

Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine Modernizes Member Engagement

The Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine brings their global member base together and keeps their association at the heart of this critical area of medicine.



Industry

Healthcare

Size

900 Members

Headquarters

Chicago, IL

CHALLENGE

Struggling to maintain their member engagement and their association's relevance in the digital age

SOLUTION

Adopting Tradewing's member community platform to bring their members together through a digital medium ABM could own and provide a tailored experience through

IMPACT

Members can now easily learn and network through ABM's community and rank Tradewing as a top reason for ABM membership

Introduction

For over two decades, The Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM) has been bringing physicians, researchers, and advocates together to better understand the medicine behind breastfeeding and educate the public (and each other) about the increasing list of lifelong benefits breastfeeding delivers.

As awareness of the importance of breastfeeding has grown, so too has ABM. Today, ABM boasts an impressive global membership of nearly 900 leading experts, with about 40% of those members residing outside the United States. They also publish their own journal and protocols, provide educational resources, and are a member of the Global Breastfeeding Collective. To power these efforts, ABM relies on an efficient and nimble four-person team.

“Our members are eager to connect with physicians who have a passion for breastfeeding medicine, and ABM is the best link they have for connecting with like-minded folks” says Caryn Odenbach, ABM’s Director of Membership and Marketing, when explaining the secret to ABM’s rapid growth and one of the major points of value they provide to their members. “Ultimately, it’s about how you keep connected with members, and how they feel connected to you as an association.”

“ We needed something that would facilitate engagement from all over the world. We had language barriers, time zones, participation costs, educational resources, and usability to consider.



Caryn Odenbach
ABM Director of
Membership

Growing into New Challenges

ABM's rapid growth also presented new challenges, particularly around member engagement. Prior to adopting Tradewing, ABM's members connected via Yahoo Groups and a Listserv which was completely separate from their association management system (AMS), resulting in a time-intensive manual process for connecting members.

"Before Tradewing, we were really hesitant to encourage participation on the Listserv because there really was no ownership, and as a moderator on a Yahoo Group, we weren't able to facilitate productive conversations" Caryn remarks. "This caused a lot of anxiety and gave us very little incentive to promote it."

It was clear to Caryn that something needed to be done. Members needed a better way to connect and if ABM couldn't provide that, someone else would.

"Some members had even started creating their own Facebook Groups using ABM's name. We knew we needed to find a solution in order to remain owners of this experience and remain relevant for our members."

When it came time to address this challenge "An online member community was a no-brainer" according to Caryn. "We needed something that would facilitate engagement from all over the world. We had language barriers, timezones, participation costs, educational resources, and usability to consider. We needed to be able to offer an experience that met the needs of our members geographically as well as professionally."

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The response from our members has been overwhelmingly positive. Just a month after launch, MyABM was being ranked by our members as a top benefit alongside our journal, networking, and education.

Solving Member Engagement with Tradewing

Looking for solutions, ABM's team pulled together their criteria and created a task force to find the ideal platform for their new community.

"The task force loved Tradewing for its flexibility and simplicity. This was important since we have varying degrees of technological skills amongst our members. Tradewing was also able to work with us on a solution customized to our needs and that fit within our budget. Very quickly everyone was onboard with Tradewing, even those who started out wanting other competing solutions."

For Caryn, what ultimately sold her on Tradewing was the service. "Tradewing took the time to ask questions in order to understand the needs of our member community. Their customer support felt more like an extension of our team than a simple vendor."

Turnaround was fast, allowing ABM to quickly launch their new community, MyABM, and get it into the hands of their members.

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“The response from our members has been overwhelmingly positive” says Caryn reflecting on the rollout. “Just a month after launch, MyABM was being ranked by our members as a top benefit alongside our journal, networking, and education. We now have regional and language-based groups so members with similar experiences can reach each other.”

As for her favorite feature, Caryn was quick to point out Tradewing’s instant messaging tools.

“It has been a lot more valuable than I ever expected. Emails get lost in so many people’s inboxes, especially a very busy physician. Now I can directly message members and committee chairs. I’ve been able to save a ton of time not having to chase people down to get a response, and people are now more proactive and directly reaching out to me.”

What’s next for Caryn?

“I’ve already pitched Tradewing to several people” Caryn remarks. “We are actually already using it for another association I serve: The International Transplant Nurses Society (ITNS), and plan to take advantage of the platform’s industry and vendor marketplace to enhance our relationship with our partners through webinars, handouts, and event promotion.”

There are plenty of instances of how Tradewing has improved ABM’s member engagement, but to Caryn, one story stands out to her the most.

“We had a member share that she’d been gone for a while, but the platform brought her back. She said she felt like she finally had a place for her to connect with other members. When I saw that I said, well, this kind of paid for itself!”

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