

Sharing Expertise

In countries where library, information services, and archives are still relatively new or where the professions themselves are still young, an information service provided by the association to those in the field can be of immense value in recruiting and retaining members. Generally, resource constraints make it difficult to organize this from an independent office or as a formally established information service, but most associations can easily maintain a simple database to register expertise and link members seeking information with those able to provide it, utilizing the efficiency of email as well as more traditional communications methods.

Standards

Standards or guidelines help the profession define satisfactory levels of service and conduct. A code of conduct may be viewed in this context, as it serves as an instrument to manage the profession and recognize its status. It therefore provides guidance to individual members as to where their first responsibility lies, and assists employers to understand what their employees might be realistically expected to undertake, as professionals bound by a code of conduct and working in the field of library and information services.

Other types of standards documents address: range, size, and scope of collections to meet various users' needs; provision of library and information services via physical or electronic means; interlibrary lending; space requirements to house collections, services, staff; and staffing requirements, both in qualifications and minimum number. Standards development should incorporate benchmarking data where available and measures of current best practices. This approach motivates developing organizations to strive to replicate such practices, as well as encouraging those currently operating to the level of the guidelines to continuously improve.

Advocacy

Professional associations can be involved in several kinds of advocacy. They can play an important role in monitoring governments' future programs and also function in an advisory or regulatory role. Particularly where proposed legislation, new or changed, relates to libraries and information services such as freedom of information issues, associations can influence the course and direction of final decisions on the legislation, drawing widely on their members for advice and taking full advantage of democratic processes for citizen advocacy on legislative matters. Legislative and political action includes such activities as: monitoring government activity to anticipate legislative action that may affect the library and information profession; establishing ongoing and effective communication of the association's point of view to key legislators and civil servants through submissions of briefs and policy papers; and submitting testimony before legislative committees and

comparable bodies. The *IFLA RTMLA Expanding Advocacy in the Library Community* brochure has more information about this type of advocacy.

Professional associations should produce promotional material on the services that library, information and documentation services, and archives provide, the functions that they perform in their communities, and the social responsibilities that they undertake, with the aim of improving the 'public's awareness' of their significance and their potential use. Advocacy of this nature is important, particularly in difficult financial times, because it serves to raise the general profile of these services in the public's consciousness with beneficial consequences when negotiations have to be started to either improve, or at least maintain, standards of service.

Activities that contribute to improved public awareness of professional work range from relatively large events organized on a national scale such as national book weeks, information fairs and archives open days, to comparatively small, entirely local events such as writer-in-residence programs, special outreach services, or special displays. For these local events, the local press and media should be involved, and for events spread across the country, national press and broadcast media should be used.

Research

Research can be viewed as a service to association members when it facilitates the development of policies for the association or assists it to undertake programs of activities in support of policies that research shows to be necessary. The professional association will most often develop the research idea or concept into a viable project acceptable for funding, obtain the funds from another funding source, and engage the researcher(s). It will then have a continuing function to supervise the research activities, monitor the research funds, and ensure that a report of the results is submitted in accordance with the contract.

Other Services

There is a range of other services that professional associations may consider supplying that may seem quite peripheral to its primary concerns. These services range from reduced tariffs at hotels for meetings to discounts on a wide range of goods made available either from manufacturers or from wholesalers or retail suppliers. Associations sometimes negotiate discounts to services for members such as theatre seats, insurance (whether it be life, house contents and personal effects), car hire and other forms of travel and holidays. Typically, suppliers find that access to the association's members by exposure of the company name justifies the discounts. For the association, the secret is to get the best deal possible by negotiating with more than one potential provider.



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Library Associations and Institutions

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GUIDELINES FOR ASSOCIATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Management of Library Associations Section

<http://www.ifla.org/VII/s40/smla.htm>

Introduction

Library and information services associations supply a broad range of programs and services to both their personal and institutional members. While each association must customize its programs and services to match members' needs, there are some offerings that have become standard to almost every organization. Following are examples of the most commonly offered services for personal and institutional members.

Career/Placement Services

Promotion of the profession is an important role for associations, not only for the purpose of recruiting the best quality candidates to library and information studies programs, but also to enhance the image of the profession in the eyes of the public, government, and funding organizations. Associations can develop and distribute promotional material (brochures, Power Point presentations, videos) at career fairs, conventions, meetings, and graduate schools of library and information studies. They can also collaborate with graduate library schools in a number of ways and maintain a speakers bureau of members and/or staff who can speak on behalf of the profession at a variety of events.

Offering a job service through posting job ads for employers in the library, information and archive services areas of the market in association newsletters or websites is a great service for both employers and potential employees. Placement services offered at annual conferences or meetings are a logical extension of this service. Employers can be expected to pay a commission to the association for use of the service when they satisfactorily recruit staff through it. At the same time, members have the opportunity to register their availability, at no charge to them, thus augmenting the association's selection of personal benefits.

Education

The stage of development of the profession and the user services it provides will indicate the levels of education required. In some countries where the profession is still young, it may not be above diploma level or immediate post — secondary schooling. In most countries, professional work is recognized as requiring a university or similar institution — based degree or qualification. In such situations the professional association's role is limited, or in rare instances non-existent. However, it is recommended that, whichever came first — the educational program or the professional association — they should work co-operatively.

Where no academic body awarding a degree - level qualification exists, then it is an association's responsibility to move to encourage one into existence. If no professional qualifications of any sort exist, then the association should step in to fill the gap with a program that is less academic and more practical in its orientation. It should award a certificate at the end of the course and it should aim for, within the targets it sets itself, the very highest standards. Before the first candidates complete the course, the association should negotiate with government and other potential employers, the grades and

salaries that the students might expect to receive in their first jobs after leaving education.

Continuing Professional Development

Continuing professional development can embrace a range of activities including seminars, workshops, courses lasting one-day or longer, conferences, and linked learning packages. Linked learning packages consist of more than one event with a common theme. These may include different modes starting with a basic or foundation-day to be followed by satellite events, which can be full or half-day courses spread over a period of time. Professional development programs may also include credit - rated events. The changes in accreditation of units of study leading to formal qualifications create an opportunity for an association to provide modules linked to units organized by other institutions.

Programs should have not only the objective of providing a service for members but also aim to provide non-dues revenue to the association. Ideally, and especially during the first years of the association's development, experienced members of the profession will serve as instructors, contributing their time, skills and expertise free or for a low remuneration, keeping expenses low. However, fees for programs can still be set at a level that the market expects to pay for continuing education services, so that the association can generate a small profit to support additional continuing education opportunities. Discounts on professional development program fees are an attractive member benefit for both personal and institutional members.

Conferences

The annual conference is, in most associations, almost a statutorily required event in that it provides the opportunity to present to the membership the annual report of the previous year's work and the audited and approved accounts for the same period. Usually associated with these activities is the address of the President and possibly that person's inauguration and other ceremonies such as the honoring of respected members. The annual conference, as opposed to others held occasionally for other professional purposes, should not be charged to members at a rate that will discourage attendance. Often it is possible to have an exhibition or display of books, media, library equipment and furniture, information systems and products, etc. with the conference that will generate revenue by renting out stand space.

Studies of Salaries and Employment Conditions

These services are designed to assist members to obtain the correct remuneration for their levels of employment, and provide guidance on standards for the relevant conditions of employment such as working hours, amount of leave or holidays and benefits such as travel loans or a subsidy for housing or removal expenses. The information acquired through the delivery

of this service can be developed into an advisory pamphlet, or even a more comprehensive publication, which can be sold to support the costs incurred in offering the service.

In some countries, the association may approximate the functions that trade unions normally undertake and influence negotiating situations with employers. In other countries, associations may decide that this is not an appropriate function or be forbidden to do this by law.

Publications

Newsletters and journals are viewed both as a personal service as well as essential tools for the association to maintain lines of communication between the membership and the headquarters office. Valuable advice on starting a basic newsletter is provided in an informative and easily read guideline published by the *IFLA Round Table for Editors of Library Journals*. It provides an overview of the essential contents for a newsletter such as the official and statutorily required information, the need for a 'people' column for members to learn of information about colleagues and a place for professional information on such matters as technical developments. There should be a letters column. The *Round Table for Editors of Library Journals* guideline stresses the need to start small and allow the newsletter to expand as interest and financial support increase.

A scholarly journal might be considered once enough experience has been accumulated and when enough writers of quality have been identified to support such a publication. But before embarking on such a venture the association should determine that there is a market for it and that adequate resources for editorial and production functions as well as subscription administration are available in the association. Alternatively, a journal can be provided through a franchise to a professional publisher who is likely to ensure the journal's regular and timely publication.

The need for professional text books, handbooks, reference materials, instructional guides, states of the art commentaries, reports of research and translations and local language editions of foreign books has long been recognized. An association is likely to have in its membership professionals with the knowledge, expertise and ability to write and translate the texts. Associations that undertake a publishing program will need to have staff or resources available that have the expertise in publishing activities such as editorial functions, pricing policies, physical production of the product, and negotiating skills with material suppliers.

In areas where telecommunications services are available and affordable, associations are increasingly taking advantage of electronic communications tools such as websites and email discussion lists to distribute news, information, and publications to their members. Some publications can also be sold via subscription to nonmembers and ad space sold to vendors to generate additional revenue.