Pursuing Sustainability: Societies with Meaningful Missions

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Society Day: The Powerful Business of Society Publishing
STM Annual US Conference 2015
Washington, DC
April 21, 2015
Society:

An organized body of people who have an interest, activity, or purpose in common.
My perspective is built on my experiences.
American Chem Soc: Advance the broader chemistry enterprise and its practitioners for the benefit of Earth and its people
American Cancer Soc: ... voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer .... by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from cancer, through research, education, advocacy, and service
Endocrine Soc: Advance excellence in endocrinology and promote its essential and integrative role in scientific discovery, medical practice, and human health.
American Assoc. for Cancer Research:
Prevent and cure cancer through research, education, communication, and collaboration
American College of Physicians: Enhance the quality and effectiveness of health care by fostering excellence and professionalism in the practice of medicine.
Elsevier: Lead the way in advancing science, technology and health
**What do societies do?**

* Provide **educational** products and services
* Support research and its dissemination
* Establish standards, guidelines, accreditation criteria, certifications, and codes of conduct
* Offer grants, awards, scholarships and fellowships
* Organize think tanks, roundtables, workshops, conferences, webinars, blogs
* Collect and publish statistics on the industry or profession
* Collaborate with various stakeholders (e.g., societies, academic institutions, industry, governments, charities, public)
* Lobby and advocate
* Promote public awareness and serve as the authoritative voice for the field
* Afford opportunities to advance the mission through engagement
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Where do societies get most of their revenue to support their missions?

* Dues
* Publications
* Meetings and exhibits
* Advertising and sponsorship
What has been changing?

* Paid membership
* International membership
* Age of full-paying members
* Who pays
* Meeting attendance
* Submissions of ms. and abstracts
* Organizational consolidation
* STM funding and its requirements
* Technological advancements
* Research and practice changes
* Increase in information
* Greater competition
* Funding and other economic challenges
* Evolving and more varied business models
What have society *publishers* also started doing?

* Delivering print, online, and apps
* Producing multi-media content
* Creating semantic tags and enhancing SEO
* Processing more submissions
* Collecting and publishing author/researcher contributions
* Screening and handing explosion of ethical allegations
What have society publishers also started doing?

* Integrating FundRef, ORCID, CHORUS
* Providing Altmetrics
* Establishing social media outlets
* Generating targeted, segmented digital advertising
* Working with authors/institutions/funders on variety of rights
With all that societies do, they are sometimes considered to be
Beyond the baby boomers

* Price vs. ROI
* Time
* Value of benefits
* Opportunities for meaningful engagement
* Sense of “belonging”

Growth in member numbers without engagement is short-term and small thinking
What can societies do?

* Focus on mission and audience
* Membership that is priced and packaged right
* Quality, continuing member benefits
* Elimination of unprofitable, unvalued benefits
* Concept testing, market research, promotion
* Global relevance, engagement opportunities, with pathways to leadership
* Collaboration, not control
Future

* Collaborative, social communities
* Multi-media rich, game-based learning
* Segmented, filtered information
* Customizable, individualized programs
* Smart networking among varied content, formal and informal
* Data depositing and sharing
Societies benefit *Society*, not just their membership.

*The future is now.*

Thank you.

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