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New on asaenet.org: Inroads--April 15, 2004

From ASAE

Global Certification Programs: The Time Is Right

By Victoria G. Axelrod

Concerned about the flight of jobs abroad and the maturing U.S. talent pool? Association executives have a real opportunity to weigh in on the offshore outsourcing, or *offshoring*, trend with positive steps for their memberships.

Supporting data

Recent data from Forrester Research, a marketing research firm for Fortune 100 companies, claim 3.3 million U.S. service industry jobs will be outsourced to foreign countries by 2015. At the same time, the United States will see a contraction in its labor pool, especially as experienced workers retire. Forrester says the survey is conservative; many job categories could experience as much as a 30 percent shift of jobs overseas.

Although the bulk of the jobs are nonskilled or semiskilled, professional positions are also portable, especially if the work is digitized and can be done through telecommunication. In general, most of the countries supplying these jobs speak English in addition to their native languages.

This will have an enormous impact on talent management in U.S. corporations, especially multinationals that seek employees with specific high-quality competencies and skills. *Business Week's* [Global 1000](#), or multinational companies, have long set the pace for globalization.

According to McKinsey Global Institute in its brief, "[Offshoring: Is it a Win-Win Game?](#)" this phenomenon will have a positive impact in the long run on America's role in the global economy.

Offshoring will allow America to capture economic value through multiple channels:

- **Reduced costs.** These savings can be passed to consumers or reinvested.
- **New revenues.** Offshoring creates demand in destination countries for U.S. products, especially for high-tech items.
- **Repatriated earnings.** Several providers serving the U.S. market are incorporated in America, which means they repatriate their earnings back into the United States.
- **Redeployed labor.** U.S. workers who lose their jobs to offshoring will take up other jobs, generating additional value for the economy.

Global certification opportunities

Certifications provided by professional and trade associations have long informed employers about the quality of the talent they hire. Frequently, certified professionals are the top earners in their professions and industries.

Associations can help their individual and corporate members by

- **Identifying new and emerging value-added jobs in industries that are now offshoring.** Associations have access to industry knowledge upon which to identify emerging jobs. This provides a benefit to the corporate members and the individual professional members they serve.
- **Increasing the professionalism of members abroad either directly through chapters or indirectly through affiliates.** Global professional certification provides consistency among professional

groupings and affords mobility through a common knowledge base.

- **Certifying outsourced vendors' and suppliers' employees.** Not every offshore supplier has the same quality of performance. Certification of talent ensures that cross-country standards are met.

Associations leading the way

Below are some of the organizations that have been developing global certifications and those who are just now launching such programs.

- The [Information Systems Audit and Control Association](#), Rolling Meadows, Illinois, offers the Certified Information Systems Auditor program, which has been the globally accepted standard of achievement in the IS audit, control, and security field since 1978.
- The [Institute for Supply Management](#), Tempe, Arizona, formerly the National Association for Purchasing Managers, has two certification programs: Certified Purchasing Manager and Accredited Purchasing Practitioner. The [American National Standards Institute](#), headquartered in Washington, D.C., recently awarded global certification accreditation to both programs.
- The [Project Management Institute](#), Newtown Square, Pennsylvania, has the PMI Certification Board Center, whose goals include establishing, maintaining, and implementing appropriate global certification standards, policies, and procedures related to the Project Management Professional Certification Program and other project management certifications. PMI has started a research project, "Commonalities and Differences in Project Management Around the World: A Survey of Project Categories and Life Cycles," the results of which will inform ongoing certification.
- The [Human Resource Certification Institute](#), Alexandria, Virginia, is developing the first human resource certification for HR professionals with international and cross-border responsibilities at multinational organizations. HRCI, an affiliate of the Society for Human Resource Management, is working with subject-matter experts from the society's international division, the [SHRM Global Forum](#), to develop the exam.

Where to begin

When determining how to take your certification global, look at the demographics of your members and the knowledge they require.

Demographics. When crafting a global integration strategy, the New York City-based [American Management Association \(AMA\)](#) divided corporations into four tiers of membership:

- *Multinationals:* U.S.-based companies with multiple headquarters. These represent the largest and most complex employee populations with significant intrafirm trading.
- *International:* Companies based in the United States or abroad doing business in several foreign countries.
- *National-plus:* Companies based in the United States or abroad that may want to go international and are affected by global markets.
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National: Companies based in the United States or abroad that want to serve only the country in which they are based.

AMA can use these groupings to identify corporations whose professionals are most likely to seek a global certification. In addition, AMA's partnerships with the multinationals have enabled the association to develop member benefits specific to the needs of vast employee populations across national borders.

Competencies and bodies of knowledge. In an information-based global economy, nothing is more perishable than knowledge. For professionals to keep up certification and recertification is a given. The [Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc.](#), based in New York City, undertook a global process to identify bodies of knowledge in the early 1990s, recognizing the speed at which technical information was changing and the importance of currency to the engineering professions. As a result, databases of competencies and platforms to access them are now being built for use by organizations lacking the time or resources to establish a global certification program.

The best global certification will combine acquired best-in-class information and proprietary information, which the association develops based on the key stakeholders in the professions they serve. Shaping the future of the global economy is far preferable to just letting it happen.

Victoria G. Axelrod, president of TAME Consulting, New York City, is former senior vice president and head of Global Best Practices for the American Management Association, New York City. E-mail: vaxelrod@tameconsulting.com. Copyright 2004 Victoria G. Axelrod.

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Manage Global–Local Complexity by Organizing Around Value

By Paul K. Ward

Surprise! You're already global.

Every association with a Web site has a global presence. This means you've already been noticed by foreign prospects. You might even be inspiring enough of them to assemble their own association. If you doubt me, have your information technology staff give you Web statistics on site visitors from foreign domains. I don't market myself directly to France, and yet 8 percent of my site visitors come from a French domain.

So it's possible that your association has opportunities—and competitive risks—across borders and oceans without your staff even noticing. This means that you have to understand how you're perceived by foreign prospects, and how well you stack up against foreign competitors, if you're going to succeed globally.

To successfully create or improve your global or international business model, implement these strategies:

- Measure how your in-country customers and members perceive your value, and rethink your products and services to increase this value. This is what Yves Doz, a professor at the Paris-based international MBA program Insead, calls *metanational thinking*.
- Create adaptable systems that act on the demands of in-country customers and members as their perceptions of your value change. Many associations handle the differing cultural demands of foreign markets by partnering with similar in-country organizations, just as the American Trucking Associations, Alexandria, Virginia, did as it moved into Canada and Mexico. Even with the improved cultural sensitivity you gain from partnering, you must streamline your partner relations to speed up your understanding of what your foreign customers and members need as time goes by.
- Choose or improve a business model that incorporates feedback into better localized products and services. As an association, you know that this model must contain certain governance safeguards. But be careful: The wrong governance

model delays and even mishandles critical data about your perceived value in a given culture or country.

You may be doing all of this already. But many associations have cultural or management challenges that get in the way. Here's how to overcome them:

Values and value

Value isn't just an intangible characteristic of products, services, and membership. It can actually be measured.

One powerful measure of value is an index called *perceived customer value*. PCV is the ratio of a weighted ranking of the customer-perceived quality of what you offer divided by price. (For more information on PCV, read "[Perceived Customer Value: What It Is and How to Get It.](#)") PCV is a great way to understand how a prospect makes a decision and to improve margins.

But it's not just about value. If it were, you'd run the risk of sacrificing your mission in the name of high-margin sales. Your mission is based on values. As an association, you often sell your mission to prospects as part of the package.

In fact, while your products and services may change from country to country, you should be constant in how you express your (perhaps localized) values-based mission.

Make sure you stick to those values, too. Your behaviors tell your prospects and members more about who you are than your mission statement. In our customer-driven Internet economy, an organization's bad behavior has an almost real-time impact on customers. For example, Nike drove away its customers when the press and activists exposed its use of sweatshops. Despite sinking profits, Nike has survived the negative publicity thanks to its deep pockets. Associations usually don't have that luxury.

Value in a global world

Going global makes marketing your values more complicated. Martha Nussbaum, a prominent American philosopher, has said, "If you really push people, they'll agree that virtue is more important than money." A virtuous organization chooses its behavior within an ethical or moral framework. But how will that translate into countries quite different from the United States? Nussbaum asks: "What would a moral global system look like? A United States of the world?"

A global association must develop a system for measuring PCV from culture to culture and an expression of its core values using locally defined signs, symbols, and interactions. Delay equals loss of credibility. If you use red, white, and blue colors on your Web site design, how will that affect your German members? Your Egyptian members?

Once you've determined how to localize your core values, measure and increase the perception of the quality of your offerings. You'll need to do this as fast as you can. As Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric, once said, "When the rate of change outside exceeds the rate of change inside, the end is in sight."

To create and manage value fast, look at adaptive systems management for inspiration.

Complex adaptive systems

Creating member value seems to be the responsibility of executives thousands of miles away who must answer to an elected board. That's bound to slow things down. How can you boost your value around the globe but leave executive management out of the daily details?

Think of your local presence as a micro-culture that evolves as you and your prospects and members get to know each other. By evolving together, you and your global members converge on an ideal value exchange. They get high value for their time and money investment, and you gain a sustainable foothold in new countries so that you can promote your core values.

When you create such an ecosystem, the richness and stability of the exchanges increase because you and your members are building on a jointly shared history. Your members remember when you deliver on your promises and adapt to their needs. It shows commitment, which makes them more loyal.

You and your members and prospects organize together to create value. This self-organization is a hallmark of a complex adaptive system.

And if your in-country team makes promises and helps build products that reflect your localized values, your executives (board and staff) don't need to be heavily burdened with managing at a distance.

Follow this prescription

So this is the prescription: Create a system that delivers well-adapted value quickly so that you build loyalty. Build your core values into your in-country behaviors.

This system of processes, people, and products is called a *business object*. In the past, people thought of departments as business objects, but the modern, nimble association realizes that interdepartmental decision making is often too slow. And, as Welch says, if you're too slow on the inside, the end is near.

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Sidebar: Recommended Reading

Complexity and adaptive systems thinking

- [*The Complexity Advantage: How the Science of Complexity Can Help Your Business Achieve Peak Performance*](#) by Susanne Kelly and Mary Ann Allison (2000, McGraw-Hill)
- [*Facilitating Organization Change: Lessons from Complexity Science*](#) by Edwin E. Olson and Glenda H. Eoyang (2001, Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer)
- [*Systems Thinking: Managing Chaos and Complexity: A Platform for Designing Business Architecture*](#) by Jamshid Gharajedaghi (1999, Butterworth-Heinemann)
- [*The New Knowledge Management: Complexity, Learning, and Sustainable Innovation*](#) by Mark W. McElroy (2002, Butterworth-Heinemann)

Object-oriented analysis

- [*Object-Oriented Analysis and Design with Applications*](#) (2nd Edition) by Grady Booch (1993, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company)
- [*Business Modeling with UML: Business Patterns at Work*](#) by Hans-Erik Eriksson and Magnus Penker (2000, John Wiley & Sons)
- [*Writing Effective Use Cases*](#) by Alistair Cockburn (2000, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company)

Choosing staff for the adaptive business objects

- [*Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap . . . and Others Don't*](#) by Jim Collins (2001, HarperCollins)
- [*First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently*](#) by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman (1999, Simon & Schuster)
- [*Now, Discover Your Strengths*](#) by Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton (2001, Free Press)

Perceived customer value

- [*"An Empirical Investigation of the Structural Antecedents of Perceived Value in a Heterogeneous Population"*](#) by Wayne DeSarbo, Kamel Jedidi, and Indrajit Sinha (1998, Pennsylvania State University)
- [*Managing Customer Value: Creating Quality and Service That Customers Can See*](#) by Bradley Gale (1994, Free Press)

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Virtual Conferences: Face-to-Face Benefits Without the Barriers **By Soren Kaplan and Julia Lynn Ashley**

Think back to the best conference you ever attended. What do you remember? Most likely it's not a particular speaker's PowerPoint presentation. It's the overall experience. And this experience is shaped by far more than content. When you look beneath the surface at what matters, it includes

- applied learning through sharing experiences;
- creating relationships; and
- developing new business opportunities.

Online conferences: The wave of the future

The tools and knowledge exist to create events that feel like real conferences yet are conducted entirely online. Just like face-to-face conferences, attendees participate in experts' presentations, get questions answered, network with others, and access valuable resources. Yet, unlike face-to-face events, online conferences allow a broad audience to participate at any time from anywhere at a modest cost.

The opportunity for delivering online conferences—in a way that creates a comprehensive attendee experience—is ripe in the international sector. Online conferences address the needs of the international community to

- overcome geographic isolation;
- learn about emerging trends and best practices;
- promote effective partnering; and
- participate in global networking opportunities.

At the same time, online conferences address the challenges of time zones, travel restrictions, and the financial constraints of attendance.

In a recent [article](#) that appeared in *Technology Marketing Magazine*, Gay Slesinger describes her experience in an international online conference: "As a participant, I found that it's like being in two places at once. You can be there virtually and in your office at the same time. You spend time, but not much money to attend. . . . As a sponsor, you can host a conference and never leave your office. You can reach your audience for far less money than sponsoring a physical conference. You can read what the attendees are saying. . . . What sets apart the online conference from an online meeting are the multiple levels of interactivity, the opportunity for collaboration, and the fact that the conference can last for multiple days—or longer."

From traditional to online

Last fall the New Media Consortium (NMC), Austin, Texas, an association

of major universities, corporations, and museums, added a new approach to its conference programs: a four-day conference conducted entirely online. Of the 225 attendees, 100 were paying nonmembers who represented 11 countries outside of the United States.

On opening day, attendees logged into the online conference, created a networking profile, and were met with a [streaming media welcome](#) and overview by Larry Johnson, CEO of NMC. Each day a new set of conference rooms opened where participants could interact with presenters and other attendees. The conference also featured

- a Collaboration Cafe, where attendees could discuss a variety of topics;
- a daily happy hour to bring together presenters and attendees in a real-time online chat;
- a searchable directory of participant profiles that created additional networking opportunities; and
- instant messaging throughout the conference and public and private virtual meetings, which created an easy, friendly environment to compare interests and exchange information.

One attendee commented, "What I appreciated most about this mode of conferencing was the ability to see and hear presentations—several times if needed—and ask questions either in a group forum or privately about matters [of interest]. It was much easier (than in a regular conference) to tailor the conference to one's needs. It is easier to network with people, too."

After discovering this new business model, NMC has already scheduled its next online conference and will integrate online activities directly into its annual face-to-face conference this summer.

Going international from the start

When the [Collaborative Communities 2003](#) conference series launched its first event—an online conference spanning four days—it involved more than 250 attendees from 14 countries. The conference included real-time presentations, recorded presentations, teleconferences, online chats, and asynchronous discussions about building online communities.

Most important, the format encouraged networking and relationship building. Attendees created networking profiles used to pair up participants with like interests. Because most presentations were prerecorded, time zones had little bearing on participation. Attendees could view presentations, post questions, and receive responses from presenters and other attendees. Real-time events were recorded and made immediately available. The result: an experience of equal participation irrespective of time zone and one that was characterized by more than just content. Several attendees walked away with new business partnerships and contracts.

The bottom line

International online conferences, when connected to the association's strategy, will be a differentiator tough to match. Given that attendees want more than content, associations are positioned to capitalize on online conferences, which can lead to

- broader reach and access to new members;
- significantly reduced financial risk when producing large events;

- unlimited non-dues revenue potential;
- greater member loyalty;
- increased participation in face-to-face events; and
- development of new knowledge assets.

Associations that take advantage of online virtual conferences will pave the way for a host of other opportunities—at home and abroad.

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From the Listserver: Country Codes Support Global Operations

According to International Section members on ASAE's [International Section e-mail list](#), country codes assist domestic and international members in making calls to the association and signal that the organization operates worldwide.

Question: *We are working to build our international presence and have been encouraging our marketing folks to use the +1 country code format for our contact information. So instead of (or at the very least, in addition to) 1-800-283-7476, we would be listed as +1-703-548-3440. We've been recommending this for many reasons. For one, it seems to be the standard outside the United States, and more importantly, individuals outside the United States wouldn't be able to reach us using the 800 number. The marketing people are OK with it, but somehow it has moved up the food chain, and there is resistance. Is anyone using the +1 country code format? Do you have examples of your reasoning for or against this? If you are located outside the United States, could you comment on +1 versus not?*

—[Sara B. Costello](#), manager, global strategy and programs, Society for Human Resource Management, Alexandria, Virginia

Response: Our house style is to put 1 before all U.S. phone and fax numbers, and omit parentheses around the area code. Reason: It reminds domestic callers that they need to use the 1 and the area code for most calls, including many local calls, plus it gives the country code for foreign callers. However, we don't put the plus sign ahead of the country code.

As to 800 numbers (and variants such as 877), I was taught to always put *toll free* in front as an added marketing plus, and the non-toll-free number after it in parenthesis, because in addition to foreign callers, the callers in the immediate area can't access the toll-free number. The same goes for toll-free fax numbers.

—[Catherine R. Lincoln](#), CAE, director, marketing and international affairs, American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery/Foundation, Alexandria, Virginia

Response: We use the following format for U.S. telephone numbers: +1 (203) 743-1336. I've seen all different styles that are used by different groups, and I think what is important is to be consistent. We opted to include a + to indicate what needs to follow the country code if you are dialing from outside the United States.

—[Christine Giordano](#), CAE, executive director, Society for Biomolecular Screening, Danbury, Connecticut

Response: As a global organization, we display our U.S. phone and fax numbers with +1 and always include USA at the bottom of our address. We have incorporated this prescribed format in our style guide used by staff and volunteers. It took me some time to change the headquarters culture and convince everyone that even when communicating with our members in the United States, we should display this global format to sensitize our North American members to the fact that we are a worldwide organization. It has now become second nature for most of our staff.

—[Sylvia Boyd](#), assistant vice president, global development, The Institute of Internal Auditors,

Altamonte Springs, Florida

Response: After 33 years in the United States, we have just moved our headquarters to England and are setting up a series of regional office contacts, which divert through to our new offices here. This includes toll-free numbers in the United States and other international access numbers. We don't have the budget to stretch to the new European 00 800 numbers (international freefone) where you can call free in your own country.

However, plenty of companies offer free divert services to the USA from the United Kingdom after line rental—for example, if you wanted to have a U.K. number for your organisation that is diverted to the USA. Being able to ring a number that is more *local* does help with the perception of being an international organisation.

In our case, we had to continue to provide U.S. numbers because most Americans do not know how to dial internationally. I should emphasize that this is not a criticism, just a reality. We bought two toll-free numbers (one telephone, one fax) for \$2 each and \$2 per month rental. Calls diverted to the United Kingdom cost just 10 cents per minute. Our fax number actually converts faxes into TIFF/PDF files and e-mails them, which makes them much more portable across our organisation. Voice mail is sent via e-mail as WAV files.

—[Steven Greenall](#), executive director, International Trombone Association, Coventry, United Kingdom

Interested in more discussions on international issues? Consider joining the International Section e-mail discussion group. To sign up, visit www.asaenet.org/networkinglistservers.

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Associations Make a Better World Virtual Conference May 4-6, 2004

Don't miss this unique opportunity for networking and knowledge sharing with ASAE International Section members nationwide as well as association colleagues around the globe. In this interactive, peer-to-peer learning format, you'll be able to share your questions, challenges, and successes. Highlights of this unique virtual conference include education discussions on

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- How associations make a better world and more

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Registration is now open. Take advantage of early bird rates by registering before July 16. Special hotel rates are also available through July 12 or until those rooms are booked. Minneapolis is ready to welcome you. And so are we. See it all come together, August 14-17, in Minneapolis. Register online today at <http://annual.asaenet.org/2004>.

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