

Minutes of the Charity Retail Association's Corporate Members Advisory Group Held at CRA Offices, 356 Holloway Road, London N7 6PA on Wednesday 12 July 2017, 11am – 3pm

Attendees

Chair: Robin Osterley (CEO)

CRA staff: Julia Cloke (Head of Events), Susan Meredith (Head of Member Services) (minutes)

CMAG: Colin Day (Senior Customer Relations Manager, Choice Textile Ltd), Rob Finley (Sales Director, Cybertill Ltd), Tony Hilton (Founder and Managing Director, Charity Fleetcare Alliance), Janet Northway (Customer Service Manager, Propress Ltd), Richard Sheppard (National Sales Manager, Shopfittings (Manchester) Ltd)

Apologies: Adrian Barker (Owner/Director, ARB Recycling Ltd), Jayne Cartwright (Owner/Director, The Charity Retail Consultancy), Sonia Fletcher (Communications Manager, Eproductive Ltd), Lesley Gorton (Head of Retail and New Business, Helen and Douglas House)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Robin Osterley (RO) welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the Corporate Members' Advisory Group (CMAG) and went through apologies.

2. Charity Retail Conference 2017

a) The new venue

Everyone felt the move to EMCC was a positive one. Main plus points picked up on were the presence of the hotel and the light and airy space (complete with air con).

SM advised that she had received 14 feedback forms from exhibitors so far and they were almost all positive. It was felt the second day of exhibition needed some work.

RS had heard some negativity about the Awards venue being offsite – but understands we had limitations at EMCC. TH suggested using a marquee as the Awards venue felt quite small. JC advised that this was too expensive.

b) Exhibition

TH felt that exhibitors should be strongly discouraged from breaking down their exhibition stands until the very end of the event. It was felt that Tuesday lunchtime was affected by this as it looked like Conference was finishing, when in fact it was exhibition time over lunch. TH suggested a rebate for those that stay until the end. RO felt this would not help as companies would write off any rebate if they really wanted to leave.

JN suggested that the CRA tries to get exhibitors to commit to the entire day 1 programme and/or entire day 2 programme – then sell the stand for whichever slots are free.

RF said CRA should be strict e.g. exhibitors cannot move electronic equipment out of the exhibition between set times. This is standard practice in many exhibitions for security and H&S reasons. RO suggested that non compliance means no exhibition stand the following year.

Action for SM: Stricter rules re exhibition breakdown for 2018.

CD advised that the lack of PA in the exhibition made organisers jobs harder. JC acknowledged that the PA system was not working to the CRA's requirements and this would be dealt with.

CD felt the writing was not big enough on the charity delegate name badges. JC advised that this was as large as the font could go on the current sized badges as some charity names and job titles are very long. JC advised that she would look into larger badges.

JN felt that the different coloured lanyards denoting charity and corporate delegates worked well.

c) Sponsorships

SM reminded all that the CMAG had agreed to the new sponsorship selection process of calling for interest amongst all Corporate Membership until a given deadline, then choosing sponsors at random from those interested. The CRA also reserved the right to use discretion if, for example, six of the same sector were selected as Headline Sponsors.

It was agreed that discretion should be deployed in the following order:

- Those who have been members for at least 1 full year
- Then others

d) The Awards – in particular Supplier of the Year 2017

2017 was the first year that the CRA had used a table plan for the Awards Dinner and there were mixed feelings about this. JN was not overly pleased about where she was placed, whereas RS was very pleased. Some of the Group also reported negative feedback from charity delegates regarding the table plan. JC advised that there were options given at the point of booking with regard to where charity delegates would like to sit e.g. with colleagues, with similar sized charities etc etc. As such the administration of the plan was a huge task.

In general, the group were in favour of keeping a table plan.

CD advised that there should have been a video feed of stage action towards the back of the hall. It was agreed that this should happen for next time.

RO reminded the group that the Supplier of the Year Award process was administered as a voting system for the first time in 2017, whereby charity members voted for their favourite supplier from the Corporate Membership and then the results were divided into three size categories depending on the number of CRA charity member clients the nominated Corporate Members worked with.

RF felt that there was an honesty issue and that issues of integrity needed to be worked into the Corporate Code of Conduct to ensure that Corporate Members were in the correct size categories.

e) Surgeries

SM advised the Group that 2017 was the first year that exhibitor surgeries had featured in the Conference programme and that the aim was to make the most of a period of exhibition time that had usually been quite quiet. There had been feedback that the surgery slot was too late in the day and the Group discussed what else could be done.

RO suggested during lunch – but JN advised that this was valuable exhibition time. RF suggested a speed dating model, using one of the focus session slots, fill a room with tables where exhibitors could present their services on a timed basis. SM suggested bringing back Corporate sponsored focus sessions by having a stream of them.

f) Exhibition stand selection 2018

SM advised the group that allocation is in the following order

- Headline sponsors
- Other sponsors
- Duration of exhibition participation over the years

g) Conference AOB

TH felt that Conference should be targeted at procurement and finance officers as there is so much to talk about. He also felt they should attend for free.

CD asked if the Conference had been profitable. RO advised that it would be a similar picture to 2016.

RS asked what the venue was like to work with. JC advised there were numerous issues that need to be worked through, but we would probably be using EMCC in 2018 – but not the Belfry Hotel.

Everyone agreed the comedian Jo Caulfield was very good.

3. Corporate Code of Practice

Please refer to previously circulated draft version of the CCP. RO advised that the current version had incorporated the views of the first meeting of CMAG (18 Jan 2017), the CRA's Board, and lawyers. There were two main differences to the previous version:

- a) The section on fraud was removed in order to comply with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
- b) In section 10 it was added that the CRA will consider making pro-rata refunds to Corporate Members who are expelled from membership.

Referring to section 2, CD asked if new members may also be announced to Corporate Members for their feedback on any issues with the potential new member. RO advised that this would not be the case, but they would be run by the CMAG.

RF asked about arbitration. RO advised that there is a right of appeal to the CRA Board.

TH said the CCP should be run by the CCC. The CCC will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

4. AOB

- JC, who was not present at the meeting, had put forward for discussion a question about what Corporate Members can do to combat the 'bleak' view of the future of charity retail put forward in the final plenary at Conference 2017. JN felt that working more with smaller chains will help.

- It was agreed to publicise the existence of the CMAG more often, offering a 'meet and greet' at conference and articles in CRA News. Offer CMAG contact for Corporate Member queries.

5. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 13 December 2017, 11am – 3pm, CRA Offices (TBA)