

The Learning Curve of a Professional Court Interpreters Association



NAJIT: National Assn of Judiciary
Interpreters & Translators (USA)

Volunteer Organizations in US

- 2004= 86,054 trade & profi assoc
- 1,010,365 philanthropic or charitable orgs
- Public benefit = tax exempt status
- Public interest vs. private interest
- Fill policy, regulatory gaps

There is a tension btwn the public interest and private interest of an org- the need to strengthen the org from within, membership concerns, financial management, etc Money is a key resource, how do you keep costs low and profile high

Value of associations

- knowledge transfer (free flow of info)
- advocacy (righteous interests pursued w unified voice)
- set standards
- provide community
- teach people new things: career building, career fitness

The Americans make associations to give entertainments, to found seminaries, to build inns, to construct churches, to diffuse books, to send missionaries to the antipodes; in this manner they found hospitals, prisons, and schools. If “Wherever it is proposed to inculcate some truth or to foster some feeling by the encouragement of a great example, they form a society. Wherever at the head of some new undertaking you see the government in France, or a man of rank in England, in the United States you will be sure to find an association.”
De Tocqueville

Advocacy: represent interests of assn before govt bodies, court admin

Delivering performance and making an impact over time- serving membership needs

Type of Organization

- Membership Model: inclusive or exclusive?
- Governance Model: CEO or board?
- Administration: volunteer or paid?
- Goals vs. skill sets

Exclusive membership was rejected when credentialing was not widely available

Restrictions will limit growth

NAJIT: Growth Stages

- Stage I
Personality-driven
- Stage II
Name change, prof'l admin, interpreter
credentialing program, tax status
- Stage III
Formalized governance, greater media
visibility, committees, advocacy, position
papers, alliances

Stage I : Members are attracted to org goals, sense of belonging

Seat-of-the-pants administration based on personal
loyalty

Achievements: code of ethics, annual meetings, members'
directory, monograph series, occasional workshops, governance
unclear

Assn. answers a need, gives an identity w/in hierarchical structure of courts

Competition with other orgs for name
recognition

Volunteers == better if they have full time jobs!

Leadership vacuum- leaders have to see qualities in others to provide for
future

Achievements

- Formalized procedure for board meetings
- Prof'l management
- Website, listserv
- Proteus
- NAJIT credential
- Position Papers
- Advocacy
- Committees
- OTS workshops
- Member benefits: liability, disability insurance
- Outreach to other entities

Procedure= Roberts Rules, no discussion of motives, Round Robin method
Directors' handbook

Advocacy for standards, for identity as legal interps, in legal and quasi-legal settings

Create visibility for org- outreach with judgements kaw enforcement, govt agencies, commy groups

Challenges

- Burn out
- Indifference
- No follow-through
- Personality conflicts, clique perception
- Ideas but no money
- Leadership vacuum

Time poverty: a full time job to run an org.

Leader as stabilizer in chaos, creating consensus is a talent

Organizational

Wish List

- Membership recruitment, retention
- Training at advanced levels (use of distance learning)
- Testing in all languages
- Ethics– enforcement?
- Training for board members
- More involvement by more members
- Outreach to schools

Power in numbers, flattening membership. AOs don't release contact data for interps, don't want interps to be org

Attract more cert interps

Use of social media, video

Bd survey– all wanted training, bd service sometimes frustrating or contentious

Board training needed

Media training needed

Negotiation training needed

Profile of Membership

- 1180 members:
 - 78% active, others associate
 - 50% certified interps
 - 56% translators

EXPENSES: \$185,000 per yr.

NAJIT MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

Active **78%**921 administrator2 Associate **8%**98 Comp2
Corporate **4%**47 Corporate Sponsor10 Honorary2 Life5
Organizational **3%** 31 Special Organizational2
Student **5%**58 Subscriber2 TOTAL: **1180**

Remarkable Associations

- Commitment to purpose
- Mission defined into areas of need
- Data-driven strategies
- Continuous flow of info
- Inspirational leadership
- Adaptability
- Alliances

Develop services to meet the needs

training to lead to credentialing

AIM: consistent prof performance

What do we know and what are we willing to do about it?

Conversation on every level

Alliances- in govt, ct admin, univ

Harnessing new technology – importance of innovation, social media

Digital immigrants vs. digital natives (120 million)