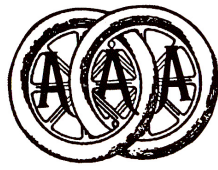


1906



1915



1922



1983

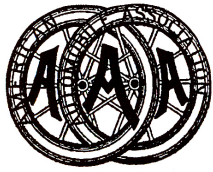


1997

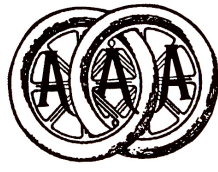
AAA ORGANIZATIONAL AUDIT

MATTHEW MORGAN
PEDRO PALOMINO
CATHERINE PYLANT
FRANCISCO RENDON

PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS
JULY 21, 2010



1906



1915



1922



1983



1997

INTRODUCTION

For over 100 years, AAA has been serving their clientele on the road and around the world. With over 51 million members across the United States and Canada, they show no signs of slowing down. These members enjoy “special services, valuable savings and priceless securities.” Through a network of 1,100 offices and their full-service website, they provide a vast array of services in the following areas:

- Ⓢ cars & driving
- Ⓢ travel
- Ⓢ insurance
- Ⓢ banking
- Ⓢ loans

Founded in 1906, AAA is the nation’s largest motor and leisure travel organization. Since their inception, AAA has advocated for motorists and travelers alike, “always lobbying for driver and passenger rights, fair laws and safer vehicles and roads.”

By maintaining affiliations with automotive organizations around the globe, AAA has provided services to members traveling in over 130 countries, spanning six continents.

- Ⓢ Today, approximately 25 percent of all American households belong to the organization.
- Ⓢ 27 percent of all American passenger vehicles belong to AAA members.

TIMELINE



[1900s] AAA helps develop the first Federal Highways and “Good Roads Bill,” and publishes the first road maps for automotive travelers.

[1910s] AAA Clubs of Philadelphia and Delaware County battle against speed traps, unjust taxes and excessive tolls. The first AAA "Road Patrol" is initiated.





[1920s] AAA starts the School Safety Patrol for children and leads campaigns for posting route signs on U.S. highways.

[1930s] The first formal driving training program and study materials are developed by AAA and the first AAA driving school opens in PA. AAA drafts model environmental act for highway beautification.



[1940s] The School's Open, Drive Carefully campaign is introduced to promote alert driving in school zones.

[1950s] AAA plays a major role in passage of legislation that establishes the Highway Trust Fund and paves the way for building the U.S. Interstate Highway System.



[1960s] AAA pushes for installation and use of seatbelts in cars, and begins alcohol and drug education programs to reduce DUIs.

[1970s] Programs and Educational materials are created to encourage gasoline and energy conservation.



[1980s] Child passenger safety initiative begins, encouraging the use of car seats. National Car Care Month is initiated to promote proper car maintenance and help reduce air pollution.

[1990s] AAA launches campaigns to reduce aggressive driving, and to boost investment in highway and bridge repair.



[2000s] Today, our public service efforts continue in consumer protection, working for fairer insurance laws and relieving congestion.



1906



1915



1922



1983



1997

MISSION, VISION & VALUES

VISION

For members to view AAA as indispensable

MISSION

To provide peace of mind and savings for AAA members

Focus on What Matters Most to Members

Continue to Focus on Evolving Member Needs



Provide Excellent Member Experiences



Build on Trusted Relationships & Sustain Trust in Brand



Communicate in Ways Members Desire

Embrace Innovation and Change

Collaborate to Grow the Business



Use the Full Potential of the Internet



Continue to Leverage New Technologies



Continually Refine Products and Services

Leverage our Strengths

Build Upon Our Heritage



Empower Associates to Meet Member Needs



Continue to Exercise Sound Fiscal Management

Strong Foundation

- Ⓢ Member First Perspective
- Ⓢ Service Excellence
- Ⓢ Brand Relevance
- Ⓢ Financial Stability
- Ⓢ Member Advocacy

- Ⓢ Shared Values
- Ⓢ Dedicated Associates
- Ⓢ Learning Culture
- Ⓢ Strong & Ethical Management

COMMUNICATIONS DEPT.

AAA has dedicated professionals at the forefront of their Communications department. It's because of these individuals that AAA is able to retain top of mind consideration amongst all their competitors.

Managing Director: Yolanda L. Cade

Expertise: Crisis Communications, International Media & Club Relations

Yolanda oversees public relations offices in Washington, D.C. and Orlando, FL. She shapes the organization's national public relations and strategic communications efforts. She is responsible for managing all aspects of communicating public policy and national business line activities to the public and media.



Director: Geoff Sundstrom

Expertise: Travel & Financial Services

Geoff oversees media relations for AAA's member and consumer products and services, including Automotive, Travel, Publishing, Financial Services, and Partnership programs.

Director: Nancy White

Expertise: Advocacy and Traffic Safety

Nancy oversees public relations for AAA's Traffic Safety and Advocacy Issues. She develops and directs media relations, advertising and marketing campaigns for national organizations.



Manager: Janie Graziani

Expertise: Social Media Relations/ Monitoring & AAA NewsRoom

Janie provides web-based communications and support for the entire public relations team including social media and management of the AAA NewsRoom.



Manager: Heather Hunter

Expertise: Publishing & Partnership Programs

Heather has participated in campaigns to promote hotels, resorts, tour operators, travel guide publications and travel organizations.

Manager: Christie Hyde

Expertise: Automotive, Auto Skills and Traffic Safety

Christie manages media relations for automotive and traffic safety programs such as roadside assistance, auto repair, and maintenance, auto buying and driver training.



Manager: Troy Green

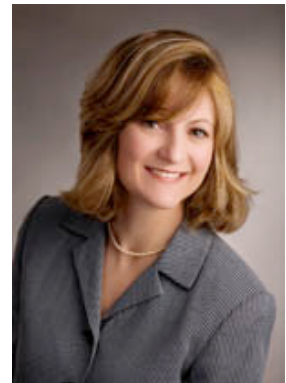
Expertise: Advocacy and Traffic Safety

Troy oversees AAA Government Relations publicity and serves as a secondary research on energy and fuel topics.

Manager: Laura Palermo

Expertise: Community Outreach and Involvement

Laura leads volunteer and outreach programs in Central Florida and seeks ways to disseminate information about AAA's priority issues and safety programs at the grassroots level.



Coordinator: Christine Johnson

Expertise: Advocacy and Traffic Safety

Christine is responsible for supporting publicity efforts for AAA's advocacy issues, as well as signature traffic safety programs. She tweets for AAA at twitter.com/AAAAsafety.

COMMUNICATION PRACTICES



AAA is an avid company at maintaining a close relationship with its customers and the public at large. It is devoted to not only providing top quality auto and customer care but also provides an in depth community relationship through its online blogs/forums and its social media.

BLOGS

In order to provide AAA customers with all sorts of opinions and information about the services provided, AAA has incorporated five different blogs that detail better ways to take advantage of their services. These blogs are used for creating online communities of people interested in voicing their concerns and especially their gratitude. On such blogs any number of people can describe their thoughts, activities and reactions, and thereby share them with others who participate on the blog site with them. The blogs they offer include:

- 📍 Ask Pete
- 📍 Sandy-gram
- 📍 Insiders Guide To Travel
- 📍 Koser's Corner
- 📍 Worldwide Travel

Bloggers are special personas unique to AAA and people from all over the world who wish to contribute to the company's online presence. Since these blogs are normally publicly available, some people can simply read them without contributing any thoughts or materials of their own. This could be a negative due to the fact that AAA only benefits by getting to know their customers. While these blogs

are great ways for customers to be in touch with AAA, it may be hard to find them due to a busy home page.

FORUMS

AAA's forums are a great way to get brand awareness out about all of their services, while at the same time making contacts they probably wouldn't otherwise have.

By properly networking through these social mediums AAA has managed to build a networking base extremely quickly and find like-minded people who are willing to share their information to the general public.

Much like their blogs, these forums are not always exposed and accentuated like the rest of their online services. AAA forums include:

- 🗨️ Share Your Views
- 🗨️ Automotive
- 🗨️ Discounts
- 🗨️ Travel related
- 🗨️ AAA Topics and Ideas

SUBJECT	REPLIES	AUTHOR	KUDOS	VIEWS	LATEST POST
Looking for contests?	6	StephenW	947	07-19-2010 10:08 AM	by StephenW
Looking for contests?	6	StephenW	947	07-19-2010 10:08 AM	by StephenW
Headlights on when raining	2	BillG	38	07-19-2010 10:05 AM	by StephenW
Question about new membership	1	ThomasD	31	07-16-2010 09:49 PM	by ThomasD
Citgo Gas on I-95 in South Carolina and North Caro...	1	sbfsl	31	07-16-2010 06:47 PM	by kbakewell
Does the AAA have any influence on a customer serv...	2	mominflorida	42	07-15-2010 03:00 PM	by mominflorida

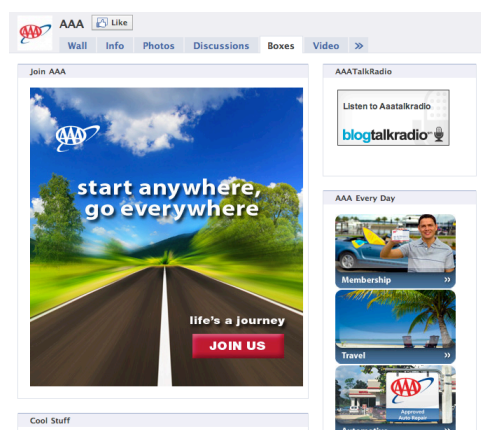
SOCIAL MEDIA & ADVERTISING

Certain popular websites like LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube are considered to be an important hub for marketing especially because they have over five million visitors on a daily basis. Promoting AAA by using these sites is a very smart business proposition since they offer a large amount of steady traffic everyday.



In today's world, social networking is extremely successful and social media marketing is very important especially due to the fact that most people today have access to the Internet. The influx of social media and the Internet means that there is many sites people access everyday. This could potentially hinder how much traffic a company gets to their designated sites.

AAA has made a good attempt at sustaining an active Facebook and two Twitter accounts, two very successful and heavy social mediums. They have also manage to create apps for smart phones to keep a mobile connection with their customers.



AAA also manages to reach the masses by using traditional forms of media. They work with several different agencies to formulate their print, outdoor, radio, TV, and online presence.

C O N C L U S I O N

AAA Autoclub South does a remarkable job in respect to public relations and how they communicate. AAA is respected for its credibility and integrity due to their communication skills externally and also internally in the company. The prestigious reputation of the company is based on the success of their consumer relations.



The company is a not-for-profit organization of clubs that serve more than 51 million members in the United States and Canada. The book explains that a company like this is usually subjected to much more scrutiny than either of the other two types because people have contributed out of trust alone.

This company must communicate with employees and consumers in order to keep their trust. Violation of public trust always damages organizations, but especially ones not based off of profit. AAA has done a great job of keeping their consumers trust, which has resulted in naming this company North America's largest motoring and leisure travel organization.

A S S E S S M E N T

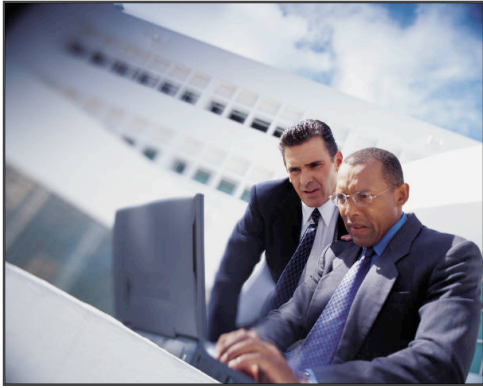
AAA does have a mission statement and it is: "To provide peace of mind and savings for AAA members."

AAA makes sure to focus their public relations efforts to support the overall mission of the organization. They start their annual plans and any department development with their mission statement.

This is important because it lets the consumers know its character and the parameters of its activities. AAA is a well-known company, but it is still important to have an informant mission statement. It is important to have a mission statement because it makes consumers feel like the company really wants to support their product. This also helps public relations practitioners to have a clear view of its own mission and what it wants to accomplish.

P E R S O N N E L I N V O L V E M E N T

The company currently has nine personnel in the main corporate office involved in the public relations and communications for AAA. These employees do everything from publicity for the company to providing web-based communication and support. Each member handles media relations, which include things like media training, message points, and news releases. Other people in the department might handle traffic safety, PR items, automotive related items, and membership.



We feel AAA has really covered every aspect possible in order to effectively accomplish all the tasks that are expected from public relation practitioners. Having numerous people focusing not only on one unified goal, but also all of the little pieces and issues, shows that the company really cares about maintaining its reputation.

MEDIA COMMUNICATION

AAA is very active when it comes to the media aspect. Different media outlets this company uses are:

- Ⓢ Press releases sent are sent out at least once a week.
- Ⓢ Social media pages are used. For example AAA has a Facebook page.
- Ⓢ AAA participates in online blogs where they invite AAA members to blog about various items such as travel and auto repair questions they have. Mainly open forum.
- Ⓢ In aspect of paid advertising, AAA does not conduct a lot of that. Any advertising they do PSA messages to teens rather than paid advertisements.
- Ⓢ On the AAA website they have forums and smart phone applications that consumers can download to their phones to keep them even more involved with the company and receive more benefits.

With all of these different media outlets, it makes it very easy for customers and clients to communicate effectively. In society today, social media and web-based communication is quickly taking over. We think it is very important for companies to have these websites and to keep up with technology. Having these various means of communication allows AAA to stay connected with employees and consumers with a touch of the button. Social media helps AAA market their brand, making people become more aware of their company. Whether it's a consumer blogging about their experience with the company or a fan page on Facebook, the name and brand are getting publicity.

One thing we really enjoyed about their website is they have a section dedicated to the oil spill. Since their business is based on helping people travel, we thought this was a great idea so travelers know the up to date information on the spill. They have maps and a forum that travelers can write about what they experience when they travel to these places. AAA seems to really know what they need to do in order to keep their customer's best interests in mind. This goes to show the company truly wants their clients informed.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

After learning about this company and getting to see the internal side of their public relations and communications department we can only express positive things about this company. It is apparent that the company truly wants to be able to communicate in anyway possible, and that is extremely important in keeping a business successful.

Management sees the need for public relations and has made the right choice is creating a department to focus solely on the reputation and communicating. AAA's has established and maintained a satisfactory relationship with its publics.



A P P E N D I X

Jessica Brady
[813] 288-7294
jbrady@aaasouth.com

Monday, July 19, 2010
12:00pm

Q: How many people are in your department and what do you do?

A: There are 8 people right now. Each of us handle media relations, that includes things like media training, message points, new releases, all kinds of stuff you name it. Other people in the department might handle traffic safety, PR items, automotive related items, membership, and things of that nature.

Q: What does your job consist of on a day-to-day basis?

A: Media analysis...looking at how much coverage do we receive...what does it equate in ad value if it was paid advertising...how many people were reached through the efforts...looking at various newsworthy items that might be of interest to consumers that reporters would want to cover...this includes travel right-ups, public safety tips, automotive maintenance and repair issues, different types of savings people can have via AAA membership...other things would include strategizing going over campaigns...what can we do to promote something if we were coming up with a new item or initiative...answering media calls throughout the day...My territory includes Florida, Georgia and Tennessee, so I have managers that serve as AAA spokespeople throughout that territory. So on a daily basis I provide them with news releases...that's a general idea of it most of the work comes on an ad hoc basis.

Q: Do you have a crisis communication plan?

A: Yes we do have a crisis communication plan within the department and how to deal with the media. Say there were a hurricane in the Gulf we would come up with a strategy as to tracking it, where its going, how we communicate if it were to come, and how we'll maintain our daily operations, what kind of items do we send out to the daily public so they better prepare for it. But have we really ever had to use one...no not really.

Q: What type of web and interactive communications do you use to inform the public?

A: We have a website, we are also implementing various social media platforms. Facebook, things of that nature. We do participate in online blogs where we invite AAA members to blog about various items whether it is travel to auto repair questions that they have and we pretty much answer it. Mostly open forums things of that nature.

Q: What type of corporate advertising do you do?

A: We do not do much of the advertising at all. All of our effort is generated through Erc Media. Very rarely do we do paid advertising when we do its usually for like PSA instead of selling things. It's more like PSA speaking towards teenagers letting them know the dangers of texting while driving and thing of that nature.

APPENDIX

July 20, 2010

To: jbrady@aaasouth.com

Subject: Thank you for the insight

Hello and thank you,

Learning about your day-to-day relations in PR was of great help with both our projects and insight into the public relations industry.

If there is anything that a USF student can help with in the future, please do not hesitate to ask.

Have a great week.

Sincerely,

Matt, Pedro, Cat & Frankie

The screenshot shows the AAA NewsRoom website. At the top left, it says "Your source for automotive, travel and traffic safety information" with the AAA logo. The top right features the "AAA NewsRoom" logo and navigation links: "HOME AAA EXCHANGE CONTACT US VIDEOS". Below this is a search bar with the text "SEARCH:" and a "GO" button. A horizontal menu contains the following categories: "ROUT AAA", "AUTOMOTIVE", "FUEL", "SAFETY", "TRAVEL", "DISCOUNTS & MONEY", "PUBLICATIONS", and "DISCOVER AAA.com".

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- 17.1% Increase in Fourth of July Travel**: A large image of fireworks at night. Below it, the text reads "AAA Predicts 34 Million-Plus Travelers" and "(2 / 5) >>".
- RESOURCE CENTER**: Three sub-sections:
 - Video News Features**: "Login to our Video area to download and watch press videos. LOGIN ="
 - Media Contacts**: "Search by zipcode to find AAA local media contacts in your area. SEARCH ="
 - AAA Facts**: "View PDFs with info regarding AAA. MORE ="
- AAA PODCASTS =**
- LATEST NEWS**: A vertical list of news items:
 - SAFETY - 7/8/2010**: "AAA Commends Delaware As It Becomes the 30th State to Prohibit Text Messaging While Driving. Nearly a dozen states have enacted texting while driving bans this year. MORE ="
 - TRAVEL - 6/23/2010**: "Fourth of July holiday travelers expected to increase 17.1 percent, AAA says. Travel by automobile continues to be dominant mode of transportation as AAA expects more emergency roadside assistance calls than any other summer holiday. MORE ="
 - AUTOMOTIVE - 6/15/2010**: "North Dakota Claims Title of Nation's Best Student Auto Technicians in Ford/AAA Student Auto Skills Head-to-Head Competition. 61st annual auto repair showdown pitted top high school teams from all 50 states, awarded \$11.5 million in scholarships. MORE ="
 - TRAVEL - 6/10/2010**



Insider's Guide to Travel

Blog [dropdown] SEARCH GO TO [dropdown]

Register | Sign In | Help

AAA Community > Blogs > Insider's Guide to Travel

BLOG OPTIONS [dropdown]

Thailand...Land of Smiles: Part I

by **zozoz** **SandyK** on 07-13-2010 10:37 AM - last edited on 07-17-2010 12:45 AM

This blog is by Jay K, who is originally from Thailand. She recently had the opportunity to go home for a visit. (Check out the trivia at the bottom of the blog.)

Although I grew up in this fascinating country, I returned home with friends determined to see the country as a tourist, not as a native...elephant rides and all. Everyone knows that when you live somewhere, you never get around to seeing all the best stuff. (It's a bit like New Yorkers' who have never visited the Statue of Liberty.) In the next couple of weeks, I'll share the highlights of my journey through the "Land of Smiles".

Day 1: My trek begins in Bangkok where I'm joined by several friends.

Having never traveled to an Asian country before, let's just say they were in for a bit of a cultural shock. We're greeted with the ever-present aroma of fragrant-spiced delicacies waiting from the carts of street vendors. Occasional bursts of flames shoot from small grills as they prepare large steaming woks of Pad Thai, curries and skewers of satay.

[Read more...](#)

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- Thailand...Land of Smiles: Part I
- The Allure of the Baguette
- Road Trips Reconsidered
- Anticipating Italy...or "Finding Gelato..."
- Size Does Matter...When you're traveling that is.
- Nashville—It's more than you think
- Travels with Mimi and Joshua
- Surprise...Part II of Travel, the Perfect Conduit fo...
- Travel, the Perfect Conduit for a Sabbatical or R...
- Mont St. Michel...The Anticipation
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Javapup on: Size Does Matter...Whe



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Sign Up | Get updates via SMS by texting [follow AAAnews to 40404](#) in the United States. Codes for other countries.

Verified Account
Name AAA
Location Heathrow, FL
Web [http://www.aaa.com](#)
Bio AAA's (American Automobile Association) official twitter channel. 100+ years of serving travelers and motorists. [www.aaa.com/publicaffairs](#)
3,847 5,404 348
Tweets 1,461

@RAD918 I'd like to help. Pls dm me your contact info and we'll look into the situation.
about 3 hours ago via web in reply to RAD918

@elle24_7 Maybe I can help. DM me your contact info and someone in Member Relations will get in touch with you.
about 24 hours ago via web in reply to elle24_7

Glad we could help! RT @ebambi Called AAA, got a new battery, and got to work all in 30 minutes. I'm totally impressed, #AAA! #RVA
about 24 hours ago via HoodSuite in reply to ebambi

@JayBeeStarsky We focus on platforms where demand 4 apps



AAA Members, [log in](#) now for full access to member services

AAA Members save on **First Time Driver Courses** and more...

[Register Your Teen Today!](#)



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Tampa, FL March 28, 2010
Investors couldn't ignore the realities of supply and demand last week which helped lower the price of crude oil to settle Friday at \$80 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

AAA CALLS ON GOVERNOR TO VETO TRANSPORTATION BILL INCREASING TRUCK WEIGHTS
TAMPA, Fla. June 1, 2010
In a letter sent to the Capitol late last week, AAA Auto Club South asked Governor Charlie Crist to veto a transportation bill (CS/CS/CS/HB 1271) that would allow state and local authorities to issue permits that increase the maximum allowable truck weight from 80,000 to 88,000 pounds. The provision, characterized in the bill as a "10 percent scale tolerance," is part of an omnibus transportation bill that addresses numerous other issues.
PRICE OF CRUDE RISES FOR FIRST TIME IN THREE WEEKS
TAMPA, Fla. May 30, 2010

Hurricane Season is Jun. - Nov.
Hurricane Season Begins June 1 and Ends November 30 - Are you prepared?
A single inch of water can cost thousands of dollars. Protect your family and property during the hurricane season with helpful information from AAA.
[More Information](#)

Fuel Gauge Reports

Use the AAA Fuel Cost Calculator to calculate the estimated fuel cost of your next trip.

[Calculate Fuel Cost](#)

- [National Daily AAA Fuel Gauge Report](#)
- [Gas Watcher's Guide](#)
- [Where Does Gas Come From?](#)
- [Strategies to Save You Gas & Money](#)
- [Sunday Fuel Price Brief](#)
- [What Taxes We Pay in a Gallon of Gasoline](#)

