

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

THE COUNCIL

RECAP

Marketing and communications leaders from across The Council's membership community recently gathered at Council HQ in Washington D.C. for the **Spring 2025 Marketing & Communications Working Group meeting**.

- Below you will find a **full recap** of the event, including links to slides and resources from our sessions and speakers.
- The Council's slide deck – [available here](#) – includes key dates for our next meeting during the **Operations & Working Groups Forum** in San Antonio this November.
- If you wish to reach out to any of your Working Group colleagues post-event, [you can still access the Attendee Roster here](#) (username: MCWG25; password: CIAB25; case-sensitive). The roster will be archived at the end of the month.

As always, feel free to contact us with any questions. We look forward to seeing you all this fall and connecting via Basecamp in the meantime.

Susan & Nicole

DAY ONE – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19



The Working Group kicked off with a **Productivity & Performance Workshop** led by **Nicole Coomber, PhD, Assistant Dean of Experiential Learning at the University of Maryland Robert H. Smith School of Business**. Coomber armed the group with actionable strategies for individual and team time management, and a practical framework for optimizing output. The interactive session surfaced key pain points among Council member firms, such as training and engaging with remote and less tenured members of your team.

Key Takeaways:

- **Be mindful of your two-system brain.** Coomber spoke to the interplay between the automatic thinking system (designed for fast, intuitive decisions and mental shortcuts) and the deliberate thinking system (designed for critical thinking, strategy and careful evaluation). She explained how our brain shifts into the automatic system when it is overloaded, and how this impacts creativity and thoughtful decision-making.
- **Focus for 90 minutes, max.** Given the potential for "decision fatigue," Coomber suggested focusing on one task for no longer than 90 minutes to optimize performance. Note that, for some, 15 minutes

or even five minutes may be the maximum amount of time that we can effectively focus, depending on the task.

- **Utilize the “Week in Review” strategy.** Attendees were encouraged to end their week with a review of how effective they were at accomplishing their objectives, deciding on key priorities for the following week, and proactively blocking distraction-free work periods on their calendars. This habit, over time, allows you to track obstacles that are impacting productivity, while also creating a sense of accomplishment over tasks that were completed, and setting intentions for the following week.

Coomber also shared templates, exercises and practical tips for enhancing writing productivity. These included AI tools that analyze personal writing styles and style guides with specific vocabulary, which can be used to create prompts for consistency. Coomber’s slides [are available here](#).

Day one concluded with a cocktail reception and **Capitol Hill Update from Audra Jackson, The Council’s Director of Government Affairs**. Jackson shared an insider view of the current political landscape and tenor in Washington D.C., and outlined several of [The Council’s 2025 legislative priorities](#), including the [preservation of the current tax treatment](#) for employer-sponsored healthcare tax benefits.

DAY TWO – THURSDAY, MARCH 20

Day two began with a presentation from **The Council’s Ken Haltenhof, SVP of Membership, and Susan Rushford, SVP of Marketing & Communications**. Haltenhof and Rushford discussed the impact that industry consolidation is having on **The Council’s ability to promote core membership benefits to the individuals who would benefit most within its member firms**. The Working Group had an open dialogue on ways The Council can adjust its marketing and communications strategy to reach deeper into member firms, so they can maximize their investment in the association.

Haltenhof’s slides are included in the full Working Group deck, [which is available here](#).



Later that morning **James Clark, CEO of Room 214**, led a session entitled **Leveraging Industry Personas to Promote Employer Brand and Recruit Untapped Talent**, featuring findings from a research project Clark conducted for The Council’s Future Advisory Committee, which identifies emerging issues for our member firms, as well as opportunities to prepare for potential market disruption. Clark spoke to current trends in recruitment marketing and presented practical applications for attracting the next generation of insurance industry professionals.

Key Takeaways:

- **Tailor to your prospective talent.** Clark suggested developing targeted recruitment campaigns that address the unique motivators and career aspirations of key talent personas like “Quants,” who are more analytical and data driven, and “Instigators” who are creative thinkers that challenge the status quo. Understanding candidates’ deeper motivations will help you craft messaging that resonates with their specific needs.
- **The “perception gap” struggle is real.** Clark emphasized the critical need to address the disconnect between emerging talent’s perception of the insurance industry and the reality of existing opportunities for innovative, purpose-driven careers. He recommended that firms combat this

stereotype by showcasing the security, growth and meaningful contributions associated with insurance roles, and the societal impact of the industry as a whole.

- **Transparency and authenticity are key.** Clark advised firms to focus on recruitment materials and interactions that offer a genuine and honest portrayal of the industry's opportunities and challenges. This approach builds trust with potential candidates. The employers that will be most successful in recruiting new talent will be those that demonstrate transparency, highlight the progression of careers in insurance, promote their company's culture and show the evolution of the industry.

Clark's slides [are available here](#).

Later Thursday morning, **Sandy Laycox, Editor in Chief of *Leader's Edge* & Vice President of Market Intelligence for The Council**, presented an overview of [The Council's annual Operations Benchmarking Survey](#), which helps Council member firms measure their growth and performance against industry peers. firms measure their growth and performance against industry peers.

Laycox also laid out the goals for the 2025 survey and provided Working Group members with early access to the [2025 survey addendum for Marketing & Communications leaders](#). If you did not have the opportunity to complete the survey onsite, [you can access it here](#). We request that Working Group attendees complete the survey by Friday, April 11th.

The Working Group meeting concluded with peer-share/open discussion on role- and industry-focused challenges identified by attendees on the first day of the event. Marketing and communications leaders were divided into smaller breakout groups to discuss a variety of topics that fell within six broader themes:

- **Change Management & Growth** (organizational change, growth and acquisition/M&A activity)
- **Prioritization & Resource Management** (managing volume, priorities, budgets and internal clients' expectations)
- **AI Utilization and Compliance** (challenges and opportunities around the use of AI in the workplace)
- **Team Dynamics & Development** (team morale, training and development, and internal communication)
- **Technology & Systems Integration** (technology implementation, system integration, and automation)
- **Marketing Strategy & Execution** (marketing strategy, content creation, campaign management, and brand building)

WELCOME TO OUR NEW WORKING GROUP CHAIR



During our Spring meeting, we were pleased to introduce attendees to our new **Working Group Chair, Bridget Scott**. Scott serves as **Chief Marketing Officer at Hylant** and is a long-time member of the Marketing & Communications Working Group. As Chair, Scott will support The Council team in selecting topics and speakers that resonate with marketing and communications leaders at brokerage firms and support them in their professional development.

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR NEXT MEETING

Join us for the next Marketing & Communications Working Group meeting, which will take place during the annual Operations & Working Groups Forum. Registration will launch in late spring.

[2025 Operations & Working Groups Forum*](#)

November 5-7 | San Antonio, TX

Rebranding to the **Operations Leadership Forum in 2026!*

JOIN OUR BASECAMP COMMUNITY

Access the Marketing & Communications Working Group online community on Basecamp, where you can connect with your Council member peers.

[Request Access](#)

[Sign In](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Here are a few more ways to stay connected with The Council in between Working Group meetings.

- Access our [Calendar of Events](#)
- Read our bi-weekly newsletter, [Council Brief](#)
- Subscribe to [Leader's Edge](#)
- Check out [our podcasts](#)
- Connect with [The Council](#) and our [Working Groups](#) on LinkedIn

GET IN TOUCH



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For more information, visit our [Marketing & Communications Working Group page](#).

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