



## Better by Association

Innovation and Good Practice in Association  
Management

Nominations for the IofAM Best Practice Champions Initiative 2008

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## Leading by Example

All around the country, members of the association sector are setting standards of innovation and good practice in a wide range of activities from recruitment and governance to customer care and the development of new and creative approaches to revenue generation. The Institute asked its members and website visitors to nominate their own Best Practice Champions. Here are just a few examples of the ideas and achievements that we can all learn from - and possibly replicate or adapt to our own particular needs and circumstances.

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## Developing New Revenue Streams

**The Society for Endocrinology.** Every association possesses specialised knowledge and skills - valuable assets and potentially significant sources of opportunities. The Society chose to employ its considerable expertise in the fields of scientific publishing and the organisation of academic events to establish a trading subsidiary to provide the services to other organisations. The demand for these scarce technical abilities was such that the venture now generates an annual income in excess of £400,000, enabling the Society to make significantly more funds available to support endocrinology through the provision of grants and other charitable activities.

**The Institute of Travel Management.** Like many organisations in the sector, the ITM identified potential risks to its financial base, due to its annual revenues being derived from only three main sources: membership fees, an annual conference and advertising sales in the association's magazine. The response was a concerted two-year campaign to develop more diverse sources of income through the creation of new services which include a programme of one-day events, promoting its established research brand to generate new commissions, attracting Government funding for its CSR programme and increasing advertising income by expanding its publishing activities. As a result, the ITM's dependence on its original core services has fallen dramatically, even taking into account notable, recent increases in conference and membership income.

**The Institute Of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.** ICAEW's policy is to constantly seek alternative revenue streams in order to add value to its members. Activities have included the creation of a unique corporate finance qualification, generating hundreds of applications from major investment houses and extensive joint ventures with academic institutions such as the Oxford University Business School. Other initiatives have included a major upgrade of information services through website development, CPD events attracting more than 100,000 people annually and promoting the institute's *Accountancy* magazine to the point where circulation now exceeds 149,000. The most recently published figures show that these efforts contributed to a growth in the number of members - now exceeding 6,000 - and a financial surplus of almost £1 million at a time when initial projections had suggested the Institute would break even.

## Creating New Services

**The British Valve & Actuator Association.** BVAV sought to capitalise on its technical expertise by upgrading a long-standing quarterly newsletter, transforming an essentially internal information sheet into a high quality glossy magazine with a wide-ranging readership encompassing the industry's customer base as well as members and suppliers. By extending its coverage to include new product announcements, application stories, company profiles, training articles and up-to-date news, the publication grew from 4 to 40 pages and circulation increased from 300 to 10,000 by the third issue. Increased advertising sales have allowed the journal to become self-funding and its increased coverage has been identified as a major factor in new membership orders valued at some £250,000.

**Association of Interior Specialists.** The association has launched a range of new services in direct response to an extensive survey designed to aid recruitment and retention by identifying and delivering members' specific needs. Services now cover a wide area of commercial and professional subjects, including free helpline advice on technical, contractual and legal issues, a credit checking facility, discounted business insurance, a regular e-bulletin, best practice guides and training courses. Members also benefit from marketing opportunities through online links to their own websites, promotional articles in the association's magazine and newsletter, brand awareness campaigns to raise the profile of AIS membership and discounted Yellow Pages advertising.

**British Computer Society.** Another organisation that has restructured its services to maximise retention, BCS also based its new focus on a detailed survey of members' needs. The result has been a considerable expansion of benefits, including the development of career recognition and development tools to help members stand out from the crowd and improve their employment and earnings potential, an expanded knowledge base that reflects the cutting edge of IT industry information, a series of product and service discounts and an extensive programme of events and networking opportunities.

## Membership Development and Recruitment

**The British Valve & Actuator Association.** BVVA has successfully reversed a continuing industry-wide trend in declining membership by working to transform the organisation's ethos and practice from the status of a 'club' to a representative professional body offering valuable practical services and benefits. An array of new services has been launched in a wide area of education and training, technical guidance and promotional assistance, leading to a dramatic and rapid increase in membership - an unprecedented rise of over 60% in three years. The initiative has not only halted the negative impact of a declining manufacturing sector but also placed the association's finances in their strongest ever position and increased membership to its highest level in the BVAA's 70-year history.

**Association of UK Media Librarians.** The association has experienced a strong growth in membership in a field traditionally regarded as 'non-joiners,' through a concerted effort to identify and overcome objections to join. As a result, the industry perceives AML as an organisation that improves the professional standing of information workers by encouraging the exchange of knowledge and experience through a programme of publications, events and networking opportunities. Membership benefits now include regular meetings to disseminate information about key developments in information management, visits to specialist libraries and suppliers, preferential conference booking and reduced rates, a regular professional journal and access to a wide range of professional media contacts.

**Caravan Club.** Through a series of initiatives including a rebranding exercise, support for British Tourism Week and events to celebrate its centenary in 2007, the Caravan Club has operated a series of carefully planned media campaigns that have resulted in an all-time high membership of almost 360,000 households and one million individual caravanners. Its successful use of the media to raise its profile and draw attention to a comprehensive range of services and events now means that the club's members represent over half the UK's caravanning community.

**Direct Marketing Association (UK) Ltd.** The DMA has undertaken considerable work to encourage new members to join by focusing on the power of association to deliver tangible benefits. Particular attention has been given to the association's proven influence with Government and regulatory bodies in terms of consulting on legislation affecting the industry, as well as the provision of free legal and best-practice advice, training and networking opportunities and unique products to aid planning and development such as the industry's only census-based analysis. A key factor in this successful campaign has involved the persuasive use of quotes from leading industry figures, along with statistics demonstrating clear commercial benefits including the fact that 82% of clients look for DMA membership when selecting a new direct marketing agency.

**The Institution of Mechanical Engineers.** Another organisation with a history of effective membership campaigns, the institute has taken the practical approach of highlighting unique benefits to individuals and businesses - particularly opportunities for both initial and continuing professional development and the international recognition of personal professional competence conferred by membership. Its approach has promoted a wide-ranging programme of networking and technical information services that combine to deliver enhanced business opportunities through a culture of creativity, innovation and continuous improvement that leads to increased competitiveness.

## Research and Information

**BCSC (formerly British Council of Shopping Centres).** BCSC's recent work stands as a prime example of the valuable contribution made by the association sector as a whole in advancing knowledge and providing the essential tools to guide and inform future progress. BCSC's understanding of the retail property industry's responsibilities in terms of tackling the impact of climate change, the growth of Internet retailing, and regenerating communities offer valuable guidance to its members and stakeholders. A major achievement was the recent completion of a wide-ranging research programme under the title the *Future of Retail Property* to examine the dimensions of change over the next decade. Probably the most extensive appraisal of the future of the industry ever undertaken, the research comprises ten detailed reports that combine to inform retailers, developers, investors and public sector policy makers about how retail property trends are likely to influence a wide range of issues - from the conception and design of new projects to future directions in social, planning and transport policy and the industry's potential to influence the new green agenda.

**Airport Operators Association.** The trade association that represents the interests of 70 British airports and the principal consulting partner for Government and regulatory authorities, the AOA has long taken a proactive role in sharing expertise and developing common approaches across the full spectrum of airport issues, in particular aviation security, economic development and environmental sustainability. Its research and publication programme comprises a model for the sector's contribution to future developments. Recent work has helped to frame anti-terrorism laws. The association has published detailed reports on sustainable aviation as well as guidance designed to help airports comply with the demands of new legislation while ensuring continued high levels of passenger services.

## Effective Governance and Implementation

**Periodical Publishers Association.** The association has delivered a textbook example on how to address the ever-changing demands on corporate governance and management structures presented by the dynamic nature of today's working environment and the evolution of new challenges. PPA adopted a root and branch approach to the issue with a comprehensive overhaul at both membership and staff levels. This has led to the creation of a new membership structure based on a 30-strong board, individual 'pillar' councils for different media and 40 specialised councils, boards and committees. Changes on the staff side have created a Chief Executive and Deputy, along with eight department directors, supported by teams of specialist account directors and support personnel.

**Institution of Lighting Engineers.** The ILE provides another object lesson in the use of comprehensive organisational measures to maintain consistent, relevant services in the face of changing needs and expectations. Its services are delivered and monitored through a committee structure which oversees membership and education, promotions and technical subjects, strengthened and underpinned by a development programme that has designed and implemented detailed job specifications for every member of the board.

## Lobbying

**Business Services Association.** Working to promote the interests of the business services sector and its workers, BSA has demonstrated the value of a strong organisational voice by inspiring the establishment of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Business Services, which has undertaken official enquiries across a range of issues including the impact of CSR requirements on business services companies and barriers to cross-border trade in Europe. Its future programme includes planned studies into Hospital Acquired Infection and sustainable food procurement, as well as the first of a series of projects based around the London Olympics.

**Royal College of Radiologists.** The College has been responsible for successful campaigns to raise awareness and recognition in Government and among the general public of the part radiologists can play in cancer treatments. Its approach has included media campaigns and responses to developments in the field, along with award schemes to reward and publicise best practice.

## Education and Professionalism

**Association for College Management.** The association has developed a programme of long and short courses aimed at raising the professionalism of all aspects of college management. Its members' contribution to lifelong learning forms the basis for a leading role in the Learning and Skills sector, where it supports the interests, values and views of education and training managers. In fulfilling its commitment to education and professionalism, ACM promotes management practices characterised by vision, integrity, achievement, high expectations, teamwork, and good judgment in an environment where service is shaped by the needs of learners.

**Institute Of Directors.** The IOD is internationally recognised as a leading supplier of professional development courses for senior managers. Its commitment to training and development encompasses an extensive range of courses, conferences, seminars, development programmes and services specifically designed to help directors improve their personal and professional effectiveness. A comprehensive, well targeted approach is a defining feature of IOD's work, ranging from the provision of board development services tailored to particular needs, one-to-one executive coaching and administration of the established chartered director qualification.

**National Association of Goldsmiths.** The association aims to position itself as an industry standard at the forefront of jewellery trade education, operating a world-renowned educational programme of seminars, courses and qualifications for members from trainee to proprietor. Termed JET - 'Jewellery Education and Training' - the association's diploma courses cover topics from basic product and selling skills to management and valuation expertise. The NAG's ethos is based on the principle that the importance of education cannot be overestimated and that recognised trade qualifications lead to higher self esteem, improved customer relations and better business performance. It is currently augmenting its offer with the introduction of continuous professional development courses.

**UK Council for Psychotherapy.** UKCP works to safeguard practitioners and patients by encouraging the professional development of therapists. It brings together a wide range of organisations concerned with training and practice covering analytical psychology, behavioural and cognitive psychotherapy and a range of related treatments for different conditions and groups of patients including children. Members provide training within the NHS or as part of university-based courses based on standards developed by UKCP in each of the specialised disciplines which ensures consistently high quality.

**SectorGuard plc.** This private sector member of the British Security Industry Association has introduced a unique initiative within the security profession, designed to enhance organisational learning and operational effectiveness. The Anglo-American Exchange involves the exchange of security officers between the UK and USA in a series of annual visits that enable the sharing of best practice in professional methods, training and management.

## Marketing

**British Institute of Facilities Management.** BIFM has successfully operated campaigns using a variety of media to enhance the profile of the organisation with both individuals and businesses involved in facilities management. A key factor has been helping to position the profession as a vital strategic discipline worth up to £95 billion per annum that is attracting increasing attention from senior decision makers and the financial sector. These marketing efforts have been effective in promoting the institute as the natural home of facilities management professionals in the UK, leading to a situation where the association now provides information, education, training and networking services for over 12,000 members.

**NACRO - The Crime Reduction Charity.** Effective marketing is an essential element of NACRO's work, particularly in the field of anti-terrorism where its remit is to acquaint businesses with a variety of challenges, highlighting a range of solutions and risk reduction measures. The charity's success in communicating the message has allowed the organisation to implement a highly acclaimed training programme in crisis management to help prepare the business community to prepare for a variety of possible crises.

## Corporate Social Responsibility

**Federation of Master Builders.** The FMB has undertaken a series of campaigns to improve the reputation of builders across the UK, including initiatives focusing on diversity, environmental impact, health and safety and community engagement. Its external affairs department has operated recent campaigns to protect consumers from the risks posed by rogue traders and is currently developing plans to help meet national targets to reduce carbon emissions. This ongoing work is designed to enable builders to play a full and constructive role in protecting the environment. The FMB's newly launched 'Building a Greener Britain' campaign has commissioned original research to develop practical policy recommendations aimed at Government which will help householders to make their homes greener.

**Institute of Travel Management.** The ITM has created a strategy to reduce the environmental impact of its own work, including saving paper by recycling all office waste, issuing electronic conference packs, reducing travel requirements by holding webinars and video conferences and increasing the amount of home working. It has also launched 'Project ICARUS,' incorporating a practical toolkit designed to help and encourage travel buyers to reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions from their travel programmes by 60% by 2050. An accreditation programme has been established to recognise achievement in the field, along with a set of virtual awards to recognise innovative travel suppliers in key sectors. A number of major organisations publicly committed to the goals of ICARUS and to achieving accreditation, including Barclays, BBC, BP, Carillion, Defra, HMRC, Inmarsat, and PWC.

## Crisis Management

**National Farmers Union.** In a year when the UK's farmers have been faced with the combined effects of foot and mouth outbreaks, the arrival of bird flu and blue tongue - as well as disastrous floods and rising feed prices - the NFU has provided an essential contact point for many of its 60,000 members. As well as practical advice, information and support, the union has worked tirelessly to ensure that the farming community's concerns are at the forefront of Government policy. A key element of the group's role in helping to manage this national crisis has been the constant provision of media services and a point of contact offering accurate, reliable news for members of the public and veterinary surgeons seeking information and guidance.