

# **AN ANALYSIS OF KEY SERVICES PROVIDED BY EVENT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS**

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# **AN ANALYSIS OF KEY SERVICES PROVIDED BY EVENT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS**

## **ABSTRACT**

As the event management industry grows and consolidates worldwide, event management associations play an increasingly significant role in professional support to the industry and its managers. Event management associations provide newcomers and existing practitioners with the necessary skills to ensure the continued growth and success of event management professionals. This paper reviews the literature on professional associations and specifically explores the services that event management associations offer to members. While there is a growing interest in the concept of services, especially in the tourism and leisure industries, there are no prior studies that investigate the services that event management associations offer.

The study concludes that event management associations have a strong record in offering a variety of professional services to members as part of their operational framework. The services offered by these associations have been ascertained by examining the significant themes that emerge from an analysis of their services. The key services that were identified were in the educational, communication, business, community, advocacy and buying power categories.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Event management has emerged over the past decade as a vibrant sector of the tourism and leisure industries. The number, diversity and popularity of events has also grown throughout this period. As the number of events increase, there is a growing realization about the continuing need to develop event management professionals who are able to create, organise and manage events (Getz, 1997). Although many events are successfully crewed by volunteers, increasing competition to secure major events is giving greater impetus for the need to create more fully professionalised events. Volunteers continue to play a significant role in the management and organisation of events; nevertheless, the industry is increasingly relying on well educated, experienced and professional event managers. Consequently, professional associations that focus on the advancement of the diverse facets of event management may have an increasingly significant role to play. Following Getz's (1997) proposition that events must be managed as one would a successful business, many event management associations worldwide are implementing strategic planning processes to determine long term goals and objectives. This also assists professional associations in determining what services they should offer their members to improve the membership appeal of their organisation.

## **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### **Professional Associations**

The literature that has been published on professional associations is scant, scattered among a variety of disciplines and consequently has little breadth (Rodenhauser, 1999:417). Promoting the industry, organising training, offering specialist advice and information, researching and publishing, and providing networking opportunities for members are primary activities of many associations (Crosetto & Salah, 1997; Kloss, 1999). Kloss (1999:71) for example, notes that:

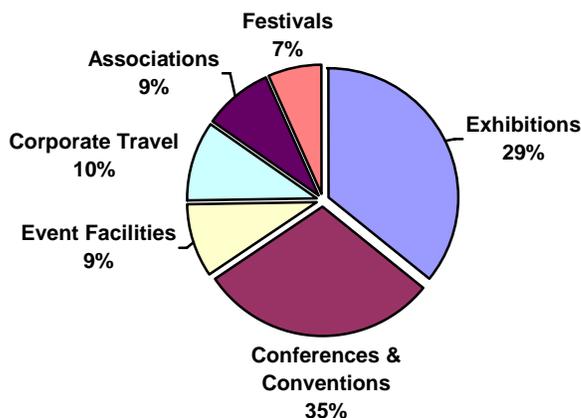
the professional association exists to advance the standing of the members of the occupation or profession by setting educational and other standards governing the profession, advocating for public and private policies, aiding members in their professional development, and advancing professional practice through research and information dissemination

Specific issues that have been investigated in relation to professional associations have dealt with long term strategic planning (Ayal, 1986; Kloss, 1999), association lifecycles and administrative dynamics (Rodenhauser, 1999), the role of politicization and advocacy (Imber & Horowitz, 1999), the need for profiling and promotion (Crosetto & Salah, 1997; Montgomery & Rutherford, 1994), and relationship marketing and membership behaviour (Frank, 1999; Gruen, Summers & Acito, 2000). These have been in relation to professional associations in a number of diverse industries such as real estate (Ayal, 1986), psychotherapy (Rodenhauser, 1999), sociology (Imber & Horowitz, 1999), environmental health (Frank, 1999) and life underwriters (Gruen, Summers & Acito, 2000). As yet, there has been limited academic research (Arcodia & Reid, 2002a; 2002b) that focuses on event management associations, nor specifically on the services that they offer.

## METHODOLOGY

For the purposes of this study an event management association was defined as one that responds to one of the sectors of the event industry such as festivals, exhibitions, conferences and trade shows. Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the categories of event management associations, however it is acknowledged that these associations will overlap in some of the categories. This study identified 151 professional associations worldwide involved with event management. While this list may not be exhaustive, it provides a very strong sample of event management associations. The categories in Figure 1 are self-explanatory apart from the 'associations' grouping, which is indicative of their membership of broader associations. The associations were identified by conducting searches via the Internet, in the academic literature, and from trade journals and personal contacts. Specific associations were contacted by letter or email to inform them of the study and to seek their involvement.

**Figure 1** Breakdown of Event Management Associations by Category



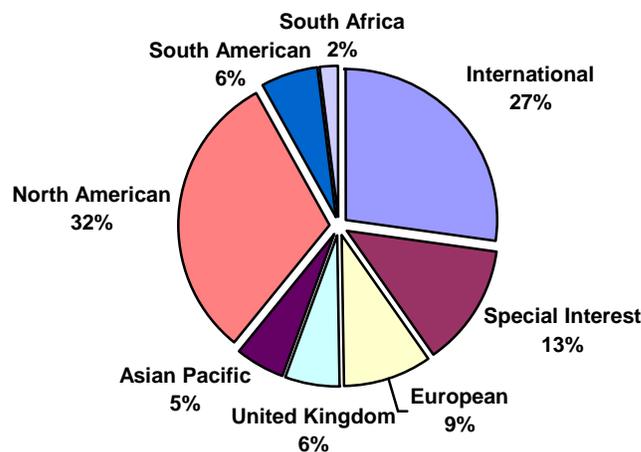
Content analysis was used in this study because it is a multi-purpose method that is useful for investigating a wide range of issues in which the content of communication serves as a basis of inference (Weber, 1985). It is an appropriate methodology to achieve authenticity and validity in

the type of qualitative data this study gathered. It did not use nor adapt an existing framework for analysis of services provided. That is, the categories of meaning emerged by identifying recurring themes in the data rather than being imposed by an existing typology from the literature or a preconceived framework developed specifically for the research.

Sixty-two percent of the associations (94) responded to requests for information. Although approximately 10% (14) of associations were not able to be contacted for various reasons, the services procured provided a very strong representative sample.

The associations were classified according to location (see figure 2). The categories included international, regional and special interest associations but there were numerous sub-categories. Many of the international associations for example, have chapters worldwide, however only the head association was included to minimise repetition. Regional associations were divided according to continents that resulted in the following six sub-categories: North American, European, United Kingdom, Asian Pacific, South American and South African. Special interest associations were included as there was a number in the sample that could not be easily accommodated within the first two categories, yet they were deemed significant to the study because they dealt with event management issues within the context of a specific industry.

**Figure 2 Regional Distribution of Event Management Associations**



### **Methodological Limitations**

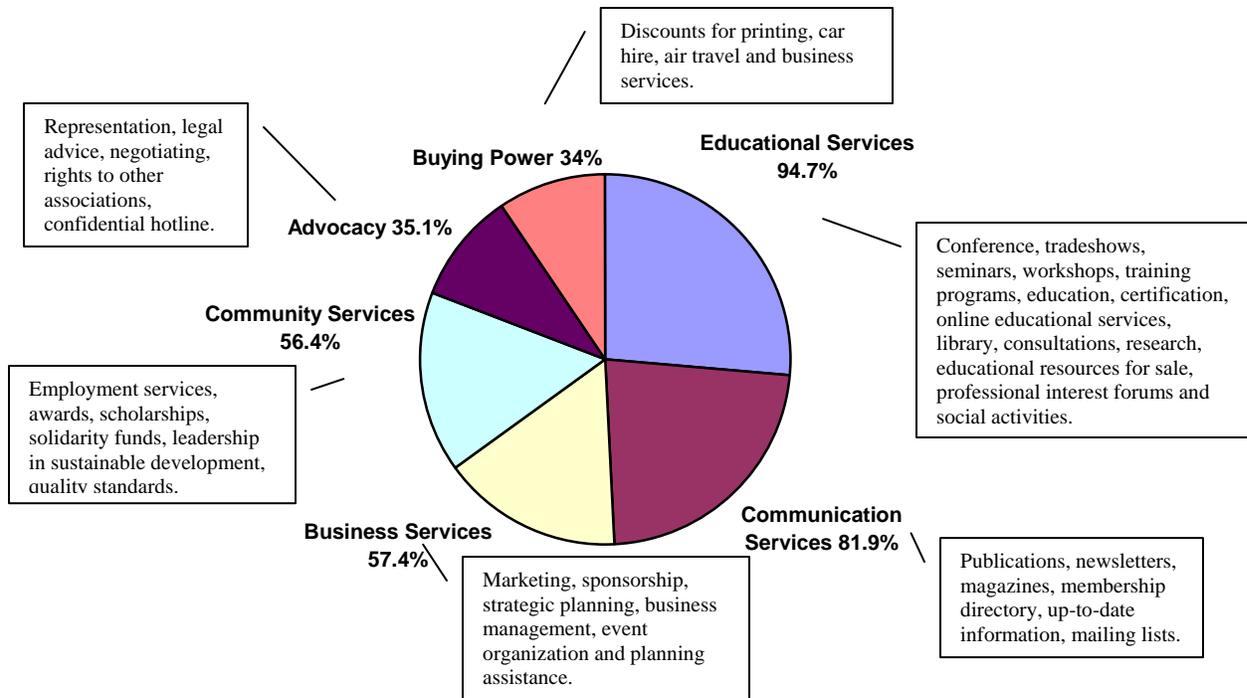
A worldwide study presents some specific challenges and reference needs to be made to at least two caveats. There are two potential limitations to this study. Firstly, is the fact that there is no worldwide registry of event management associations, consequently, the exact number of associations involved with the event management industry worldwide is unknown. Nevertheless, after conducting an extensive search, the 151 that were included in the study is more than likely a very strong sample population. Secondly, in addition to verifying the number of event management associations operating worldwide, there is an issue of language and cultural orientation. Associations around the world are in existence due to the need within their regions for support in the event management industry, so their primary language may be one other than English. While the working language of all associations is clearly not English, the internationalisation of English in recent years, together with the fact that many associations draw membership from more than one country, has served to minimise this problem. Nevertheless,

33% of the associations are based in North America and this provides for some cultural bias which cannot be avoided in this study.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The six most commonly occurring categories of the services offered were educational services, communication services, business services, community services, advocacy services and buying power improvements (see figure 3).

**Figure 3 Services Offered by Event Management Associations**



### Educational Services

The provision of education was a key service offered by event management associations with 94.7% (89) providing some form of educational services and products. This category consisted of a wide array of themes including annual conferences, tradeshows, seminars, workshops, training programs, education and certification, online educational services, research, consultation, library facilities and access, publications for sale, regular meetings and the production and delivery of social programs. These themes were grouped together either due to their direct educational objectives, ie. through training and certification, or indirectly through the networking of members at social occasions. A majority of the associations 62.8% (59) organised and produced an annual educational conference and/or a tradeshow. This provides members with the opportunity to network, learn about the latest issues affecting their profession and to experience some of the new products that are in the marketplace. The British Association of Conference Destinations (2000:1) states that:

'CONFER' is an annual exhibition held in Kensington Town Hall, which gives conference organisers a unique opportunity to obtain the latest information on conference, meeting, exhibition and incentive travel facilities in the top conference destinations across the British Isles...

The Convention Industry Council (2001) further supports the educational opportunity that the conference presents by stating that by "...producing the CIC Forum, an educational seminar where industry professionals exchange ideas and information and learn about important issues affecting the business community...". The knowledge that can be gleaned from networking and conversation with others at these conferences and tradeshow is another priority for many of the participants. Furthermore, the Canadian Society of Association Executives noted that the:

National Conference – [was] your best opportunity to network with fellow association executives to exchange ideas and conduct business, both informally and through organized sessions...

Seminars and workshops was another theme important to 45.7% (43) of event management associations. These bring members and industry professionals together to share ideas and research in a smaller setting than at the annual conferences. The International Convention and Congress Association (2001) notes that:

To assure ongoing professionalism, ICCA members are regularly invited to enter into debate about issues which effect the whole industry. This also provides the opportunity for ICCA members to get together and develop new professional links. Furthermore it is ICCA policy to invite clients, as such providing a business forum for the exchange of ideas. So members on the one hand are kept informed about the changing demands from the market. And clients, on the other, are given fresh insight into the possibilities available within the meeting industry itself.

Furthermore, the World Council for Venue Management notes that these seminars and workshops were essential to support the objectives its association had outlined in the strategic management process (Arcodia & Reid, 2001). They stated that the:

WCVM shall perform the following functions in order to achieve the objectives stated in the preceding article: ...2. Provide a forum for the exchange of information, papers, articles and research related to the practice of public assembly facility management...

The direct relevance of training programs, education and certification was another factor of importance to 63.8% (60) of event management associations. Education and certification are seen as ways in which the associations can assist the industry in professionalising and improving the quality of service. Education is also a way of supporting the professional development of members in their current positions or to enhance their skills for future positions within the industry. This is noted by the Society of Government Meeting Planners association (2001) which states that they provide:

Education in basic and advanced areas of meeting planning - Information on the latest techniques and services available to insure successful meetings... As the only professional meetings industry association specializing in the government market, SGMP offers its members opportunities for professional development

through: Expanding the knowledge and abilities of planners and suppliers by conducting formal education programs...

The provision of these training and education programs is in no way limited to the traditional teaching delivery methods. The Canadian Society of Association Executives (2001) includes a variety of methods from face to face contact through workshops, to online distance education programs at different levels. It states that:

CSAE's professional development programs provide additional worth to its members. *Educational Sessions* – Various symposia and workshops covering topics relevant to association management, including the building of non-dues revenues, sure-fire strategies for increasing membership, and how to successfully sell sponsorship. *Online Education Program* – The Association Management Education (AME) distance learning program addresses the key competencies of association management via the Internet. *Certification* – CSAE is the professional organization in Canada responsible for association management certification. Completion of the AME program leads to your CAE (Certified Association Executive) designation.

This allows flexibility for members who have a professional practice to operate as well as family commitments. The use of the Internet has opened up a wide range of facilities for members of associations. Linking members' professional pages to an association's website ensures that members are able to be accessed more efficiently than by finding a certain type of event management company or individual through traditional means. By including online directories on association's websites this can be achieved. The International Association of Conference Interpreters (2001) notes that the:

Association publishes a yearly directory of members which is also based online with sophisticated query possibilities being offered as a new service to AIIC consultant interpreters and members.

The use of chatrooms and online learning programs further enhances the Internet as an educational tool for event management associations. Chatrooms enable members to discuss issues that are affecting them or their businesses with colleagues who may be able to offer suggestions or advice. The Internet is a valuable research tool as it offers very quick access to such information.

Research and consultation is another service that 46.8% (44) of event management associations offer. This includes the conducting of research for clients or members through specialised consultancy projects and survey instruments or the provision of industry wide related research statistics. The Trade Show Exhibitors Association (2001) states that it provides members with access to the "TSEA's Annual Salary Survey to help benchmark salary based on industry averages, TSEA's Annual Budget Guide with industry averages, saving tips and planning worksheets...". The World Council of Venue Management (2001) furthers this by stating that the:

WCVM shall perform the following functions in order to achieve the objectives stated in the preceding article: 1. Gather and disseminate information on effective ways to operate and manage public assembly facilities...

This research assists members in understanding issues and helps them to create strategies to improve their businesses by investigating what does work and avoiding what does not. Research groups are another way in which members can work collaboratively on projects and contribute to the improving of the event management industry. The International Convention and Congress Association (2001) acknowledges this through the provision of the ICCA Database:

Access to ICCA DATA: The ICCA DATABASE which offers you high level marketing information, such as: Monthly published fact sheets (Bulletins) with detailed information on international meetings (700 per year). This information is also available on a CD-ROM. International Congress and Convention Researchers Meeting: a platform, endorsed by ICCA, where congress researchers discuss and exchange daily experiences to improve general knowledge on how to survey the international meetings market most effectively.

Access to an association owned and managed library collection and access to otherwise confidential publications is another service that 25.5% (24) of event management associations provide to their members. The Association of German Trade Fair Industry (2001), for example, states that it provides "...access to extensive literature on the theme of trade fair figures, collects and publishes extensive data on over 5,000 events, up-to-date information on the website." This further supports the fact that information access in all different forms, either hardcopy versions or electronic, are important sources to members. The International Festivals and Events Association (2001) further supports the access of information by providing "...the IFEA library [which] provides valuable resources, books and award-winning videos and sales kits for members."

A small number of event management associations (13.8%,13) offered professional interest forums or groups to support specific research or organisational agendas. The Exhibition and Events Association of Australia (2001) states that:

The EEAA has a number of working committees concentrating on special areas of interest to members. These committees have specific functions including market research/statistics, public relations, venue liaison, training and education, fundraising and membership recruitment.

This encourages members with specialisations in these areas to contribute to the further advancement of the association and understanding of other members whose strengths may lie elsewhere.

A final educational service that was significant to 27.6% (26) of event management associations was the holding of regular meetings and social occasions. Not only does this facilitate effective communication, understanding and cooperation among members and suppliers, but fosters the association's commitment to its members and ensures that they are working for and on behalf of the members' interests.

### **Communication Services**

The provision of communication services is evident in 81.9% (77) of event management associations. Event associations provide publications, newsletters, magazines, membership directories, press releases, referrals and mailing lists. Communication is an important component of the services that the associations provide as it ensures that members receive timely information on issues and news. It also assists members in feeling a part of the association, which is essential

for guaranteeing membership numbers and cash flow. The Federacion Espanola de Organizadores Profesionales (2001) states that it:

Publishes the Directory as a simple and useful tool for whoever is interested in contacting the member companies pertaining to any of the autonomic Association or the Federation itself.

The Wedding and Special Events Association additionally distribute these membership directories to prospective clients with business referrals and information so that clients can choose from a range of the association members (2001). As noted previously, these directories also in some cases publish electronically on the Internet through the association's website. Newsletters form another way for event management association to publish relevant information to members. Fifty percent (47) of event management associations publish and distribute newsletters to members, potential members and prospective clients. The Exhibitor Appointed Contractor Association (2001) notes that it publishes:

Showfloor Buzz: You'll stay informed with a weekly emailed newsletter to keep track of the latest breaking showfloor news and industry trends that are important to your business. Exhibit City News: the monthly trade show publication that focuses on showfloor activities.

The Society of Corporate Meeting Planners (2001) further supports the use of newsletters by stating that "Newsletters [are] a great way to stay in touch with your fellow members..." In addition, the Society publishes the "'SCMP Connects', a monthly electronic update on the activities within the Society and the industry in general..."

Event management associations support the dissemination of information further by publishing magazines 32.9% (31). The Western Fairs Association (2001) publishes the 'Fair Dealer' magazine quarterly and this is "filled with the latest information concerning the fair industry..." The Health Care Exhibitions Association (2001) states that it:

Publishes a number of books, reference guides and directories to effective and efficient health care industry meetings, conducts research and publishes Insight Magazine and Association Alert Newsletter.

Another facet of information provision that 29.7% (28) of event management associations provide are press releases with up-to-date information. This ensures that members are provided with the latest information on issues and topics that affect them and allows members to stay abreast with new techniques or products. This is distributed primarily through weekly email or facsimile to make certain that the news is delivered in a timely manner and is not 'old news' by the time traditional mailouts would arrive. The National Business Travel Association (2001) notes that it provides "...direct Line for breaking news and critical issues." Additionally, many associations provide information on their members and the industry to interested people. The Association of Destination Management Executives (2001) states:

We supply information to corporate and association meeting professionals regarding member DMCs in their locale or a locale in which they will be managing meetings, events, incentive programs, etc.

Another service that 17% (16) of associations provide to members is the compilation and distribution of mailing lists. This is comprised of companies and individuals that have utilized

conference and convention facilities and expertise. The British Association of Conference Delegates (2001) noted this by stating that it provides "... the Conference Buyers Database is available to all involved in conference venue and destination marketing who wish to target the quality conference buyer." These communication services are important tools that the associations utilize in keeping members up-to-date with current issues, research and social activities. It also provides members with specific outcomes from their membership fees and shows that the association is working for them.

## **Business Services**

Business Services were a key strategic initiative for 57.4% (54) of event management associations. Marketing and publicity, brochures, sponsorship and advertising, strategic and budget planning, event organisation and planning assistance are represented in this category. The marketing, publicity and specialist brochures assist in educating the public of the importance and usefulness of the event management industry and encourage their participation. Of the event management associations analysed, 29.7% (28) acknowledged this as an important service. The Association of British Professional Conference Organisers (2001) states that it provides "event marketing, including the design of conference programmes and promotional materials, PR and media co-ordination..."

Advertising was an important variable with 14.8% (14) of event management associations providing advertising or advertising opportunities. The Bridal Show Producers International (2001) association prepares "... cooperative regional and national advertising programs..." for their members. This helps to reduce costs for members and also broaden the advertising spread to further than individual members' advertising budgets would otherwise allow. The Society of Corporate Meeting Planners (2001) additionally acknowledges that members have the opportunity to advertise in both print and electronic mediums. The rapidity of the Internet as a tool in communication and learning has been noted earlier; for limited costs in the establishment and continued maintenance of Internet advertising, this is an attractive alternative to conventional print advertising campaigns.

Event organisation and planning assistance was provided by 11.7% (11) of event management associations. One such approach has been outlined by the Association of British Professional Conference Organisers (2001) states that it can provide "... an administrative secretariat, handling delegate registrations, recruitment and briefing of conference staff..." Many associations offer full suites of organisational management with strategic and budget planning, VIP services, risk management assessments, exhibition and onsite management, food and beverage management, pre-event logistics, post event evaluation and entertainment and speaker selection processes being provided.

Venue selection is an important aspect of event planning and of the event management associations analysed 15.9% (15) offered venue selection, finder, inspection and negotiation services to members. The European Federation of Conference Towns (2001) noted this:

EFCT maintains a friendly service to meeting planners from all over the world, and or just around the corner, helping them identify and enjoy ideal destinations and venues from among our membership in 34 countries. Provides a destination finder service...

The use of familiarisation visits also ensures that event association members are aware of destinations and may be encouraged to hold a conference or convention there. The key objective

of the British Association of Conference Destinations is to locate venues in the British Isles and to arrange these familiarisation visits. It states:

BACD ... offers a free, impartial venue-finding service for any organisations seeking conference, exhibition or meeting venue anywhere in the British Isles ... BACD collaborates with small groups of Association members to arrange familiarization visits to particular areas of the country for conference organisers...

Another feature that is significant to event managers is the provision of, or negotiation with, insurance companies that is a service that 10.6% (10) of event management associations provide. Insurance is an integral component of event management with public liability and other insurance costs being a large financial burden on organisations. The Religious Conference Managers Association (2001) provides for its members "... \$5000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance at no added cost..." to its existing membership fees. Additionally, the association can liaise with various insurance companies to ensure the best deals for its members or to tailor insurance schemes to individual requirements. This is the case for the International Association of Conference Interpreters (2001) which states that it "... negotiates various insurance schemes which take into account specific needs." This assists individual companies and members to achieve reduced rates and tailored packages due to the higher volume of sales achieved by directing all the association's members to the one insurance company. Furthermore, members benefit in the reduction of time associated with source all the different insurance companies and negotiating schemes.

### **Community Services**

Community service was an important component of the services provided by 56.4% (53) of event management associations. This consists of employment services, awards, scholarships, solidarity funds, leadership in sustainable development and quality standards. The inclusion of jobs and human resource management were considered to be apart of this variable because by providing employment services it assist members of the community and the association's community to improve upon their positions or lead to new jobs. The Chicago Society of Association Executives noted that:

With the Association Forum's job and resume banks now on the Forum's Internet Web site ([www.associationforum.org](http://www.associationforum.org)), new, professional career counseling and recruitment services are now available to association executives and employers.

This seems like a logical way for members of the association to recruit staff that are involved in the same field. The Exposition Service Contractors Association also provides this type of service, however it also offers programs to assist in employee relations and other human resource management issues. It states (2001):

Employee Relations and Human Resource Management Services: Support services from our employee and labor relations program assists in telephone consultations; solving people problems, professional advice, recommendations and union activity. This service also provides publications and research on labor and employee relations issues, they can review, analyze and give you their professional recommendations on your present personnel policies, work rules and employee handbooks...

Scholarships are another way by which event management associations and members can contribute to the community. Graduate fellowship grants under a donor's name is one method adopted by the Centre for Exhibition Industry Research (2001). The National Coalition of Black Meeting Planners however offer "... scholarships to African American students seeking careers in meeting planning..." Awards also offer ways by which the association can recognise continued leadership and outstanding service to the event management industry. As with the scholarships, this takes various forms. The Convention Industry Council (2001) recognises "... pioneers of the industry through the CIC's Hall of Leaders..." Whereas the International Special Events Society (2001) offers recognition through the "ISES Esprit Awards."

Some 6.3% (6) of event management associations also have established contribution programs and special philanthropic activities. The Professional Conference Management Association (2001) has achieved these philanthropic objectives by offering 'network for the needy' and 'party with a purpose'. Many other associations offer volunteering opportunities for a range of different causes. The Outdoor Amusement Business Association (2001) states:

Membership Services Contribution Program... (is) designed to help raise funds to protect the future of your family business and preserve, protect and promote the carnival industry.

The International Association of Conference Interpreters (2001) also offers a fund of this nature, it states that it "maintains a Solidarity Fund for assisting members in distress and negotiates various insurance schemes which take into account specific needs."

Another facet of this community service is establishing quality standards for the protection of the public against unscrupulous organisers. This also encourages organisers to join event management associations as including their membership on their advertising ensures a seal of approval. "Working towards establishing accepted practices that will become standards across the convention industry in order to improve its efficiency and effectiveness" is also another advantage (Convention Industry Council, 2001). Again, this is an ethical notion that leads to a more professional industry for associations, members and the general public. The final theme that emerged in the community service category is the leadership through sustainable development. The Pacific Asia Travel Association reflects this by stating "Leadership; Preservation of the areas unique cultures, heritage and environment, Championing of sustainable development...". Protecting what exists today for future generations is of benefit for all people, however with many conferences and conventions being in unique environmental areas this is of particular importance to the event management and tourism associations.

## **Advocacy**

Additionally, 35.1% (33) of event management associations offer advocacy and representation services to the industry as a whole and also to individual members. Representation, legal advice, negotiating, reciprocal rights to other associations and a confidential hotline are all significant services within this category. The Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Organisers' and Suppliers' Association (2001) reflects this:

(It) provides industry members with a unified voice in negotiations with the government and government-related organisations and for the general betterment of business interests of members. Has built a much stronger position to exert influence in the right quarters, always keeping member's business interests at the forefront of the Association's activities.

The strength of argument that can be achieved by coordinating the opinion of many individuals gives the industry a stronger voice. The Union des Foires Internationales (2001) states:

Members receive full and helpful assistance in their participation consistent with the international standards set by experienced trade fair/exhibition organizers worldwide ... the provision of information and on-going training in the widest range of fields within the exhibition business, UFI contacts with the relevant intergovernmental and international organizations concerned with trade, which, in the interests of all members, are informed about exhibition industry matters and problems.

The introduction of reciprocal rights is also gaining momentum with the attraction being the fostering of links, communication and understanding that this promotes. The World Trade Centre Association (2001:X) offers members “reciprocal privileges at all other operating member facilities worldwide...” The World Council for Venue Management (2001) also explains that it :

... facilitates access to the resources of the member associations for individual members of all WCVM associations through providing limited reciprocal membership benefits, such as the ability to attend meetings, purchase or subscribe to publications, attend educational programs and access data and other resource materials...

Event management associations are also offering access to professionals through the establishment of confidential hotlines. The International Festivals and Events Association (2001) has established an “ask-an-expert free member consulting service.” This assists in the solving of professional or industry issues affecting members. The Association of Convention Operations Management (2001) states that it operates the “Resource Bank, a referral source of member experts willing to listen, counsel and share professional/career ideas...” These are all services that associations offer to members as a community service, either to the external community or internally to the member communities.

### **Buying Power**

The advantage of stronger buying power to members of event management associations was an important category to 34% (32) of associations. This provided discounts on a range of products and services such as hotel accommodation, car hire, air travel and business products. The International Association for Exhibition Management (2001) notes:

The buying power of IAEM members enables IAEM Services Inc. to form marketing partnerships with companies that in turn offer their products and services to IAEM members at reduced prices...

This can save members on insurance and car rentals (International Association of Fairs and Expositions, 2001), hotel rates (International Association of Conference Interpreters, 2001) and office products (Chicago Association of Executives, 2001). The Exhibit Designers and Producers Association (2001) further documents the savings attained by stating:

Saving you money: 50% Reduction on all EDPA Publications, 50% Reduction on Trade Shows & Exhibits Schedule w/mid-year supplement, Reduced Rate for

You and Your Team to Attend EDPA “Knowledge of the Industry” Regional Seminars.

## CONCLUSION

As the event management industry consolidates worldwide, event management associations play an increasingly significant role in professional support to the industry and its managers by assisting their continued growth and success. This paper has reviewed the literature on professional associations and explored the key services offered by event management associations. While there are a number of studies which review services that focus on organisations in specific industries, there are no studies previously conducted that investigate the services offered by event management associations worldwide.

The data points to a higher level of organisational sophistication and a broader range of services offered among those organisations that are larger and have been established for a longer period. The event management associations with a North American, European and International focus depict this trend. The data does not allow for a productive conclusion about differences that may exist between associations that draw from organisational members, in contrast to those who draw from individual membership. Event management associations have a strong record of developing services as part of their strategic framework and the analysis revealed that the six most commonly occurring categories of the services offered were educational services, communication services, business services, community services, advocacy services and buying power improvements

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