

AgGateway 2011 Marketing & Communication Plan

OVERVIEW:

AgGateway

AgGateway is a non-profit organization, comprised of businesses serving the agriculture industry, formed to allow its members to achieve the benefits gained when companies collaborate to share information electronically in the agricultural and food supply chains. Established in November 2005 with ten founding members, AgGateway helps member companies efficiently address current and future challenges in efficient and effective supply chain management, product and materials traceability, government regulation compliance and reporting, and other areas important to members' long-term productivity and sustainability. Addressing these challenges is accomplished through member collaboration on agriculture industry eBusiness standards, eBusiness education, and eBusiness Project implementation as well as the involvement of appropriate government regulatory agencies and information technology companies in the development of eBusiness standards and tools. AgGateway's premise is that eBusiness can be more effectively implemented by cross-segment collaboration rather than by each agricultural industry segment operating independently.

Initially (2006) AgGateway focused on establishing the AgGateway organizational structure, creating the brand and introducing the organization to the agriculture industry as well as sponsoring implementation projects. In 2007 the RAPID membership and organization transitioned into AgGateway, a significant effort, and implementation project work continued. In the second half of 2007 membership growth became the highest priority. A review of promotional materials and a membership drive which resulted in the addition of 45 new members followed.

AgGateway's outreach efforts to add members continued in 2008 and a new initiative targeting agricultural industry associations begun. A new AgGateway logo was designed and in the fall of 2008, the AgGateway Board of Directors approved a resolution to task the Future Direction and Vision committee with creating a three-year strategic plan for AgGateway. As part of their work the group reviewed and simplified both the AgGateway vision and mission statements. The group was also charged with looking beyond the current state of the industry to determine needs and technology likely to be used in the future and considering new sectors in agriculture where eBusiness can be introduced and used to improve efficiency. The output was the 2010-2012 AgGateway Strategic Plan containing five strategic objectives designed to allow AgGateway to accomplish its mission and move the organization closer to its vision.

AgGateway's Vision: AgGateway will be the recognized international source for facilitating implementation and collaboration in the use of information and communication technologies for Agriculture

AgGateway's Mission: is to promote, enable and expand eBusiness in Agriculture.

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2010 - 2012 Strategic Objectives:

- Increase Industry Segment Councils from five to ten
- Create valuable promotional tools & measure their effectiveness
- Provide tools to increase the number and ease of successful project implementations
- Develop a marketing plan and create promotions to expand the use of eBusiness throughout Agriculture
- Increase number of working relationships with industry trade groups from five to ten to establish AgGateway as THE eBusiness solution partner in the industry

While there was no formal AgGateway Marketing Plan post 2008 (due to the Executive Vice President vacancy) the focus of the organization in 2009 was on increasing membership, adding new councils, expanding eConnectivity through implementation projects, and promoting the use of eBusiness in Agriculture through educational seminars and webinars. New logos were created for the AgGateway tools to further strengthen and support the AgGateway brand implemented with the new AgGateway logo created in 2008.

In 2010 AgGateway focused on accomplishing the strategic objectives outlined in the 2010-2012 AgGateway Strategic Plan: creating three new councils, adding 27 new members, and expanding working relationships with Agriculture industry trade groups and associations, creating and promoting the value of eBusiness, and providing tools and services to increase the number and ease of successful implementation projects. A new AgGateway website launched in January 2010 provided a new 'look and feel' and allows easier navigation and better consistency across pages for members and those interested in learning more about AgGateway. The EVP/COO vacancy was filled and charged with drafting an AgGateway Marketing Plan.

Today, AgGateway is starting to gain momentum, already adding 16 new members in 2011. Active Implementation Projects are ongoing, new projects are under consideration, and our new Precision Ag and Ag Retail Councils are rapidly growing and engaging in the organization. While there is frustration with some of the current tools available to facilitate eConnectivity, and their degree of use reflects that, Task Forces are already underway to address those challenges. New tools, such as CLICK, and improvement on existing tools such as NEXUSE2e 4.5, further facilitate the expansion of eConnectivity. However, while awareness within the member organizations who have fully engaged and embraced the value of eBusiness is good, there is still large "awareness gap" both within the industry and within our member companies as to what AgGateway is, what the benefits of membership are, what tools and services AgGateway provides, etc. Many in agriculture have never heard of AgGateway.

Customers:

Members:

Since 2005, AgGateway's growth has occurred through the addition of new members with the transition of RAPID members into AgGateway, implementation of eConnectivity Projects (both through AgGateway and through member company initiatives), initiatives with industry trade associations, and the creation of new councils. Starting with ten founding members, AgGateway added 22 new members in 2006, 45 in 2007, 25 in 2008, 10 in 2009, 27 in 2010

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and 16 to date in 2011. Due to member company consolidation and some attrition, the current membership stands at more than 130 members comprised of raw material suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, retailers, software and service providers and associations representing allied providers, crop nutrition (fertilizer industry), crop protection (agricultural chemicals), feed industry (animal nutrition), ornamental horticulture, precision agriculture and seed (primarily focused on agronomic row crops) segments of the agriculture industry.

In addition, AgGateway has seven affiliate members – American Feed Industry Association (AFIA), American Seed Trade Association (ASTA), Chemical Producers and Distributors Association (CPDA), Crop Life America (CLA), Independent Professional Seed Association (IPSA), The Fertilizer Institute (TFI), GS1 US, and OAGi.

New Members:

For 2010 and 2011 to date, membership growth focused on obtaining new members within existing segments (recent membership initiatives driven within the councils) and adding new councils through the efforts of the President/CEO and the AgGateway staff. While a relatively systematic approach was used to identify and prioritize new council segments, other efforts have not been as focused. There is a need to develop a consistent, coherent plan for attracting new members outside of current new council efforts.

Target Member Profile: Company doing business with or within the agricultural industry interested in improving business efficiency and processes, delivering excellent customer service, streamlining the supply chain, enhancing food safety, and supporting sustainable agricultural practices throughout the world through the use of electronic information and communication technologies.

AGIIS Subscribers: AGIIS is a critical asset in the implementation of eConnectivity, providing the unique identifiers needed. Since not all current subscribers are AgGateway members, one goal would be to turn all current non-member subscribers into AgGateway members. The converse is true as well, not all AgGateway members are AGIIS subscribers, so we want to increase the use of the directory by our current subscribers as well as by adding subscribers. Strategies and tactics for increasing the number of AGIIS subscribers will be included within the AGIIS marketing plan in development.

Competitors:

There are no apparent direct competitors to AgGateway as there is no other organization within the Agriculture industry which does what AgGateway does. However, there are initiatives and other organizations within the industry which could negatively impact achievement of the AgGateway Vision through the development of independent standards and guidelines, or which may view AgGateway as a competitor regardless of how AgGateway views them. Additionally, federal government standards initiatives developed without AgGateway's participation and collaboration could seriously undermine the work of the organization. This perspective will be important to consider when interacting with other trade group organizations, allied providers, and government agencies.

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Collaborators:

AgGateway collaborates with other standards organizations such as OAGi and GS1 US providing maintenance and input to both data and message standards. Collaboration within and among councils, within committees and among our members is a core concept to the AgGateway organization and critical for its long term success.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

Marketing Strategy:

Our strategy is to grow our membership within the agriculture industry by demonstrating and communicating the benefits of implementing eBusiness within members' organizations through collaborative industry projects, individual company-to-company connectivity services, tools and standards development and innovation.

Assumptions:

- Limited marketing and communications budget, therefore marketing promotions and communications should be relatively inexpensive.
- Preference to retain current tagline: "AgGateway - your source for eBusiness innovation"
- Best way to attract new members - referrals, communication/demonstration of value and "Sales" calls, government mandates, and connected members expressing desire to get connected.
- Need to address current awareness gap as a priority
- Responsible Parties are defined based on the current AgGateway structure (staff roles and responsibilities as currently defined)

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES:

1) Increase Membership

Increasing membership is a core strategic objective for AgGateway – more members should ultimately translate into greater connectivity thus benefiting all members and the industry as a whole. One strategy is to "spread the word" about AgGateway, our industry initiatives and the benefits of eBusiness through the addition of new councils, development/strengthening of our relationships with other industry trade groups, and communications. Since organizations need to be "aware" of AgGateway in order to join and positive organizational awareness is needed to retain members, some of the tactics are intended to address the current "awareness gap" regarding AgGateway within the industry. (*Supports 2010-2012 Strategic Objectives #1, #4, and #5*)

a) Add New Councils:

- i) Responsible Party: President/CEO (R. Conner)
- ii) Timing: throughout 2011

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- iii) Tactics/steps
 - (1) Review and confirm prioritized 2011 targets (Q1 2011)
 - (a) #1 - Grain (marketing, grain handlers, exporters, etc.)
 - (b) #1 - Specialty (fertilizers, pesticides and seeds; includes the T&O industry for example, deliberately left very broad)
 - (c) #1 - Animal Health
 - (d) #2 - Produce
 - (e) #2 - Energy (producers, those involved in the exchange of petroleum and ethanol industry, major coops involved in these businesses)
 - (f) #3 - Transportation () (anything that moves agricultural product)
 - (2) Develop and document council acquisition plan (template)
 - (3) Identify top target industry segments and associated companies/organizations and ultimate target candidate list - ongoing
 - (a) Identify current members and have them identify whom we should target
 - (b) Target the related associations/activities to these
 - (i) Grain
 - 1. Current Member example - CHS
 - 2. Potential Member examples – ADM, AgXML, Bunge, Cargill
 - 3. Associations/Activities: National Grain and Feed Assn (NGFA)
 - (ii) Specialty
 - 1. Current Member examples - Bayer, Growmark, Nufarm, Syngenta
 - 2. Potential Member example – Makteshim Magan,
 - 3. Associations/Activities: Chemical Producers and Distributors Association (CPDA)
 - (iii) Animal Health
 - 1. Current Member example – Bayer
 - 2. Potential Member examples – Elanco, Pfizer
 - 3. Associations/Activities:
 - a. AHI - EDI Project
 - b. APHIS – US Government agency
 - c. USAHA – United States Animal Health Assn – September 2011, Buffalo NY
 - d. American Veterinary Medical Association
 - e. American Veterinary Distributors Association
 - (iv) Produce –Focus initially on Associations: PMA; United Fresh
 - (4) Create and implement acquisition plans for top 4 candidates
 - (5) Draft Charter, UVP/Sell Sheet, and Communication Plan for top 4 candidates
 - (6) Present new council charters to the AgGateway BOD for approval
- iv) Support: EVP, Council Advocates, Management Team (MT), Membership & Communications Committee (M&C)

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- b) Conduct membership drives
 - i) Responsible Party: President/CEO (R. Conner)
 - ii) Timing: Q3/4 2011
 - iii) Tactics/steps
 - (1) Review membership drive approach to date, develop and implement new approach by August 2011 for Fall 2011 implementation
 - (2) Create member advocates and provide tools/collateral to support - ongoing
 - (3) Conduct at least one general membership drive per year starting November/December 2011.
 - (4) Consider implementing a new membership promotion (discount/membership +)
- c) Continue “Sales” Calls to non-affiliated agriculture companies/organizations
 - i) Responsible Party: President/CEO (R. Conner)
 - ii) Timing: throughout 2011
 - iii) Tactics/steps
 - (1) Identify and prioritize target companies based on target company profile (Q1 2011)
 - (2) Identify key stakeholders/decision makers within each company targeted
 - (3) Develop and implement call plan for each company/organization targeted
 - iv) Support: EVP, Council/Member Advocates, M&C
- d) Develop/strengthen relationships with industry trade groups
 - i) Responsible Party: President/CEO (R. Conner)
 - ii) Timing: throughout 2011
 - iii) Tactics/steps
 - (1) Identify top trade group targets and engage AgGateway members (who are also members of trade groups/associations of interest) (Q1 2011)
 - (2) Identify target trade group leaders (Q1 2011)
 - (3) Create and implement communication plan for targeted trade groups - ongoing
 - (4) Establish/maintain relationships with trade associations CEO/Executive directors-ongoing
 - (5) Consider sponsoring a lunch/dinner meeting with affiliate trade groups - TBD
 - (6) Offer informational/educational presentations to target trade groups – ongoing (reference trade show target list- next section)
 - (7) Develop opportunities to present to target trade group boards and at trade group meetings/conferences – ongoing
 - iv) Support: Councils AgGateway Board of Directors (BOD), M&C, Education Committee (EC)
- e) Increase industry presence through participation in industry events and communication
 - i) Responsible Party: EVP/COO (W. Smith)
 - ii) Timing: throughout 2011

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- iii) Tactics/steps:
 - (a) Develop and implement formal industry communication plan including press releases, articles in trade publications, agriculture industry trade show participation, webinar opportunities, etc. (Q2 2011)
 - (b) Attend agriculture industry trade shows and professional association meetings – ongoing – proposed 2011/early 2012 targets
 - (i) IPSA Annual Meeting – January 18 in STL (Note: can't participate)
 - (ii) AFIA International Feed Expo Jan 26-28, 2011, Atlanta (Note: can't participate)
 - (iii) The Pesticide Stewardship Alliance Annual Conference (TPSA) – February 15, 2011, San Antonio – presentation on reusable container labeling scheduled
 - (iv) PISC (Purchasing and Ingredient Suppliers Conference) – February 28, 2011, Las Vegas
 - (v) CLA BOD meeting to present concept for Innovation Award – March 1, 2011 at Ritz Carlton, Washington, D.C.
 - (vi) CLA and RISE Spring Conference - April 7 – 8, Arlington, VA (Note: can't participate)
 - (vii) OHIO Floral Association (OFA) Short Course – July 9 -12, Columbus, OH
 - (viii) CLA Annual Meeting – September 2011 – Report at BOD meeting
 - (ix) Fertilizer Outlook and Technology Conference – November 12-17, 2011, St. Petersburg
 - (x) ARA – December 2011
 - (xi) ASTA Corn and Sorghum - December 6-9 2011, Chicago
 - (xii) ASTA Vegetable and Flower Seed Conference, January 21-24, 2012 Tampa
 - (xiii) IPSA – assume January 2012
 - (xiv) AFIA International Feed Expo - January 25-27, 2012, Atlanta
 - (c) Consider evaluating social media opportunities for AgGateway and developing strategy and implementation plans
- iv) Support: M&C, EC

2) Promote the value of AgGateway membership

Equally important to adding new members is ensuring that new and existing members receive and recognize the value and benefits they derive from membership in AgGateway. Consistent, regular follow-up with new members beyond the initial welcome packet is important. We want to make sure our members can swim, not just throw them into the deep end of the pool. We want to “show them the value” through communication, follow-up, education and demonstration of the opportunities and benefits of AgGateway membership, establishing eConnectivity, and incorporating eBusiness into their overall business strategy. (*Supports 2010-2012 Strategic Objectives #1 and #2.*)

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- a) Improve member experience and customer service
 - i) Responsible Party: President/CEO (R. Conner)
 - ii) Timing: throughout 2011
 - iii) Tactics/steps
 - (1) Seek input/feedback from current members, new members, and prospective members - ongoing
 - (2) Develop new member orientation and revise follow-up process/checklist (Q2/3 2011)
 - (3) Develop new council development and follow-up process/checklist (Q2/3 2011)
 - (4) Identify staff member responsible for member follow-up/customer service (Q1 2011)
 - (5) Assess current AgGateway website (Q2 2011) and consider redesign and re-launch
 - (a) to provide information from a non-member perspective to promote awareness and membership
 - (b) to facilitate implementation of eConnectivity from a member perspective
 - iv) Support: CEO, EVP, M&C, Projects Director, C. Aclin, Web Developer
- b) Create and publish eBusiness value publications using a variety of media options
 - i) Responsible Party: EVP/COO (W. Smith)
 - ii) Timing: throughout 2011
 - iii) Tactics/steps
 - (1) Create/revise and publish AgGateway value collateral piece for Applied Providers, Crop Nutrition, Crop Protection, Feed, and Seed Councils (Q3 2011)
 - (2) Ensure AgGateway value collateral piece is created for each new council as new council charter is developed. - Ongoing
 - (3) Working with the AgCIO Roundtable, provide information on how member companies can integrate eBusiness within their corporate strategy - TBD
 - (4) Identify and prioritize additional value publications needed (such as case studies, executive newsletter/blog, etc.) - TBD
 - (5) Develop and launch new publications - TBD
 - iv) Support: CEO, Councils Chairs and Vice Chairs, M&C, AgCIO Roundtable
- c) Create and publish educational courses demonstrating benefits of eBusiness
 - i) Responsible Party: EVP/COO (W. Smith)
 - ii) Timing: Proposed 2011- May be 2012
 - iii) Tactics/steps
 - (1) Identify target audience within member companies
 - (2) Determine courses needed
 - (3) Develop, implement and publish new courses
 - iv) Support: M&C, EC, Member Advocates

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3) Expand the use of eBusiness throughout Agriculture

AgGateway's mission is to "promote, enable and expand eBusiness in Agriculture", so expanding the use of eBusiness is a critical component of what AgGateway is all about. The idea is to "build it, communicate it and let them use it" through the creation and communication of tools designed to facilitate eBusiness implementation, through development and support of industry initiatives, through marketing and promotions, and through the collaboration and exchange of information and ideas that occurs at face-to-face meetings. (*Supports 2010-2012 Strategic Objectives #2, #3 and #4*)

a) Development, communicate and support industry & individual member initiatives

- i) Responsible Party: Standards Director (M. Hunter)
- ii) Timing: throughout 2011
- iii) Tactics/steps
 - (1) Develop and Launch Consulting Services (project development, implementation support, etc. Offer to member companies'– Q1/2 2011
 - (2) Implement New Project Development/Idea Incubator process developed by Council Vice Chairs and communicate new projects list – Q3/Q4
 - (3) Launch Project Documentation Publication Access via website – TBD
 - (4) Communicate to membership in a timely manner as new documentation becomes available - ongoing
 - (5) Develop training modules and provide regular training on key activities essential for eConnectivity success (i.e. synchronization of data) - ongoing
 - (6) Consider creating project promotions for non-members - TBD
- iv) Support: Council Vice Chairs, M&C, EC, EVP, C. Aclin

b) Communicate tools and services that facilitate eBusiness implementation

- i) Responsible Party: EVP/COO (W. Smith)
- ii) Timing: throughout 2011
- iii) Tactics/steps:
 - (1) Create communication plan to promote tools & services – Q2/Q3 2011
 - (2) Create and implement an AGIIS Marketing Plan – Q3/Q4 2011
 - (3) Improve current and develop new tools & services to facilitate implementation and launch to appropriate target audience – ongoing
 - (a) Resolve AGIIS Duplicate Issue
 - (b) Enhance AGIIS to make product directory easier to use
 - (c) Launch "Standards Browser Plus"
 - (4) Communicate new tools and services to target audience
 - (5) Assess current AgGateway website (Q2 2011) and consider redesign and re-launch facilitate implementation of eConnectivity - TBD
- iv) Support: Projects Director, Standards Director, M&C, Education, CSC, DOC

c) Create and present educational offerings/webinars that promote eBusiness and AgGateway

- i) Responsible Party: EVP/COO (W. Smith)

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- ii) Timing: Q2/Q3 2011
 - iii) Tactics/steps: Working with the Education Committee
 - (1) Identify target audience within (member and non-member companies)
 - (2) determine courses needed
 - (3) Develop, implement and publish new courses
 - iv) Support: M&C, EC, Member Advocates
- d) Market AgGateway and eBusiness through AgGateway Conferences and other Meetings
- i) Responsible Party: EVP/COO (W. Smith)
 - ii) Timing: throughout 2011
 - iii) Tactics/steps:
 - (1) Plan and execute 2011 Committees, Councils and Projects Meeting (CCP) – June 2011
 - (a) Launch “Invite a Trading Partner Initiative” for 2011 CCP
 - (b) Communicate 2011 CCP through AgGateway Newsletter, email blasts, and Trade Press and Trade associations prior to and immediately following conference – March – July 2011
 - (2) Plan and execute 2011 Annual Conference – November 2011
 - (a) Communicate 2011 Annual Conference through AgGateway Newsletter, Press Release, Trade Press and Trade associations prior to and immediately following conference – June – December 2010
 - (b) Consider promotion to bring conference participants and potential future participants to the AgGateway website post-conference – TBD
 - (3) Participation in Association Meetings: 2011/early 2012
 - (a) IPSA Annual Meeting – January 18 in St. Louis (Note: can’t participate in 2011)
 - (b) AFIA International Feed Expo Jan 26-28, 2011, Atlanta (Note: can’t participate in 2011)
 - (c) The Pesticide Stewardship Alliance Annual Conference (TPSA) – February 15, 2011, San Antonio – presentation on reusable container labeling scheduled
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 - (l) ASTA Vegetable and Flower Seed Conference, January 21-24, 2012 Tampa

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- (m) IPFA – assume January 2012
- (n) AFIA International Feed Expo - January 25-27, 2012, Atlanta
- (4) Meetings with Members and Potential Members
- (5) Consider meeting targeting generic manufacturers – TBD
- (6) Identify target meetings for 2012 – December 2011
- i) Support: Conference Committee, COO, M&C

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Appendix:

Targets:

- Members
- Potential Members
- AGIIS Subscribers
- Ag Industry Segments
- Broad Industry Communication
 - Agriculture media
 - Information Technologies media
 - Industry Groups and Trade Associations
 - Corporate executives
- State and Federal Government

Marketing program components list: *(not necessarily all inclusive)*

- Annual Conference
- Mid-Year CCP Meeting
- Committee Meetings
- Council Meetings
- Projects – development, implementation, results
- Consulting services
- Website
- Newsletter
- Email
- Snail Mail *(use would not be consistent with AgGateway brand)*
- Seminars
- Webinars
- Social Media
- Invoices
- Collateral
- Press releases, news articles
- AgGateway Staff
- Members
- AgGateway Elections
- AGIIS
- AGIIS Help Desk
- eMessenger/AgTAC
- Membership Dues
- AGIIS Subscription Fees
- Implementation Project Fees – AGW and internal
- Consulting Services Fees
- Discounts/Special Offers