

CO-6

Notes: Membership Promotion Brainstorming Discussion
December 11, 1999 MPLA Board Meeting

From a board brainstorming session, the following ideas were discussed. Before the end of the meeting, board members indicated, by check marks shown as “x”s below, which of the ideas they thought were most likely to produce results.

Judy Zelenski, Membership/PR Committee Chair

Why do people join MPLA?

- Newsletter
- Professional development (workshops, CE, better speakers, networking)
- Networking, including E-mail
- Membership Directory
- Professional Development Grants
- Conferences
- Multi-state organization offers more choices, more counterparts in region
- Intimacy – not so large, easier to talk with each other (unlike ALA); but offers more than state associations
- Place to give presentations and become published
- Opportunity to be on board
- Geographical similarities, concerns
- Job hunting
- Intellectual freedom information
- Travel opportunities to conference sites
- Need “affiliation” (friendships)
- Sense of contribution to effort
- Tenure
- Gives own institution recognition
- Pride
- Role model for staff and others

Why Don't People Join MPLA

- Don't know about it
- Expense
- Travel restrictions
- One more “dues” organization
- Intimidation – don't know people at conventions
- Paraprofessionals don't see relevance
- Don't see benefits
- No one has asked
- Lack of financial support for regular conferences

- Institutions don't see value of regional associations
- Institutions don't get benefits – directors, etc.

From what groups would new members of MPLA be most likely to come? (Groups to target for membership promotions)

- Library school students
- Library school faculty
- Participants in state certification programs
- Paraprofessionals groups
- Independent information professionals – not affiliated with institutions
- Job hunters

Does MPLA need to change what programs it offers, or just reach people who aren't members and let them know what MPLA offers.

- Do we need to change name – to include Information Specialist as well as Librarian?
- Do we need to do another membership survey?
- Include the new electronic focus (sounds “cooler”)
- Target different groups
- As a volunteer organization – can only focus on a few things
- Core of MPLA is newsletter plus annual conferences

Pretend you don't know anything about MPLA – and just hear that it is a new regional library association seeking members. What would it take to have you write out a check and join? Ideas for events, promotions, etc – to encourage membership

- Someone asks me x x x
- ½ price first year membership
- Free membership
- More MPLA experiences in workplace
- Joint state conferences
- Cheaper conference registrations
- Visibility at every state conference every year
- MPLA sponsored program at each state conference, with MPLA brochures x x x x x x x
- President doing program at state conferences
- Professional development grants x x x
- Free individual memberships with institutional memberships x x x x x
- Attractive conference sites, promoted at state conferences (include information from local Chambers of Commerce) x
- Information at state conferences
- Information in state newsletters
- Inserts in newsletters, conference packets
- President audio/video-taped message
- Ads in state newsletter
- Coverage in state newsletter

- MPLA pay to have a booth at state conferences
- Presentation packets to give out at meetings (printable from web page, benefits separately identified) x x x x x x x
- Free memberships to be given by each member of board – include promo and information and persuasion x x x x x x x
- Short video with testimonials (sung, perhaps)
- Every free membership recipient obligated to give one the next year x x x
- Give t-shirts to recipients of free memberships if they join on own second year
- Expand newsletter to journal format – to offer publishing opportunities for members
- Have some newsletters and some journal issues
- Have a refereed journal
- Have refereed articles on the web – also use research forum articles and professional development grant reports
- Shorter terms for state reps
- More opportunities for board involvement
- Dues renewals with president or committee chair letter
- MPLA sponsored program at each state conference
- Visit library school programs annually x x x
- Give free memberships to library school graduates
- Involve library school students in conference work and fun
- Have conference issues relevant to students as new professionals (job hunting, etc) x x x
x
- Use web page as forum for issues
- Provide interview opportunities at conferences