

American Association of Endodontists
ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

The American Association of Endodontists (AAE) represents more than 6,500 endodontists (the dental specialists who conduct root canals) and other professionals with an interest in endodontics. The Chicago-based association is the primary source of continuing education in the field for members, the dental profession and the general public. Through its annual conference, special events, credentialing services and professional journals, the non-profit AAE strives to achieve its mission of promoting excellence in the art and science of endodontics and to help members meet the highest standards of patient care.

The need

As part of implementation of recommendations of a major communications audit Hodge Schindler had conducted for the AAE, the association sought to launch an electronic newsletter for its professional members, whose ranks were increasingly tech savvy. The AAE also wanted to demonstrate its comfort with 21st century technological capabilities to younger members and those who saw the organization as stuck in pre-Internet communications models. The association planned to manage the project on its own, but needed Hodge Schindler's help in putting together the right model that would pass muster with its governing bodies.

Our approach

- After establishing the scale and scope of the project (the AAE would develop and edit all of the material to appear within the e-newsletter and manage the distribution through its proprietary database system) Hodge Schindler began to develop a name and format for the newsletter. From a list of submitted names, "PULP" was determined to best reflect the new approach for the newsletter, setting it apart from the AAE's traditional academic magazine, *The Journal of Endodontics*, or "JOE."
- We then developed several designs for the e-newsletter template that would be flexible enough for the AAE staff managing the execution of the project. It included varying graphical elements and, ultimately, small ads or sponsor links. (This was a radical departure from other AAE publications, which accept no advertising.) Once the final design was selected, Hodge Schindler and its design team conducted a day-long seminar to help the staff expand its skills using Macromedia Dreamweaver to manage the e-newsletter. (We also consulted on the best ways to host and distribute the e-newsletter through the existing network architecture.)

The outcomes

- By all accounts internally and externally, the debut of "PULP: The Inside Word from the AAE" was well received by recipients and AAE management. Much of the praise focused on the lighter, non-academic approach of the articles and the addition of handy how-to features that help members improve the way they run their businesses.
- There were no requests to be removed from the e-newsletter's mailing list and there were several recipients who took the time to send positive e-mails about sensitive subjects covered in the first issue. The distribution of the e-newsletter also went off without a hitch, according to AAE insiders in charge of that part of the process.
- The AAE is still holding off on the advertising/sponsorship model for now, but the organization was pleased that it was able to launch the e-newsletter project within the projected timeframe and with minimal setbacks.