



EASTERN ACADEMY
of MANAGEMENT

Path towards Self-reliance: Rebuilding an Academic Professional Organization through Self-Service Capabilities

Mousumi Bhattacharya, PhD

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Scholarly Societies/ Academic Associations

“....independent scholarly societies are vital to the academic ecosystem, and are the only community organizations whose sole reason for existence is to provide for the scholars in their academic community. .”

- Harrington (2019)

What is an Academic Association?

- An organization that exists to promote an academic discipline, profession, or a group of related disciplines
- Most academic associations are non-profit organizations, and many are professional associations
- A professional association usually seeks to further a particular profession, the interests of individuals and organizations engaged in that profession, and the public interest

Challenges for Small Enterprises

“SMEs¹ usually have severe resource limitations. Internally, they face shortages of information, capital, management time, and experience. Externally, they face constraints that arise from their vulnerability to environmental changes.”

- Li & Qian (2007)

Challenges for Academic Associations

How can Academic Associations Ensure

Value

- Demonstrate the value of membership and of the services they offer to members?
- What metrics can they develop to help monitor this?

Viability

- Help board members understand the tension between the association's goal of disseminating knowledge and the need to ensure the future viability of the society
- Establish/maintain a strong brand vis-à-vis peer associations

Resource limitations

Volunteer Managed

- Depends on personal motivation
- In recent years motivation is declining among academics
- Limited organizational expertise
- Time constraint of volunteers, no time release by employers

Financial Constraints

- Limited organization budget, cash flow
- Reliance on single source of revenue-generation – academic conferences
- Vendors are not attracted due to small size

Uncertainty

Members

- High turnover
- Numbers depend on conference participation
- Decreasing conference/travel budget for faculty

Others

- Declining sponsorship by academic institutions
- Journal cost increase
- Declining of lack of journal revenue
- Open access journals

Self Reliance

- Self-reliant firms do business mainly through internalization: i.e. all activities are brought under internal stakeholders such as employees, managers, top executives

Why Academic Associations need to be Self Reliant?

- Retain knowledge
- Build capabilities
- Manage costs

Path towards Self-Reliance

~~Full-service
Outsourced~~

Self-service
Capability development

Technology

Conference

Relationship

Website

Publications

Communication

Financial

Conference Management

Academic

- Call for paper
 - Short form (save the date)
 - Long form (with tracks)
- Track management
 - Track Chairs (senior faculty)
 - Co-chairs (junior faculty mentoring)
 - Timeline
 - Follow up
- Paper submission
 - Blind review
 - Acceptance ratio
- Program creation
 - Ensure conference registration
 - Conflicts
 - Rule of three

Event

- Conference web page
 - All relevant information
 - Registration, travel, accommodation links
- Registration
 - Categories
 - Eligibility check
 - Duplication check
 - Refunds
- Onsite event
 - Room set up
 - Food and beverage budget
- Socialization and communication
 - Outreach to attendees
 - Local non-conference events

Special challenges for virtual or hybrid conference

Relationship Management

Members

- Long time
 - Fellows (high engagement)
 - Conference attendees for 3+ years (engage more)
- New
 - Conference attendee for 2 years (retain)
 - Only one conference (attract)
- Prospective
 - Find
 - Reach out, repetitive
- Lapsed
 - Remind
 - Retain as contacts
 - Design low stake activities

Others

- Academic Institutions
 - Liaison management
 - Doctoral programs
- Sponsors
 - Repeat sponsorship
 - New sponsorship
 - Individual donation
 - Support program elements (awards, journal)
- Vendors
 - Repeat vendors
 - New vendors
- Contact management
 - Free events
 - Career info (job postings, workshops)

Website Management

Public Information

- **General**
 - Mission, activities, brand building
 - Membership links
 - Newsletters
 - Events, pictures
 - Sponsor recognition
- **Governance**
 - Bye Laws
 - People in governance, current/past
- **Conference Information**
 - Past, upcoming
 - Sponsorship page
 - Proceedings, program booklets
- **Journal Information**

Restricted

- **Members**
 - Minutes of business meeting, current/past
 - Members-only resources
- **Board of Governors**
 - Repository of documents such as
 - Standard Operating Procedures and timelines
 - Reports by individual Directors
 - Minutes of Board meetings
 - Contracts with Hotels and Vendors
- **Committee members**
 - Shared documents
- **Conference participants**
 - Conference-only resources

Publications and Communication Management

Publications

- Journal
 - Publisher contract
 - Ranking, indexing
 - Readership
 - Comparison with peer group
 - Author development
- Conference proceedings
 - Formatting and publishing
 - ISBN number, indexing
 - Easy retrieval
 - Archived
- Newsletter
 - Content management
 - Formatting and publishing
 - Archived
- Others
 - White papers
 - Video recordings

Communication

- Members only
- All Contacts
- Board of Governors
- Committee members
- Conference participants
- Other events participants
- Sponsors
- Vendors
- Intuitional liaisons
- Peer organizations

Financial Management

Bank Accounts

- Domestic
- International
- Restricted
- Interest earning

Credit card processor

- Processing Fee
- System Integration
- Acceptability

Accounting and Reporting

- QuickBooks
- Accountant

Technology

- Comparative analysis
- Cost containment

Tax

- Tax returns
- Tax-free transactions
- Archival management

Legal

- Forms
- Incorporation
- Transparency
- Receipt management

Insurance

- Director's liability
- Association insurance
- Event insurance

Foreign transactions

- Exchange rate
- Transaction fees
- Cost estimation

Technology Management

- Multiple software platforms
 - Conference submission and review system
 - Event management system
 - Website management system
 - Membership management system
 - Financial systems - multiple
- Learning curve
- Continuity
- Connectivity



Eastern Academy of Management (EAM): A Case Study

- Well established – 60 years
- Regional affiliate of a large premier academy association
 - Academy of Management (AOM)
- International in scope
- Small size
 - Membership < 200
 - Contacts < 1,500
- Most activities outsourced to consultants for over 15 years
- Severe budget short falls led to self-reliance in 2019

EAM: A Case Study

- Directors and executive officers picked up the work in 2019-20
- Specific designations were given to directors to represent their areas of work
- Number of directors were expanded to accommodate the additional work
- Several do-it-yourself software were purchased
 - Automated many process components
 - Provided many templates for reduction of time needed
- Effective team building by leadership, especially aided by COVID era insecurities

Addendum in 2022

- Successfully survived effect of COVID travel restrictions
 - Switched to virtual domestic conference in one month's notice in May-June 2020
 - Continued with virtual domestic conference in 2021, deferred international conference by a year
 - Held in-person domestic and international conference in 2022
- Transitioned to open access journal with increase in publisher fees
- Partners with another regional affiliate of AOM for sponsorship of journal
- Financially stable with healthy bank balance growth of 90k
- Preparing to celebrate Diamond Jubilee year with new initiatives