

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: ALA Publishing

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:

The “Strategic activities” background document includes an overview of ALA Publishing FY18 department-wide approaches and activities, with some specific examples by business unit. Our discussion will focus on best approaches to reaching the revised FY18 goals and positioning the department for future growth.

ACTION REQUESTED BY: Mary Mackay, AED Publishing

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DRAFT OF MOTION: None requested

DATE: October 4, 2017

BACKGROUND: An overview of strategies and activities the ALA Publishing department and its six business units are implementing to meet FY18 revenue goals, and position the department for growth.

AVAILABILITY: No restrictions

ATTACHMENTS: “ALA Pubs Strategic Activities October 2017;” “Discussion Points October 2017.”

ALA Publishing Strategic Plan Overview, 2018-2020

ALA Publishing will be the content source of choice for the library and information profession. The department will increase net revenue to support the mission of the association through providing materials that contribute to improving library programs and services, while also serving the changing professional development needs and career goals of individual librarians and library staff.

The six business units in ALA Publishing are: ALA Editions/Neal Schuman; Booklist Publications; ALA eLearning Solutions; Digital Reference (RDA); ALA Graphics; and American Libraries. (The department also includes the internal cost-recovery units Production Services and Print Services.) All six business units' strategic plans for 2018-2020 are built around the following assumptions and priorities:

- Address the unique potential of each business unit as we develop and implement plans.
- Build on current strengths and advantages while seeking new opportunities.
- Work towards being able to promote ALA Publishing as a “hub” of specific areas of expert-developed, accessible content, offered in multiple channels. Take full advantage of ALA resources and channels.
- Maintain a more rigorous external focus that puts members, customers, subscribers, registrants, users, advertisers, sponsors, and other vendors/external partners at the heart of relevant decisions.
- Prioritize long-term outcomes over short-term results, while consistently delivering net revenue.
- Streamline, control, and monitor internal operations (including financial and production) to free up the creative energy needed to develop and deliver compelling content in updated formats.
- Track how people purchase and use digital content. Make all content accessible in appropriate formats.
- Incorporate digital formats—especially mobile and video—as non-digital products are designed, and stay on top of trends to be ready and receptive for new formats.
- Identify and build on internal and external partnerships and collaborations to support development and delivery of content and products that would be otherwise unaffordable, and to reach audiences we would otherwise not have access to.

ALA Publishing general, some of what's underway

- FY18 individual staff goals are being aligned with strategic plans by unit, with relevant measures/accountability. Simplified strategic plans for clarity of required outcomes, feasibility of implementation.
- Focus on current high-volume customers, finding out more about why/how they buy, what they need.
- Systematic approach to developing leads, documenting requirements/terms for organizations that purchase in bulk/reach widely—consortia, school districts, state libraries, US military, etc.
- Individual meetings with division/office directors to identify past, present, and future collaborative opportunities.
- “Synergy meetings” across ALA Publishing for staff to share ideas and current projects.
- Consultation with Business Intelligence Director to improve email marketing targeting and back-end analysis.
- Internal operations: Working with Finance and Accounting by unit to increase productivity by streamlining budgeting templates and reporting. Working on aligning budget, strategic plans, goals for integrated approach. Finalizing tasks related to shifting fulfillment center in FY17 for efficiency in FY18.

By business unit, selected examples of specific actions underway/planned

Booklist Publications

Working with advertisers to identify new product opportunities, and finalizing first sponsored white papers. Developing plans to leverage editorial expertise in on-site events where libraries pay for a Booklist editor to present/train in aspects of collection development and readers' advisory. Broadening scope of webinars by planning more interactive programs with authors/ book editors. Implementing joint project with AASL for free subscriptions with special renewal plan. Working with United for Libraries on how best to share content/expertise/access to market for maximum exposure for each unit, in context of Book Club Central and beyond. Investigating next multi-platform advertising package/campaign to build on what was learned from the successful "50 Years of YA."

ALA Editions | Neal-Schuman

Planning how to leverage the new ALA Store (due late fall 2017), as focus shifts from managing the technology to taking advantage of new opportunities afforded. Tight focus on delivering 60 new titles in FY18, and building future pipeline. Revised marketing approach that is more author-centric and increases number of channels, including social media. Building collaborations for product development and possible co-branding across ALA. Implementing co-marketing projects with ACRL book publishing. Distributing the Center for the Future of Libraries Trend Cards, looking at further content to build around them, and listing selected Editions titles on CFL site. Investigating international opportunities such as ALZAD for Arabic translations of materials.

ALA Publishing eLearning Solutions

Investigating how to secure bigger/bulk purchases of courses/workshops. Researching mid-size public library systems in particular to identify HR/training staff who can purchase for staff and work on customized packages. Engaging with association elearning organization Tagoras to speed up learning and potential implementation of trends such as nano-learning. Collaborating with ALCTS and Digital Reference to create an online RDA Learning Center. Experimenting with RUSA/ASCLA—they provide content and experts, eLearning Solutions provides logistics, marketing. Working with American Libraries on ramping up AL Live broadcasts, including identifying new potential sponsors. Preparing to launch ALA Essentials on-demand webinars and eConsulting Solutions program.

Digital Reference (RDA)

Completing development of the revised RDA by the end of FY18. Developing marketing plans with international group to reach catalogers, students, managers, metadata specialists, archivists, developers, and publishers. Focusing on specific regions that have not yet adopted, including South/Central America. Working with translators to extend adoption, identifying additional languages needed. (Ongoing consultation with International Relations Office.) Collaborating with ALCTS and eLearning Solutions to create an online RDA Learning Center, and with ALA Editions for RDA-related books.

ALA Graphics

Planning how to leverage the new ALA Store (due late fall 2017), as focus shifts from managing the technology to taking advantage of new opportunities afforded. Analyzing results of survey to recent/current customers to inform product development and identify operational issues that may be negatively affecting sales. Sped up development process to build on a major unplanned opportunity. Collaborating with United for Libraries to generate revenue while offering member benefits, and leveraging their state-level connections. Looking with APA at bringing NLWD product back into Graphics. Collaborating with Editions and AASL on promotion of AASL standards-related items.

American Libraries

Re-energizing internal liaison program to ensure range of ALA units and activities are well represented in AL products. Looking at specific advertising packages that will increase revenue and attract new advertisers, including leveraging the successful Dewey Decibel podcast and AL Live (in partnership with eLearning Solutions). Working on different ways to capture reader and member feedback to determine perceived value of each product to inform product development.