

Association TRENDS

Seriously useful news & information for association leaders

\$5.00

Over 130 Jobs in the TRENDS Executive Job Board!

Where associations meet



To see if an AMC is a fit, first work on a project together

At Todd Mann Management Group, there is a philosophy: an association shouldn't buy into full service until it is ready.

Seems to go against the entrepreneurial notion of "sell what you can, when you can," but for associations that don't quite know what their needs are, being able to buy a la carte services or hiring for a single project is a win-win for both the association and for the AMC, Todd Mann advises.

When an association comes to him – many times by word of mouth – the first discussion is discovery for both parties: the association wants to know what are the different expertise of TMMG, and Mann wants to know "whether you are buying for 'smart' rather than a body for a position."

But more than that, it's important for Mann – and for any AMC – to know that the association knows its own value.

"Unless you are willing to ask the question, 'if we didn't exist, who would care,' and if you can't answer that question, that ought to determine where you think your value lies," he said.

And that's where Mann believes he can help an association. But he advises many to take it slowly, if that's the best way. "I've advised boards to don't buy the whole thing right away, let's piecemeal it, let's wait and see

how it's going. That gives our team a better sense of their culture and history, and gives [the association] a better sense of here's what can happen with new people."

This approach also allows the association to see where there is the need for TMMG's expertise, and who, if any, of the association's current team it wants to keep.

Many AMCs, like TMMG, now offer sin-



gle project management, whether as a prelude to full management or just on a single project.

Mann describes a project that he is currently conducting for an association that wants to clarify and raise its profile among its established constituencies, as well as create new constituencies.

Rather than start at the press release stage,

TMMG went out to members to collect data to formulate a profile of the industry.

"I sold it to the membership as we're not collecting data just to collect it," but the information will go out to current and new, important constituencies. By participating, the respondents were included on a list that will be seen by the public as well as high-profile, possible advocates to the industry.

Once the data was collected, it was used to start discussions with people inside and outside of the industry, and to show trends that otherwise would have gone unnoticed. Also important, the data was used to show how the members of the association are setting up a future workforce.

Now, at the midway point in the project, the association is in the position to promote its findings publicly through a media campaign.

Will such projects turn into a full management contract? About half do, Mann said.

"It's a different way to look at it, feels more current" when you outsource and have people working remotely with a different set of eyes than your staff.

"Part of my message to prospective clients is, it doesn't have to be an all or nothing, that's how a lot of boards start out thinking."

– EFD