



ASSOCIATION SUCCESS STORY



NEW WEBSITE AND ELEARNING PLATFORM: WWW.EACA-INSPIRE.EU

European Association of Communications Agencies (EACA)

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PROJECT

www.eaca-inspire.eu
Inspire! by EACA: rebranding EACA's education & training offer to fit the needs of its members and stakeholders



SUCCESS ACHIEVED

Created a single hub with training and education opportunities for all stakeholders in the commercial communications industry



ORGANISATION

European Association of Communications Agencies (EACA)



DATES

May 2015 - September 2016



CATEGORIES

Education & training, Professional development, Website & eLearning



Members

- » **The European Association of Communications Agencies (EACA)** is organised in 5 councils; the National Associations' Council, the International Agencies' Council, Media Agencies' Council, Integrated Marketing Communications' Council and Health Communications' Council. The National Associations' Council consists of 31 members across Europe each representing the industry on a national level. The other councils represent members on a European scale.
- » **The European Institute for Commercial Communications Education (edcom)** is a network which consists of 49 members across Europe. The members are higher education institutes, specialised in studies on commercial communications (advertising, PR, marketing, design, communications...).

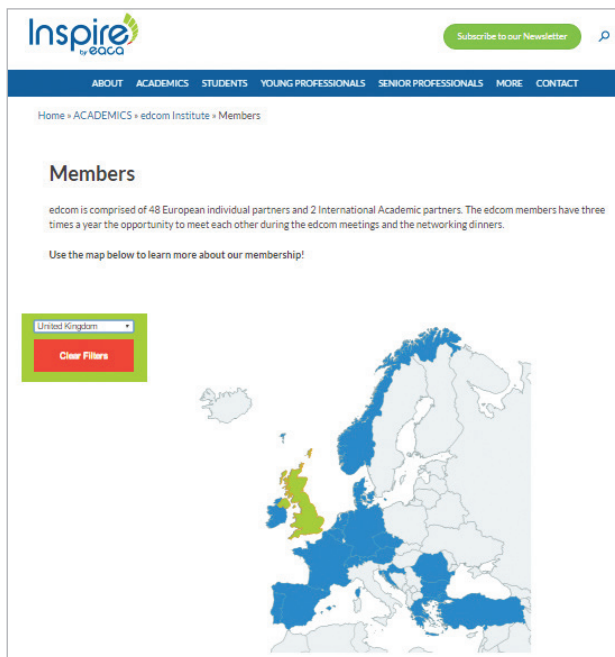


Figure 1 edcom Institute - Members



Association Project team

- » **Dominic Lyle**, Director General
- » **Tamara Daltroff**, Director of European Affairs
- » **Pauline De Pelsmacker**, Education & Training Manager
- » **Peter Banach**, User Experience Designer
- » **Marko Nikolic**, Web developer



Introduction

"The Inspire! by EACA" website was recently created based on the need to combine and create links between all of EACA's educational projects within one single hub. EACA's educational portfolio has been growing over the years and this broad range of educational and training programmes has now been grouped under the umbrella of our new structure "Inspire! by EACA". We set out to significantly improve the user experience for our stakeholders: one single website has replaced four separate ones, grouping all stakeholders and information about our educational activities in one place.

The main issue with the previous websites was that they were not linked to each other and it was therefore not visible at a glance what EACA could offer. We also realised that the focus needed to lie more on our stakeholder groups and not primarily on our projects. By bringing together all different projects, we realised that we would achieve greater success when channelling visitors into four distinct target groups: students, young professionals, academics and senior professionals. This way, each individual member feels at the core of EACA's personalised strategy and receives relevant information about projects tailored for their profile and experience in the industry. We also listened to our members' demands and provided extra informative pages and platforms for them on the Inspire! website. For instance, our academic members were missing a platform where they could find information about other members to facilitate the process of fostering European exchanges.

The 'Inspire! by EACA' website provides us with a firm foundation for future expansion. In addition to the current content of the website, EACA is planning to create a career guidance platform for all stakeholders in the commercial communications industry - from the students exploring the market to the senior professionals looking into opportunities of sharing their experience and "giving something back". According to our research, nothing similar exists for our industry at a European level and all players across Europe would benefit highly from this hub of information and development tools. The career guidance platform will tackle lifelong learning and the current issue of youth unemployment as a co-operative effort.

The content will include a variety of tools and tips that will help students and accompany them during all the stages in their career (thus catering as well for young professionals and senior professionals, and for academics who wish to help their students). Therefore, we will focus on students as a target group but treat the platform as a long-term initiative that will provide them with lifelong learning.

EACA is planning to enhance the website in 2018 with the addition of this career guidance platform for students, and by adding more filters to the membership management platform for edcom academics.

Objectives

SHORT TERM OBJECTIVE

A single platform – a personalised approach:

- » “The Inspire! by EACA” website was structured around the primary aim of bringing together all educational projects carried out by EACA within one single hub in order to achieve our long-term goal of becoming the gold standard and reference centre for training & education in the commercial communications industry. Because of our complex membership structure, it is important that each target group can identify themselves with a profile within the industry; whether it be a student, an academic, or a young or senior professional. Therefore, one of our objectives is to offer a personalised training offer for each of these groups that they can easily find relevant information on our website.

MID TERM OBJECTIVES

A single platform – multiple opportunities:

- » A second objective is to create bridges between the target groups and encourage interaction between them. EACA’s members can now easily access information about what training is available to them and how they, in turn, can contribute to the educational output of EACA. For instance, by becoming trainers, jurors for competitions, or by promoting the various educational offers to students and young professionals. This is significant because the new website enables EACA to effectively promote reciprocal learning across all generations, as well as facilitating dialogue between academia and industry.
- » Raise visibility and increase number of participants. In more measurable terms, our key objective is to raise visibility of our projects and to have more participants in various projects over time. We’ve experienced difficulties in reaching students or young professionals directly, rather than through academics, managers or directors. One objective of the website is to be able to reach those groups more effectively in a direct way. With its colourful and inspiring look, the website is designed to attract and inspire a young and dynamic audience.

Activities

» **Brainstorming meetings within the team** (4-6 months)

Firstly, EACA’s education & training offer was solely focused on agency professionals and had a separate website for the EACA Academy (face to face training), and a separate website for the European Advertising Certificate (a certificate given for online training). These two products and others were showcased on EACA’s main website. Secondly, edcom, the network for students and academics, had a separate website with no links or references to EACA’s websites. As the education & training offer was growing, we realised it was time to launch

a brand that served as an umbrella or central hub for all education & training opportunities in the commercial communications industry. See *Figure 2 ‘New concept’ Example of early brainstorming sessions* where we tried to come up with different structures to fit the needs of the target audience.

» **Research** (2-3 months)

We had many conversations with the EACA and edcom members to understand how the education & training offer at the time could be improved; how our members and also their members could benefit from a new structure and brand.

» **Creating the brand** (1-4 weeks)

After several brainstorming sessions and members’ meetings, we created the Inspire! by EACA brand. We made a business plan to determine its aims, goals, identity, SWOTs, relevant stakeholders and a budget. We also contacted a graphic designer to propose a logo and brand identity that fits in the EACA corporate identity.

» **Creating the website** (2-3 months)

Aiming to be a reference hub for all education & training opportunities in the industry, the Inspire! by EACA website had to be our most important asset: it should inform stakeholders about all projects, invite them to participate and keep them up to date with the latest opportunities and developments in the industry. Based on the research phase, we concluded that the website should focus on four target groups: students, academics, young and senior professionals. See *Figure 3 Update wireframes September’* and *Figure 4 Homepage proposal_Inspire*. We contacted a user experience designer to create the website in such way that each target group could immediately browse for opportunities based on their profile when landing on the home page, yet also have the flexibility to visit other pages (for instance, students looking for future opportunities on the page of young professionals). The second step was to create wireframes to map out the website. Once we had a final draft, we contacted the web developer to implement the draft and start the actual creation of the website. At this stage, we were able to shut down the ‘old’ websites and move all content across to the new one. The Home Page is colourful, gives a clear overview of the four target groups and also offers updates on ‘news & events’. In the background, there is a video of one of our biggest projects (the summer school). A fold out menu at the top offers visitors the change to switch inbetween pages, depending on their interests See *Figure 5 Inspire! By EACA’ Homepage* and *Figure 6 Inspire! By EACA’ – Student Page*. Throughout this period, we had various dialogues with our members to ensure that the website was still corresponding to their demands.

» **Communications strategy** (1-2 weeks)

Once we had the website ready, we created social media accounts for Inspire! by EACA (Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook) See *figures 7,8,9,10 Inspire! By EACA Social Media*, we officially launched the brand by publishing a press release, we created a newsletter for all stakeholders and created infographics for all projects. We also presented the brand and website to our members for any feedback.

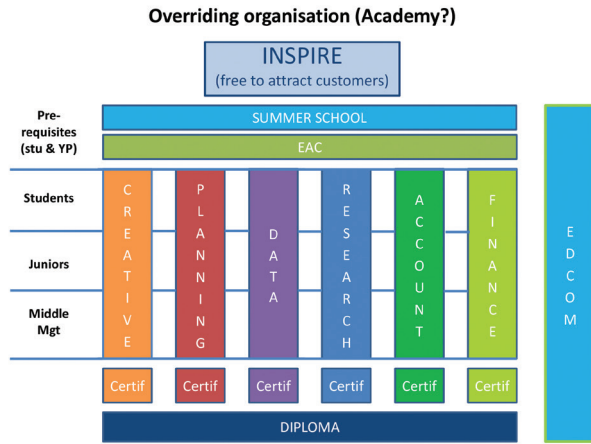
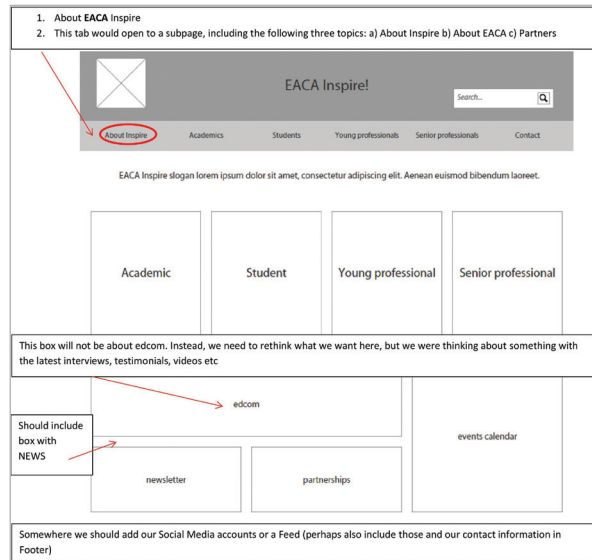


Figure 2 'New concept' Example of early brainstorming sessions



Figures 3 'Update wireframes September'

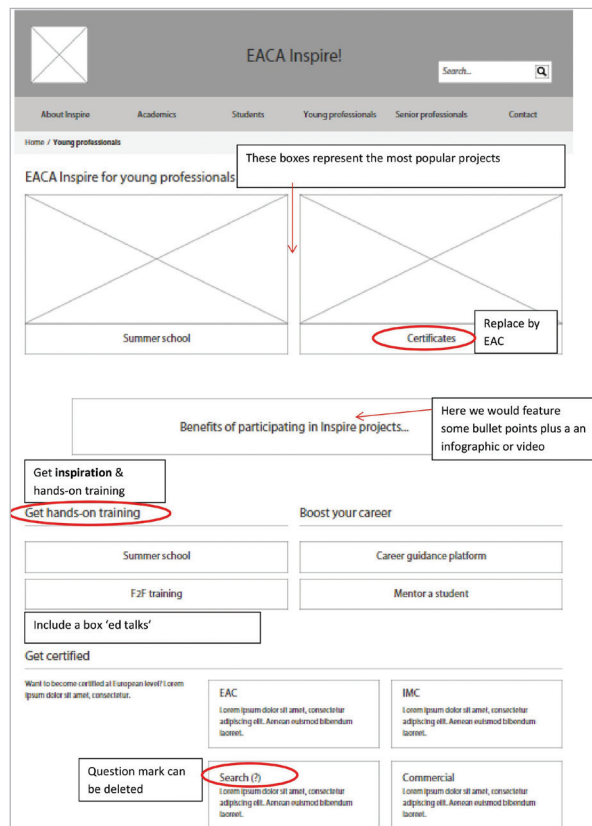


Figure 4 Homepage proposal_Inspire

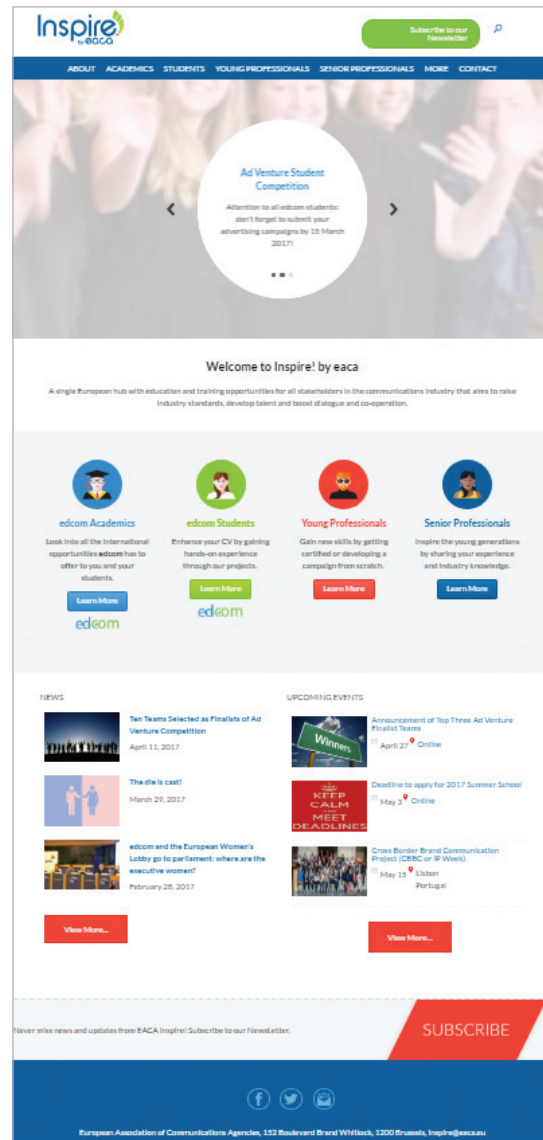


Figure 5 'Inspire! By EACA' Homepage



Figure 6 'Inspire! By EACA' - Student Page



Figure 7 Twitter

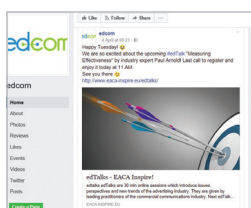


Figure 8 Facebook

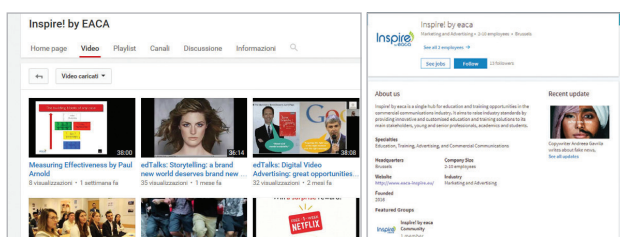


Figure 9 Youtube

Figure 10 LinkedIn

Tools & Systems

EACA decided to group its main stakeholders into four target audiences:

- » Young Professionals
- » Senior Professionals
- » Students
- » Academics

EACA has a very broad and complex membership, so the user experience designer recommended that the stakeholders should first have the opportunity to select their profile on the homepage. This way, we ensure that the projects and information they will see are relevant to their profile. They also have the possibility to explore other target groups by navigating through the menu or by returning to the homepage.

We also created a membership management platform for edcom's academic members. The platform includes an interactive map of Europe, showcasing the member network. The user can use filters to narrow down their search, for instance based on location. At a later stage, we will also add filters such as discipline, field of study, ownership and degree. Each edcom member page contains contact details of the university and a biography and photo of the edcom representative for that university.

Partners

Before approaching a user experience designer, we consulted our members, such as commercial communications experts and academics. Once we had a clear picture of the new concept, we employed an independent website developer who created the new website together with staff members of the EACA team. We regularly updated our members throughout the process to ensure that the target groups were satisfied with the result of the website as it stands today.

Challenges

Given the broad range of different member profiles and their secondary network (ranging from academics to students to agency professionals to global senior professionals), it was difficult to find a structure that would fit every profile. We solved this problem by grouping them in four target groups according to their profile. This way, when they would land on our website, they could determine for themselves to which group they belong to or which pages they would like to visit.

We are also a small team working on Education, so it was not always easy to effectively find the time for this huge project next to our other projects. Although the developer coded the basic wireframes of the website, it was the team itself who created the layout and content of the entire website (a total of 203 pages).

Results

MEMBER EXPERIENCE

The website delivers a personalised experience through structuring the homepage into four separate pathways - one for each of the key target groups. This is represented by visual icons and invites the visitor to make a selection based on their profile. The pictograms are representative of each of the four target groups and offer a mix of gender, age and race. The experience is personalised as the icons indicate to the viewers where to click according to their own profile.

A pedagogical approach has been used to guide the reader through the various pages and projects displayed. The website also includes many downloadable infographics, explaining the projects for each of the relevant target groups. The majority of the project pages display a countdown, so visitors are reminded of the next deadlines relevant to them.

ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

SHORT TERM OBJECTIVE - A single platform - a personalised approach:

We achieved this objective entirely as we managed to create a single education and training hub with a distinct personalised approach. By targeting our 4 main stakeholder groups from the main site, users will be directed to the projects and opportunities most relevant to them.

MID TERM OBJECTIVES - A single platform - multiple opportunities:

- » We have managed to create bridges between the target groups and encourage interaction between them. We receive regular requests from senior professionals interested in doing an edTalk (one of our monthly webinars) and from academics promoting other projects to their students. As a

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result, we can see that stakeholders, who were not aware of certain projects before, show interest now.

- » Our key objective was to raise visibility of our projects and to have more participants taking part in the various projects over time. Since our projects run on an annual basis, it is too early to draw conclusions, but we have already seen a significant increase in the participation of new or non-member delegates for two of our projects: The Ad Venture Student Competition (deadline was 15 December 2016), the EACA International Advertising Summer School 2017 (deadline 3 May 2017) and the European Advertising Certificate (deadline is 12 April 2017). See *Figure 11 'Inspire! By EACA' - Training Project*

Since both projects show an increase of the participation rate of students and young professionals who had previously been difficult to reach, we believe that we have already succeeded in reaching those target groups more efficiently.

The significant increase in numbers of users, page views and page sessions is also an indication that we are heading in a positive direction to meet this objective in the medium term.

Figure 11 'Inspire! By EACA' - Training Project

IMPACT

One of EACA's key goals is to raise standards, develop talent and boost dialogue and co-operation by providing innovative and customised training solutions for our stakeholders. With the establishment of a continuous professional development platform for both junior and senior professionals, EACA has managed to create the key prerequisite to advance the strategic goals of the organisation. A website is nowadays the first contact point and the flagship of an association. As our new website and the concept have

been so enthusiastically received by our members, we can proudly say that it has a very positive impact on our stakeholders. EACA is constantly improving its services and strives to meet the most recent standards with this modern and unique website.

Our members are able to see an overview of the complete education and training portfolio which EACA has developed over the years. As a result, they have the possibility to disseminate the projects we offer amongst their members, within their agency networks or universities, with one link and one message instead of multiple links to different websites. Furthermore, academics can see what projects are interesting for their students; students and recent graduates can see what training opportunities are available to young professionals; senior professionals find the next talent in a pool of successful students and young professionals and can find expert academics to establish collaborations with. These are just a few examples of how the different target groups can interact with each other in a fruitful way.

STATISTICS

The number of active visitors and page visits has shown a significant increase due to the promotion of our activities in newsletters, email exchanges and on social media, driving significant traffic to the website.

Website Results	From September 2016 to mid-March 2017	From September 2015 to mid-March 2016 (Old website)	From February to mid-March 2017
Users	6,000	1,300	2,030
Sessions	11,000	1,900	3,200
Page Views	37,000	3,900	8,700
Average duration session	3:52 mins	5 mins*	

*This duration is probably due to the difficult navigation system that the old website offered.

The new website is attracting a higher number of returning visitors, which indicates a positive experience.

Ratio for the new website	From September 2015 to mid-March 2016	From September 2016 to mid-March 2017
New visitors	65.6%	54.5%
Returning visitors	34.4%	45.5%

FINANCIAL

We invested

- » 1330 EUR: wireframes (including several consultations with a user experience designer, creation of the wireframe itself and a review once the website was completed)
- » 2445 EUR: website development (including several consultations with a website developer who made the website in Wordpress using Pagebuilder (no template was used))

» 270 EUR in a new logo - The transfer of content and look & feel of the website were created by members of EACA's staff over a period of several months

This makes a total of 4045 EUR. The website is a free service offered to our members, although we benefit indirectly from increased uptake of paid-for training courses as a result of improved visitor numbers and experience.



Innovation

The website is user-friendly and easy to navigate, combining bright colours, lots of visual images and videos and has a consistent design that reoccurs on all pages. The homepage is structured into four target groups represented by visual icons and invites the visitor to make a selection based on their profile. Once on their target group main page, the visitor is guided through more options, tailored to their profile.

The website contains many testimonials and pictures of former participants, which is encouraging and motivating for the readers that are considering joining some of the activities.



What we would do differently

We are still aiming to create a membership platform on the website for edcom members. The web developer implemented a code so that visitors can filter our membership based on discipline, degree, private or public institute and location. However, the member mapping and research process took longer than expected, so at the moment, we currently only filter on location. Starting again, we would suggest collecting all the information before the launch of the platform.

Given the small team and the huge project, we would recommend to draw a realistic timeline. We

underestimated the amount of work and that had an effect on us and our members; we had to keep postponing the deadline because we were missing content, we sometimes had to rely on third parties or there were technical difficulties. It's important to launch with a big bang, rather than constantly having to modify your website or change your strategy because of a shortage in time



Feedback & Testimonials

The website has received excellent feedback from all its stakeholders and visitors.

In February 2017, the website was nominated as a finalist in the European Association Awards. Jurors commented:


» *"Excellent graphics, simple, easy to navigate"*

» *"A good idea for training and education"*

» *"Really enjoyed the use of colour, it makes the website 'welcoming', as well as the use of infographics, that help navigate the information. These elements contribute to the overall impression that learning is fun. Good idea to tailor the menu to the various user communities (student, young professional, senior professional etc.), there is a wealth of information available on the site and tailoring it to different users makes it more easy to navigate and digest."*

Our members particularly enjoyed the colourful and modern design, the icons representing the target groups and the clear navigation.

» *"I really like the new design. Excellent work, edcom!", Professor **John Delacruz**, a former edcom President*

» *"The website has a great colourful design; the navigation is excellent.", **Selim Ünlüsoy**, New edcom Board member & Executive Creative Director at Ogilvy Istanbul *

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