

agenda

THE JOURNAL OF SUSOC, THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF MANAGERS IN STUDENTS' UNIONS

Issue 56 • December 1996



A Design for Life

Why Student Nightclubs are leading the World

Selling on the Internet • UNL Student Centre Profile
Photocopiers • License Renewals

agenda

AGENDA is the journal of the Students' Union Senior Officers' Conference. It exists to promote discussion amongst students' union professionals.

The views expressed in AGENDA are those of the authors alone and do not represent the views of the editor, SUSOC Committee members or the authors' employing unions.

Published by SUSOC

What's new in SUSOC New appointments and news	2
SUSOC report by Stephanie Hancock	4
From the Chair by Michael Baron	5
Selling to Surfers Jan Kewley on the SMI Cybermarketing Seminar	6
On the Right Course SUSOC Training Programme	9
Students' Uni-owned The new Student Centre at the University of North London is owned by the University, not the Union. <i>Agenda</i> pays a visit	10
Scams, Dodgy Deals, Daylight Robbery Gary Stark blows the lid on the shady underworld of buying a photocopier	12
UKCOSA News by Alan Henderson	16
Legal News Lisa Sharkey of Poppleston Allen Solicitors advises about renewal of club licenses	18
Extra Publications 1996/97	22
Agenda Readership survey Tell us what you think	24

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Officers and staff of the **University of East London Students' Union** celebrating receiving a prestigious 'Investors in People' award. The award recognises the achievement the Union has made in reaching national standards of training.

Mike Davies is the new General Manager at the University of Wales Institute Cardiff Students' Union. He was previously Administration Manager at the University Union, Cardiff.

The University of Liverpool Guild of Students has appointed **Ian McCartney** as Student Activities and Premises Manager. Ian was formerly Student Enterprise Manager at Napier University and an Education and Training Adviser at the Open College.

Pete Mayhew, formerly manager at the Stumble site at the Royal Holloway University of London Students' Union, has now taken responsibility for all revenue-generating activities at both Union sites. **Richard Swift** (Bars

Manager Union Site) has taken responsibility for all technical systems and safety issues.

Agenda will be going into the new year with a new look. As part of our continuing efforts to provide a magazine which is interesting and informative as well as being an important communications tool, we are conducting a readership survey to find out exactly what you want. There's also a space for you to tell us about any ideas you might have for a feature. We constantly require new articles so even if you don't want to write one yourself, let us know what you want to read about. Please take the time to fill out the form and return it to the SUSOC office by the end of January. Your participation is appreciated. The survey is on page 24

Dear All,

As you may know, I resigned as SUSOC Administrator in early November in order to take up employment with Ernst and Young, as their Training Course Supervisor.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you and goodbye to SUSOC and its members. I have found the last eighteen months very enjoyable, challenging and, above all, rewarding.

I wish SUSOC, its members and its volunteers all the best for the future.

Regards

Wendi Lunn

We would like to publish your views, objections, thoughts and reactions to anything affecting SUSOC members. Please send your letters to the SUSOC Office at Aston Students' Guild, Aston University, The Triangle,

Margaret Richards

Margaret Richards, former Permanent Secretary of University College London Union, died on 14th August 1996 at the age of 86. Her service is described in 'The Godless Students of Gower Street', published in 1968:

"At the start of the 1948-49 session Miss Margaret Richards became the Union's Permanent Secretary. This position had been created during the previous academic year but Miss Richards' predecessor had been unsuited to the job. Margaret Richards inherited an overwhelming administrative problem. In cramped and uncomfortable surroundings she had to fashion order out of chaos, but in next to no time, she had sorted out the dance tickets and the poster paints, and made a beginning on a comprehensive filing system.

Margaret Richards was a graduate of Somerville College, Oxford, and had led a varied life as a secretary, teacher and civil servant before joining the National Union of Students as General Secretary after the war. As a JP and councillor, Margaret had the ideal qualifications for the UC

Union post.

She found that the biggest single problem was shortage of space. "In 1948 the total Union office consisted of two desks shared by the Executive and the Permanent Secretary, and a set of pigeon-holes," she later recalled. "The Union accommodation was underground in what is now a stationary store." Miss Richards thinks that the students of 1948 were older and more mature than those of the present generation, "but this was not always translated into their Union activities. Perhaps more students in those days regarded the Union as a relief from the pressing realities of living - a reaction from the war years; whereas students now look to the Union for ways of acquiring the responsibilities and know-how of real life."

Miss Richards retired in 1971 after twenty-two years of service to UCL Union. Her longevity in the post was almost matched by her successor, Michael Freeman, who served as Union administrator until June 1991.



From the Chair

Michael Baron explains why Students' Unions should be like steam trains

I was travelling back from the first meeting of the Senior Managers Group committee on the day of the recent severe gales. When I got to York, there was an announcement that no more tickets should be sold for travel between York and Edinburgh and passengers were advised not to travel. The wind had blown a power transmission cable down over the track and this had demolished the railway's overhead cables. What had been planned as a easy day-trip was turning into a marathon.

The incident reminded me of a session given at the ACUI Region 1 conference at Strathclyde by Kathleen Allen. Participants were asked to write down the characteristics of a steam engine and of the weather. A steam engine was man-made, mechanical, predictable, had measurable inputs and outputs, it is orderly in that the effects of changes to the system can be traced. The weather was natural. It was predictable both in the short term and the long term. Effects could be linked to causes. It is essentially disorderly (chaotic in the jargon). The question was, consider your organisation:

is it more like a steam engine or the weather? Most people said that the characteristics of their organisation were much more like the weather.

If this is the case, what sort of training and development should be provided for people who have to manage 'chaotic' organisations? To deal with essentially unpredictable organisations requires experience and judgement rather than easily learnt rules. Beyond the basic levels, 'Red sky at night,

shepherd's delight' type axioms will not work. This is one of the reasons why it has been difficult to find advanced versions of the SUSOC residential courses that have been so successful for junior and middle managers. It was this problem we were discussing in Leeds that day.

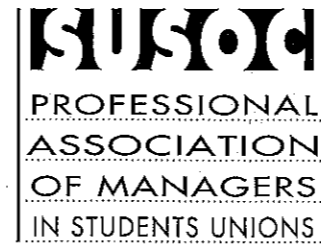
What we came up with was a number of suggestions that people on the committee are investigating.

Most people said that the characteristics of their organisation were like the weather

- One that is likely to come to fruition in the new year is a senior managers' retreat. The idea is that up to twelve managers go away for 24 hours and each one presents a paper on a topic of interest, either something that has arisen in their union or something that they have been researching. This would then be followed by a discussion.
- More and more senior managers have taken or are considering a professional qualification. We are investigating with a couple of institutions developing an MBA course with options geared to student union managers.
- The third idea is to do more work on improving the quality of networking between managers. All staff require support from peers and supervisors, but this is often not easily available for senior managers. More contact with colleagues would be one way of achieving this. Various ways are being looked at including training and regional initiatives.

The committee consists of myself, Ken Stratford at Leeds Met and Marie-Anne Kyne at Anglia. We would welcome any feedback from members on these plans.

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SUSOC Report

by **Stephanie Hancock, SUSOC Office Manager**

Season's Greetings from the SUSOC Office. Since the last edition of Agenda Wendi Lunn has left and also the book-keeper, Margaret Hiam. So you can see we are a little thin on the ground at the moment - just me and the part-time student casual staff to help out. However, please do not let that deter you from contacting us as usual with your enquiries and requests.

The latest news from the division training front is that the first event took place with SMI Cybermarketing at Warwick in October and was a great success with eighteen participants plus representatives from the committee in attendance. In November, the first SMI residential training was held at a new venue called Hillscourt Conference Centre in Birmingham and was very well subscribed. The venue is set in the Lickey Hills and has about 25 acres of walking country surrounding it. The day the training began there was a heavy fall of snow so it was more a case of skis and sledges than walking. At the moment we are taking bookings for the SMI sponsorship seminar to be held in early December and there has been a lot of interest shown, with the speaker, Richard Busby, Chief Executive from BDS Sponsorship, London conducting the training.

The RAWs committee met in November to organise their training events and to discuss next year's conference. The training on Housing will hopefully take place at Aston at the end of January 1997. The Nursing Students training is scheduled for the start of February at International Students' House. Please look out for these events which will be advertised in the weekly mailing. The committee met at Tupton Hall, Sheffield which is to be the venue for their residential conference in March 1997. First impressions by the committee are that everyone will be very well looked after during their stay. The

committee would be pleased to hear from anyone who is interested in helping out with training events or the conference. Please contact Avril Cooper (RAWs Chair) at Loughborough on 01509 217766.

Planning is underway for next year's FOG residential training which is scheduled for mid August following the highly successful event earlier this year. There is a Christmas meeting planned to take place on the 18th December and details will be sent out in the weekly mailing. FOG are also looking to run professional development sessions establishing a mentoring scheme. The SUSOC office will as usual have all the details.

SMOG hope to continue their successful training days and provisionally there are two days planned, one in the Spring for February/March and one in the summer, probably June. Training material is available from all previous SMOG events from Dave Strawbridge at ULU. If anyone is interested in the joining the committee or has any innovative ideas for future training days, please contact Dave Strawbridge on 0171 580 9551, extension 221.

The first meeting of the Training Group took place in early November and from this meeting came the Management Development Initiative planned to take place early in December. Again this event will be publicised in the mailing and will take place at Aston. I am always delighted when events come to Aston because then I often have the opportunity to meet so many of you who I have spoken to on the telephone. Please feel free to come to the office where we hold the resource library which may be of interest.

SUSOC training began with the Manager and the Team course taking place at the popular training venue of Runnings Park in Great Malvern. The course was full and we have also half filled

SUSOC REPORT cont

the next course which will be at the TUC Training Centre in London on 4 - 6 February 1997. We are currently receiving registrations for the Finance for Non-Financial Managers course on 15 - 16 January 1997 also to be held at Runnings Park. Please note that this is the only scheduled finance course this training year, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

We have now moved into the suite of four offices and this has made administration a lot easier and I don't seem to be bumping into furniture when we had sometimes up to 5 people in one room. We have obtained some office furniture from the University which while it serves its purpose is not designer labelled!

I have just made a quick count of general enquires ranging from resource library requests, training, publications, accounts and general information requirements. It was fairly quiet for SUSOC while you were extremely busy with Freshers but that did not last for long as we have received 236 enquiries for the two month period October to November. We try to log all the telephone enquiries which gives a good idea of the volume of work coming through the telephone. At the moment we are looking at telephone systems and will encourage you to contact us at anytime on 0121 333 6201 or e-mail susoc@aston.ac.uk.

Since publishing the list of resource library contents we have had several requests for information. Please could you let us have your up to date information from your Union which will help enhance the library and provide an even more effective service.

The Directory 1996/97 was distributed in the weekly mailing on the 6th December and I hope you have found it useful and are pleased with the format. Please fill out the form at the back of the directory if you need further copies.

Finally, the office will be closed from 24th December 1996 and re-open on Thursday 2nd January 1997. Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Selling to Surfers

The SMI Cybermarketing Seminar was held at Warwick on 25th October 1996. Jan Kewley reports

Just about every student at every university has access to the Internet. Some don't bother, but huge numbers do. Many of them have set up their own websites to talk about themselves or their interests to anyone who's interested enough to listen (a notable example is the cheese-Ophile student at Warwick who creates a 'Cheese of the Day' website by scanning the label of his chosen dairy produce).

So there are thousands of our target market sitting at computers just looking for something to take their fancy. And here are we, people who have services, goods, entertainment and the like set up specifically for students, trying to find ways to tell them what we've got. It seems like a pretty good opportunity to me.

This was the idea behind the SUSOC Marketing Initiative's Cybermarketing day. Some of us had already tried to use the Internet for marketing communications, mainly through web pages. Most of us were keen to know how to improve our efforts. We asked Pauline Bickerton, Director of Marketing Net, to speak to us about what we are doing and how to do it better. Marketing Net is a team of marketing people who specialise in the use of cutting edge technology to put their clients on the Internet. They have worked with over 50 companies, from small companies to Forte, The Ritz and Grant Thornton International. And as Pauline is an ex-student of Warwick, she knows a bit about student life.

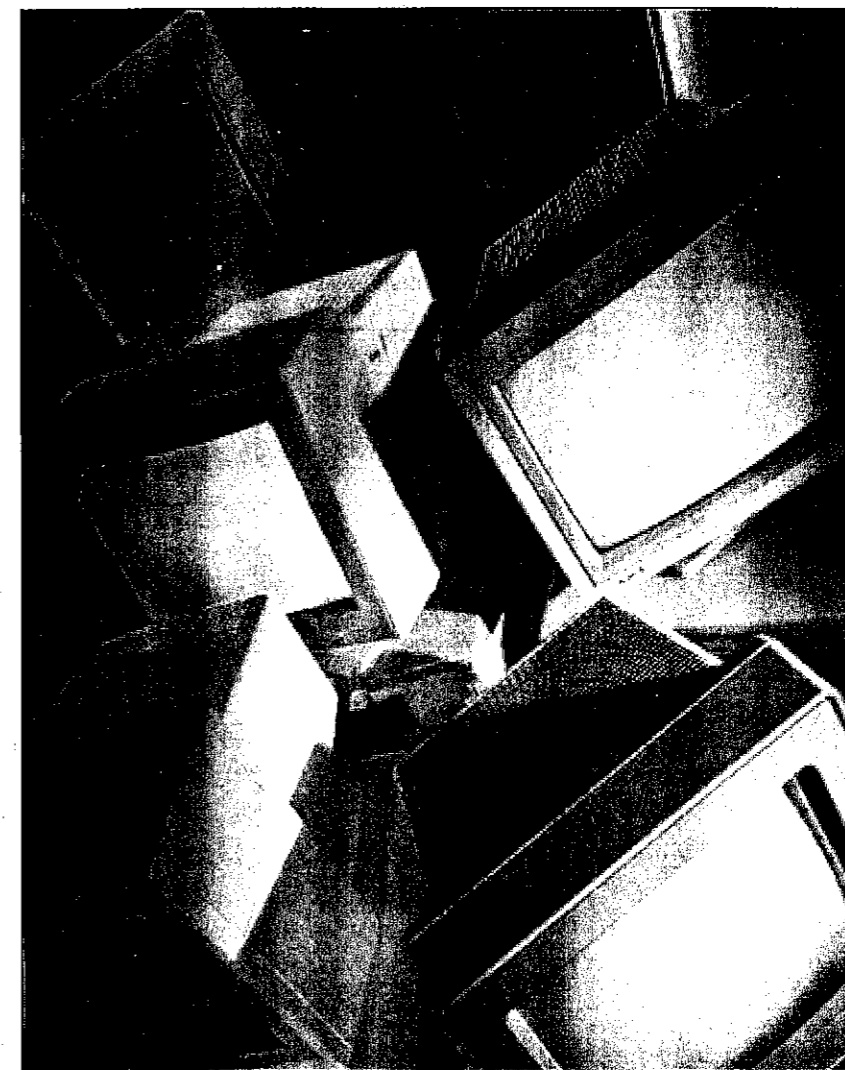
The seminar started with Pauline doing a whistle-stop tour of the history of the Internet, from its origins in the USA as a military facility, through to its current status as a tool for over 45 million people. She then went into the uses of the Net, and what the main user segments are. For those of us in Student Organisations, our main segments are 'hobbyists' - those who use the Internet to pursue their main interest, often films, music and games (there are good mail order CD companies on-line!) - and academic buffs; some of the earliest users who tend to employ the Net as a tool to source information and data to help with their studies.

The next stage was to look at what makes the Internet - and

more specifically, a website - different from other forms of media. In other words, why you can't just plonk your student handbook on the web and expect it to be a roaring success. Pauline took us through the essentials: the 'Ten Rules of Internet Marketing' (which if you want to learn, you'll have to attend one of her seminars!). The most important difference is that people will visit your site to get something from it. That might be entertainment (like a

quiz or screen-saver) or information (like your bar opening times or the Ents programme) or links to other useful or entertaining sites. But they are not going to visit just because you put it there for them, and they are not going to come back if you don't keep it interesting.

After lunch we looked at lots of websites, from commercial companies and students' unions, to see what it was that made a successful site. Pauline was very complimentary about the friendly, welcoming approach and useful links, but we all have a lot to learn about presenting information.



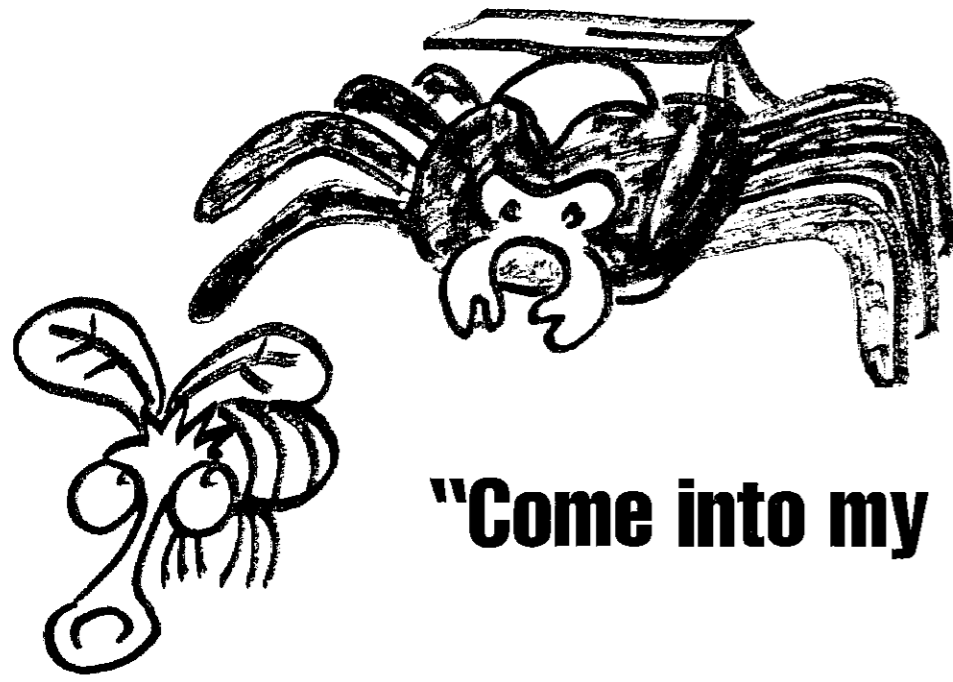
The final part of the day was to make a start on devising a strategy to make the most of the web for students' unions. This was an open session so we all contributed ideas. We started by brainstorming what we currently used the Internet for, and then looked at it from our customer's perspective. We talked about who uses the service and what for. Then we looked at segmenting the market into past, present and prospective students and what each segment might want from the websites we produce.

Among the reams of ideas it became clear that there is a real revenue-generating potential for unions in the setting up

and running of high-quality websites. After all, if you generate revenue on your newspaper or radio station, this is just as viable, so long as you work within the restrictions imposed by the Joint Academic Network (JANet guidelines are available on ja.net/JANET/document/use.html).

Jan Kewley

MarketingNet's website is <http://marketingnet.com/>



"Come into my Parlour"

Students' Uni-owned

The new Student Centre at the University of East London is run by the University, not the Union. How does it work?

It sounds like a Vice-Chancellor's dream: the lucrative student services being run by the University, and no student officers to get in the way. That's the current situation at the University of North London, where the University took over the student services eighteen months ago and there has been no executive since the summer. However, students and staff alike are hoping that the turbulence of recent months will soon be forgotten as the new Student Centre finds its feet.

"The University took over the Union's commercial services in the summer of 1995," General Manager Lesley Dixon explains. "The University was, at that time, spending large sums of money on refurbishing the Students' Centre and originally it was thought that the Students' Union were going to run those services. Eventually, however, the University didn't have confidence in the Union to run those services properly and therefore took them over themselves."

Ms. Dixon, who is the former General Manager of King's

College Students' Union, denies that the University's decision had anything to do with the Union's history of electing politically extreme executives, and was based solely upon the fact that the financial position of the Union was judged to be precarious. She cites a postal referendum carried out by the University which registered nearly 80% support among students for the Student Centre to be run by the University and not the Union.

The services in the new custom-built Student Centre include three bars, two shops and a nightclub / concert venue. Early indications are that, after a little over a year, the Centre's performance is improving.

The Centre is run by the University of North London Student Centre Ltd, and there will be two student representatives on the board of the company - the President and VP Finance of the Students' Union. One problem, though: UNL is currently the only University in the country to have no student officers.

"Last spring the Students' Union didn't organise its elections," says Ms. Dixon. "Under the Education Act 1994 the University has to ensure the elections are conducted fair and properly, and once it got to the end of May the University decided that if elections were to be held so late in the term, this would not be possible. So there were no elections last term, and there are currently no officers. New elections have now been scheduled for next semester, and once those elections take place there will be direct student input on the board."

While the Student Centre is a private company, it remains effectively a department of the University. This brings natural savings: there is no need, for example, for the Student Centre to employ its own buildings support staff or finance office. Indeed, with just sixteen employees serving 12,000 students, the economies of scale really pay off.

The Student Centre is also taking on some of the duties traditionally thought as the Student Union's role: welfare and advice. They have just appointed a new Support Services

Manager, Rachael Grose, who has three years' experience as a Welfare Manager. "Her responsibilities are all the Centre's non-commercial activities," says Lesley Dixon, "and although no hard and fast decisions have been made yet, we'll be looking to employ welfare staff in the Centre quite soon."

So what implications can other Universities and Unions around the country draw from the UNL experience? Are VCs throughout Britain salivating at the prospect of getting their hands on the Union's money-spinning services? Not according to Lesley Dixon.

"The reasons that this happened here are quite unique, and I don't think that other colleges will go down the same route."

Where the relationship between a union and the university is strong, there's no reason why the university should want to take over the Union's services. There might be money in it for them, but if the students' union is doing a good job, providing a good service to students, and is contributing to an atmosphere which makes students want to study there, it can only help recruitment".

NUS Deputy National Director Nick Gash agrees. "The situation at UNL is quite individual," he says. "The University built a new building with no formal agreement about who would run it. It's not like the University were taking over an existing facility. Universities and colleges recognise the value, if for no other reason than in marketing terms, of good student facilities, and in the majority of cases they want and expect these to be run by the Students' Union. NUS understands that it is the intention of UNL to hand over the

running of the Student Centre as and when the Students' Union becomes capable of running it."

The time-scale for such a transfer, however, is vague. At this point it is simply being talked about in "the long term". Meanwhile, the performance of UNL's Student Centre will be watched with interest from campuses around the country.

There will be two student representatives on the board of the company. One problem, though: UNL is currently the only University in the country to have no student officers.

Scams, Dodgy Deals, Daylight Robbery...

How to not get ripped off when buying a photocopier!

**Gary Stark's third and last article
on how to make sure you don't
overspend when you're acquiring
your photocopiers.**

I know it's not a sexy subject... and that's the main problem. Because it's not sexy, it can often be treated as just another item of office furniture and yet an average copier contract will cost your Union £25,000 over 5 years. Now

since the average number of copiers in a typical Union is three, this can cost £15,000 per annum -and that's if you've got a good deal. If you've got a bad one, as is too often the case, then your Union could spend treble that amount. I know of no other item of Union expenditure at that level that is dealt with without planning and forethought, yet after visiting over 60 Unions in the past 18 months, I have seen too many haphazard methods of obtaining copiers which are costing Unions far too much money. So, as my final farewell to the pages of "Agenda", I would like to offer serious advice on how to buy copiers properly.

However, before I begin, I would like to make two important points. Firstly, I have to admit that until I started investigating this market more fully, I made mistakes that I wouldn't make now. I let myself be browbeaten by aggressive sales staff, I looked at what make I wanted before I knew what I wanted the copier to do, I fell for offers of free equipment etc, etc. But I now know differently. Secondly, I would ask any of you that have signed bad deals to not feel ashamed- you are in good company- American Express, British Gas, BBC, and many others, all with full-time professional buyers, have fallen into the same traps as your Union may have. However the real shame is when buyers are afraid to admit to themselves they did it wrong: that's when things get really rough because the copier company have then got you by the proverbial short curly ones! I know of one school headmaster who wouldn't sue the copier company because he was afraid of the furore and is still tied in for 5 machines he doesn't use for £100k per annum.

So, how should you go about it. There are four methods, two of them good, one average and one to avoid.

- 1) Get involved with the local college deals. The main advantages of this are that the prices are competitive and the service is good (although all companies these days are providing good service). However there are three distinct disadvantages. Firstly, the college will probably be tied to one or two manufacturers and this could mean that you are not getting the best machines on the market. Technology changes fast and whereas, say, Canon were the best machines around three years ago, that is probably no longer the case. Secondly, many colleges are tied to Rank Xerox, whose machines are more expensive than most of the other manufacturers, and whose leasing terms are also prohibitive. Finally you will still have to deal with copier reps, whose job is to sell you what they've got in stock not what is the right machine. At one Union last year, the rep was trying to sell eight machines none of which would actually have done the job that the Union needed. Similarly, at another Union, the rep was browbeating them to change their machine unnecessarily half way through the leasing term. This would have cost the Union £16,000 with no additional benefits, simply so the rep could meet his target.
- 2) Get involved with CMP Purchasing Group Ltd. I don't particularly want to make this article a sales pitch so I will simply state the pros and cons as fairly as I can, (given that I am still working with the company). CMP is a specialist photocopying purchasing consortium acting on behalf of its members, which comprise many large International companies, charities and approx. 30 Student Unions from all over the country. The advantages of working with the group are :-

a) There is no cost to the Union. CMP guarantees the Union a minimum of 36% discount of the manufacturers list price and then splitting any additional discounts 50-50 between the Union and CMP. So typically, the Unions are currently gaining 43% off list price, compared to HMSO and Canon educational rates of 35% discount.

b) CMP is not tied to any manufacturer. By helping you easily build a purchase specification they can give you good advice on what is the best machine for your needs and are not limited to any particular range. This has enabled Unions to buy a smaller machine than they would have bought from a rep and so save money.

c) CMP have removed all the scams from their contracts. Because they represent a purchasing strength of over 3000 machines, they have insisted that the manufacturers meet their terms....no minimum volume charges, low leasing rates, service guaranteed by cash back penalty clauses etc.

d) Saving Managers money and worry. Because they deal with the manufacturers on your behalf, you will never have to be pestered by copier reps again and all the worry about "which is the right machine", "am I being ripped off", "do I have to visit 3 - 4 sites to see the different machines in action", etc will be removed from your desk. CMP allows you to get on with your main priorities and not have to spend a lot of time over what should be a simple although expensive purchase.

However, there are two disadvantages. The college deals while restrictive in choice, may sometimes be 2-3% cheaper than CMP, although when leasing rates are taken into account this is not usually the case. I prepared a quote for one Union in the consortium, where the purchase price quoted by CMP was £50 dearer than the college, but when the leasing rate was considered, CMP was £4,000 cheaper. The other disadvantage is that like any consortium, NUSL for example, a level of commitment is needed and therefore we ask our members to add their future replacements and equipment into the consortium. By doing this, CMP is able to negotiate current prices based on future sales, which is of course, how the NUSL beer deals have worked. This has caused some Unions to wait until they need to replace their machines before joining, but of course if everyone did that, there would be no consortium and no benefits.

3) There is a deal with Rank Xerox for Universities whereby you just pay a copy charge which includes the capital cost as well as the service charge. However to date I have only found one Union who is using this deal, and while it allows a level of flexibility, it does work out relatively expensive. When service and capital costs are included, a copier making

Scams, Dodgy Deals, Daylight Robbery...

30,000 copies a month should roughly work out at about 1.1 pence per copy over a 5 year period. Any more than, say, 1.25 pence per copy is expensive and should be avoided.

- 4) Do it yourself. I will make a bold statement here....I only know one Union where they have saved money by doing it themselves and that was 4 years ago and the Manager spent many hours getting a good deal. He admitted to me he wouldn't do it again. I am prepared to guarantee that no-one out there can better CMP's deals or the colleges deals by putting together a package entirely on their own. I ask anyone who thinks they can do better to prove it and I will back it up with a £50 prize to anyone who can. My advice to you all is don't try it. But, if you still want to try, below are some tips on how to avoid the pitfalls.

Firstly, under no circumstances pick out the model you want without analysing what you want it to do. I know this sounds obvious, but I have visited over 120 unions and companies and only two have actually drawn up a specification or even a simple list. If you don't know what you want it to do, the rep will take the chance to sell you what he/she wants you to buy. Usually, this means you end off with a machine larger than you actually need, and with features you rarely use. This costs you big money!! So draw up a specification, stating desired number of copies per minute, highest likely monthly volume (do not use average volumes as you will then overstretch the machine at peak times and this could make the service contract null and void), do you want double-sided copying, sorters, staplers, document feeders, what size reduction do you want, A3/A4 copying, do you want a large paper tray. All of these additional features can double the cost of the basic machine, so put them in writing to the company and get them to state in writing that their machines meet these specifications.

Secondly, when they quote prices ask them to separate all the components of the deal. So ask :-

- a) What is manufacturers' list price?
- b) What discount are you receiving?
- c) What is service cost per copy and what does this cover?
- d) Is there a minimum volume of copies you must achieve? - my advice is show them the door if they insist on that.
- e) What leasing rates are they using?
- f) If you are leasing, what happens to the equipment at the end of the lease?- if they say you can continue with the leasing, but at the same price, again I suggest you show them the door.
- g) If any settlements of previous equipment is included ask

them to split this and show it separately, and show leasing costs of that settlement separately.

- 3) On service terms ask if service is guaranteed and what penalties occur if they don't meet their terms. Also check on length of service agreement-it is not unknown for companies to sell machines on a 3 year lease with a 5 year service contract, so you end off paying service costs on a machine you don't have anymore!
- 4) Send the contract to your solicitors. I used to send all our documentation to Stuart Richardson at Christopher Davidson, who actually helped ULU out of a terrible copier contract (signed before I started!). Ask what are your liabilities and the companies responsibilities. It will only cost £100 or so at any solicitors and will ensure you understand what you're signing and if there are any pitfalls you need to know about.
- 5) Beware of offers of free machines. THERE IS NO SUCH ANIMAL!!!
You have to understand how the companies make their money and I have seen Unions where they have very low service costs but were charged list price on the purchase, unions where the purchase price was low but charges of 2 pence per copy for service (you shouldn't pay more than .9 pence per copy for servicing), low purchase prices with high leasing rates, refurbished machines sold as new etc. etc. One way or another they will make you pay and hide how it's happening. They hate having to commit themselves to meet a specification or fully detailing how their costings are made up. So make them do it.
- 6) Finally, work out the total costs of the machine over a 5 year period, including service, capital and leasing costs. This will help you compare different machines as well as help you budget for the future.

If all this sounds complicated, it is. The copier companies have drawn rings round professional buyers whose sole task is to purchase effectively - if they can make mistakes costing £80,000 per machine, you need to be really very brave or foolish to try and match wits with the copier companies. Therefore, return to option 1 or 2 and get support and help.

I hope this will help you in making better decisions and save money - I estimate that the Student Union market is overspending on copiers by £200,000 per annum.

If you think your deals would win the £50 prize or you want any help or wish to discuss CMP's proposals with me, send details or contact me on 01933 626068 or write to me at 30 Brooks Road, Raunds, Wellingborough, Northants NN9 6NS.



LEGAL NEWS

Clubtastic

Lisa Sharkey of Poppleston Allen Solicitors
has advice for renewal of club licenses

Have you looked at your club rules recently? If you are approaching renewal of your club registration certificate, my advice would be to have a look at them. I've heard about a number of clubs recently that have had their renewal refused because their rules were not in order.

The Licensing Act 1964 sets out a number of rules which you must include. The rules are as follows:

Management of the club

The affairs of the club must be conducted by one or more elective committees, or sub-elective committees, with the exception of matters reserved for the club in general meeting or for the general body of members. If not dealt with by the club as a whole, there must be a 'general committee' which deals with the general management of affairs not specifically assigned to elective committee within your rules. You must identify who conducts the various duties and responsibilities of club.

Any committee responsible for the purchase/supply of intoxicating liquor, and any committee of four or less numbers must be elected by the members. Otherwise, a committee must have at least two or three of the membership elected.

Elections must be held annually and a committee member may

sit for a minimum of one year and a maximum of five years, provided there is provision in the rules. If you provided for a member to sit for more than one year, your rules must contain a 'rotation' system for re-election, ie. which positions must be filled annually or what percentage of the committee must retire annually.

If a casual vacancy occurs, the committee should be able to appoint a member to fill the vacancy for the period of the unexpired term.

All persons with voting rights and who have been members for two years are entitled to stand for election and this should be clear in your rules.

General Meetings

A meeting must be held at least once a year, and no more than 15 months may elapse without holding a meeting. Your rules should enable the committee to call a meeting upon giving reasonable notice, and should entitle voting members to demand a meeting in the same fashion, if a number of them join together to do so - that number should not exceed thirty, or one-fifth of the membership, whichever is the smaller.

Voting is confirmed to members who have equal voting rights. Here are some of the categories who may be excluded from voting:

- i. Members below a specified age, not greater than 21.
- ii. Women in men's clubs and vice-versa.
- iii. Family members, where a member of the family has a vote and his/her family are members by virtue of their relation to a member.

If the magistrates allow, your rules can provide for 'associate members' who have no voting rights. However, you must ensure

that the number of non-voting members will generally no use above about 10-15% of the membership.

Under S42(2) of the Act the magistrates may authorise other members to have no voting rights, provided it is in the interests of the club and it does not prejudice the non-voting members, for example where members have difficulty travelling to the club because of distance.

The provision of a chairman's casting vote will not automatically mean your club is doomed, but the court may require you to give evidence as to why a casting vote is required and justified.

Membership

Your rules must provide for 'ordinary members' to be elected in a general meeting or by an 'elective committee' or a special committee consisting of an elective committee and members appointed for that specific purpose. The name and address of the person applying for membership must be displayed in a position visible to all members for a period of at least two days.

Finally, remember that your rules should ensure that the number of persons admitted as 'non-ordinary members' are not significant to the total membership (as has already been outlined above).

There are of course many other club rules which you may include, but I've outlined above the rules you must ensure are included. I will deal in the future with the rules you may wish to include and may make your club more profitable, eg. hiring your club rooms to non-members; sales of alcohol to guests who are not members.

Changing the subject, there's no news yet on the Marsden decision. The High Court has deferred judgement, which means the judge has gone away to consider the evidence and will give his judgement in due course - hopefully before Christmas.

A great Christmas to all,

Lisa Sharkey.

Agenda Readership Survey 1996

Agenda will be going into the new year with a new look. As part of our continuing efforts to provide a magazine which is interesting and informative as well as being an important communications tool, we are conducting a readership survey to find out exactly what you want. There's also a space for you to tell us about any ideas you might have for a feature. We constantly require new articles so even if you don't want to write one yourself, let us know what you want to read about. Please take the time to fill out the form. Your participation is appreciated.

How satisfied are you with Agenda, generally?

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Not satisfied

Do you read the magazine all the way through or just the articles relevant to you?

- All
- Just relevant articles

Do you keep Agenda for future reference?

- Yes
- No

If Agenda produced binders and an index system, would you use them?

- Yes
- No

Would you visit an Agenda website?

- Yes
- No

Do you prefer in-depth, highly technical articles or shorter, more 'newsy' features?

- In depth articles
- short features

Do you think Agenda should have a round-up of interesting events, campaigns, and news from Unions around the country?

- Yes
- No

Do you think Agenda should have a regular 'Campus Focus' feature, exploring the individual situation of a particular Union (a bit like the feature on UNL this month)?

- Yes
- No

Is there any aspect of Students' Union management which you feel is under-represented in Agenda? If so, what is it?

.....

Please state which sort of articles would interest you.

Tick as many boxes as you like.

- SUSOC News
- Relevant National News
- Welfare/Advice
- Finance
- Ents
- Building Management
- Staff Training
- Officer Training
- Personnel
- Legal News
- Nightclubs/Venues
- Design/Print
- Environment
- Bars Management
- Shop Management
- Interior Design
- Marketing
- Computers

Other (please specify)

.....

Please use the space below for any comments or queries you may have. We also welcome any ideas you might have for an article or feature. Please indicate if you would like to contribute to Agenda.

.....

Name

Title / job description?

Organisation

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Thank you for completing this survey.

Please return the completed form to:
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