



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HOME INSPECTORS

How You Can Use PR and Social Media to Support and Market Your Chapter

ASHI Leadership Development Conference

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Marketing your Chapter and ASHI

Chapter Spokesperson or Communication Officer

Your Chapter should strive to advance its mission by communicating openly and honestly using consistent messaging with its constituents, including the media.

It is important that one of your chapter officers be the chapter spokesperson, dedicated to communications, publicity, or marketing. The designated chapter spokesperson should be the only spokesperson for your Chapter to ensure the quality and consistency of information disseminated to media sources. The spokesperson should be the board liaison or chair of your PR and marketing committee if you have one. The committee members can assist the spokesperson behind the scenes by helping with social media and PR projects. However, there should only be one chapter spokesperson.

1. The spokesperson should handle all media inquiries.
2. **Unless the requests pertain to ASHI**, then inquiries should be directed to ASHI HQ, to the attention of ASHI's Director of Marketing, regardless of who the media representative is, whom they represent, or how innocuous the request might have been.

The designated Chapter Spokesperson must be familiar with ASHI POLICY and your Chapter's Policy.

All spokespersons require a professional appearance, and the chapter spokesperson must represent the Chapter, not their own business. The spokesperson should send press releases and reach out to the local media, including TV, video, print, and radio.

Chapter Marketing Must-Do List

At a bare minimum, your Chapter should do the following:

1. **Have a mobile-first (mobile-friendly) website.** Over 60% of all web searches are from mobile devices. If your site is not mobile-friendly, not only do the search engines punish you, but visitors will not have a pleasant experience.
2. **Have a Google My Business Page.** Typically, this may require you have a real street address you can use for verification purposes.
3. **Have a Chapter Facebook and Instagram Page.** Increase your Chapter's online visibility and easily manage both platforms through Facebook (Meta).
4. **Be an active presence in the community.**
5. **Get creative with the resources around you.**
6. **Alert ASHI HQ about meetings and upcoming events so they can publicize them on your Chapter's behalf.**
7. **Your Chapter should publicize ASHI HQ's events.**

Get on Social Media

There's no excuse: To effectively market your Chapter, you must be on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. At the very least, pick one platform and do it well. It's better to master one platform than to be on all platforms and update them poorly.

Promote your social media sites at all events and meetings. Have your members invite their friends to like and follow your pages.

Post regularly — find a schedule that works for you and stick to it. Share chapter news and events, maintenance tips, safety tips, and articles the public might find interesting.

Outsource your marketing. Hire someone to spend 5-10 hours a week or use a vendor if you can't dedicate the time. Alternatively, programs such as HootSuite, Adobe Express, and Constant Contact are available to schedule posts ahead of time at a minimal subscription fee.

Know your Market and How to Reach Them

- Home Buyers
- Homeowners
- Realtors

Know the demographic you serve and appeal to your audience by building relationships. Identify your target audiences and foster relationships with all of them.

Ideas for Marketing your Chapter

- Conduct presentations at realtor's offices weekly or monthly to educate them on why they should only be using ACIs.
- Join local realtor associations as an affiliate member and get on the affiliate board.
- Teach classes for your local realtor association.
- Sponsor a realtor event.
- Have an "Ask the ASHI Home Inspector" table at your local home improvement center.
- Attend the housing industry alliance meetings held in your area. If there isn't one, spearhead starting one. Housing Industry Alliance should include one member from every industry related to housing and real estate sales).
- Make sure your Chapter has a mobile-friendly website.
- Find a niche tool that doesn't currently exist but every home buyer or realtor needs and create it.

Think outside the box. Be strategic with the promotion of your Chapter. Personalize the message to ensure it has an impact:

- Get to know your local media, find out what kind of stories they like to cover, and send different photos and stories to various newspapers.
- Promoting the value of hiring ASHI Certified Inspectors, find facts relevant to them (Prepare a PowerPoint presentation on the importance.)
- Use language that everyone understands, and never assume anything — create messages for different audiences to reach them effectively.

Use your chapter members as your primary marketing tool. Never promote yourself. Always promote your Chapter and the members.

Dealing with the Media

ASHI continues to be featured in national magazines, newspapers, blog articles, TV, and Radio. You can connect with local reporters to reach your target audience. This guide will help you talk to local reporters to promote your Chapter and its members and convey important information about ASHI. Here's how to reel in an interview:

- **Pay attention** to real estate reporters in your area and follow the stories they cover.
- **Reach out** and contact the reporters, so they have you in mind when looking for an interview source.
- You can generally find reporters' contact information on their outlet's website. If you're having trouble communications@ashi.org at ASHI for help.

Interview Best Practices

- **Be prepared.** If the reporter remembers nothing else, what do you want it to be?
- Summarize **key points** for the reporter.
- Use consumer-friendly language and strong emphasis words like "This is very important."
- Keep the interview **short and concise**.
- **Use examples.** Personal examples are the most effective and memorable. Don't be shy to draw from your own firsthand experience on the job to illustrate a point.

Typical Interview Questions to Expect

Below are the questions often asked in many interviews in national media outlets by ASHI executive leadership.

1. Why are home inspections important?
2. What sets an ASHI inspector apart from other home inspectors?
3. What can homeowners/buyers/sellers expect from a home inspection?
4. Can you tell me more about ASHI?

Interview Tips

1. **THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO:** Select your primary message. Have no more than two (three at the most) main points you want to make.
2. **EQUALLY IMPORTANT:** Select examples that illustrate your messages. Use examples of real people in real-life situations that the audience will relate to (e.g., "I find faulty wiring in more than half of the homes I inspect...").
3. **EMPHASIZE YOUR MAIN POINTS:** Reporters and their audiences won't know what's important unless you tell them, "This is very important." "If there's one thing I think people should remember, it's..." The more often you make your point, the better the audience will remember it.
4. **Think: What are the questions likely to be asked?** Reporters will generally ask, "What is this all about?" They are looking for the story's WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, and HOW. To get an idea of what a reporter will ask, discuss your topic with a friend or neighbor who doesn't know much about the subject.
5. **Treat the interview like a living room conversation.** Be yourself, be personable, smile, and tell stories. Do all the things you would do when conversing with a friend.
6. **Remember, there is no such thing as "off the record."** Do not say anything you do not want to see in print, online, or hear on the air.
7. **With newspaper and magazine interviews, slow down and know when to be silent.** Many print reporters take notes by hand and appreciate your speaking slowly and deliberately. Complete your thought and wait until the reporter prompts you to speak again. *Note: Your Chapter should*

have a list of specific talking points that you can send (preferably on Chapter letterhead) to the magazine/newspaper ahead of the interview as prep.

8. **On television, keep eye contact with the speaker.** Forget about the camera and speak specifically to the person who asked you the question. If there are several of you on the show, look at the person talking.
9. **On the radio, speak into the microphone.** You must speak directly into the radio studio microphone rather than swinging your head to look at another person.
10. **Don't let your wardrobe overshadow your words.** Look in the mirror and ensure your outfit will not distract the audience from your message. For television, dress conservatively in plain (no prints) colors. Do not wear black, white, or an all-red outfit. If it is an in-studio interview, avoid green, as it can interfere with the green screen while filming.
11. **Monitor nonverbal signals.** Eyes looking up, down, and away look untrustworthy and less informed. Hands that fidget, such as playing with jewelry or clutching the arms of a chair, look nervous. If you are nodding your head to indicate, "I hear you," you are also telling the reporter and the TV audience, "I agree."

Social Media: Why It's Important

Social media has become necessary for people of all ages when they're making purchasing decisions or need recommendations. More than **81 percent of consumers today** are influenced by their friends' social media posts when making decisions, so you want to have a strong presence online.

You can use social media to **strengthen your member's and Chapter's reputation** as leaders in the home inspection industry and connect with potential new business contacts.

Social Media Tips

1. **Reply** to posts and always be professional. Aim for one level of professionalism above the posts you're replying to, as it signifies respect for your customers and potential customers viewing your page.
2. **Monitor** current conversations on other pages and comment when you can add value.
3. **Respond** to questions and mentions in a reasonable amount of time. Aim to reply to posts on your page within 24-48 hours.
4. Acknowledge and leverage **current news and events** when appropriate. Share news stories about home inspections, safety, or other important home information.
5. **Share content** and give credit when it's due. Follow and "friend" local real estate agents and professionals you work with and share their posts when appropriate. Build up a professional network.
6. Don't post anything **potentially offensive**. If something is questionable, it's better not to post it. You don't want to offend your next potential customer.

7. Don't be careless about **spelling and grammar**. People pay attention to this, which can affect their decisions to work with you.
8. **Do not criticize** other inspectors, companies, or groups. Remain professional and level-headed, even if someone is criticizing you.

More posts are not always better. Generally, we recommend not posting more than 7-10 posts per week. A good rule of thumb is to share posts that fit one of the following three descriptions:

- Funny or entertaining
- Educational or informative
- Surprising

The ASHI website and Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram channels are also great places to find shareable content. ASHI's social media channels feature Postcards from the Field, videos, infographics, relevant articles, etc., that you can share with your followers. You can also find articles of interest in ASHI's Newsroom (homeinspector.org/news).

ASHI Messaging

In any media interview that you do, ASHI members should convey at least one of these main messages:

- ASHI inspectors adhere to the strict ASHI Code of Ethics to ensure the conduct of professional inspections. ASHI requires members to adhere to the highest technical standards and provide the best in customer service.
- An ASHI inspector can provide homebuyers and sellers with important information about a home before completing a sale. A home inspection helps protect buyers' and sellers' investments.
- A home inspection can be a good "check-up" to ensure everything is working properly for homeowners who have lived in a home for several years. An ASHI inspector can help spot little issues before they require significant repairs.

How you communicate this is up to you, and put it in your own words, so it's genuine.

For example:

- For over 40 years, ASHI members have helped homeowners, buyers, and sellers make informed decisions about their homes.
- As an ASHI member, I adhere to a strict Code of Ethics and make sure that I'm always providing the best in customer service.
- I'm proud to help homebuyers and sellers make smart decisions about their investments. Safety is the most important thing to consider when buying and selling a home.

ASHI Background Information

About ASHI

- The ASHI Code of Ethics details the core guidelines of home inspection professionalism and home inspection ethics. Covering crucial issues such as conflicts of interest, good faith, and public perception, home inspection ethics are central pillars of the industry's professionalism.
- Only an ASHI inspector can provide you with a professional, personalized inspection that combines nearly 50 years of the highest technical standards, adherence to a strict Code of Ethics, and the very best in customer service. We call this "The ASHI Experience."
- No other professional society can match the credentials of an ASHI inspector. When you choose ASHI, you'll be working with a professional home inspector who has passed the most rigorous technical examinations in effect today.
- ASHI is North America's most respected professional association for home inspectors. Through ASHI's continued efforts, ASHI's Standard of Practice—covering all of a home's major systems—is now part of many pieces of state legislation.
- ASHI's website, homeinspector.org, is the definitive resource for inspectors, homeowners, real estate professionals, and the media for information, advice, and resources dedicated to home inspection. Here you'll find a wealth of shared ASHI home inspection knowledge at your disposal.

Conclusion

You can share background information on ASHI and your business if you receive media interest from your customizable news release. By speaking with the media and helping build the public's knowledge about home inspections, you play an essential part in keeping the public safe and educated about home inspections.

Need Help

If you have questions, please contact the ASHI Communications team at communications@ashi.org.