ICCA Association Success Story

ISHA – The Hip Preservation Society

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Why Associations must have a Clearly Defined Purpose and the Value of Aligning these to the UN SDGs

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Like many in March 2020, as a medical society, the realisation that we were about to be hit by a metaphoric sledgehammer began to dawn!

We were not unlike many medical societies in that much of our focus and efforts revolved around the planning of our in person scientific meeting. Not only was this our key educational forum each year, but it was also a very valuable revenue source that enabled us to fund the "extras" over and above the operational running of the society.

Even though in late March our annual meeting was still 7 months off, the understanding that our leadership had of the severity and implications of a pandemic of the nature of Covid-19 was all too apparent. One thing we had in our favour was that we were nimble and acted quickly, albeit that many stakeholders in the meeting sector thought we were being too premature, and everything would be fine in 3 – 4 months. As we know with hindsight, this was sadly not the case.

However, there were many positives to be grateful for; one very significant and timely one for our society is that it forced the leadership to take a step back and ask: what is our purpose, what do our members want and need from us, what difference can we as an international subspecialty orthopaedic society make to the global hip preservation community, members or not, and how can we make a direct impact on improving patient treatment and outcomes.

ISHA – The Hip Preservation Society is a relatively young society, formed in 2008 by 10 innovators and pioneers who were developing treatments to provide minimally invasive surgical techniques to the largest and most complex joint in the body, and the last to be explored arthroscopically. The ideal is, where feasible through early diagnosis, to repair hip conditions using minimally invasive techniques before irreversible damage is done to the joint meaning that the only course of action is a total hip replacement, which is not a good outcome for those who may still be adolescents or young adults.

So, it was very timely that as a society we were no longer taking the baby steps of infancy but were now entering our teenage years, finding our voice, and defining what we wanted to be when we were grown up!

Our vision was to be the premier international society for hip preservation in the world! But what did that mean? Premier, in what terms and measurement, and to whom?! These were questions that as a leadership team we had started to ask ourselves as we recognised with rapid clarity that with the pandemic and without an annual in person meeting, we would have to do some work in several key areas:

- Conveying to our membership what value we brought to them both personally and in their professional capacity;
- Keeping visible, to retain our membership and maintain our commercial stakeholder relationships;
- Continuing to grow and attract new members and revenue sources;
- Ensuring that our meeting activities also delivered on the wider society purpose and strategic goals, as these are key enablers.

All the above was dependent on a clear purpose, clear goals, and a well-defined methodology of communication.

These discussions coincided with a timely invitation from ICCA to attend their ICCA Association Expert Seminar (AES) Forum in Frankfurt ahead of IMEX on the topics of Distribution, Reinvention and Sustainability, Building an Association Legacy Strategy, and Leveraging Legacy Impacts from Meetings.

I can't thank ICCA, Geneviève Leclerc from Meet4Impact and Gary Grimmer from Gaining Edge enough for their wise counsel, and the guidance and tools that they provided which helped give me a structure and process to work with our Board to really dig in to determine what we are about, defining our Mission and Vision that would provide us with a clear, strong message of what ISHA's purpose and objectives are.

This was steps one and two, but the next question was how we communicate this and demonstrate the value, again thinking of the stakeholders we needed to be able to convey this to for different purposes.



As Geneviève and Gary pointed out, the matrix that most organisations across the globe can find relatable is the UNs 17 SDGs. If we as an organisation could explain how, where and why our purpose, activities and goals aligned to the UN SDGs, this would enable us to communicate our messaging in a way that could be well understood by other organisations we were seeking to engage with. Not only that, but it also acted as a great framework for us to create a strategic plan of actions and activities that we would plan to undertake, which had a clear intention of each of these directly supporting our Mission and Vision.

Firstly, we created a new mission statement: *"to create 'healthy hips' by bringing hip preservation, prevention, and treatment to all the people regardless of age, social status, gender, or economic situation."* Simple, clear, and brief!

From here we were able to define our vision: *"a world with equitable access to quality treatment and the best achievable patient outcomes through improved access to appropriate treatment, early intervention, prevention and education, with the goal of us living in a world where hip joint replacement is only an occurrence of old age"*.

We then looked in depth at the 17 UN SDGs to identify which were the goals that were directly aligned to ISHA's Strategic Goals, which had been re-defined once our mission and vision had been determined. We identified UN SDGs 3, 4, 5, 9, 13 and 17 as having shared goals and intentions. We didn't stop at the SDG Goals themselves, but took a deeper dive into each of the SDG Goal Targets and Indicators and used these to directly explain why we are aligned and what actions and activities we are undertaking that support the achievement of our society strategic goals.

Then we realised we had to make this visible, and as the old adage goes, a picture can say a thousand words, so we created graphics that emulated the UN SDGs, which are well recognised and gave this prominence not only on our website, but also in our newsletters. We created a new Commercial Partnership offering, using the work we had done to explain the purpose and value of what we are doing and deploying these tools to provide our partners with the substantive and clear initiatives we are undertaking in a language that will be understood within their commercial organisations, making it easier for them to commit to our support.

We have used SDG Goal 17 for Partnerships as a springboard to strengthen our strategic partnerships, our alliances with industry and allied regional and national societies, to enable the society to amplify its impact, driving meaningful change and progress across the specialty. Tangible results include collaborative education programs, joint research programs and collaboration in developing best practice treatment guidelines and starting to develop an International Hip Registry.



We are still a small society with limited financial and manpower resources, but we have seen a growth in our membership in the last 6 years of over 300% despite the lovely pandemic, which is a great achievement and testament to leadership. The knowledge gained though the ICCA workshop has helped us as a society to gain clear focus, which has helped us to evolve, get invigorated and, as one of our Board members said this week, "many are looking to how ISHA are doing things, and there is a lot of talk and excitement". We owe a great debt of gratitude to all who have supported us on this journey.

About the Author



Caroline is a meetings industry professional with 30 years' experience. She has specialist knowledge of the healthcare and life science meetings and congresses gained from working as a PCO with many international medical associations globally for 20 years and working within the medical communication sectors delivering international pharma and medical device events for 13 years.

Caroline is Executive Director and Trustee of ISHA – the Hip Preservation Society, an international society which is focused on hip preservation surgery to enhance patient care and outcomes, through delivery of training, education, support of research, sharing of knowledge and best practice, fostering global collaboration and provision of patient and professional information to improve hip care.

She is also the Managing Director of the Conference Consultancy, a specialist boutique event, PCO and association management company, managing events and associations both domestically and international.
Founded in 2014, the Conference Consultancy specialise in supporting the healthcare, life sciences, not-for-profit and academic sectors.

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