2024 Comprehensive Media Plan
Trustees' Public Information Committee
November 20, 2023

The following is intended to serve as an inventory of ongoing work and plans, a guideline for the A.A. Offices in their work, budgeting processes, and HR planning to effectively carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Overall, this document can be considered a plan for supporting A.A. members in carrying the message to all who suffer from alcoholism. The development of this document occurs through close collaboration between the General Service Board, General Service Office, and AA Grapevine Office and is being presented to the Fellowship through the Conference process to better communicate the ongoing work and to capture feedback from the Fellowship on these efforts. The structure of this document and the content will evolve over time. Still, its use will remain critical in our efforts to effectively communicate to the world our message of hope and recovery from alcoholism.

As we continue to make our message available in traditional and new formats and channels, it is always important to remain true to who we are and what we do. Staying consistent with our principles and identity is critical to clearly communicating our message of hope and recovery from alcoholism, regardless of the format or channel through which we communicate.

Mass media has provided a key avenue for sharing the message of Alcoholics Anonymous since our earliest days. From almost the very beginning, members of our Fellowship grappled with the tension between self-promotion and making sure those who needed us had access to our lifesaving message. Over the last few decades, the media and technology landscape has evolved far beyond what our founders would have imagined. Balancing our Traditions with the ways we utilize technology is of critical importance. At the same time, "attraction rather than promotion" cannot be an excuse for failing to carry the message on platforms that members and potential members prefer. It is our responsibility to adapt to new digital opportunities and hold ourselves to the highest standards as a Fellowship.

Regular communication about our lifesaving content is vitally important in today's colossus of communication. We seek to make our public service announcements more available to the suffering alcoholic by making them available wherever people consume information. We can also make our content more shareable to support recovering

alcoholics already carrying the message of hope and recovery. A focused effort is underway to develop content that is more readily available across multiple formats for our Fellowship to share while staying well within our spiritual principles.

As we go on learning how to be more effective with this information in a multitude of channels such as our websites, Instagram (GV), YouTube, LinkedIn, Meeting Guide App, GV App, Online Business Profile listings, and podcasts, we will need to allow our employees the flexibility to pilot different approaches that fall within our guiding principles and to measure their effectiveness in carrying the message. For each new experiment, we will want to ask ourselves how to determine if this was effective in carrying the message. We will need to continue to ask ourselves if we are making the most of the strengths that each of our corporations brings. As our Executive Editor recently shared, AAWS publishes the collective voice of A.A., and Grapevine publishes the collected voices of A.A. members. Are we allowing each to shine as brightly as possible in carrying the message?

CONFIDENTIAL: 74th General Service Conference Background

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Section 1: Introduction

Introduction

The Comprehensive Media Plan is a primary focus of the Trustees' Public Information Committee. It is submitted to the Conference Committee on Public Information annually for review. This document serves as a strategic communications plan and review for Alcoholics Anonymous and its incorporated brands. The following pages document current business standards and serves as a benchmark to build on. These documents are prepared to chart a course for communication strategy, measure effectiveness and accomplishments, and reevaluate their effectiveness as conditions change. The guiding principles for this plan are firmly rooted in the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Key Tenets for Communications Strategy

- Amplify the A.A. message of hope and recovery in traditional and digital media to reach key audiences, especially suffering alcoholics.

- Connect the suffering alcoholic with local resources that can provide immediate help.
- Create content that is inclusive and accessible to all we serve.
- Reach our audiences where they are and where they search for our messages.
- Ensure our message resonates with and is relevant to our key audiences.
- Continuously evaluate and recommend digital platforms that offer opportunities to amplify the A.A. message to our audiences and can be used in keeping with the Twelve Traditions and A.A. principles.
- Practice thoughtful stewardship of our limited financial and employee resources by strategically and carefully planning annual calendars of projects to pursue and determining what projects or functions can be put on hold without jeopardizing our effectiveness.
- Provide consistent/stable anchor points for members and partners to seamlessly connect to, utilize, and engage with our content.

Collaboration, content sharing, and coordination across our boards, committees, and corporations make our message stronger. Our communications to our wider audiences—including members, suffering alcoholics, the professional community, and the media—need to respond to current communications preferences and digital habits:

- Affinity for social media
- Desire for more concise, engaging, and frequent communications
- Preference for mobile app-like experiences

The still sick and suffering alcoholic (our "target audience") is seeking our message online and on mobile apps, and an online visibility strategy is needed to ensure people are able to find us. Our online visibility strategy is based on digital marketing principles and tools.

Key Terms and Definitions

1. **Anonymity/Privacy** – Anonymity and online privacy are very different concepts. Users have control over their own online privacy; Google Safety has a Privacy Controls dashboard that allows users to see, control, and delete the data that Google tracks. Google Ads also has policies that prohibit advertisers from targeting users based on personal hardships or medical conditions, meaning that no one will ever be served an ad for a for-profit recovery center because they clicked one of our ads.

2. **Brand Identity** – This section represents the look and feel of our messaging. While a publication might include different images, depending on the target audience (for instance teenage alcoholics vs. professionals). At the same time, it would contain consistent elements that identify it as an A.A. communication.

   > 2.a -- A **brand** includes easily identifiable marks, messaging, and imagery that conveys its identity to its target audience.

   > 2.b -- A **brand voice** is the tone and personality. It conveys the particular vocabulary, attitude, and values of the brand to the external audience. **Brand**, **brand voice** and **communication strategy** should be closely linked.

3. **Budget** - We should be strategic and mindful of utilizing Seventh Tradition contributions, keeping within the Board's fiduciary responsibility when embarking on projects.

4. **Information architecture** should define the best path and best content to meet the needs of each user group.

5. **Key Message:** There Is a Solution

6. **KPIs** – Key performance indicators are necessary to show our goals have merit and that we are adequately working towards executing them. KPIs are the foundation of accountability and reporting.

7. **Marketing –** The process of making a message or product visible (attractive?) to a target audience. The General Service Office, the AA Grapevine Office and the corporate boards use marketing tools not to sell anything but to carry the message of hope and

recovery. To be effective, we embrace digital marketing best practices and hold our online presence to the highest possible standards.

8. **Media Objective** – To help the sick and suffering alcoholic and provide accurate information to the media and the public about A.A.

9. **Metatags –** snippets of code on every web page that communicate with search engines. They tell search engines what to display in search results for the page and how web browsers should display the page to visitors.

10. **Recovery Landscape** – A.A. and non-A.A. entities that provide similar or overlapping help to problem drinkers **or** provide the help that A.A. does *not* provide.

11. **SEO** – Search engine optimization is the practice of improving a website's rankings in search engine organic (unpaid) search results of relevant terms.

12. **Target Audience** – Those seeking help with a drinking problem and those who seek to assist them.

Section 2: Creative & Identity

This section covers the look and feel of the Alcoholics Anonymous brands, including AAWS, Grapevine/La Viña and its communication assets.

AAWS

The GSO style guide provides internal stakeholders with current versions of our logos, colors, fonts, and other visual elements to aid branding consistency across all our materials and platforms.

The Publishing, Public Information, and Communication Services departments continue to bring older assets into alignment with current standards.
Mention terms of use and IP

AA Grapevine/ La Vina

Grapevine and La Viña have a contemporary look and a clear identity. Their assets mirror each other closely and have a visible "voice." They do not come up in searches under ancillary keywords but do come up with direct keywords. Their consistency across all platforms is stronger than that of AAWS, as there is a clearer understanding of Grapevine

and La Viña's purpose: to gather and share the personal stories of A.A. members recovering from alcoholism.

A.A. members have found that this sharing of personal experience with another alcoholic is critical: it allows one alcoholic to identify with another, and this identification leads to the process of recovery. Grapevine and La Viña's story-based content, then, makes them powerful tools for communicating the message of hope and recovery that alcoholics find in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Section 3: Websites

The intent of this section is to focus on the primary websites for AAWS and AAGV. This includes the main landing pages, associated subpages, and store websites that sell AAWS or AAGV products.

AA.org

The goal of the A.A. website, aa.org, is to present Alcoholics Anonymous as a credible, relevant resource to new visitors and deliver value to existing members.

Content and Navigation for Key Audiences

- Suffering alcoholics looking for help/potential A.A. members

- Family members and friends of active alcoholics/ potential A.A. members
- Current A.A. members, inside and outside the service structure
- The professional community

The landing pages on aa.org are designed to address the needs of each of these audiences. They are continuously evaluated and improved based on user feedback, current analytics, the needs of audiences, and availability of new content.

Advanced search capabilities

Search needs to deliver fast, accurate, easily understood results. In addition, the search functions independently in each language (English Spanish and French).

Connect Users to Their Local A.A. Entities

While AAWS, GSB, and GV/LV serve all members of the Fellowship in the U.S. and Canada, ours are not the only websites serving members. All over the U.S. and

Canada, Areas, Districts, Central Offices and Intergroups (as well as other entities like Hospitals and Institutions (H&I) Committees and Bridging the Gap (BTG) committees) set up their own websites, many of which include useful information on local A.A. events and meetings.

Several years ago, we conducted a focus group with local entities, and they were overwhelmingly opposed to adding meeting finder functionality to aa.org. The commonly held belief was that people looking for meetings were a primary source of online traffic and general exposure for local entities and the services they provide for their local communities.

So, instead of providing A.A. meeting information, aa.org links users to local resources where they can access this information. A geographic search using the Find A.A. tool generates a list of local entities, usually a mix of Intergroups/ Central Offices, Districts and Areas closest to the user's location (see https://www.aa.org/find-aa). While many users appreciate this service, others complain about not being able to search directly for a meeting in their chosen location.

Providing accurate meeting information is one of the main responsibilities of local A.A. intergroups, central offices, areas, districts, and answering services. These entities are also local and better equipped to connect individuals with A.A. resources in their local area, and many have 24-hour phone coverage to provide assistance at any hour.

Service Materials for trusted servants

A.A. provides a variety of services through a local committee system. These committees are provided with resources by AAWS, Inc., most of which are available on our current website at aa.org/service-committees. Work is ongoing to make these pages more useful.

Optimized performance

AA.org is a heavily trafficked site and needs to deliver industry-standard response times both on desktop and mobile devices. Back-end performance, front-end performance, mobile versus desktop, payload sizes, and the number of assets, as well as time to first byte, should be continuously maintained and improved to meet rising technological standards.

Flexible and easy-to-update

We moved from custom software that required a technician to update to a robust content management solution where the AAWS staff has far more control to create and edit content independently of the web developer, significantly increasing our responsiveness to content changes and updates.

Security compliance

This site is required to be PCI compliant.

Cookies and Privacy

AA.org is compliant with current national and international privacy laws as they apply to non-profits and continues to work with appropriate parties to review our privacy policies and practices.

SEO and Metatags

- Basic descriptions and cleaned-up titles to match the visible titles on items have been applied to most assets in English, Spanish, and French; work continues to develop any missing content.
- As often as possible, we will use the same descriptions on aa.org and the online store. Simplifies writing/translation and helps SEO to relate items across platforms.
- All Newsletters in English, Spanish and French titles and dates/years were updated to be uniform.

Translations

Any new content must be translated and added to the French and Spanish versions of the website as soon as it is available.

Analytics

We moved to Google Analytics for AA.org and Meeting Guide in 2021 in conjunction with the relaunch of aa.org. This brought our website, online bookstore, app, and Google Ads together under one analytics software for easier comparison and holistic planning. We have also successfully updated our implementation to GA4, as Universal Analytics is no longer available. One priority of the GA4 implementation was to ensure that our sites reflect best cookie opt-out and online privacy standards.

AA Grapevine and La Viña Websites

AA Grapevine maintains two websites: the Grapevine site, which includes the current magazine, archives, store, and other features, and the parallel La Viña site, for Spanish-speaking members.

The primary website for all things Grapevine is aagrapevine.org. This site includes the home page for AA Grapevine, with links to the current magazine; the archives of Grapevine stories back to 1944; a "Get Involved" page with links for Grapevine Reps (GVRs), an events calendar, special features, and more; the online store for Grapevine books and other products; and a subscription page. A Digital or Complete (Digital plus print) subscription is required to access the monthly magazine and Story Archive on aagrapevine.org.

The home page also contains links to La Viña, the Carry the Message Project (which encourages A.A. members to purchase gift subscriptions for alcoholics in need), the Grapevine podcast, and aa.org. The site is a "one-stop shop" for users to purchase all Grapevine material. Meanwhile, aalavina.org parallels aagrapevine.org but with unique content by and for Spanish-speaking members. As with aagrapevine.org, a Digital or a Complete subscription is required to access the bimonthly magazine and La Viña Story Archive, which dates back to 1996.

Online Business Profiles

Online business listings are pages that display an organization's information on directory websites, search engine result pages, social media, and business reviews. We currently have business listings on Google, Bing, and Yelp. The individual search platforms automatically generate these with our publicly available company contact information. We took ownership of all three in 2019 to correct inaccuracies and use the opportunity for improved public relations. Currently, the information on each listing is correct.

There are public review, comment, and question features on these listings that cannot be turned off or removed. By ignoring these comments in the past, we were leaving inaccurate/inappropriate comments in place and missing an opportunity to provide help and contact information. There was a backlog of unresolved comments/ questions, which has now been completed. We continue to respond to any new comments or questions as they come.

Depending on the comment, we provide short, accurate response text, A.A. contact information, and where to find more information. For unrelated reviews that are aimed at A.A. in general or local entities, we direct them to the best resource and provide general A.A. information. We'll only attempt to remove a review that is unrelated to AAWS, GSB, or GSO.

Google Ads

Our participation in the Google Ads for Nonprofits program is the result of a 2017 Conference Advisory Action. Google Ads are a P.I. tool no different than those we've utilized since our founding. Google is one of many online search engines people use to seek help with a drinking problem. Google's organic (non-paid) and paid search results are dominated by for-profit recovery centers that can afford to spend thousands of dollars per month on search engine optimization and ads. The Google Ads grant gives us an opportunity to be visible where we otherwise would not have been able to reach our audiences online—especially suffering alcoholics.

While this is a Conference-approved project, some may raise questions about how our participation adheres to the 7th, 11th, and 12th traditions. The 7th tradition states that A.A. groups should be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions. Donated television and radio airtime for PSAs has long been acceptable to A.A., and the Google Ads grant program is very similar. The grant has no "strings" or affiliation in the same way that we aren't beholden to or affiliated with the television networks that air our PSAs.

Some members have voiced concerns about anonymity and Google Ads because of things like cookies and data tracking. Anonymity and online privacy are very different concepts. Users have control over their own online privacy; Google Safety has a Privacy Controls dashboard that allows users to see, control, and delete the data that Google tracks. Google Ads also has policies that prohibit advertisers from targeting users based on personal hardships or medical conditions, meaning that no one will ever be served an ad for a for-profit recovery center because they clicked one of our ads.

Under this program, nonprofits have up to $10,000 per month in ad placement value available. The GSO Communication Services Department is currently responsible for managing and updating Google Ads campaigns. This includes:
- Evaluating and experimenting with ad targeting
- A/B testing ad copy and design
- Adding/removing keywords and negative keywords
- Changing keyword match type

- Testing multiple landing page options
- Approving/denying basic campaign suggestions provided by Google Ads
- Generating quarterly reports

Three Google Search Ads campaigns are currently running: "Find a Meeting," "Get Help," and "For Professionals." For each of these campaigns, we assign keywords that, when searched for, may prompt our ad to appear in the Google search results. Our ads will never be shown unless someone searches for keywords and phrases directly related to our ads, restricting our potential audience to those actively seeking our message.

Key points:
- All links in the ads lead back to aa.org, as required by the Google grant program.
- The highest click-through rates continue to relate to finding a meeting.

Communication Services regularly evaluates the effectiveness of our campaigns and the resources required to optimize our ads and fully take advantage of this program.

QR Codes and UTM Codes

QR codes are machine-readable codes consisting of an array of black and white squares, typically used for storing URLs or other information for reading by the camera on a Smartphone. GSO strives to adhere to best practices in its use of QR codes. For instance, the Publishing Department is gradually adding QR codes to pamphlets and other publications in an effort to gauge usefulness and efficacy before making decisions on further usage.

Exploring ways to utilize QR Codes on our PI materials has been an ongoing conversation in the trustee's PI committee and the Publishing department. Examples of where QR Codes have helped PI communicate more effectively include: using QR codes on posters for Young People's video project and in the Membership Survey pamphlet.

We follow standard business practice of embedding a UTM code to links and QR codes to track engagement. A UTM code is a basic snippet of code added to the end of a URL to assist with tracking the performance of content campaigns. Including a UTM code in a link allows us to use analytics to track exactly where the click came from, so we know how many people scanned the QR code.

UTM codes are in use at the Grapevine and GSO in various applications, including Meeting Guide news items, and Grapevine newsletters. GSO and Grapevine will continue to deploy UTM codes when appropriate and explore further applications.

Section 4: Public Relations

"We are trying our best to reach more of those 25 million alcoholics who today inhabit the world. We have to reach them directly and indirectly. In order to accomplish this, it will be necessary that understanding of A.A. and public goodwill towards A.A. go on growing everywhere. We need to be on even better terms with medicine, religion, employers, governments, courts, prisons, mental hospitals, and all those conducting enterprises in the alcohol field. We need the increasing goodwill of editors, writers, television, and radio channels. These publicity outlets— local, national, and international—should be opened wider and wider, always forgoing, however, high-pressure promotion tactics. It is to, and through, all these resources that we must try to carry A.A.'s message to those who suffer alcoholism and its consequences."
> *--Bill W. Concept XI, page C38 Twelve Concepts for World Service 1962*

Strategy

Public Information staff work to convey information about A.A. to the general public.. Key tactics include:

- Annually develop a content and public information calendar.
- Identify representatives to speak about A.A. to the public, professionals, and the press.
- Working with an external vendor to ensure that our press releases are distributed to the best possible outlets.
- Annually communicating to the media about our principle of anonymity.
- Maintain a tracking matrix covering press releases and media contacts that include the reach of all coverage.

Our Talking Points:

o *No matter what your age, no matter what your gender, or background, if you are drinking too much, A.A. offers a solution.*

o *Our competence to speak about alcoholism is limited in subject matter to Alcoholics Anonymous and its recovery program.*

o *Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership*

is a desire to stop drinking.

Press Releases

The General Service Office distributes up to six press releases annually. Releases are generated and coordinated through the Public Information assignment. Press release content creation is the three-way responsibility of Public Information, Publishing, and Communications. All releases are made available in English, French, and Spanish. Also, the PI desk provides electronic press kits on request as background to releases. A recent list of press releases may be found on the Press and Media page.

The Communication Services Department continues to evaluate the usefulness of press releases as a communications tool.

Grapevine and La Viña have their own processes for external communication. They don't issue press releases, rather they communicate with the Fellowship through email blasts, web posting, through our newsletters and with the Grapevine app.

Direct Communications

This includes announcements sent to members, staff, board members, Delegates, Districts, Areas, and local Intergroup/Central offices.

Types of announcements include messages from the General Manager on any number of topics, including but certainly not limited to 7th Tradition updates and news about GSO of interest to the Fellowship. Announcements are sent out using the e-mail marketing platform Campaign Monitor, using the available data in the GSO NetSuite software. These messages are also shared via Meeting Guide app news and What's New?

Quarterly Reports are sent out from the General Service Board to all Conference members, and AAWS sends out AAWS Highlights on a Quarterly basis. These are also posted to What's New and Meeting Guide app.

Newsletters

Box 4-5-9 is publication for the Fellowship that publishes four times a year (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall). The newsletter is published electronically and posted on

aa.org. The electronic version is currently emailed to 60k+ members of the Fellowship, including those in the service structure and others who subscribe via aa.org. A print edition is sent to a small subscription base.

Section 5: Content Creation

TV PSAs

Public Service Announcements (PSAs) have long been recognized and used as PI tools for many non-profit organizations, including Alcoholics Anonymous. The first mention in the History & Actions of the Trustees' Committee on Public Information is 1966, with the production of 15-second, 30-second, and 60-second television PSAs in the decades that followed.

Television stations air public service announcements in unsold commercial airtime. Whenever a station has a commercial break, if the ads during that break are not entirely sold out, stations will turn to PSAs to fill that gap. A.A. makes an investment in the production of the content, distribution, and tracking, and the stations provide the airtime. Therefore, PSAs fill a content need for the stations. The commercial value of the airtime provided to A.A. (as well as other nonprofits) over the years is in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

The professional production quality of our PSAs is key to the success of the campaigns over the years. The better the quality of a PSA and the messaging, the more stations will play them. While it used to be that stations were mandated to provide airtime, that is no longer true. With the vast numbers of PSAs that come to the stations, high production values are essential for successful placement.

Local Public Information Committees also use PSAs within their committees and at information sessions. The PSAs are also available on the aa.org website for viewing. Local committees are also very helpful in getting broadcast quality PSAs to television stations and outlets that may not have been covered by GSO's initial distribution or providing an extra push to elevate the playing of our PSAs by building local cooperative relationships.

Each year through the General Service Conference process, the trustees' Public Information Committee and Conference Committee on Public Information, in partnership

with the Public Information Coordinator at GSO, work with the Fellowship to review the usefulness and relevance of the PSAs developed for Alcoholics Anonymous through this process:

- Existing PSAs are reviewed, and each is assigned a status: continue their distribution in their present form, perform select edits or retire the PSA.
- New PSAs may be requested for development.
- New distribution channels may be considered.

The GSO Staff on the PI Assignment leads any project to produce new PSAs, whether they are for broadcast television or radio placement, as well as to edit any existing PSAs. The production process includes our Publishing Department and third-party service providers to create or edit a PSA. All new creative content is sent through the committee process to Conference for approval. Once approved, a service provider is engaged to ensure that the broadest possible distribution occurs throughout the U.S. and Canada service structure. Analytics and tracking data are provided to the committees for review.

The freshness of content is also important. At about the six-month mark of distribution for newly developed TV-PSAs, we typically start to see a dip in usage over time. Often, stations start to focus on newer campaigns, and airings start to decline. So, we re-distribute or "refresh" the PSAs to give the campaign a second wind and keep the results momentum. This gives stations another shot at airing the PSAs if they did not run them the first time. For stations that aired the spots and have taken them out of rotation, this also helps generate new airings. On average, we typically see a 10-25% increase in stations airing PSAs following a refresh. We use new station airings as the primary benchmark for refresh increases because growth in airings, impressions, and media value can come from existing stations.

Strategy
- Create high-quality content to ensure the broadest possible distribution
- Refresh content as needed
- Track performance to measure the impact of various executions and the overall success of the program
- The continued effective use of resources such as our PI Appointed Committee members, who are professionals in the field, is essential in terms of keeping an active eye on the ever-changing media landscape, ensuring we do not miss new opportunities.

Radio PSAs

As with the television PSAs, A.A. has long found radio PSAs to be very effective tools. Currently, this is especially true in small, under-served, and remote locations, where local radio stations play a large part in service to those communities. In parts of the US and Canada, where infrastructure does not support more complex technologies, radio is a true lifeline. Therefore, the importance of providing radio/audio content for those stations about A.A., such as our PSAs, becomes clear. All radio PSAs are regularly reviewed. In 2021 tag lines at the end of our PSAs were updated to reflect the latest contact information for A.A. Broadcast-quality PSAs are available on the website for direct download and through the PI desk.

While radio might at first glance appear to be an older, less effective technology in terms of comparative reach, it is, in practice, one of our most valuable tools for local committees.

We do not directly distribute any radio PSAs. We're not currently tracking downloads from our websites, but this would be useful to implement in the future for tracking usefulness and distribution. Radio PSAs are regularly reviewed for effectiveness.

Podcasts

GSO Podcast

The goal of GSO Podcast is to be a powerful platform to reach members wanting to know more about GSO and the service structure while expanding the public's understanding of A.A. as an organization and demystifying the Fellowship and dispelling misconceptions.

History

The 2022 Conference Committee on Public Information supported the development of a GSO podcast. Work on the podcast began in 2022 and continued through 2023. Launch of the first season is expected in early 2024.

Strategy

Each episode will invite listeners to visit aa.org to learn more about A.A. and will direct them to Meeting Guide app to find a meeting near them.

AAGV Podcast

The Grapevine podcast typically consists of candid and entertaining conversation between hosts (all longtime A.A. members) and guests (either a member or a friend of A.A.) sharing their experience, strength, and hope with each other in a light-hearted setting akin to "the meeting after the meeting." Like the magazine, each episode offers both humor and inspiration while tackling the very serious topic of recovery from alcoholism.

History

Grapevine released the first episode of "The AA Grapevine Half-Hour Variety Hour on October 4, 2021. As of November 2023 the weekly podcast has 113 episodes, with 665,000 downloads. The podcast is available on the AA Grapevine app, all popular podcast platforms (Apple podcasts, Spotify, etc.) and via Grapevine's podcast player at https://www.aagrapevine.org/podcast.

Goals
● To enrich members' sobriety and attract alcoholics to A.A.
● To build community with and between other A.A. members
● To provide accessible content to A.A. members, available anytime and anywhere
● To raise awareness about Grapevine/La Viña magazines, the GV/LV apps, digital subscriptions, books, and other GV/LV products, and to encourage their use as Twelfth Step tools

Strategy
• Personal narrative/story invites identification (critical to recovery)
• Casual "Fellowship-style" atmosphere and encouragement of audience participation build feelings of community and inclusion among A.A. members
• Regular features such as "Ask the Oldtimer," "What's in a Name," "Stump the Thumper" (Big Book trivia), and humor from Grapevine keep the podcast entertaining and lively, much like the magazine
• Podcast's availability through multiple outlets and channels ensures its accessibility to potential listeners
• Interviews with Grapevine/La Viña staff and board members educate listeners about GV/LV products, including their effectiveness as Twelfth Step tools

User-generated Content

While sharing individual stories of hope and recovery from alcoholism have long been a key part of how we carry the message, more recently AAWS has begun to more systematically collect and distribute content that is created and/or curated by members themselves. One example is the Young People's video project (in which young people

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are encouraged to create and upload anonymized short videos of their own experience with sobriety). For revisions to the pamphlets "A.A. for the Black and African American Alcoholic" and "A.A. for the Native North American," A.A. members from those communities have been invited onto working groups to collect, select and edit stories.

We seek user-generated content when:

1. When we believe that our message will be most effective if members of the target audience help craft the message
2. We believe that user-generated content will provide perspectives or insights that are different from those that might be crafted through more conventional content development mechanisms
3. User-generated content will be more engaging
4. User-generated content will be more cost-effective

What kinds of guidelines do we provide content creators?

1 Technical requirements (varies by project)
2 Creator(s) must be AA members
3 Content must be original (may not appear on other platforms)
4 Content must adhere to AA's anonymity traditions
5 Focus on stories that will help alcoholics identify
6 Content creators must be at least 18 years of age
7 Content creators must be within the boundaries of the U.S. and Canada A.A. General Service Structure
8 Submissions should be in English, Spanish or French
9 By submitting their content, content creators agree to assign copyright and editorial control to AAWS. Public Information staff work with GSO's legal staff to formalize this process with permission/ consent forms.

Section 6: Literature
AAWS Publishing Department

Very early in our history, A.A. made the decision to be its own publisher, a decision that has meant a great deal to the unity, growth, and financial health of the movement.

Starting with the Big Book, A.A. has developed a broad range of materials designed to carry the A.A. message of recovery and articulate the principles of the A.A. program.

The Publishing department coordinates all aspects of creating, printing, and revising these materials, including all books, pamphlets, CDs, DVDs, e-books, audiobooks, and other formats. In addition to Conference-approved materials, AAWS publishes service materials such as guidelines and bulletins, and much of the material published by AAWS is also available in different formats, including large print editions, braille, and ASL.

The Publishing department manages the AAWS webstore and collaborates with member services and the finance department (and with input and approvals by the AAWS board, as needed) on managing inventory, reprints and special offers.

The Language Services department is responsible for translating literature into French and Spanish for A.A. members in the U.S. and Canada.

The Legal, Licensing and Intellectual Property department is responsible for working with other countries to have A.A. materials translated into multiple languages as requested by those countries. This department also keeps track of all copyrights and permissions.

The Conference Approval Process

The addition of a new book or pamphlet is not approached lightly. Here is an outline of the process:

- Usually, the need is well-researched by Conference and trustees' committees, which move the idea forward. If the need does not appear to be urgent or broad enough to justify a new publication, the project is abandoned or deferred; if the need is clear, work is started.
- From the first draft to the last, committee and staff members — and occasionally a broadly representative special panel — are free to criticize and to suggest, underlining what they feel will best express the A.A. point of view. This process takes time — months or even years.
- When all the preparation work is completed, a manuscript is forwarded to the appropriate Conference committee for discussion. If the committee recommends approval, it moves to the Conference as a whole. If not, it returns to the appropriate trustees' committee or the Publishing department for further revision or discussion.
- If two-thirds of Conference members agree to the manuscript as presented or with specific edits approved by the body, the new piece of literature is entitled to bear the designation, "This is A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature." The same process is used for developing audiovisual and digital materials.

For AA Grapevine and La Viña, the Conference reviews proposed topics for every Grapevine and La Viña book as well as Grapevine policies. The Conference does not review material in advance of publication in the Grapevine or La Viña magazines; to attempt this as a matter of procedure or policy would be impractical for a monthly or bimonthly magazine, and the Conference Charter notes that "nothing herein shall compromise the Grapevine editor's right to accept or reject material for publication."

Books & Pamphlets

"Today, as in the early days of Alcoholics Anonymous, the A.A. message of recovery from alcoholism is carried by one alcoholic talking to another. However, since the publication of the first edition of the Big Book in 1939, literature has played an important role in spreading the A.A. message and imparting information about the A.A. Twelve Step program of recovery. A.A. co-founder Bill W., who often called the influence of A.A. literature 'incalculable,' wrote in the May 1964 issue of the Grapevine, 'Suppose, for instance, that during the last twenty-five years, A.A. had never published any standard literature…no books, no pamphlets. We need little imagination to see that by now, our message would be hopelessly garbled. Our relations with medicine and religion would have become a shambles. To alcoholics, generally, we would today be a joke and the public would have thought us a riddle. Without its literature, A.A. would certainly have bogged down in a welter of controversy and disunity.'"

(The Language of the Heart, p.348)

The cornerstone of our program and A.A. literature is *Alcoholics Anonymous* generally known as the Big Book, which was first published in 1939. More than 40 million copies of the title have been sold across 73 different languages, with 28 translations pending in various stages of development. Today the title is available in a range of formats, including print, digital, audio, braille, large print, and ASL.

A.A. World Services Inc. (AAWS), one of the two service corporations of A.A. (the other being AA Grapevine, Inc. or AAGV), publishes not only the Big Book but additional book titles, including "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions," "Daily Reflections," "Came to Believe," "As Bill Sees It," "Living Sober" "Our Great Responsibility" and more. Each title is available in a variety of formats and a number of different languages as well. In addition, AAWS publishes more than 60 pamphlets on a wide range of topics.

AA Grapevine, Inc. publishes a monthly magazine, Grapevine, in English, as well as a bimonthly Spanish language magazine, La Viña. In addition, Grapevine publishes books derived from the magazines, of which *Language of the Heart, Bill W.'s Grapevine Writings,* is the best seller. Grapevine has a robust multimedia presence, including mobile device apps, a website featuring the Grapevine archives, as well as a podcast, Instagram and YouTube channel, and a daily quote email.

AAWS Publishing Strategy

Develop a broad range of materials designed to carry the message of recovery and articulate the principles of the A.A. program.

Publish the historical and contemporary experiences of recovering members of A.A. through their personal stories.

Ensure A.A. content reaches the broadest possible audience through a variety of strategies and AAWS board-approved initiatives:

● Translate materials into a variety of languages, with Spanish and French being primary "domestic languages"
● Create a wide range of formats so the message of recovery can be carried to the Fellowship in whatever forms they prefer to consume content.
● Develop a variety of accessible formats to ensure the message can reach those with various accessibility challenges. And complement that format strategy with distribution strategies to reach audiences such as incarcerated persons.
● Develop targeted content to reach the broad scope of the fellowship and enable our diverse members to see themselves easily in the program. Ranging from Black and Hispanic members to the young and LGBT to those of various faiths and many more.
● Develop targeted content to reach those outside the fellowship who serve as important referrals of the still sick and suffering alcoholic to the program, including medical, human resources, legal, and corrections professionals as well as faith leaders and educators.

Top Selling AAWS Titles in 2022

English	Spanish	French
Big Book, hardcover	A.A. at a Glance	How it Works
Big Book, softcover	Information on A.A.	Information on A.A.
Is A.A. for You?	Where do I Go from Here?	Where Do I Go from Here?

A Newcomer Asks A.A. at a Glance Q&A on Sponsorship This is A.A. Twelve & Twelve, softcover Twelve & Twelve, hardcover Problems Other than Alcohol	Problems Other than Alcohol Twelve & Twelve, softcover A Message to Teenagers Big Book, hardcover Living Sober Is A.A. for Me? FAQ About A.A.	Is A.A. for You? Problems Other Than Alcohol A.A. at a Glance A Newcomer Asks This is A.A. Big Book, hardcover Many Paths to Spirituality

Top Selling AAGV Titles in 2022 (English, Spanish and French)

1. Prayer and Meditation
2. Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier
3. Language of the Heart (softcover)
4. Fun in Sobriety
5. Women in AA
6. Emotional Sobriety II
7. El Lenguaje del Corazón
8. Voices of Women in AA
9. Free on the Inside
10. Language of the Heart (hardcover)

The Magazines: Grapevine and La Viña

AA Grapevine is the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous. Written, edited, illustrated, and read by A.A. members and others interested in the A.A. program of recovery from alcoholism, Grapevine is a lifeline linking one alcoholic to another. Often referred to as "our meeting in print," AA Grapevine communicates the experience, strength, and hope of its contributors and reflects a broad geographic spectrum of current A.A. experience with recovery, unity, and service.

The awareness that every A.A. member has an individual way of working the program permeates the pages of the Grapevine. Throughout its history, the magazine has been a forum for the varied and often divergent opinions of A.A.s around the world. As such, articles are not intended to be statements of A.A. policy, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by either A.A. or the Grapevine.

AA Grapevine also publishes books and related items in English, as well as Spanish and

French. The best-selling Grapevine and La Viña book title is *Language of the Heart*, which contains all of Bill W.'s 150-plus Grapevine articles. All titles are also available as eBooks and a number as audiobooks as well.

La Viña History

In 1995, the General Service Conference addressed the expressed need within the United States and Canada for a Spanish-language edition of the Grapevine and gave its approval to the idea. In July 1995, a special edition of the Grapevine in Spanish was produced, containing articles that had already appeared in the English magazine. La Viña launched as a bimonthly publication for Spanish-speaking members of A.A. in June 1996.

Grapevine Story Archive

Almost every Grapevine article and letter ever published has been preserved online. With articles written by A.A. members from June 1944 to the present, the Story Archive offers a vivid account of A.A. history (including every article published in Grapevine by co-founder Bill W.) as well as a view of the Fellowship today.

The Archive is available through a seven-day free trial or with the purchase of a Digital or Complete subscription, and visitors can search it by location, author, or subject to find the first version of the Traditions, to learn what A.A.s have said about such topics as sponsorship and self-support, and to explore how much—and how little—A.A. has changed. Readers may also browse through the collection by department, topic, or date to find hundreds of jokes and cartoons, along with thousands of articles. La Viña digital archives are also available. Digital subscriptions to the Grapevine or La Viña include access to 20 stories per month in the Archive.

GSO Newsletters and Bulletins

In 2023, an internal working group comprising CSD, Staff, Operations, and Publishing began to take a deeper look at newsletters produced by GSO and how they might be updated/redesigned in look and content to better serve members.

- *Box 4-5-9*: quarterly; special articles cover public information, cooperation with the professional community, and correctional and treatment facilities activities; English, French and Spanish editions. Free digital subscriptions are available

through aa.org. Limited print circulation

- About A.A.: published semiannually; designed to inform professionals interested in alcoholism (the only bulletin aimed primarily at non-A.A.s). English, French and Spanish editions. Free digital subscriptions are available through aa.org.
- Loners-Internationalist Meeting (LIM): confidential bimonthly bulletin of A.A. Loners (Lone Members), Homers (housebound members), and Internationalists (seagoing A.A.s); excerpts of correspondence and lists of names and addresses of LIM members who wish to correspond with each other.
- Quarterly Report: covers activities of the General Service Board, including A.A. World Services Inc., and A.A. Grapevine, Inc. English, French and Spanish editions.
- Sharing from Behind the Walls: four issues a year; contains excerpts from letters received at GSO from people in custody; distributed by local correctional facilities committees to A.A. groups behind the walls. English, French and Spanish editions.

Literature in Corrections Settings

Conference-approved AAWS and Grapevine copyrighted eBooks and audiobooks are available on tablets and desktops in corrections venues, prisons, and jails. They can now be accessed by people in custody and by the professionals who serve them.

Strategy

Grapevine and AAWS continue to work to contract key vendors who supply tablets in correctional facilities in the United States. The plan is to continue to enlarge the number of vendors we have contracts with and increase the range of items of A.A. literature available. The Canadian Corrections Working Group has been appointed to help get literature on tablets in Canada and to increase awareness and participation in the Corrections Correspondence Service.

Progress report

The current number of tablets managed is approximately 317,000, but it will soon increase to more than 400,000 throughout the United States.

Current Statistics

- GTL & Edovo (These vendors share content)

- Tablets – a total of 117,100 in 209 facilities across 44 Areas.
- E-Books – 12 English titles, 9 French & Spanish titles.
- For the period March-November there have been 4,855 new starts, and 694 completes.
- Audio Books – 3 titles in English, French, & Spanish. 13,892 total starts, 9,724 completes.
- The Big Book and *Living Sober* are the most downloaded audiobooks. We are currently in the finishing stages of producing an audiobook for *Daily Reflections (first quarter 2023 release).*

- Securus Jpay – (Lantern educational portal)
  - Tablets – a total of 200,000+ in 240 facilities
  - Same ebooks (no audiobooks) as on GTL/Edovo
  - Reporting yet to be accessed

- Ingram CoreSource – OverDrive (Libraries and Institutions)
  - Same selection on ebooks and audiobooks are available for access via institutional Libraries and venues that use this vendor hub (primarily jails).
  - Reporting is yet to be accessed – vendor dashboard is being redesigned

Section 7: Social Media

AAWS YouTube Channel

The current AAWS YouTube channel was launched in 2017. There are over 9,000 subscribers to the channel as of September 2023. The videos include informational videos for members of the Fellowship, professionals, and all of the current video PSAs. Through YouTube analytics, we can gain insights about visitors to our channel to help us understand our audiences.

Goals

- To create an online video channel for access to online videos developed by Alcoholics Anonymous with a clean, attractive design.
- To house public AAWS video content, offering local service structures and Inter-groups the ability to embed video content directly into their local websites.
- To share AAWS video content more broadly in a contemporary medium while significantly improving the ability to find videos online.

GV YouTube

The AAGV / La Viña YouTube channel currently has more than 12,000 subscribers. In an average month, 2,800 videos are viewed. The most popular videos on the channel receive between 100 and 500 monthly views each. In a typical month one to three of the top 10 most-viewed videos are in Spanish. Topics include information on Grapevine and La Viña, and stories recorded by members of the Fellowship that are presented in an audio-only format to protect anonymity.

AAWS LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional social networking platform that hosts more than 600 million professional profiles along with 55 million companies listed on the site. AAWS's presence on LinkedIn allows us to communicate and share our mission with the professional community by providing relevant and informative content.

Approved by the General Service Conference in 2018, the AAWS LinkedIn channel has the following goals:

- Offer another digital resource, in addition to www.aa.org, where professionals can find accurate information about A.A.
- Broaden the reach of the *About A.A.* newsletter for professionals.
- Provide a platform where our professional friends may recommend A.A.
- Raise awareness of exhibits staffed by local CPC committees at national and local professional conferences.
- Expand the network of our professional friends and perhaps deepen the pool of Class A Trustee candidates.
- Reinforce the continuing relevance and efficacy of A.A. to professionals.

Instagram

Currently, AAGV Instagram has more than 11,000 followers on GV and 1,500 on LV, increasing daily. For Grapevine, posts generally receive 100 likes on average. GV posts typically twice per day. Posts include the daily reflection, inspirational quotes, notices of new magazines and books, upcoming events, cartoons/jokes, photos from A.A. events, and more. For the most part, top posts for the year consisted of "Overheard at A.A." posts, daily quotes, and cartoons. The posts with the least likes were often those more directly related to sales or products on the website and encouragements to sign up for the newsletter or to subscribe to the magazine. For La Viña, the most popular posts

were inspirational quotes, calls for photo submissions, and photos of events. A typical La Viña post receives around 30 likes.

In keeping with AAGV's mission, posts on both accounts are primarily directed at alcoholics "inside and outside the rooms." GV/LV also seeks to communicate with professionals who could be instrumental in helping A.A. to reach alcoholics. For both Instagram accounts, comments are disabled. A hashtag strategy is in place to increase visibility.

A proposal to launch an AAWS Instagram account will be on the agenda at the 2024 General Service Conference.

Of note: Several Instagram accounts are impersonating AAWS, which could confuse members or potential members trying to find us on Instagram. The Grapevine Instagram account has been quite successful in terms of the number of subscribers and engagement, indicating an audience. An AAWS account and the GV account could work in tandem, each increasing the reach of the other through linking and tagging while providing useful content to our audience.

Comments

As a result of a 2017 Advisory Action, comments are disabled wherever possible on our social media accounts, namely on the YouTube channels, LinkedIn, and GV Instagram. This decision was made partly to restrict members' ability to break their own anonymity in comments on our content and to avoid disparaging or inaccurate comments about A.A. getting associated with our content.

Some members have expressed concern about this decision, suggesting that because comments and engagement are key factors in social media visibility algorithms, by turning off comments, we may inadvertently harm our visibility on these platforms and hinder our ability to carry the message.

Section 8: Apps

Meeting Guide App

Purpose
- Connect people with the A.A. message of recovery by connecting them with local A.A. meetings.

Strategy

The App Support team holds regular strategy meetings where the team reviews the

project backlog which includes client outreach, entity feature requests, bugs, user feature requests, entity outreach, distribution/channel improvements, backend improvements, improved entity access, and data improvements.

Highlights

- Accurate, credible list of A.A. meetings
- Links to purchase literature and read Daily Reflections
- Announcements from GSO and AA Grapevine

Analytics

The primary use of analytics is to gather data on what and how features are being used, and to help us determine the App roadmap.

GV LV App Release

Goals
- To enhance members' sobriety
- To provide highly accessible content
- To build GV/LV subscriptions
- To expand awareness of the GV/LV brand and its range of products
- To increase participation in the GV/LV community among A.A. members
- To introduce new ways of interacting with the Fellowship

The Grapevine and La Viña apps officially launched on Friday, September 1, 2023. Members can download the apps for free from the Apple App Store for iPhone, or from Google Play for Android. Certain features such as the daily quote and Sobriety Calculator are free to all; however, users must have or purchase a Digital subscription to access the monthly magazines, the Story Archives, and other content through the apps. Digital subscriptions, which include access to magazine content via the apps and the websites, are priced at $2.99 per month or $29.99 per year for Grapevine and $2.99 per month or $14.99 per year for La Viña. Complete (print plus Digital) subscriptions also available. Subscriptions may be purchased through the app or on the website. With the advent of the apps, the Grapevine and La Viña ePub were discontinued. Legacy ePub subscribers are now considered Digital subscribers and can log into the apps using their current username and password. The apps are available exclusively in the U.S. and Canada at this time.

Highlights
- Daily sobriety calculator and spiritual practices checklist (free)

- Easy access to magazine content and Story Archives (with subscription)
- Direct links to all website features, including calendar of events, GVR/RLV resources, Meeting Guide app, and so on

Attraction efforts include email blasts, Instagram videos, website notices, Meeting Guide app news, and a FAQs page on aagrapevine.org. In addition, the September 4 podcast included a discussion about the apps. App subscriptions peak on weekends when Grapevine staff and directors are travelling to events and present the apps to the Fellowship.

The launch of the apps was met with much enthusiasm; downloads and subscriptions have exceeded initial expectations. Since launch, the Grapevine app has consistently ranked among the top 40 magazine and newspaper app downloads in the Apple App Store. Plans are afoot to offer users capabilities such as sharing stories with non-subscribers and posting events on Grapevine's calendar. Special features focused on Grapevine's 80th anniversary and the International Convention are also in discussion.

Section 9: Next Steps for the CMP

The CMP is a living document that is meant to be improved, updated and reviewed regularly. The goal of the 2024 CMP was to create a strategic roadmap and shared resources.

This document offers key stakeholders the opportunity to review our efforts in light of industry standards and provide guidance where necessary.

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