

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN ACTION: INSIDE THE ADB KNOWLEDGE FORUM 2021

How we built an innovative, digitally-led communications strategy that attracted almost 30 times the number of expected attendees.

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ADB

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BRIEF

In August 2021, the Knowledge Advisory Services Center in the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department developed and implemented a communications and content strategy for the flagship virtual conference, the Knowledge Forum 2021.

The Bank unveiled its Knowledge Management Action Plan (KMAP) in 2021, which demonstrated how it is moving towards becoming a 'knowledge solution provider'. Beyond providing financing in Asia and the Pacific, the Bank aims to amplify how it uses knowledge to help its developing member countries (DMCs) to innovate and solve development challenges in a rapidly changing, increasingly uncertain world.

Knowledge management has been recognized as a key tool to enhance efficiency, productivity, and innovation at ADB. Its core elements, people and culture, process and systems, and relationships have to be managed to achieve organizational goals. At the core of knowledge management are people. This means improving knowledge management requires behavioral changes at every level; breaking down silos; finding innovative ways to connect people and teams; and increasing collaboration.

The Forum was a platform to promote and celebrate knowledge management solutions that are making a difference in DMCs. At the same time, it was a great

opportunity to show how critical thinking, creativity, and new ways of working can foster innovation and enhance the impact of development work. The different topics of the forum revolved around the three pillars of ADB's Knowledge Management Action Plan - People and Culture; Processes and Systems; and Relationships.

With over a month for the event preparation and using a new virtual event platform, SDCC-KC was challenged to make this event successful. It was critical to ensure that the forum was able to successfully highlight and enhance the visibility of ADB's commitment to the knowledge management agenda of ADB's Strategy 2030.

The team worked with Moore's Lore Media, a Singapore-based content and communications consultancy that helps people and organizations to be more impactful in their work through storytelling and strategic content creation, to develop ADB's team capacity on implementing effective event communications.

The target audience of the Knowledge Forum 2022 were a combination of both internal and external participants. These include international leaders, industry experts, academia, government knowledge professionals, international finance

institution partners, and ADB staff. The communications strategy was designed to convince and capture the interest of these participants to join the forum.

CHALLENGE

The biggest challenge faced by SDCC-KC was the short timeframe of just around one month to set up and learn the new virtual platform. This meant, executing a strategy that would be running in parallel with many other phases of the event, such as engaging and onboarding speakers, and learning the new event platform. This added an element of complexity to the day-to-day operations of the team.

The team faced challenges reaching and engaging with the internal audience - ADB employees - while external, non-ADB audiences were much more engaged. ADB's Knowledge & Innovation

team (the Knowledge Advisory Services Center) has a strong presence across all social media channels. For example, the Knowledge and Innovation group on LinkedIn has around 1,200 followers, Facebook has 4,720 followers, and Twitter has 1,350 followers. The right internal communications channels that would engage and excite the target audience needed to be used.

Finally, team members worked entirely remotely and were spread across Asia. The right digital collaboration tools were needed to ensure constant communication to keep connected and work well together.

OPPORTUNITY

The big idea was to use the forum content as a living, breathing example of 'knowledge management in action'.

What does this mean? Firstly, as part of the strategy, we planned to capture the key insights, quotes, and ideas of our excellent speakers throughout the entire event and edit them into shareable and easily digestible content formats. We were determined to try out different types of content to see what resonated the best with our audience, from live drawings, quotes, to daily email summaries.

Secondly, we experimented with methods of communication and engagement that were different from anything we have done before. A large part of our strategy was external social media promotion, using assets and visuals that were fresh, different, and engaging. We made sure to include internal communications in our strategy as well, as a large segment of our audience were going to be ADB colleagues.

Finally, we are documenting our experiences in this case study, which can serve as a knowledge document for anyone within the ADB to learn from. We hope that this will be of value to others who want to improve their content and communications.

The numbers speak for themselves:

- The initial audience size we had hoped for was 100 ADB employees; we ended up hosting 2,900 active viewers over three days consisting of ADB staff and external participants.
- Each viewer spent an average of 6.5 hours on the event platform per day, with an average satisfaction rating of 8.9.
- All of our social media activity combined accounted for over 75,000 impressions!¹

¹ Social Media Impressions are the total number of times a content was displayed to people or the number of times the content is displayed, no matter if it was clicked or not.

APPROACH & SOLUTIONS

To make our content and communications strategy a success, we needed to introduce our core team to new and innovative ways of working with help from Moore's Lore Media, a Singapore based content and communications consultancy that helps people and organizations to be more impactful in their work through storytelling and strategic content creation. Moore's Lore Media guided and supported us on the following solutions:



1. USING CHAMPIONS OR AMBASSADORS FOR THE EVENT

We knew that we would be the best champions or ambassadors of our event. A big aspect of our approach included encouraging our colleagues to promote the forum to their respective networks and invite their contacts to register early. We created a set of social media assets (quote cards, audiograms, infographics, slideshares, etc.) and accompanying copy to make this as easy as possible.

To complement this direct approach, we needed some high-level messaging as well. We identified a group of senior leaders, managers, and subject matter experts (known as 'Focals') within ADB that would be influencers for this event, including the ADB President.

We chose them because they had highly visible LinkedIn profiles and large, engaged networks. By promoting and supporting the Knowledge Forum, they created a compelling argument for their teams and employees to register for it.

We worked with these 'influencers' to produce customized audiograms - audio quotes in the form of short, shareable videos - and quote cards that spoke about knowledge management playing a key role in development. We simply asked each

influencer to either approve a pre-written quote or record an audio quote of their own by using the voice notes app on their smartphone in a quiet room. Our content creators did the rest.

These audiograms and quote cards went out on each influencer's personal channels and through ADB's social media channels, amplifying their reach. Every post contained the event hashtag, tags of colleagues, and a call-to-action to 'register today'. Examples are on the next page.

These social media posts were part of an overarching internal communications strategy that looked like this:

- Social media campaign on official ADB social media pages, including ADB Knowledge & Innovation and ADB HQ
- Messaging on OneADB Today, pop-ups, and internal email and calendar invites
- Posting on MyADB, Yammer, STG community sites, and the Knowledge Community site for the repository of materials and sending of information through its monthly digest
- Engaged KM Focals and departments, including the Department of Communications, to promote the forum within ADB

Here are some examples of audiograms and quote cards:

ADB Asian Development Bank (ADB)
459,957 followers
3mo • 🌐

Join ADB President Masa Asakawa and a lineup of incredible speakers at the [#ADBKnowledgeForum](#).

Learn how knowledge management tools and techniques can optimize development and drive positive change.

JOIN US NOW: <https://lnkd.in/eSVAWFTH>



Masatsugu Asakawa, President, ADB

Dr. Susann Roth • 1st
Advisor and Chief of Knowledge Advisory Services Center at Asian Developm...
3mo • 🌐

Do you wonder, why you should join the ADB Knowledge Forum on 29 Sept-1 Oct. 2021, check out my soundbite-) ADB Knowledge & Innovation. Nurfilzah Rohaidi, VIVEK RAMAN, Ede Ijjasz-Vásquez, Ed Hoffman, Keisuke Taketani, Woochong Um, Bambang Susantono, Patrick Lambe, Patricia Eng, Dr. Ketevan Chkheidze, Andrew Perrin

KNOWLEDGE FORUM 2021
LEARNING THROUGH CHANGE
29 SEPTEMBER-1 OCTOBER 2021

SUSANN ROTH
Chief of Knowledge Advisory Services Center, ADB

REGISTER TODAY

registration-knowledgeforum.adb.org

Susann Roth, Chief, Knowledge Advisory Services Center, ADB

ADB ADB Knowledge & Innovation
1,044 followers
3mo • 🌐

[#KnowledgeManagement](#) is so important to [#Innovation](#) inside any organization. How does your team approach innovation? Share more at our [#ADBKnowledgeForum](#) NEXT WEEK 29 Sep-1Oct 🗣️ <https://lnkd.in/gF-DwYEt>

Bambang Susantono



Bambang Susantono, Vice-President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development, ADB

ADB ADB Knowledge & Innovation
1,044 followers
3mo • 🌐

Join us as [#Knowledge](#) champions in this changed world 🌐 ONE WEEK LEFT TO REGISTER for the [#ADBKnowledgeForum](#) on 29 Sep - 1 Oct: <https://lnkd.in/gF-DwYEt>

[#Innovation](#) VIVEK RAMAN

REGISTER FOR THE ADB KNOWLEDGE FORUM TODAY

Vivek Raman, Principal Knowledge Sharing and Services Specialist, ADB

The ongoing pandemic has amplified our want for timely

registration-knowledgeforum.adb.org

Vivek Raman, Principal Knowledge Sharing and Services Specialist, Knowledge Advisory Services Center, ADB



2. INTRODUCING A SUITE OF CLOUD-BASED CONTENT CREATION AND MANAGEMENT TOOLS

We had just over a month to create lots of content very quickly while working with an entirely remote team. The goal was to create highly shareable pieces of promotional content for an ever-more discerning online audience, all of which had to be cohesive in look and feel.

We approached this by introducing a suite of cloud-based content creation and management tools and design software. It was very important that we could scale up and adapt. The design team used Canva, a web-based design tool, to

create master templates for all social media content, which could be edited, replicated, or worked on by more than one person at a time. (This case study was created in Canva.)

The one unifying element that made every piece of content look cohesive was the key visual, which was the main building block for each master template. These templates could also be adapted into dozens of other templates and formats, such as an event agenda, event poster, speaker poster, social media banners, and more.

The collage displays various content templates for the ADB Knowledge Forum 2021, all featuring a consistent blue and white color scheme with the forum's logo and tagline, "Learning Through Change".

- Speaker Spotlight:** Features a large portrait of a speaker (Leah Gutierrez) and their name and title.
- Speaker Grid:** A grid of small circular portraits of multiple speakers.
- Quote Card:** A quote from a speaker (Shixin Chen) with a portrait and the text: "ADB continuously strives to enhance knowledge and learning for our DMCs. Providing knowledge solutions is at the core of ADB's corporate strategy."
- Event Banner:** Announces the event dates (29 Sep - 1 Oct 2021) and includes a list of speakers and a brief description of the forum's goals.
- Session Spotlight:** Promotes a specific session, "Leaders Plenary Panel: Knowledge Across Borders: The Importance of International Collaboration", listing the panelists.
- Promotional Popup:** A registration call-to-action with the text "REGISTER TODAY!" and the registration link.
- Audiogram:** A circular portrait of a speaker (Ed Hoffman) with a soundwave graphic below it.
- Agenda-at-a-glance:** A detailed table of the event schedule for both days, listing times, topics, and speakers.

Crucially, Canva provides links to dynamic designs. Our event agenda underwent multiple changes in the weeks and days leading up to the event. Instead of sending out multiple PDFs of this agenda, we gave attendees a link that would update to reflect any changes we made to the main design file in near real-time. This provided a more seamless experience for the team and the attendees.

What's more, we used Descript and Headliner to produce speakers' audiograms quickly, without needing to engage the services of an external vendor. These tools were so easy to use that the event organizers themselves could learn, within a matter of hours, how to create audiograms from scratch.

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3. APPLYING A CUSTOMER SERVICE-ORIENTED APPROACH TO SPEAKERS

A crucial part of our strategy consisted of speaker engagement. We had a stellar lineup of international speakers from prestigious organizations such as Google, NASA, the WHO, and a US federal government agency. It would be a huge, missed opportunity not to leverage on their large, diverse networks.

We took a customer service-oriented approach to our speakers. They received customized speaker info packs - a presentation deck that contained all the information they needed for speaking at the event, along with login details and social media banners so they may spread the word.

We also set up a pre-event briefing with each of

them, ensuring that we could answer any questions ahead of time, do the necessary introductions, and help them get acquainted with the functions of the event platform. Finally, we sent each of them calendar reminders that contained their login details, so that they did not need to search through their inbox for this crucial information.

All these added touches served to create a more seamless, enjoyable, and fuss-free experience for our speakers. With such a high caliber of speakers, we wanted to provide a fantastic experience that would make them superfans of us, and as such, enthusiastic about promoting the Knowledge Forum on social media as an unmissable event.



4. TRACKING ACTIVITIES THROUGH ONLINE MONITORING TOOLS AND TIMELINE

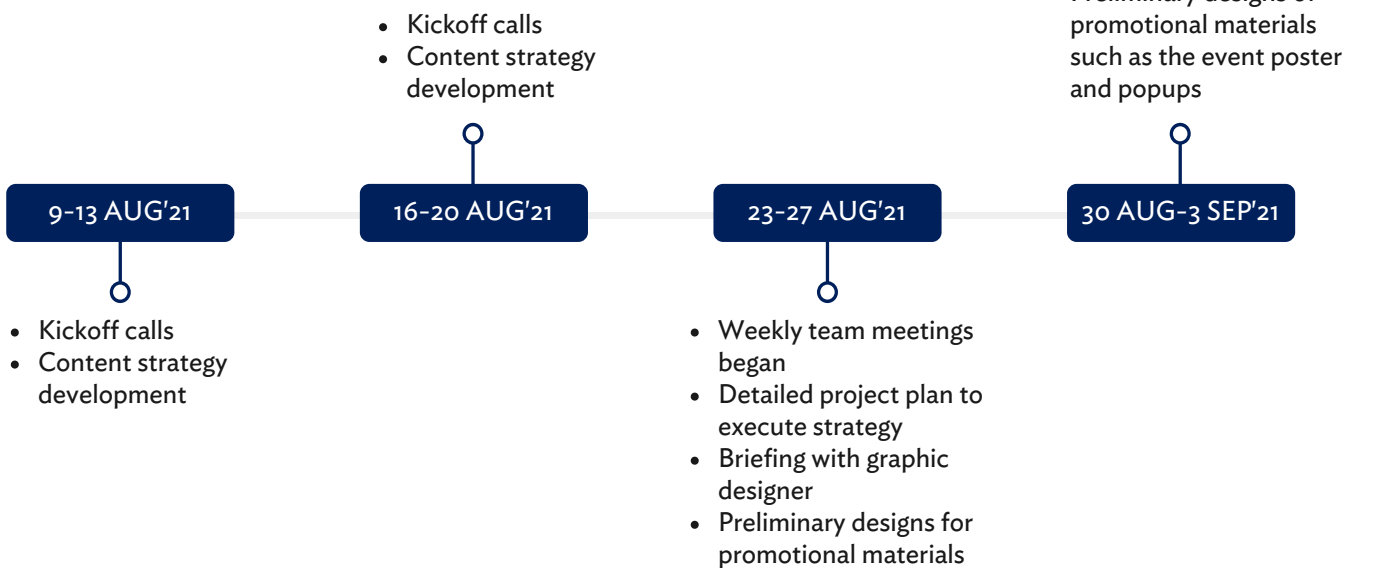
With various communication activities planned, we ensured that we monitor and track every activity through the timeline we developed and online tracking tools.

Using tools such as Trello and Google Sheets, we

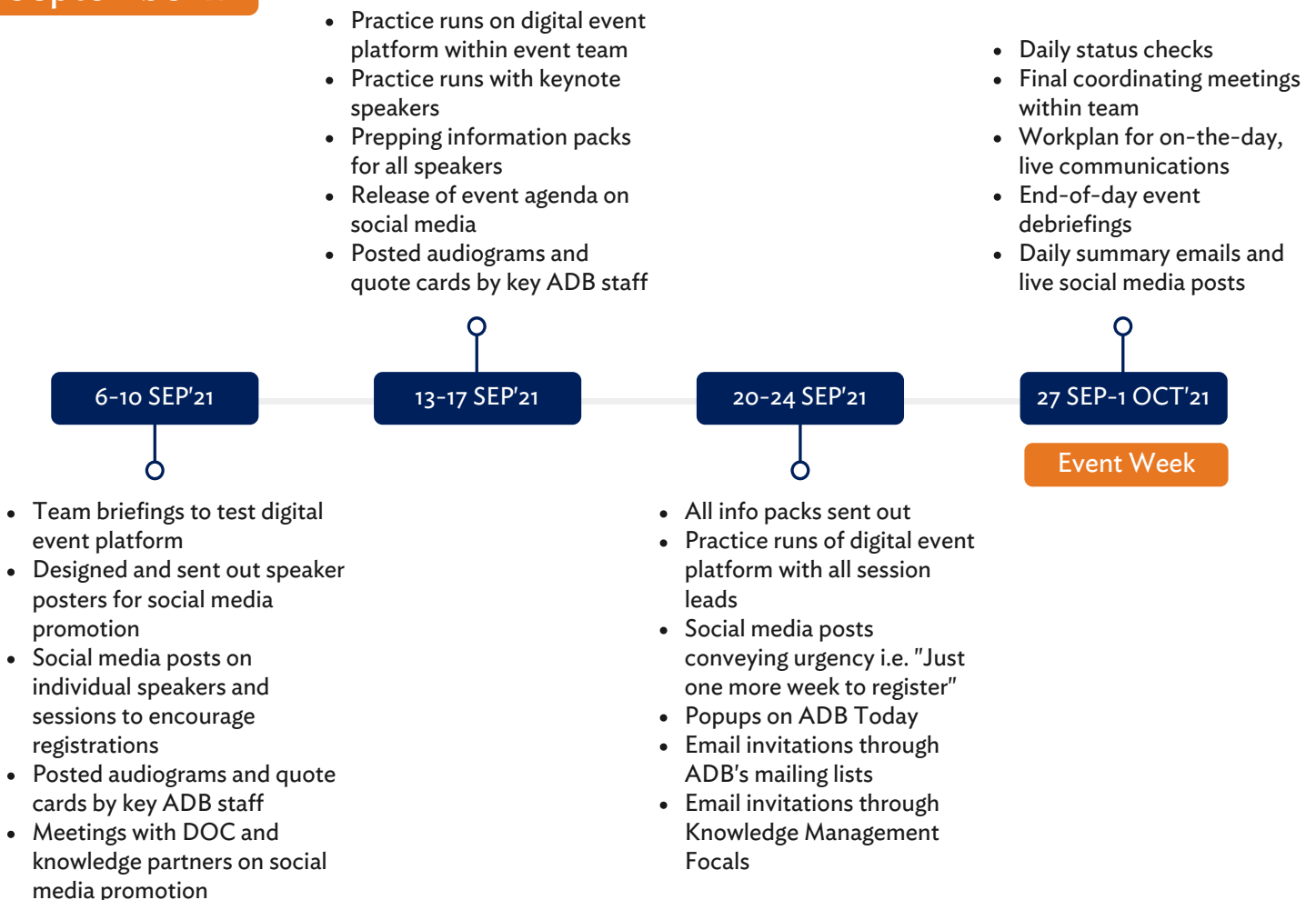
created dashboards, spreadsheets, and trackers to keep on top of shifting deadlines and important details, such as links to documents or speaker's names and job titles. These created one source of truth that everyone could refer to at any time, without having to search through email threads.

TIMELINE

August'21



September'21



5. PRODUCING LIVE CONTENT

With so much great content going out in the lead-up period, we wanted to keep the momentum going during the Knowledge Forum itself. We filled up our social media feeds with fresh, timely content from each of the sessions as they happened.

Here is how we did it: we assigned someone who served as journalists to provide live coverage of the keynote sessions each day. They created live Tweets and updates to generate hype online as the forum progressed. They also posted live comments in the chat box of the event platform during each session.

They also used Otter.ai, a real-time transcription service, to collect live quotes. We displayed these quotes as a ticker tape onscreen as speakers spoke during the forum.

These quotes were later turned into quote cards and audiograms that were posted online within an hour of the session ending. We tagged the relevant speakers, increasing the reach of each post.

But with a wealth of content from each event day, we could see the risk of our audience becoming overwhelmed or missing out on the best bits. So, we put together a daily summary email for our registered attendees that concisely captured the top messages and insights.

We took the opportunity to make this email interactive and visually appealing by including quote cards, live drawings, screenshots of speakers, and links to audiograms.



Hi Nurfilzah,

Thank you so much for joining us for Day 1 of the #ADBKnowledgeForum!

See you tomorrow for more insights, talks and success stories on #KnowledgeManagement. In the meantime, #InCaseYouMissedIt, here is a summary for the day.

We kicked off with **Dr Maya Shankar**, Global Director of Behavioral Science at Google. She spoke about how behavioural nudges in the simplest of ways - sometimes, a single word or phrase - can lead to huge changes and outcomes.

She noted how changing people's minds and psychologies is 'one of the most elusive, coveted types of change' and it all boils down to trust and building relationships.

ADB VP **Bruce Gosper** anchored the conversation with Maya in ADB's culture change initiative.



The people in the organization that endure change the best, that thrive in the face of change, are the ones that can latch themselves on to a core set of values that don't change, like treating people well, putting the customer first.

DR. MAYA SHANKAR
Global Director of Behavioral Science, Google

#ADBKnowledgeForum

Next, we had an insightful panel discussion on why it is critical in this day and age to build policies and initiatives around gender equality. **Suzanne Gaboury**, Director General, Private Sector Operations Department at the ADB believes that organisations need to include gender in all aspects, "from the boardroom to service and suppliers". This is key to enabling an environment for gender mainstreaming.

Meanwhile, fellow panellist **Roshaneh Zafar**, Managing Director of the Kashf Foundation, shared how "it's important to create managers who are gender sensitive, inclusive, compassionate, empathetic, irrespective of whether they're men or women".

Andre Viljoen, CEO Fiji Airways, highlighted how female leaders at his company applied their knowledge and experience to save the airline during the crisis. ADB VP **Ingrid van Wees** called for action to include women in the C-Suite and leverage diversity for knowledge sharing and innovation.



6. POST-EVENT COMMUNICATIONS

We knew that the post-event period was very important in keeping our audience engaged and interested, while the content was still fresh in their minds. We created a post-event comms plan to release key insights, lessons, and interesting tidbits from the forum in the weeks and months afterwards.

We had a plan to release all of the forum's session recordings on the ADB Knowledge & Innovation YouTube channel as videos-on-demand. Our social media strategy was developed in support of this. Each post was used as a teaser to direct viewers to the channel.

Here is what we did: we examined transcripts and recordings of the forum's most popular sessions and identified great quotes and interesting facts to share on social media. Using the templates, we had created, we could generate content quickly.

Throughout this entire experience, we realized that anything could become great content. For instance, all of the session leads for the Knowledge Forum contributed to a 'key takeaways' document to collect the most important insights from each session in one place. We used this document to create a series of informative social media posts like the one on the right, which we named 'top takeaways'.

We also created infographics that highlighted noteworthy statistics and data from the Forum, such as the number of participants, top five countries, and so on.

#ADBKnowledgeForum Top Takeaways

What we learned from 'How can knowledge management be institutionalized?'

- 1 Governance should follow 4 core values: (i) scientific evidence-based approach, (ii) precautionary principle, (iii) information transparency, and (iv) information democratization.
- 2 Institutionalizing knowledge from previous pandemics such as SARS, swine flu and MERS helped Korea to build a social consensus around testing and tracking movement.
- 3 The platform for sustainable health management solutions came from a collaboration between ADB and the Ban Ki-moon Foundation to provide evidence-based information.
- 4 ADB's priority is in supporting its developing member countries to institutionalize knowledge sharing, decentralize pandemic management, and use new digital tools to manage and share knowledge.

Throughout this entire experience, we realized that anything could become great content.



THE KNOWLEDGE FORUM AT-A-GLANCE



2,900

Active participants
over 3 days



>150

Speakers



90

Countries
represented



30

Organizations



8.9

Average satisfaction
rating



6.5

Hours spent on event
platform per day

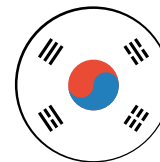
Top Countries By Registered Users



Singapore



The Philippines



South Korea



India

Event Summary



Showcased knowledge solutions, best practices and effective problem solving methods from across ADB



Highlighted innovative processes and systems to improve staff capacity to create and apply quality knowledge management



Strengthened collaboration amongst staff and externally through examples of successful knowledge management solutions

LESSONS AND TIPS FOR EVENT COMMUNICATIONS

1. Use templates. No need to reinvent the wheel every time.

With one master template that includes your logo, you can create multiple visuals. We recommend Canva for this purpose. This way, you can keep all design work within the team, and learn a new skill at the same time. Play around with fonts, colors, photo placements, bold shapes, and design elements to create visuals that look different from each other but are still cohesive.

2. Create one source of truth for everything. Do not rely on emails.

Keep one shared spreadsheet with details that the entire project team needs to know. This spreadsheet may need to be updated on a daily or even hourly basis. But your hard work will pay off because it minimizes small or big mistakes from creeping into important documents. Alternatively, Trello is also a good project management tool.

3. Experiment with different types of content, not just text.

With the Knowledge Forum, we tried all sorts of content to see what would resonate most. Our quote cards, audiograms, infographics, and daily

email summaries were particularly popular. We also enlisted the help of an illustrator to create live drawings; view them all [here](#).

4. Go where your audience goes, and think about digital ‘real estate’.

Do your research before creating your strategy. Depending on your audience and their content consumption patterns, your strategy could be entirely different from what you originally planned. Ours was very email- and popup-heavy because that was the most effective way to connect with ADB employees. Do not also forget to use other available internal communication tools in ADB such OneADB Today, MyADB, Yammer, and Community sites

5. Your team is everything.

All of this was only possible because we were working with an incredible team that was collaborative, supportive, and believed in the broader mission. With just over a dozen people behind-the-scenes, we successfully put on a digital conference for almost 3,000 active viewers!

6. Do not be afraid to try new platforms and tools.

From the very beginning, we would like to give a different experience to the participants of the knowledge forum. That is why, even though it's risky to try a new event platform and other online tools, we did not hesitate to do it. We faced a lot of challenges by doing so, but with the success of the event, it's all worth it.

APPENDIX

- Canva - For graphic design, short-form videos, and social media content
- Descript - For creating audiograms from soundbites and audio quotes, and video editing for novices
- Headliner - For creating audiograms from soundbites and audio quotes
- Google Sheets - For keeping everyone organised and updated from one source of truth
- Otter.ai - For real-time, highly accurate transcripts of presentations, meetings, or events
- Trello - For project management among remote team members
- Hopin - Online event platform