CHALLENGE: (ISC)² began as a certification consortium for information security professionals and in the past decade has evolved into more of a membership organization. As a member benefit, it began producing a quarterly print and digital magazine for its members in the mid-2000s. While a popular asset, the publication's content was similar to other trade press and had a heavy emphasis on corporate news. Most articles were penned by professional writers outside the organization, who understood technology and business management but not as much about the organization or its culture.

SOLUTION: Twirling Tiger Media promised to transform the publication from a corporate-centric magazine to a more communal one that better reflected the membership in all its diversity and provided unique content to strengthen the (ISC)² brand.

The company achieved its goals of a more membership-focused magazine by:

- Redesigning the publication for a more modern look and feel.
- Establishing an editorial advisory board to help guide content and distribution channels.
- Soliciting more member contributions.
- Adding more member news and member-specific columns.
- Expanding the number of mobile-friendly viewing options.
- Being more of a physical presence at security conferences.

**TWIRLING
TIGER®** media

creators of content you
can sink your teeth into

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CREATING COMMUNITY

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NOT-FOR-PROFIT (ISC)² had a problem that other organizations would envy: its membership was growing, and rapidly. Almost from its inception some 25 years ago, the consortium saw increasing popularity for its prime credential program, which led to a unique community of IT professionals who'd passed the rigorous exam to become Certified Information Security Specialist Professionals. Over time, as the information security industry matured, more credential programs were added for those specializing in healthcare security, digital forensics, software applications, cloud security and more.

In 2008, the Clearwater, Fla.-based organization decided to add a quarterly magazine to its membership offerings. (ISC)² leadership hired IDG's custom publishing services to produce *InfoSecurity Professional*, which included several columns and feature articles, most of which focused on current or emerging technologies that members were likely to use or express an interest in. Freelance writers or staff writers wrote the vast majority of published feature articles. In membership surveys, the magazine became the top-ranked asset in the membership services portfolio.

After five years, (ISC)² leadership decided to put the magazine's production out to bid and in 2013 Twirling Tiger Media won the new contract. Beginning in January 2014, it expanded the number of issues from four to six, or bimonthly. It also developed a between-issues e-newsletter called *Insights*. In its proposal, Twirling Tiger Media pledged to transform the magazine and e-newsletter to better meet the needs and spirit of a membership growing globally (today, (ISC)² members are located in almost 135 countries). This would require editorial staff to better understand membership needs and actively solicit contributions that fit the brand's culture and corporate communications standards.

The end goal was to use the two publications to strengthen community and create a unique and more relevant magazine. To do so, we wanted to better showcase members, their thought leadership, and to create content and imagery on professional development. These initiatives would provide more value to being an (ISC)² member and dovetail with their professional improvement paths. This also helps the organization recruit and retain promising professionals whose credentials would strengthen the (ISC)² brand at a time when other organizations also were seizing on cybersecurity's popularity with their own professional development programs.

HOW TO CAPTURE A BRAND'S SIGNATURE LOOK

Talk, talk and talk some more to your client and team members. These conversations inform a visual interpreter—your designer.

Next, take a holistic approach and consider how the following elements will work in harmony:

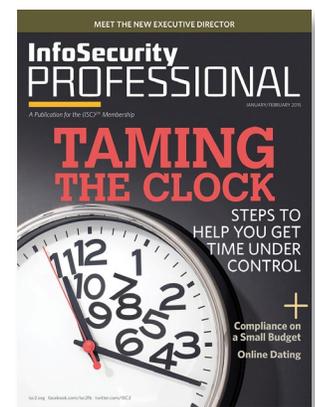
- Logo
- Typography
- Color palette
- Photography and illustration
- Structure and look

A NEW LOOK FOR A NEW ERA

One of the first actions taken was to change the overall design of the magazine to create a better reader experience.

The magazine's new art director approached the overall design in multiple dimensions with careful consideration to how the publication looks, sounds, thinks, performs and, ultimately, is.

In establishing each of these considerations, the art director was able to create the new design and formatting style guide. She created a publication that was inviting and engaging, did the difficult visual work of making the content easily navigated and understood, focused the reader's eye on what mattered first, and delivered impact for a publication that was now vibrant, sophisticated, authoritative and ready for business...and to win design awards.



2016 bronze winner of international trade magazine industry design award

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TIPS ON

ASSEMBLING A KILLER ADVISORY BOARD

Choose wisely. When new to an organization, ask for recommendations from people you trust. Give them the criteria for selection so everyone knows what makes a good fit for the group. And keep your numbers low so the group is manageable.

Set expectations—then be sure they are met. With each recruit, outline what's expected in terms of time commitments and get formal sign-on before welcoming them aboard. Then honor each member's time by meeting their expectations too.

Make sure you outline the WIIFMs. Most people you approach don't need the advisory board on their resume; they are serving because they care about the organization. But if your board members need more incentive, consider adding their names to a page on your website for more visibility (and accountability).

Honor opinions; act on good suggestions. Good meeting management means not only does everyone get a chance to have their say, but that at the end action items are developed and assigned. This holds members and management accountable. And when members see action being taken, even those initially outvoted generally will respect the process.

Give everyone their due. You recruit people to represent a segment of the community, which means discussions will reflect a diversity of thought. This also requires sensitivity to cultures. Try not to be led by a vocal minority. Try also not to hoard praise.

CREATING AN ADVISORY BOARD

About six months after the new magazine launched, the editor-in-chief began to invite select (ISC)² members and staffers to join a small editorial advisory board that met by phone up to three times a year and once in person.

Recruitment. (ISC)² determined which organizational staffers would be on the board, and they included the executive publisher, publisher and member services director. The initial (ISC)² members were chosen for their active involvement in organization events and chapters. We made sure each member represented a different region: North America, South America, Asia and EMEA.

Meetings. With a goal of meeting quarterly, and with everyone living in different parts of the world and time zones, scheduling conference calls was a bit of a challenge. So the editor would send everyone a Doodle invitation with several date and time options and then select the most popular one that the majority could attend. The one or two members who had conflicts always found a way to make the call, resulting in near 100 percent participation each time. Those who had to cancel sent along recommendations based on an agenda shared in advance.

Terms and Turnover. Advisory board members were given two-year terms and to date, only one member has left—because he was elected to the (ISC)² board of directors. This led us to believe that the time commitment was appropriate. Each member always came to the conference calls prepared with ideas and comments. And, importantly, we acted on those recommendations by following up with (ISC)² staff when needed and incorporated good ideas into future issues. We now have members asking to join the advisory board when there is an opening, which helps elevate the level of engagement required to make this advisory board continue to function as planned.

MORE MEMBERS MAKING A NAME FOR THEMSELVES

As the (ISC)² organization evolved from a certification organization to a membership one, the magazine similarly began to feel like a unique publication by featuring more member contributions. The editor actively solicited submissions initially on (ISC)² forums and then during a presentation on getting published at (ISC)²'s annual Security Congress. We shared editorial calendars and writer and photo submission guidelines and within months we received between six to nine submissions monthly—a 100 percent increase.

Of course, there were only so many opportunities in each issue, so the next step was to reconfigure content to make room for more member-authored pieces. We began taking some entries that didn't work well as features and turned them into member Q&As in a section called Field Notes.

Most members are not natural storytellers or writers, so we beefed up our submissions guidelines with tips for a more powerful written presentation. We also were helpful in assisting non-native English speakers with grammar, spelling and punctuation. It required more copy editing hours on our end, but the result was a more diverse collection from around the globe, instead of very U.S.-centric pieces. And when we had U.S.- or U.K.-centric pieces, we made sure they “translated” to other countries or highlighted how other countries might also incorporate recommendations, based on their data security laws and regulations.



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We also introduced two new columns: Members' Corner and 5 Minutes with...

Members' Corner provided a forum for those with strong opinions on privacy, data security or professional qualms to start a dialogue. The latter became a new back-page column in which we conducted a Q&A with someone around the world. An excerpt appeared in the magazine and the full discussion then carried into the next issue of *Insights*, the supplemental e-newsletter we produce.

As of this writing, 50 percent or more of the magazine content is now member-generated and often it is closer to 75 to 85 percent.

CREATING THE E-NEWSLETTER

Along with overhauling the magazine, we also redesigned and expanded *Insights*, the intersessional electronic publication sent to all 125,000 members. The new format created more synergy with the magazine by cross-promoting content and being more visually appealing.

Each issue now includes at least one main feature, usually a member submission that didn't fit an upcoming issue but was worthy of publication (with editing for length and content). We also always include the full-length member Q&A.

PROOF OF ELEVATED ENGAGEMENT

In 2015, (ISC)² conducted its biennial membership survey. The magazine was again the No. 1 asset in the organization's portfolio but this time, in addition to voicing approval for the publication, hundreds of members added comments about what they liked and what they wanted to see in future issues. In fact, there were 19 pages of comments, the vast majority positive.

The *Insights* e-newsletter continues to gain in popularity. Initially it had a 19 to 21 percent open rate but in recent issues, with expanded coverage and an updated look, a quarter or more of all members are reading it electronically.

The editor not only continues to see submissions increase, but almost everyone who publishes once asks if they can do it again at some point based on the positive experience and finished product. It should be noted that members also are motivated by earning up to five Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credits for getting published, but some have said their primary goal is to share what they've learned in the field with their fellow members.

We also now hear from members with unsolicited feedback and suggestions for future articles, as well as requests to share issues with their teams and colleagues outside the organization. Such information-sharing in an industry that values guardedness and privacy like none other can be slow to get going, but as our initiative to use the magazine to promote more thoughtful and thought-provoking exchanges has shown, it can happen. *InfoSecurity Professional* now has a more unique feel and content reflective of those who make (ISC)² what it is.

There's a stronger sense of community and greater value in members proudly pronouncing they are part of (ISC)².

Contact ghunt@twirlingtiger.com for a sample of *InfoSecurity Professional* magazine.

2017
WINNER
OF GOLD TABBIE
AWARD* FROM
TABPI FOR EDITORIAL
EXCELLENCE

2016
WINNER
OF TWO BRONZE
TABBIE AWARDS FROM
TABPI FOR DESIGN
AND EDITORIAL
EXCELLENCE

ABOUT US

Twirling Tiger Media offers content creation for marketers.

By following our proven process workflow, we:

- Make the complex simple to reach all levels of expertise.
- Use our journalism skills to create unique content.
- Provide both writing and imagery.
- And, we are certified as a WBE by WBENC and federally designated as a WOSB, bringing more supplier diversity to your workforce.

*Trade, Association and Business Publications International (TABPI).

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