

Corporate Members Advisory Group

18 September 2020, 2pm – 4pm
Zoom

Attendees: Emma Peake (Deputy Chief Executive, The Air Ambulance Service Trading, Chair), Neil Collarbone (Morplan), Sarah Dodd (Kudos Software), Susan Meredith (Head of Member Service, minutes), Robin Osterley (CEO, Charity Retail Association), Richard Dorf (Wil-U), Richard Sheppard (Shopfittings Manchester)

Minutes

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| 1. Welcome and apologies | |
| EP welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received from Janet Northway, Adrian Barker, Tony Hilton (TH). | |
| There is one vacancy on the group in the textile recyclers category. SM advised she would run an election and try to get the post filled by the end of October. | SM – process started |
| 2. Minutes from January 2020 | |
| Conference items will be rolled over to the next meeting, as it didn't happen. | SM |
| Case studies web page: SM will plug away at increasing the number of case studies on the dedicated web page. | |
| TRUST: There is a TRUST meeting towards end of this month. The audit was considered too onerous for the auditors and so is being revised. TH's point regarding van overloading is to be mentioned then by RO. | RO |
| COP review: Susan to circulate COP for review at the next meeting. | SM |
| All otherwise happy with the minutes. | |
| 3. Update on how Corporate Members have fared during lockdown | |
| RS – Everything came to a halt in April then started to resume May, June, July. A few fit-out jobs are coming up. Some charities are choosing to use this time to refurbish their estates. All staff started back 1 July. Haven't had a quiet time since then. | |

SD – Customers have tried to get software to work harder for them, so work didn't slow down but new business was slow. Held webinars and training etc. When shops started to come back there were challenges where equipment hadn't been turned on for a while and pending updates caused delays. Pretty much BAU now.

RD – Business went very quiet very quickly. Some charities took the opportunity to roll out new tech projects and some pulled back altogether. BAU now.

NC – Lots of the team were furloughed – some still are. Morplan has 130 staff. Workload and sales increasing month on month. Worked hard, spoke to customers, product innovation, started producing sanitizer themselves. Some charities have projected onwards and are developing their chains and some have suspended their shop opening programmes. It has been good to maintain old relationships and help longstanding clients through a tough period.

4. **Update from CRA on how events have been affected by the pandemic**

RO advised the CRA took a decision to cut face to face meetings from March and cancel conference (effectively postponed for a year). There will be no face to face meetings at least until the end of 2020. We thought about a hybrid AGM, but budget won't allow this. We have our first online conference next week involving 7 digital sessions and charity members are paying £50 to attend. There are three corporate sponsors. Another conference based around the AGM will take place 3rd week of November – free to members, and three corporate sponsors again. All special interest groups are running online and more often. All network meetings are planned for online.

We received a strong steer from the Board that Conference should be planned for June 2021. The venue is booked. Some speakers and corporate members are rolling on with their cancelled bookings from 2020.

Online meetings have been incredibly successful, good geographical spread, feedback really positive, so we don't feel it necessary to drop digital events. A straw poll of members showed they'd like to see a mixture of face to face and digital.

Losing Conference made a loss of £100K for CRA. Mini-conferences are bringing in approx. £10K in sponsorship per meeting – but this isn't enough to make up for the conference loss.

RO wanted to know how Corporate Members saw the future of their participation if more events went online.

5. **Discussion: How does Corporate Member participation look in a long-term virtual events scenario?**

RD – Face to face conference gave charity retailers a chance to window shop and Wil-U would have expected business from that. But sees the need to find out how this can be done digitally.

RS – Regarding special interest groups, perhaps do two face to face and two digital. But regional specific meetings should try be held face to face regionally.

EP – suggested themed online sessions e.g. textile recyclers. SD liked this idea too.

NC – Lack of face to face meetings means you are missing the people that you don't know and missing one to one discussion – the opportunities where delegates say 'I didn't realise you did that'. Online events should continue, whether BAU or not, but face to face is best for corporates members.

RS will send SM links to digital exhibition provider.

RS - DONE

RO – likes the idea of online 'meet the exhibitors'

NC – For example, discuss what's new in sustainability. Ask corporate members to come forward if they have something to say on this – for a fee.

RO – Sessions could be around an hour and a half.

SD – Can we harness contact details

RO – tick box upon sign up – agree to be contacted by participants. Is this intrusive?

EP – No, it is easier to access corporates this way, we don't have to take time travelling, just take an hour or two out of the working day instead of the whole day, learn about new and exciting things.

RD – You don't particularly have to create new content all the time – it can be repeated.

EP – Utilise the upgraded aspects of Zoom – breakout sessions.

SD – Maybe introduce other types of retailer as well – how they did during the pandemic might chime with charity retailers too.

RO – liked RD's idea of trying to maintain the face to face regional network meetings. NC says maybe halve the sessions am/pm. RO thought that was a good idea.

SM will investigate setting such an online event up.

6. **AOB**

SM reminded those present of the request for examples of where corporates members helped charity members during lockdown – this is for a slide show during the ‘new’ charity retail awards.

7. **Date of next meeting**

SM will advise after the CMAG vacancy has been filled.

SM