

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: ALA Branding Working Group Update

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:
Information

ACTION REQUESTED BY:
N/A

CONTACT PERSON:
Stephanie Hlywak, Director of Communication and Marketing Office
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DRAFT OF MOTION:
N/A

DATE: October 13, 2021

BACKGROUND:
Per 2021-2022 CBD #2.0, the ALA Executive Board approved the request to create an “ALA Branding Workgroup”.

The workgroup will consist of members, staff, and partners. The group will look into the opportunities beyond Libraries Transform to create an inclusive campaign including library workers and library lovers everywhere. The charge of the workgroup is to develop, review and recommend a new public awareness campaign, including investigation of a potential membership level geared toward the general public. Opportunities for members to engage in the process of the workgroup will occur throughout the year.

The anticipated timeline for the workgroup is to begin immediately and complete work by June 2022.

ATTACHMENTS:
N/A

ALA Branding Working Group Update

Goal:

ALA is a professional association of library workers led by members. To increase membership over the next five years, we are looking to create a category of belonging for library lovers. We seek to develop a new membership/affinity program to capture the interest, enthusiasm, and engagement for libraries among the general public to drive revenue and increase brand awareness and reach. This project will support efforts to increase contributed revenue and membership as identified in the Pivot Strategy.

CMO will serve as business owner and will be supported by a working group of members, staff, and partners and chaired by Julius C. Jefferson, Jr. and Lessa Pelayo-Lozada.

Public Awareness and Development Campaign Tie-In:

This investigation will yield a campaign to replace the current “Libraries Transform” public awareness program, now in its sixth year. This will also, by necessity, be connected to (but may differ slightly from) the six-year multimillion dollar fundraising effort that centers social justice, EDI issues, and access to information – among others – as “legacies” of ALA and libraries more generally.

Consultant Specs:

We hope to partner with a consultant or firm with experience with stewarding membership and/or affinity programs; awareness of fundraising and direct appeals; developing personas, surveying, analysis, and reporting; building engagement among target audiences; and working with complex organizations.

The “Why”:

Professional associations working at the intersection of public interest and professional values may provide some models or inspiration in this work. For example:

- National Realtors Association has established the licensed REALTOR © as a profession, brand and gold standard for real estate transactions.
- The American Dental Association’s “Accepted by the ADA” lends credibility to toothpaste and other dental products.
- The American Civil Liberties Union introduced the idea of a “card carrying member,” even if these “members” are actually donors who do not participate in the ACLU’s governance.
- AARP provides another salient example; in the past people may have loathed getting their AARP cards, but the organization has made that rite of passage more appealing over the last decade.

- Public radio stations across the country hold member drives, and donors feel a sense of obligation and pride in giving to something that they rely on for news.
- In the realm of health care advocacy and research, organizations like those supporting women and families facing breast cancer have been able to establish easily recognizable symbols (i.e.: the Pink Ribbon), and the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge gave visibility to a rare and devastating neuromuscular disease.

ALA seeks to create resonance, visibility, reach, and immediate connection with the national public in a similar way.

There is a huge opportunity here to move beyond our typical targets of library professionals and existing members to reach library users, avid readers, and those engaged in or motivated by work in the social justice space, among other audiences.

Timeline and Budget:

Using seed funding from the remaining funds from President Julius C. Jefferson, Jr.’s budget, CMO hopes to engage a consultant to review, research, and map out a strategy to meet our goals. CMO has grant money from Mellon as well as a gift from Oprah/Apple to continue this work as it moves from concept to launch.

Members:

Unit/Group	Individual	Email	Accept
AASL	Sara Kelly Johns	skjohns@gmail.com	Y
ACRL	Emily Day	emily.daly@duke.edu	Y
PLA	Kristina Gomez	klgomez@milwaukee.gov	Y
UFL	Skip Dye	sdye@penguinrandomhouse.com	Y
Chapters	Sharrese Castillo	sharrese.c.c@gmail.com	Y
Chapters	Mike Zeller	mzeller@cwmars.org	Y
Membership Committee	Sandy Hirsh	sandy.hirsh@sjsu.edu	Y
PAG	Karlene Jennings	karlenejennings@gmail.com	Y
Public Awareness Committee	Stephanie Freas	stephanie@muskingumlibrary.org	Y
Public Awareness Committee	Milagros Maria Andrada-Tanega	milagros.tanega@hcpl.net	Y
ALA Staff	Stephanie Hlywak	shlywak@ala.org	Y

ALA Staff	TBD - CMO is hoping to hire new positions in the Fall	TBD	
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Industry rep	Steve Potash	spotash@overdrive.com	Y