



Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute

Communications Committee

Approved Minutes (on 11/3/23)

Friday, September 22, 2023

12:00 PM – 2:30 PM AKST

Yukon Room @ CoWork RSD - 911 W 8th Ave #101, Anchorage, AK 99501 and Virtual

I. Roll Call

ASMI Communications Committee Chair Squibb called the meeting to order at 12:03 PM. Solanoy did roll call, and a quorum was established.

Committee Members Present:

Chair Cassandra Squibb
Vice Chair Hannah Heimbuch
Julianne Curry
Shannon Ford Ward
Matt Carle (via Zoom)
Nicole Kimball
Pat Shanahan
Everette Anderson (via Zoom)
Julie Cisco (via Zoom)
Tomi Marsh – Board Member Liaison (via Zoom)

Committee Members Not Present:

Jessica Keplinger

ASMI Staff Present

Greg Smith
Nanette Solanoy
Tanna Peters (via Zoom)
Megan Belair (via Zoom)
Jeremy Woodrow (via Zoom)
Leah Krafft (via Zoom)
Nicole Alba (via Zoom)
Susana Osorio-Cardona (via Zoom)
John Burrows (via Zoom)

Contractors Present:

Christine Fanning (Christine Fanning Communications)
Kate Consenstein (Rising Tide Communications)

Alina Fairbanks (Rising Tide Communications, via Zoom)
Josie Curtis (Edelman, via Zoom)
Katie Goldberg (Edelman, via Zoom)
Courtney L'Ecuyer (Edelman, via Zoom)

Nicholas Dowie (ASMI Salmon Committee Chair) (via Zoom)
Tom Gemmell (via Zoom)

II. ASMI Antitrust Statement

Chair Squibb read the ASMI antitrust statement.

III. Approval of Agenda

Squibb suggested modifying the agenda to add committee member introductions as agenda item V. With no other requests from the committee, Squibb asked for a motion to modify the agenda. Ford Ward motioned to modify the agenda to add committee introductions, and Heimbuch seconded the motion. With no objections, the motion to modify the agenda passed.

IV. Approval of Previous Minutes April 13, 2023 meeting

Shanahan suggested that there be more details added to future minute's documents, such as more details to questions and answers provided from ASMI staff and contractors. Shanahan moved to approve the meeting minutes from the April 13, 2023 meeting, and Kimball seconded. With no objections, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

V. Committee Member Introductions

The committee members introduced themselves and Squibb welcomed new ASMI Communications Committee member Julie Cisco.

VI. Introduction of New ASMI staff

Greg Smith introduced himself as the new ASMI Communications Director. Smith also gave an update on the ASMI Communications Specialist recruitment.

VII. Communications Program Update

A. Consumer Public Relations – Edelman

Katie Goldberg, Josie Curtis and Courtney L'Ecuyer gave a recap of the FY23 campaign and an overview of the FY24 campaign.

FY23 campaign recap

- Focus on wild as being a priority of consumers
- FY23 earned media results
- Committee Vice Chair Heimbuch's episode on Martha Stewart to air
- FY23 Make the Wild Choice Influencer Program was the most successful in ASMI history
- Recap on FY23 FAM Trip
- Shift for Alaska Seafood owned socials to be Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest, where most of the social media reach is met

FY24 campaign brief overview

- Challenges for the New Year: consumers like the health benefits, taste, and premium experience of seafood, but still face challenges on how to cook it due to limited perceptions of ease, versatility, and predictability.
- Objective: Increase awareness and consideration of Alaska seafood and ease into easy preparation and versatile options.
- Goldberg gave an update on the FY24 Cook Wild Campaign
 - Press release and data
 - Hedley and Bennet partnership (aprons)
 - Cook Wild sweepstakes to launch on ASMI channels
 - Influencers partnerships and content – easy recipes, focusing on air fry cooking method
 - Industry toolkit email
 - Spring: planning in-person New York event, as well as bringing a variety of media to Alaska for stories.
 - Cook Wild Launch preview – industry toolkit, industry email blast, ASMI landing page, Cook Wild influencers.

Kimball asked if using the biggest factor (ease of cooking seafood) for people potentially not buying seafood was data driven. Goldberg and Curtis responded that it was data driven and it was from their most recent consumer survey where 66% of consumers said they would purchase more seafood if they had easy recipes to follow.

Squibb asked that in terms of the FY24 campaign and what ASMI could do, if making seafood easier to cook would get people to buy more of it. Goldberg responded that consumers see seafood as intimidating, so showing them more approachable and simple ways of preparing seafood would help. The other piece was the cost factor.

Shanahan asked if it would be possible for the committee to get the research on how the Edelman team made their decisions for the campaigns, as it would be beneficial for other industry members and markets to understand the work ASMI is doing. Goldberg responded that the information would be available in the toolkit scheduled to be sent out on September 26 and would include the stats, messaging, full study, and other robust information.

Heimbuch asked about the type of influencers they were choosing for the campaign, and Goldberg responded that they primarily work with food driven influencers, but have also worked with health-focused influencers as well. For the FY24 campaign, they were going to work with a mix of different influencers.

Curry asked the Edelman team what they could do if they had more budget. Goldberg said they would like to try to expand and experiment working with different types of influencers, such as a combination of micro and macro influencers based on the budget.

Squibb read Marsh's question in the Zoom chat: Marsh asked if an expansion of the influencer program work with the visitor market, and collaborating with ATIA to access additional funds. Goldberg said they would be happy to work with more industry partners. Smith added that that he was in contact with someone at ATIA as well.

Shanahan asked if the research showed what it would take to get consumers to get over the challenge of how to buy and cook seafood. Goldberg said that the data does not specifically go into it, but they know from other experience, the direct to consumer interaction experiences (which they have not done in the program yet) such as more in-store demos and giving consumers experiences that are more individual are helpful. Curtis added that making content to follow what is trending would also help reach consumers.

B. Channel Project Update and Buy Alaska Seafood Webpage - Tanna Peters

Peters gave an update on the Channel project and Buy Alaska Seafood Webpage and added that in addition to the content creation from Edelman, she was also working on more content creation.

- ASMI video project with key goals to tell the story of Alaska Seafood through matching and cohesive sets of videos, photos and illustrations that could be utilized by industry, retailers, foodservice, and international partners
- Newly launched branch anchor video (“Ocean to Plate”)
- Results from 13 species “bios” – YouTube Shorts videos available in long and short format
- Wild Alaska Seafood and Your Health, Alaska Seafood U revamp
- Seafood Marketplace Update: a tool to replace the supplier’s directory
- Buy Alaska Seafood Page – Buy Direct: Alaska Seafood Marketplace, only for consumers to buy directly from suppliers

Kimball and Marsh commented that the videos were very well done. Curry shared her appreciation of how easy it would be to now find direct suppliers and markets on the new website.

C. In-State Communications - Rising Tide Communications and Christine Fanning

Kate Consenstein and Christine Fanning gave a recap on the FY23 in-state campaign and overview of the FY24 in-state campaign plan.

1. FY23 in-state campaign recap

- Recap of Phase 1 campaign (out of three phases)
- Recap of Phase 2 creative
- Recap on series of op-eds
- Swag items for promotions
- Campaign results to-date
- New Airport ads – capitalizing on Channel footage and messaging
- Next steps: post mid-campaign polling to take place in October

2. FY24 in-state campaign plan

- Campaign 2.0 next steps
- Phase 2 – families and communities
- Continue to support phases 1 and 2 messaging
- Address sustainability more directly in full Phase 3
- Sponsorship of Arctic Winter Games in MatSu Valley March 2024

Kimball asked if in the initial polling, if they were just getting impressions of Alaska seafood. Consenstein said the questions were more of agree or disagree questions to see where participant’s attitudes stood. Kimball also asked if they were looking for a committee recommendation, and Squibb said she might recommend the In-State Subcommittee do more of a deep dive on the polling results.

Heimbuch asked when Consenstein would need a recommendation by, and Consenstein said they do not need a fast decision right now, as she was happy with the campaign so far.

Shanahan asked if the polling would give enough information to make decisions. Consenstein said she was curious to see if they have lost more ground on the sustainability question, not because of the campaign but that it would show the importance to actively do the work to effectively communicate on sustainability.

The committee recessed to a quick break at 1:55 PM, and reconvened at 2:03 PM.

VIII. Committee Roundtable

A. Discussion of current communications issues and opportunities facing industry

The committee discussed that it would be helpful to know what was accomplished from the questions that they raised last year at All Hands, and how they could get a status report as well as how to get feedback from the ASMI Board. ASMI Executive Director Jeremy Woodrow responded that getting Board feedback before All Hands would be a challenge, but he agreed that following up on direction from last year was a good idea for the committee to discuss. Woodrow mentioned that the Board would like to see discussion from the committees on what are some immediate actions that ASMI can take to help solve the crisis that the industry was currently in. Curry said she could give suggestions on what can be done (market collapse in seafood industry) and thinks that ASMI could help in the industry if they had more money. Woodrow said that ASMI was going to ask for additional funding, and was also thinking about what else they could do with existing funds and that the goal was to overcome the crisis situations that have evolved over the past year.

Kimball asked what ASMI could do with communication materials on the state of the seafood sector, and that a clear and persuasive communication one piece that explained the situation that would then set support a collective policy would be an appropriate piece for ASMI. Shanahan brought up the topic of how to choose which species to focus on when they were all in a crisis. Squibb said to Kimball's point, Smith was asked for some communication on how to talk to state constituents about the issues that are happening in the Alaska seafood market. Consenstein asked whom the audience of the deliverable that Kimball was suggesting would be, and Kimball responded it would be for federal government, delegation and the governor.

For the responses to the committee questions, Smith said that ASMI communications team created a draft of the responses and would share it with the communications committee before All Hands.

The committee discussed the current communication piece on trade, and that it could be updated as things have changed. Woodrow said that trade issues were still the same, but they could update it and add other factors.

Heimbuch brought up the topic of direct markets, and Peters discussed the work they have done with direct marketers (quarterly toolkit email to direct marketers to be brand ambassadors, focusing on direct marketer website).

Kimball asked if they needed a one pager on PFAS. Smith said he could work with ASMI Seafood Technical Director John Burrows on it.

Heimbuch would like to continue the discussion about the climate aspect at All Hands. She would like to know what the board's feedback was, and it would give context on how the committee could give recommendations. Squibb mentioned if committee flags items with increased urgency, will likely get more feedback. Ford Ward mentioned a Washington Post article regarding climate change and impacts on salmon returns affecting Katmai brown bears.

Ford Ward discussed the issue of seeing poor quality fish in fish cases, and ASMI's emphasis on frozen and how they could effectively communicate it to not only consumers but also retailers. She also asked if there was oversight on if a restaurant used ASMI branding. Ford Ward also talked about branding seafood as a luxury – could seafood be more every day, part of every meal, or as a condiment (adding seafood to salads, sandwiches, etc.). Goldberg said they were focusing on making seafood a staple, especially shelf-stable tinned or canned seafood or frozen. She discussed the impacts of inflation on consumer behaviors. A lot of ideas, including always having frozen on-hand. Peters added that she was also working with the domestic team on more frozen and canned seafood efforts. Goldberg mentioned tinned fish and the possibility of doing a limited run of canned salmon packaging, using visuals to get more consumers more excited about it.

IX. All Hands on Deck: November 2-4, 2023 at Captain Cook Hotel in Anchorage

Squibb said there was a lot of good discussion to encourage the committee to stay in touch leading up to All Hands. Squibb said there would be a new round of questions to answer at the next All Hands meeting, and would suggest looking at those questions ahead of time.

Curry suggested circulating last year's questions and answers as well as the roundtable discussion to help start answering the questions for this year's All Hands.

X. Public Comment

No public comment was given.

XI. Old Business and Good of the Order

Curry asked if the chair and vice chair terms were up for next year, Heimbuch confirmed.

XII. Adjourn

Curry motioned to adjourn the meeting, Vice Chair Heimbuch seconded. The meeting adjourned at 2:41 PM.