



# Positioning SLA for the Future:

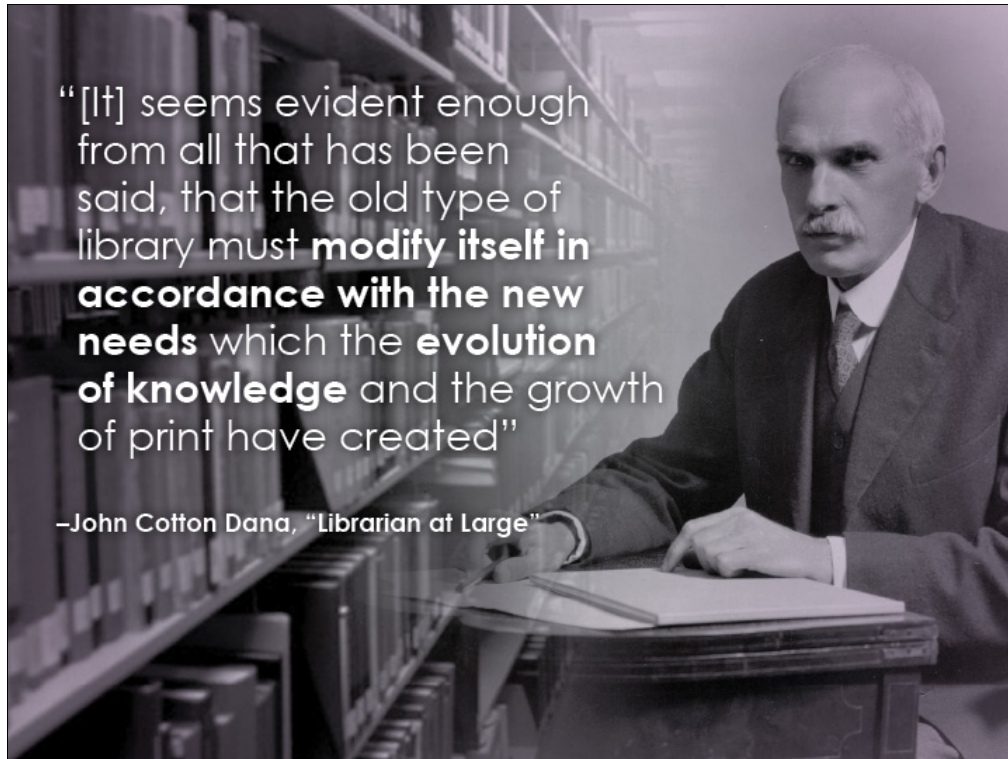
Alignment Initiative **Results** and **Recommendations**

*Presented Tuesday, January 13, 2009, in Savannah, GA*

**FLEISHMAN  
HILLARD**

**SLA**  
Contracting, People  
and Performance

**OUTSELL**



## Notes

- Since the advent of the printing press, the role of libraries and librarians has consistently evolved to meet the needs of a changing world
- As SLA prepares to enter its second century of service, it does so amidst sweeping technological change that is reshaping the information profession and redefining the world in which we live
- Now, more than ever, we need to embrace a position that is value-driven, relevant and provides a framework to discuss the Association and the profession in a single persuasive voice

## ■ Challenges & Opportunities

- Digital revolution
- Membership growth
- Aligning values with perceptions
- Unified voice, consistent communications
- SLA Centennial, repositioning for the future

### Notes

#### **Digital revolution:**

- Business leaders think Google is all they need
- Speed, convenience and self-service have gained momentum
- Opportunity to connect librarians and information professionals with *value-added intelligence*

#### **Membership Growth:**

- SLA's competition for membership, services and market leadership has intensified and diversified
- Growing decline of boomers in the workplace has impacted membership numbers
- SLA is increasingly focused on appealing to and recruiting younger members
- SLA has also identified growth opportunities outside of North America, as well as those in non-traditional information management roles

#### **Aligning values with perceptions:**

- The roles and responsibilities of information professionals and librarians continue to evolve
- Instead of *functional* descriptors, librarians and information professionals need to be defined in terms of the *value*, *benefit* and *impact* provided to their organizations (e.g. advancing business development, facilitating good decision-making, managing crises, etc.)
- Messages that validate strategic ROI of library and information management professionals need to be more actively promoted

#### **Unified voice, consistent communications:**

- Many chapters and divisions within SLA have adopted their own visual identity and nomenclature
- Formal mechanisms are needed to ensure that all facets of SLA are thinking, communicating and behaving as one enterprise, connected by a unified mission

#### **SLA Centennial, repositioning for the future**

- Opportunity to establish a shared vision of the future and the role of information professionals in it
- Opportunity to establish a strategic course that ensures the effective communication of the value uniquely delivered by librarians and information professionals

## ■ Alignment Goals

- Bring cohesiveness, alignment and integration
- Express essential identity and core purpose
- Create a framework for communications

### Notes

- Build a brand that connects with key programs, resources, products and services and cultivates relationships with key audiences
- Build a brand that stands the test of time and remains relevant to the future of the information management industry
- Articulate a common vision, identity and purpose → mission and vision statement, a formal definition of the association that supports SLA's mission-vision-values, elevator speech
- Create a framework for the development of brand support materials that enable consistent application of key messages through all SLA communication programs

## ■ Definition

Alignment is...

- A discipline that guides the way an organization thinks, acts and communicates
- Focus and cohesion around who you are, what you stand for, what you deliver
- Communicating with clarity, credibility, consistency

## Notes

**Alignment is not...**

- A logo or tagline
- An award-winning advertising campaign
- A “marketing” opportunity
- A naturally occurring phenomenon

## ■ Benefits

### Internal Benefits

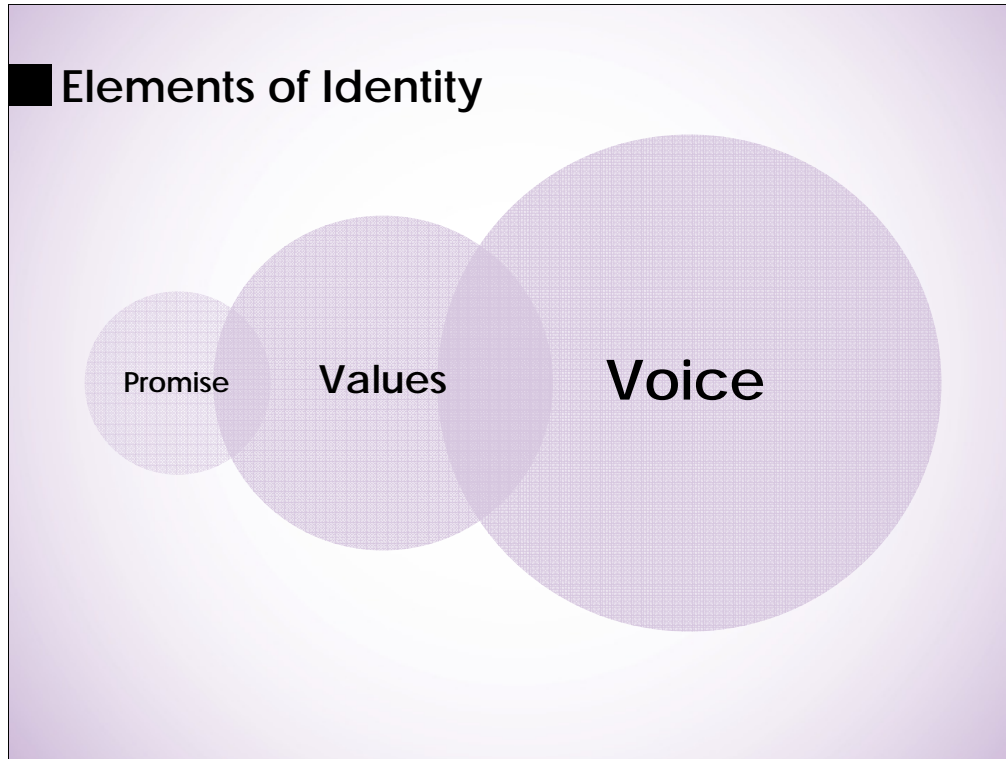
- ✓ Clarity of purpose
- ✓ Motivator for members
- ✓ Compass for communications
- ✓ Efficiencies in marketing

### External Benefits

- ✓ Recognition in the market place
- ✓ Differentiation from competitors
- ✓ Loyalty of existing members
- ✓ Attracting new members

### Notes

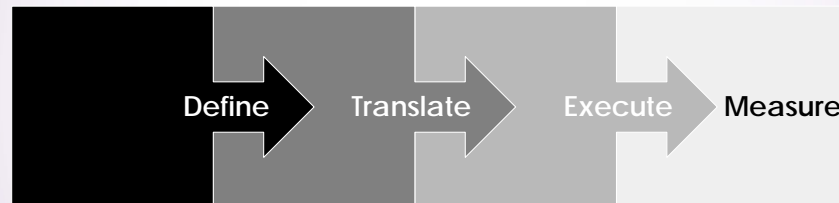
• **Recognition in the market place** (under **External Benefits**) applies to both the profession and members



### Notes

- Promise:** The unique characteristics of an organization that defines its value-driven purpose and potential
- Values:** The fundamental beliefs that are shared by the people in the organization
- Voice:** The distinctive way an organization communicates with members and key stakeholders, based upon its unique promise and core values

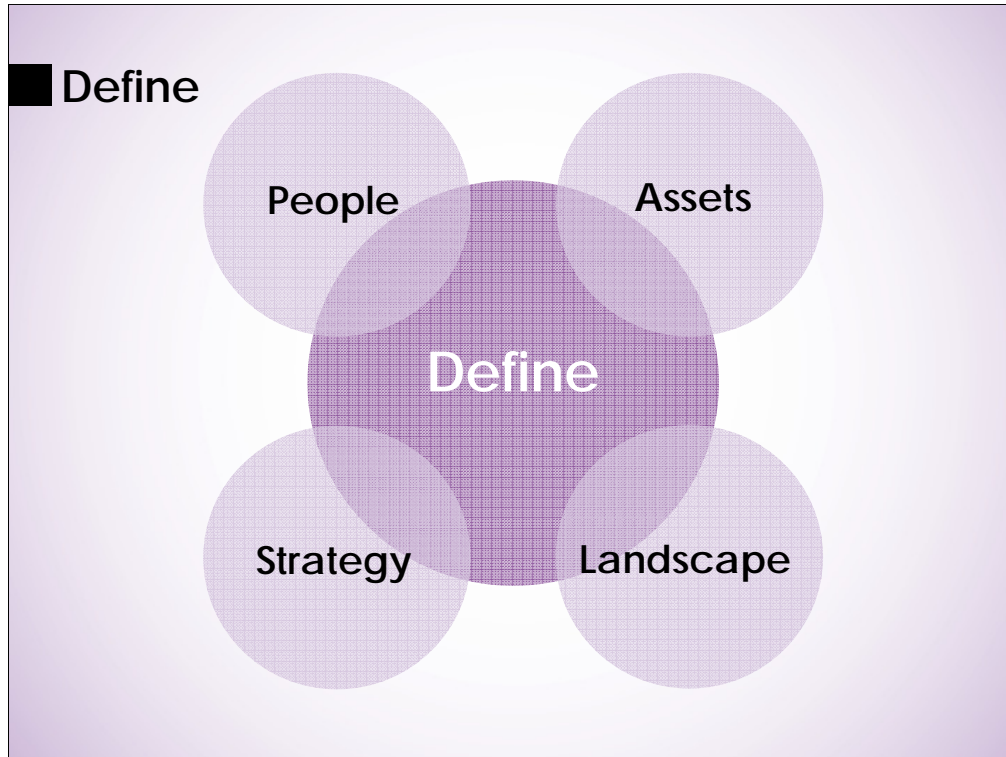
## ■ The Process



### Notes

#### **The alignment process follows a four-step, research-based methodology:**

- **Define:** Conduct primary and secondary research to define a position for the Association and profession that is relevant, differentiated, and authentic.
- **Translate** the research findings into a communications framework, messaging architecture and visual identity
- **Execute** marketing strategies and tools that clearly articulate the Association and profession's value
- **Measure** traction of new framework through ongoing communications audit and tracking studies



## Notes

- The Define phase has relied heavily on both primary and secondary research to help librarians and information professionals align their skills, knowledge and experience with the organizations of tomorrow.
- Our effort has been based on more than 18 months of in-depth research, including existing data from Outsell and SLA, leadership roundtable discussions, member focus groups around the United States, a survey that spanned four-countries across the globe and language exploration sessions with key influencers in Washington, DC and Toronto, Canada.
- **In summary, the Define phase was comprised of four key elements:**
  1. **People:** Conduct interviews and language workshops with SLA leadership and membership
  2. **Assets:** Review existing communications, research and reports
  3. **Landscape:** Audit of competitor communications
  4. **Strategy:** Develop design and segmentation plan for primary research

## Primary Research

### Segmentation and Sampling Design

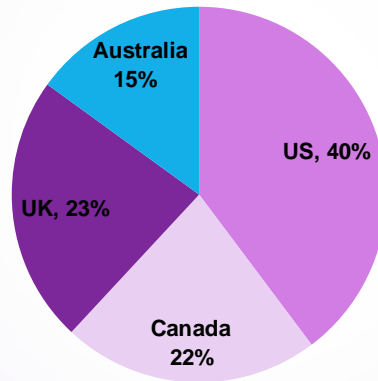
Country	C-level Execs	IT Pros	HR Pros	Marketing Pros	Strategy Pros	Info Pros/ Librarians	Totals
US	25	25	25	25	25	175	300
UK	25	25	25	25	25	25	150
Canada	25	25	25	25	25	25	150
Australia	25	25	25	25	25	25	150
TOTALS	100	100	100	100	100	250	750

### Notes

- Roles/titles were surveyed across all 4 market sectors: corporate, government, academic and healthcare.
- Groups surveyed included C-level executives and professionals in HR, IT, Marketing and Strategic Planning.
- The Info Pro/Librarian segment included information professionals and students from the University of North Carolina and graduate students in the Librarianship Program in the College of Education at The California State University, Long Beach.
- Survey was fielded from August 13 to September 11, 2008
- We received a total of 846 responses, which represents the findings at a confidence level of 95% +/- 3.4%

## Demographics

Geographic Representation



### Notes

- Respondents represent a mix of English-speaking countries: Australia, Canada, US, and UK.
- The greatest number of respondents (40%) were from the US
- UK comprised 23% and Canada comprised 22% of respondents
- 15% of respondents were from Australia

## Demographics

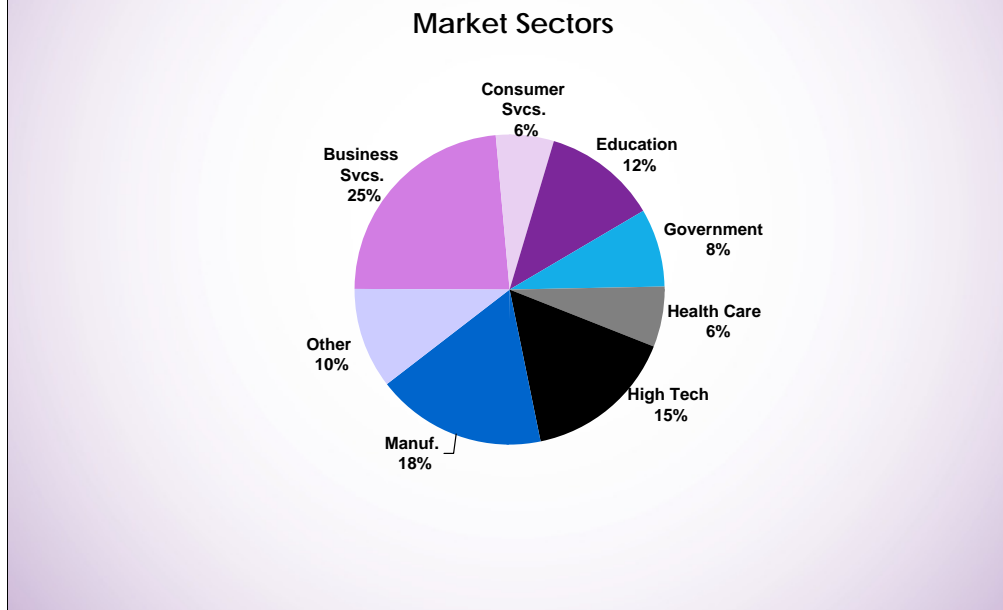
### Audience Categories

	TOTAL	TOTAL	Australia	Canada	UK	US
<i>Bases:</i>	<i>843</i>	<i>843</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>188</i>	<i>195</i>	<i>335</i>
	<i>#</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
C-level Executives	157	19	18	25	27	10
IT Pros	107	13	20	13	13	9
HR Pros	101	12	16	13	13	9
Marketing Pros	98	12	13	14	13	9
Strategic Planning Pros	91	11	16	13	12	7
Info Pros	289	34	17	22	21	56

### Notes

- About one-third of respondents represent information professionals and librarians (34%)
- C-level executives represent the next largest segment of respondents (19%)
- The other groups make up the remainder at 11% to 13% each

## Demographics



### Notes

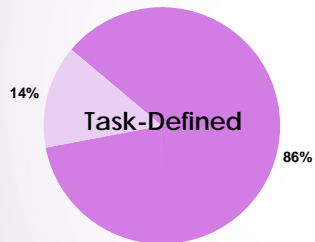
- Respondents represented consumer and business services, manufacturing, and high tech in the corporate sector, as well as education, government, and health care sectors
- Majority of respondents (74%) were from the corporate sector, including business, consumer services, high tech, other verticals
- 12% of respondents are from the education sector
- 8% of respondents are from government, and 6% from healthcare

## ■ Key Findings

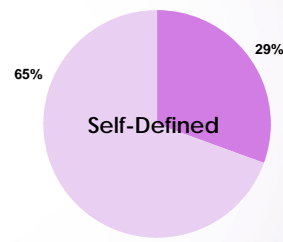
- Information Roles
- Information Habits
- Perceptions of Value
- Perceptions of Role

## Information Roles

Only 14% of respondents are defined as information professions by *task*, but 65% define *themselves* as information professionals



Base = 846  
Q15. On what 3 tasks do you spend most of your time in your current role? [Role derived by selection of tasks]



Base = 846  
Q17. Would you consider your current role to be that of an Information User or an Information Provider?

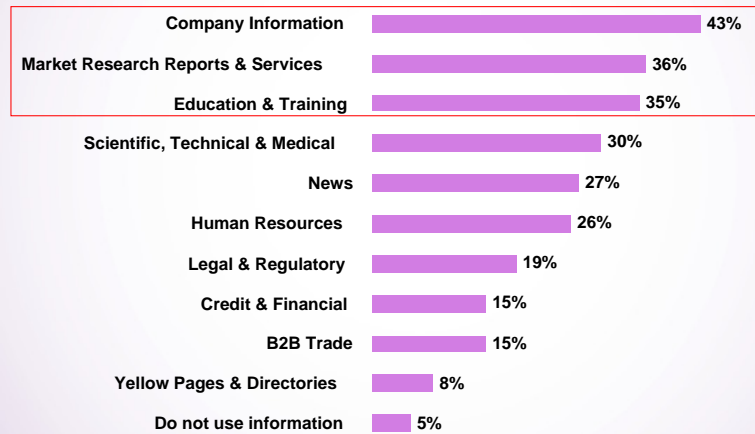
### Notes

#### **Strategic Implications: Information Roles**

- A “big tent” recruitment strategy should avoid task-driven descriptions of the profession, which are less inclusive of the broad base of professionals who consider themselves IPs
- These findings also support the need for an overarching positioning strategy that uses broader, value-driven descriptions of the Association and the profession
- IT Pros are an important audience to consider for recruitment efforts—this segment was much more likely to define themselves as information providers (80%) than the other functions (65%)

## Information Habits

### Top information categories



### Notes

#### **Strategic Implications: Information Habits**

- Top information categories reflect the major information needs and habits of respondents.
- Top information categories (company information, market research, etc.) suggest areas of emphasis for IPs looking to align their knowledge and areas of expertise with the needs of their organizations and/or employers

## Information Habits

### Analyzing vs. Gathering

	TOTAL	Execs	IT Pros	HR Pros	Marketing Pros	Strategic Planning Pros	Info Pros
<i>Bases (information users):</i>	720	150	102	98	91	86	190
	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
Total Hours/Week	22.5	21.2	21.1	22.8	19.9	24.2	24.7
Gathering	11.1	10.8	10.3	11.2	10.2	11.3	12.3
Analyzing	11.4	10.4	10.8	11.6	9.7	12.8	12.4

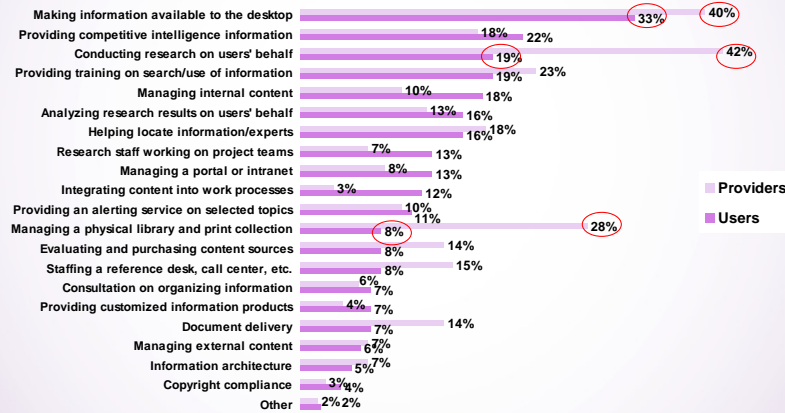
### Notes

#### **Strategic Implications: Information Habits**

- Across all job functions, time was evenly distributed gathering and analyzing information
- Beyond information gathering, the equivalent time devoted to analysis validates the IPs role in providing value-added intelligence
- This finding further supports a departure from functional descriptions of IPs such as FUMSI (Finds, Uses, Manages and Shares Information) that fail to capture the IPs role of analysis and critical thinking

# Perceptions of Value

## Most Valuable Information Roles (Users vs. Providers)



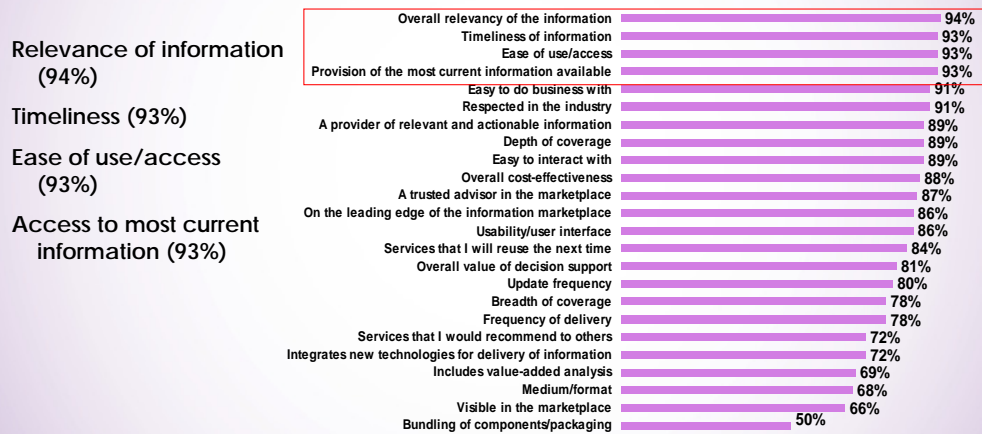
## Notes

### Strategic Implications: Perceptions of Value

- Both information providers and users recognize the value of making information readily accessible to the desktop; however, there is significant disconnect regarding the value of conducting research on users' behalf (42% providers vs. 19% users)
- This finding supports the need to emphasize the quality of information, the efficiency of dissemination, and level of analysis which IPs uniquely provide
- Conversely, research indicates that services such as managing a physical library should be less prominent in positioning the profession

# Perceptions of Value

## Most Important Attributes of Information Resources



### Notes

#### Strategic Implications: Perceptions of Value (cont.)

- Perceptions of information resources signal a greater emphasis on relevance, access and timeliness vs. the packaging and format of distribution

## Perceptions of Value

### Value of Information to Organizations



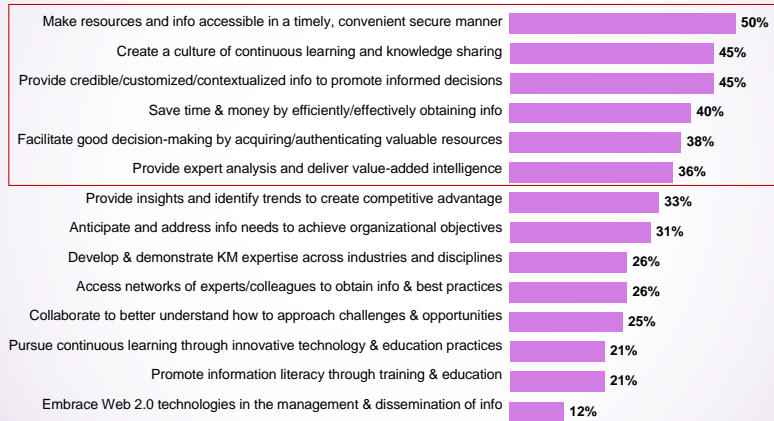
### Notes

#### Strategic Implications: Perceptions of Value (cont.)

- While two-thirds of respondents (67%) agree that information is critical to making strategic decisions, a smaller percentage (59%) find they can access this information easily
- This finding underscores the significant opportunity to position IPs as critical assets who provide the necessary information to facilitate good decision-making
- Specific messaging is needed to connect the role of IPs with saving and generating revenue. While 60% of respondents agree that information saves them time, only about half (51%) say information saves them money; and only 44% claim that information helps generate revenue

## ■ Perceptions of Role

### Role of Information Professionals



### Notes

#### **Strategic Implications: Perceptions of Role**

- The most highly rated attributes for the profession highlight the need to reframe the skill sets of IPs in terms of better end-products and bottom-line results
- Specific areas of emphasis include making resources credible and easily accessible, facilitating good decision-making, and saving time and money. Knowledge sharing and continuous learning also tested well.

## Perceptions of Role

### Role of Association/Organization



### Notes

#### **Strategic Implications: Perceptions of Role**

- The most highly rated attributes for the Association also indicate a focus on continuous learning, as well as setting best practices and promoting the exchange of knowledge and ideas

# Language Exploration

## Positioning Statements

Profession Themes	Association Themes
Continuous Learning & Expertise	Professional Development & Advancement
Knowledge Navigators & Value-added Intelligence	Networking & Personal/ Professional Connections
Strategic Advisors & Growth-Drivers	Champions for the Profession

### Notes

The language exercise tested six statements—three of which were created to communicate the value of the information profession and three of which were created to communicate the value of the Association (provide handout of statements to session participants). These statements were developed based on key themes that emerged from an in-depth review of part research, roundtable discussions with SLA leadership and membership and language workshops across the country. They were presented at the SLA conference in June and refined based on SLA feedback for the alignment survey.

#### **Statement #1 – Continuous Learning and Expertise**

Information professionals and special librarians develop and demonstrate knowledge management expertise across a broad range of industries and disciplines.

- Information professionals and librarians create a culture of continuous learning and knowledge sharing
- Access networks of experts and colleagues to obtain information and best practices for their customers
- Pursue continuous learning through innovative technology and education practices
- Promote information literacy through training and education on the effective use of information sources

#### **Statement #2 – Knowledge Navigators and Value-added Intelligence**

Information professionals and librarians are knowledge navigators who provide credible, customized and contextualized information to promote innovative and informed decisions.

- Provide value-added intelligence that creates a comprehensive understanding of issues, challenges and opportunities facing the organizations they serve
- Embrace and incorporate Web 2.0 technologies in the management and dissemination of information
- Save time and money by efficiently and effectively obtaining valuable information
- Make resources and information accessible in a timely, convenient and secure manner

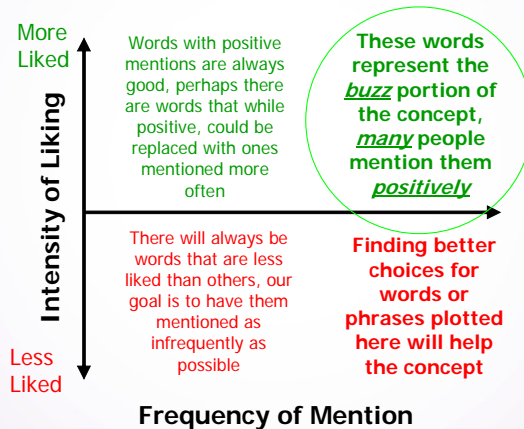
#### **Statement #3 –Strategic Advisors and Growth-drivers**

Information professionals and librarians are strategic advisors and growth-drivers, anticipating and addressing information needs to achieve organizational objectives and successful outcomes.

- Collaborate to create a deeper understanding of how to approach challenges and opportunities facing the organizations they serve
- Provide insights and identify trends to create competitive advantage and advance business objectives
- Facilitate good decision-making by acquiring and authenticating valuable resources, providing expert analysis and delivering value-added intelligence

## Interactive Editor

Respondents were asked to rate specific words and concepts



### Notes

The language exercise tested six statements—three of which were created to communicate the value of the information profession and three of which were created to communicate the value of the Association (provide handout of statements to session participants). These statements were developed based on key themes that emerged from an in-depth review of past research, roundtable discussions with SLA leadership and membership and language workshops across the country. They were presented at the SLA conference in June and refined based on SLA feedback for the alignment survey.

#### Statement #4 –Professional Development and Advancement

The Special Libraries Association promotes professional development and advancement by providing members with innovative resources and continuous learning opportunities.

- Offers comprehensive curricula on best practices and the latest advances in information management, delivered through Web-based courses
- Anticipates industry trends and provides members with opportunities to discover and explore the latest emerging technologies
- Provides opportunities to develop leadership skills and achieve professional success

#### Statement #5 – Networking/Personal and Professional Connections

SLA fosters collaboration, interaction and collegiality across disciplines and geographies to promote the global exchange of knowledge, experience and ideas.

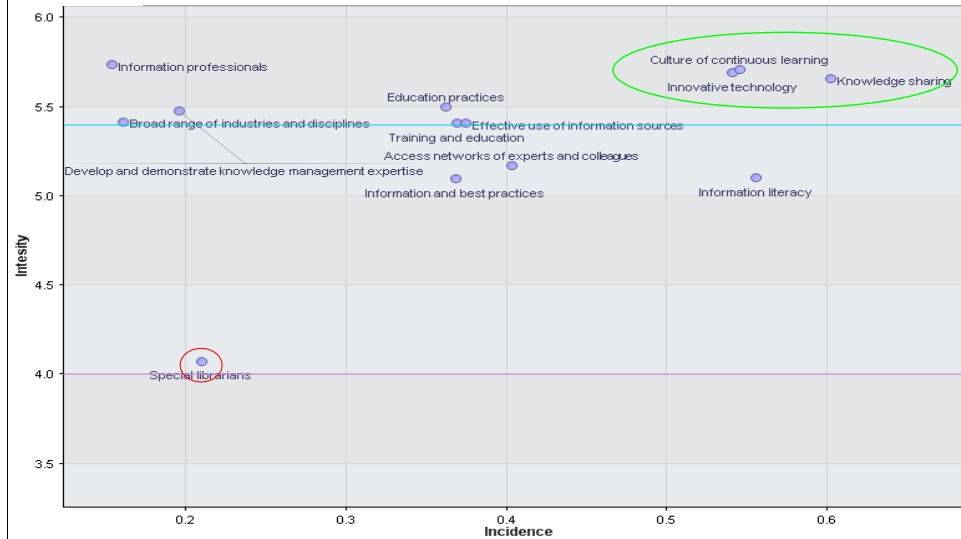
- Provides the most comprehensive professional communities and global networks to share new ideas, trends and cutting-edge developments
- Enhances professional and personal development through global networking and knowledge sharing
- Creates a network, virtually and globally, that promotes the collective evolution of the profession as a whole
- Provides opportunities for developing meaningful connections, contacts and friendships with others in the profession from varied disciplines and locations across the globe

#### Statement #6 – Champions for the Profession

SLA is a global organization of information professionals and librarians, dedicated to promoting and strengthening the role and value of our members as leaders in their organizations and communities.

- Serves as the unified voice of the profession, promoting members as critical assets within their organizations
- Advocates and sets best practices for the information profession, including shaping information policy
- Communicates, collaborates and partners with key stakeholders in the information industry and global business community
- Represents the interests of the industry before regulatory agencies and constituent groups

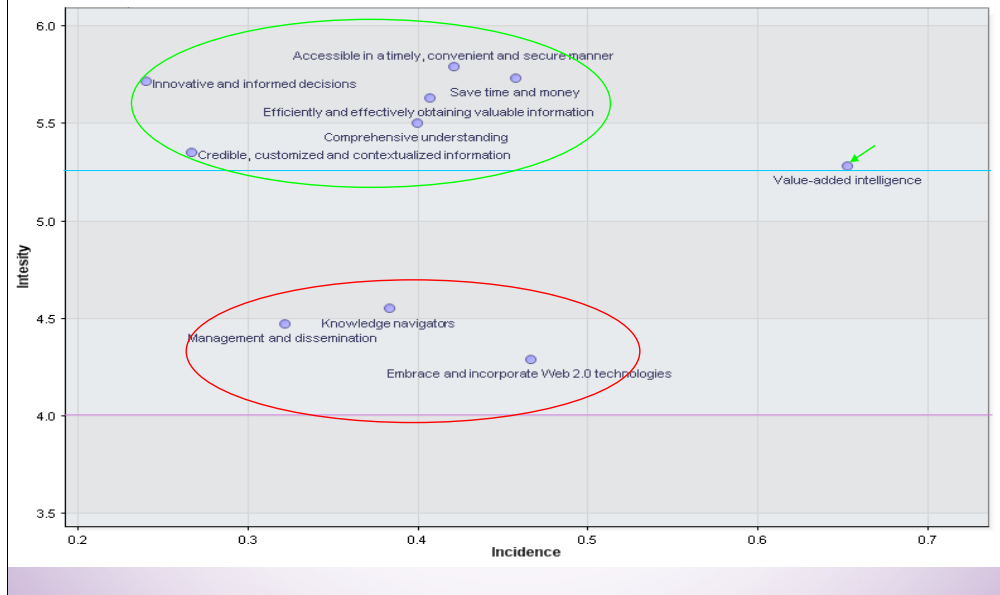
# #1: Continuous Learning and Expertise



## Notes

- The majority of phrases in Statement #1 were found to be positive, with “knowledge sharing” leading the pack followed by “culture of continuous learning” and “innovative technology.”
- Conversely, the term “special librarians” did not test well across all audience segments.

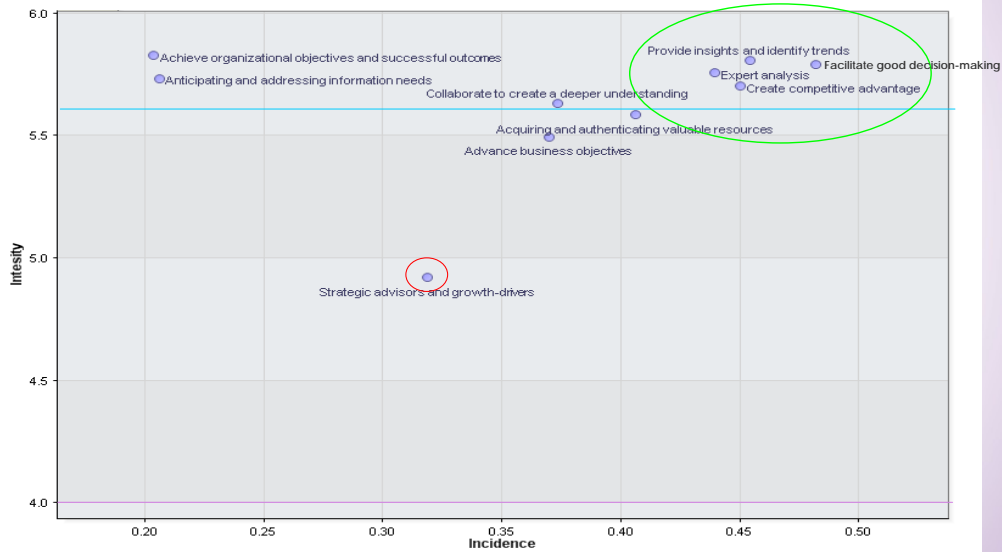
## #2: Knowledge Navigators/Value-added Intelligence



### Notes

- “Value-added intelligence” received the most mentions in the second statement while also having a positive rating.
- The remaining phrases seem to fall into 2 groups, those above and below average.

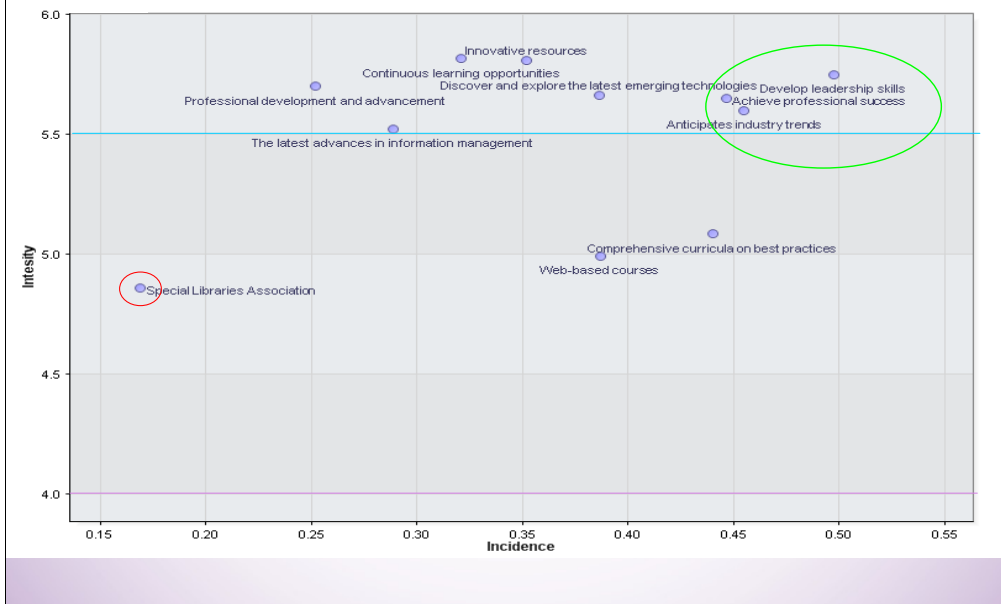
### #3: Strategic Advisors/Growth Drivers



#### Notes

- Statement #3 has a cluster of value-driven phrases that highlight the importance of providing insights and expert analysis and facilitating good decision-making.
- However, the label “strategic advisors and growth-drivers” did not test well.

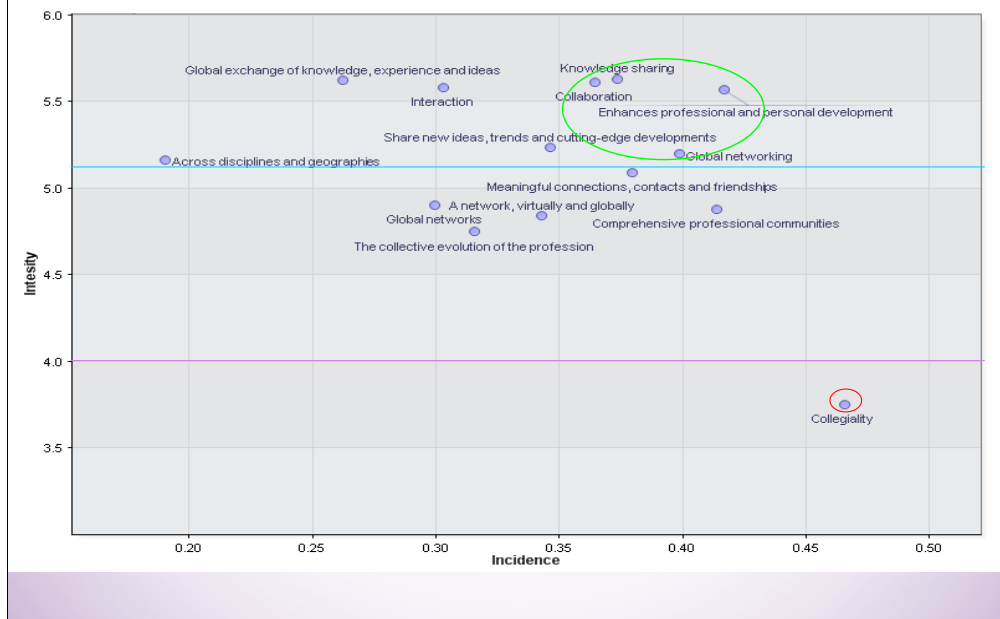
## #4: Prof. Development/Advancement



### Notes

- “Developing leadership skills” stands out in Statement #4.
- “Special Libraries Association” ranked lowest across intensity and frequency of mention.

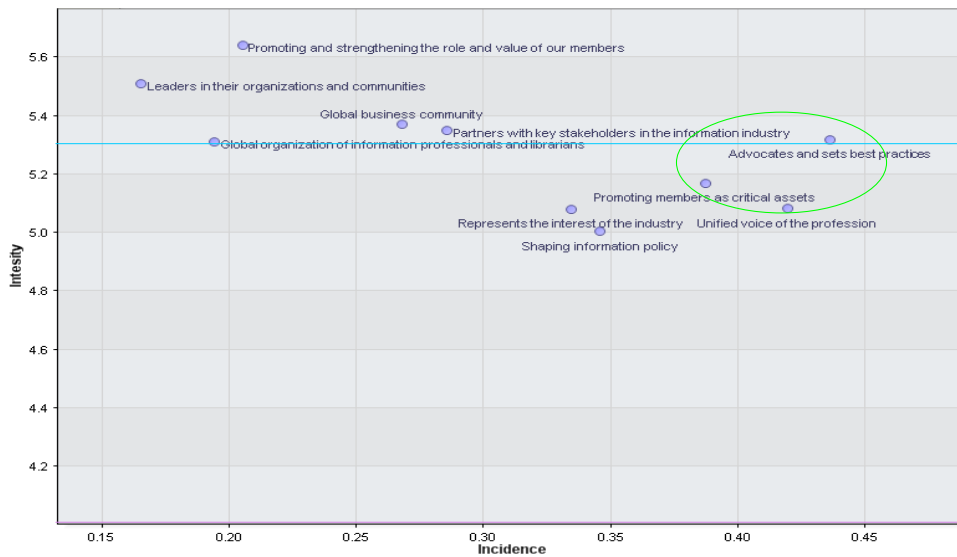
## #5: Networking/Personal & Prof.Connections



### Notes

- Almost all phrases of Statement #5 were rated positively with the exception of “collegiality” which received a score well below both the mean and the neutral point on the scale.

## #6: Champions of the Profession



### Notes

- Most phrases in Statement #6 tested well, with “advocates and sets best practices” emerging as the strongest concept.
- “Promoting members as critical assets” and “unified voice of the profession” also tested well.

## Translate

### Instant Response Dial Sessions

- Sessions in Washington D.C. and Toronto, Canada
- Corporate executive participants (VP-level and above)
- Information profession participants (members and potential members)



## Methodology

- Aggregated data from alignment survey and language exploration
- Refined positioning and key messages
- Taped Q&A sessions of key influencers and new messages
- Conducted dial sessions to measure current language against new language



## Notes

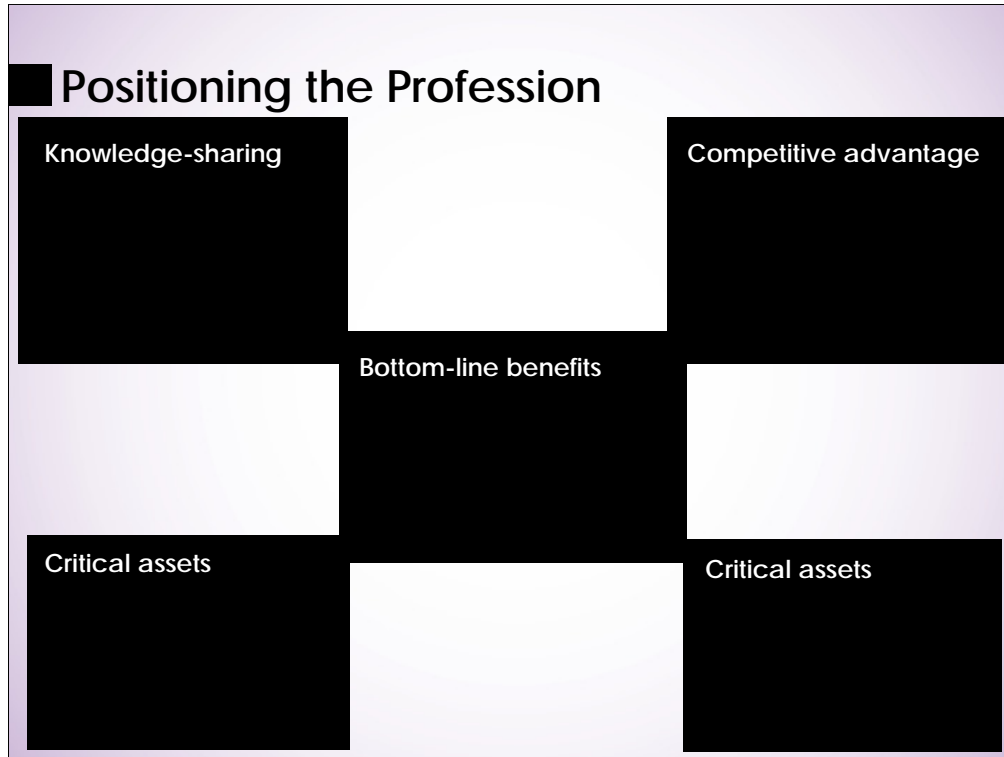
- Aggregated data from alignment survey and language exploration to refine positioning and key messages for the Association and the profession
- Taped Q&A sessions of key influencers and new messages to measure current language against new language
- Conducted dial sessions to provide accurate measure of exactly what works, what doesn't and why.

## ■ Five Key Findings

1. Promote vs. defend value-driven benefits
2. *Knowledge* is the bridge between information and action
3. Evolution, not revolution
4. The “suite” spot—appealing to corporate executives
5. The “L” word

### Notes

- **Promote the unique, value-driven benefits of the profession.** In the Dial Sessions, participants responded more favorable to language that emphasizes the value of information professionals—rather than the shortcomings of information without mediation. The latter was perceived as “defensive” because it does not serve to highlight the benefits of information professionals.
- **“Knowledge” is the bridge between information and action.** The word “knowledge” has special resonance with many people because it implies a deep understanding of information. Information professionals and librarians do more than just connect people with information. They provide the context and depth that *turns information into knowledge and results*.
- **The key to successfully re-positioning the profession is evolution, not revolution.** Both information professionals and C-suites agree that members should find their own place in their organizations – and that place isn’t necessarily in the boardroom. Rather than advocating for a presence at the highest levels, information professionals want support communicating *what* they do and *how* they benefit their organizations. They want their role to evolve from the background to the limelight – but recognize that the limelight doesn’t necessarily equal the boardroom.
- **Corporate executives readily acknowledge the value and importance of good information.** Almost every participant agreed that it’s important to have the *best* information rather than the *easiest* information to access. But only 2 of 30 corporate-level respondents feel they readily have access to this information—a finding that emerged in the survey as well. At the same time, they recognize that information professionals are the most qualified to review information to *decide quality and accuracy*. To resonate with this critical audience, information professionals must make the connection between their deliverable and their company’s deliverable. More than simply accessing information, executives want to know *how* that information will *create competitive advantage and benefit the bottom line*.
- **The word “librarian” still carries a significant amount of equity among both information professionals and C-suites.** Communication efforts should leverage the positive attributes of librarianship while stressing more modern applications of the profession. While the term has been described as “dusty” and “antiquated,” in certain contexts, it continues to have positive associations among target audiences.



**Notes (give setup for what will be previewed in these slides)**

**Knowledge-sharing**

- This concept tested particularly well with corporate executives
- They don't want to be told that only a small group of people know how to use the tools of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but they do recognize there needs to be a layer of people who turns that information in actionable, reliable intelligence.
- Knowledge sharing also applies to information professionals sharing their training and education with their colleagues on the effective use of information sources

**Creating competitive advantage**

- Corporate executives need to know the contributions that information professionals are making and how they are benefiting their organizations.
- Executives want direct and exact proof points about the immediate competitive advantage that information professionals can offer to them; positioning needs to create a critical link between source material and strategic decisions
- Positive messaging about the benefits of information professionals tests much better than negative statements about what organizations look like without information professionals

**Benefiting the bottom line**

- Both information professionals and users agreed that a critical benefit to having an information professional on staff is the effect they have on the bottom line. That is "where the library meets the boardroom."
- Corporate leaders need **accurate, reliable, relevant information** that will help them make the **right decisions** every time; by emphasizing these benefits, information professionals can demonstrate how they **save their organizations time and money**.

**Critical assets vs. strategists**

- Information professionals should be positioned as critical to the decision-making process, rather than decision-making leaders
- Messaging that takes this positioning a step further and identifies information professionals as "strategists" or "analysts" may be threatening to corporate executives; corporate leaders want to make their *own* decisions based on expert information instead of the information professionals making the decisions for them
- While C-levels may not want information professionals in the boardroom, they did make it clear they value information professionals in their organizations as critical assets who turn information into actionable, reliable intelligence. Most importantly, they want to know that the information you get them will be the right information. It doesn't matter to them what methodologies you utilize.



### Notes

#### **Connecting continuous learning to professional success**

- Continuous learning is important, but not as compelling as some of the Association's other value propositions.
- While continuous learning is perceived as a great benefit of Association membership, members and potential members indicated that they are primarily motivated by the *networking* and *advocacy* that SLA uniquely offers.
- When promoting SLA's continuous learning opportunities, this benefit resonates more strongly when framed in the context of enhancing professional success.

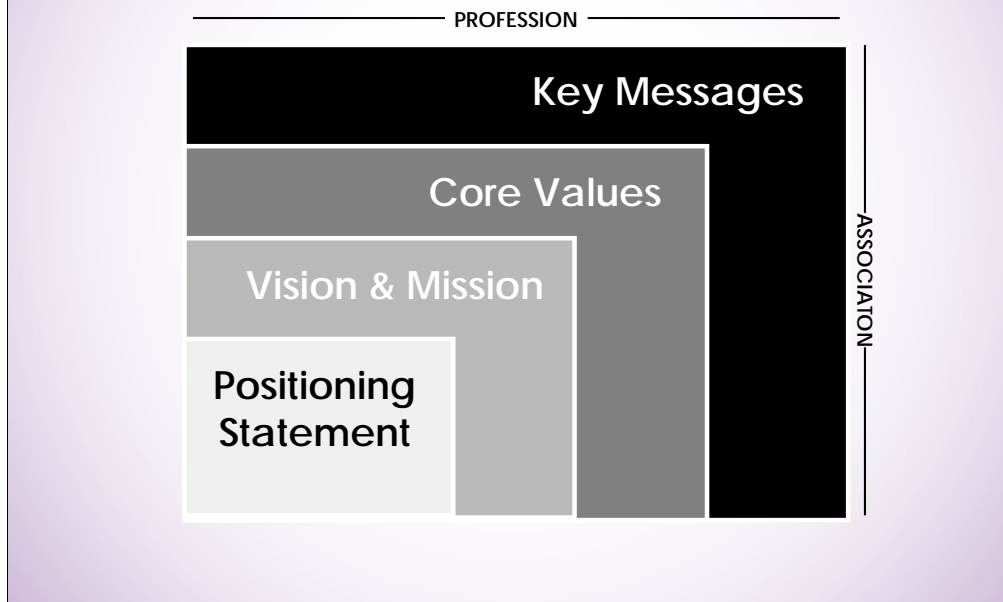
#### **Global networking—differentiation and innovation**

- Global networking is a key benefit and area of differentiation for the Association
- This language worked particularly well with C-suite participants. Both corporate leaders and information professionals appreciate the value of having connections around the world.
- This benefit is particularly powerful when framed in the context of promoting knowledge-sharing and the exchange of innovative ideas, insights and trends

#### **Advocacy and empowerment**

- Information professionals and C-suites in both cities agreed that it isn't necessarily the role of the Association to advocate for members to have a place at the highest levels of an organization.
- Advocacy efforts should focus on empowering members to anticipate the needs of their organizations and integrate their roles into the work flow, as well as actively promoting the importance of reliable, relevant and accurate information

## Communications Framework



### Notes

- The research has provided the essential ingredients to create a framework for positioning the Association and the profession.
- Based on a synthesis of the findings outlined in this report, the following statements provide a platform to answer the most fundamental question of the alignment process: *What common values do the Association and profession make possible for all target audiences?*
- With this research-based framework, we can build a system of communications that consistently conveys the unique value and positioning of the Association and the profession.

## ■ Positioning Statement

[SLA] is an **international community** and the **leading voice** for the **advancement of the information profession**.

We **empower members to achieve professional success** within their organizations by providing **continuous learning opportunities**.

We create a **culture of knowledge sharing** through **global networking** to **exchange information, innovative ideas, insights and trends**.

We **champion the value** of information professionals as **critical assets** who provide **value-added intelligence** that **facilitates good decision-making** and **creates competitive advantage** for organizations.

## ■ Vision & Mission

### Vision

[SLA] leads the information profession into the future by promoting its members as **invaluable assets to their organizations**. We will continually empower our members to be **knowledge leaders who actively contribute to and drive the success of their organizations**.

### Mission

[SLA] serves as the **unified voice** for the information profession, **advocating its value, promoting best practices**, creating **knowledge sharing and global networking opportunities**, and empowering members to become **critical assets within their organizations** through **continuous learning**.

## ■ Core Values for the Profession

### Leadership

Ensuring that organizations have **access to the information, insights and trends** that **facilitate good decision-making** and **create competitive advantage**.

### Accountability & Results

**Saving organizations time and money** by providing **value-added intelligence** that is **accurate, reliable and relevant**.

### Service

**Delivering expert information** to our organizations in a **timely, accessible and convenient manner**.

## ■ Core Values for the Association

### Continuous Learning & Prof. Development

Providing **continuous learning opportunities** to **discover and master emerging technologies**, **develop leadership skills**, and **achieve professional success**.

### Knowledge Sharing & Collaboration

Leveraging **global networking opportunities** to promote **knowledge sharing** and the **exchange of information**, **innovative ideas**, **insights and trends**.

### Advocacy & Empowerment

Serving as the **unified voice for the profession**, **advocating its value**, **promoting best practices**, and **empowering members** to become **critical assets within their organizations**.

## ■ Key Messages for the Professional to Use

### Knowledge Sharing

Information professionals are **accountable** for **gathering, organizing and sharing the right information for the best decisions**. Information professionals further **create a culture of knowledge sharing by educating colleagues on the best use of information sources**.

### Global Networking

Through **active global networking**, information professionals **promote the exchange of information, innovative ideas, insights and trends**.

## ■ Key Messages for the Professional to Use

### Competitive Advantage

Information professionals **ensure organizations have the right information, insights and trends to make good decisions and gain competitive advantage.**

### Bottom-line Benefits

Information professionals **save organizations time and money by providing value-added intelligence that is accurate, reliable and relevant.** We deliver **expert information to our organizations in a timely, accessible and convenient manner.**

## ■ Key Messages for the Association

### Prof. development

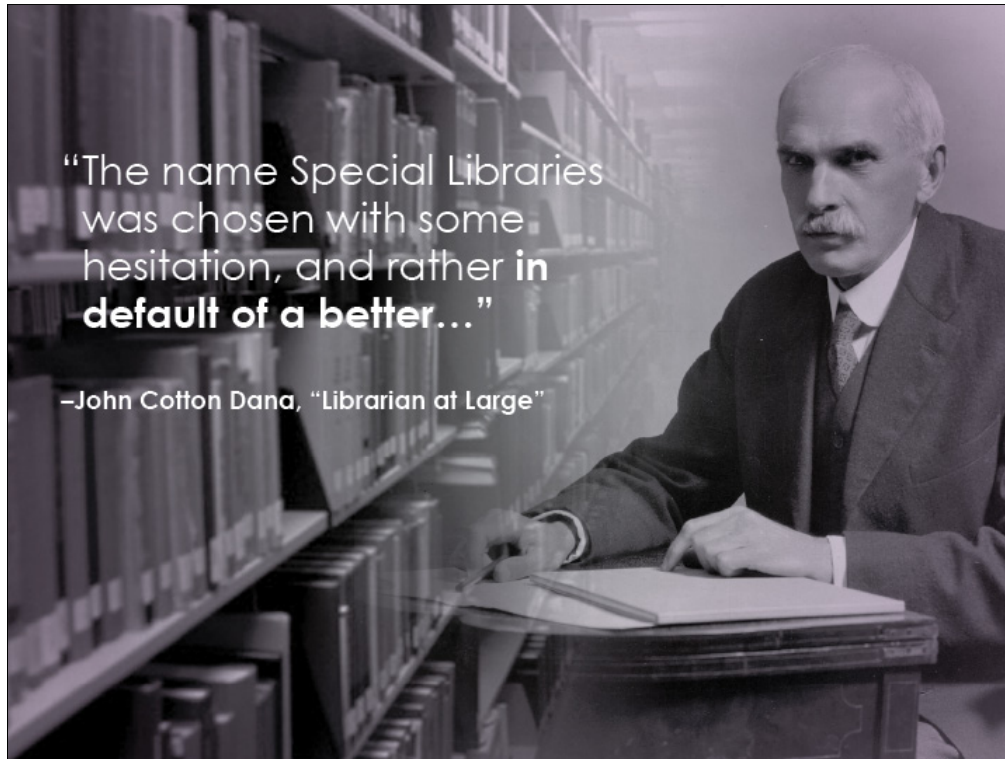
[SLA] provides members with **continuous learning opportunities to explore and master emerging technologies, develop leadership skills and achieve professional success.**

### Global networking

[SLA] is the **only association** in the world that **serves the international community** of information professionals. We create a **culture of knowledge sharing** through **global networking** to **exchange information, innovative ideas, insights and trends.**

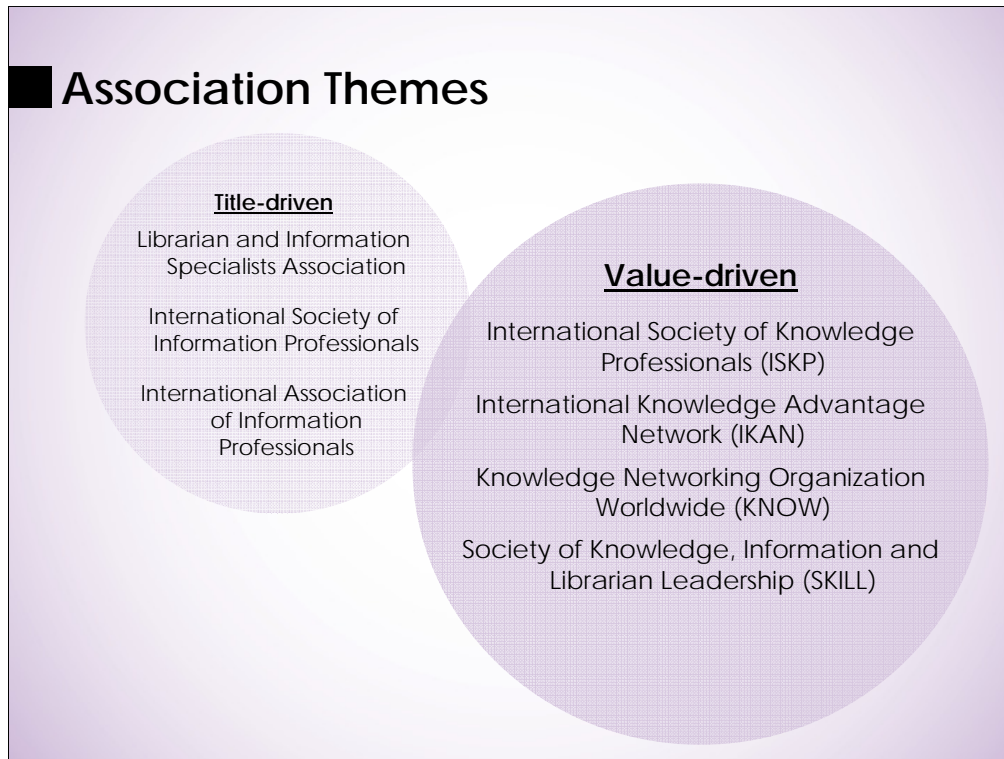
### Unified voice

[SLA] serves as the **unified voice for the information profession.** We **advocate its value, promote best practices, and empower members** to become **critical assets within their organizations.**



## Notes

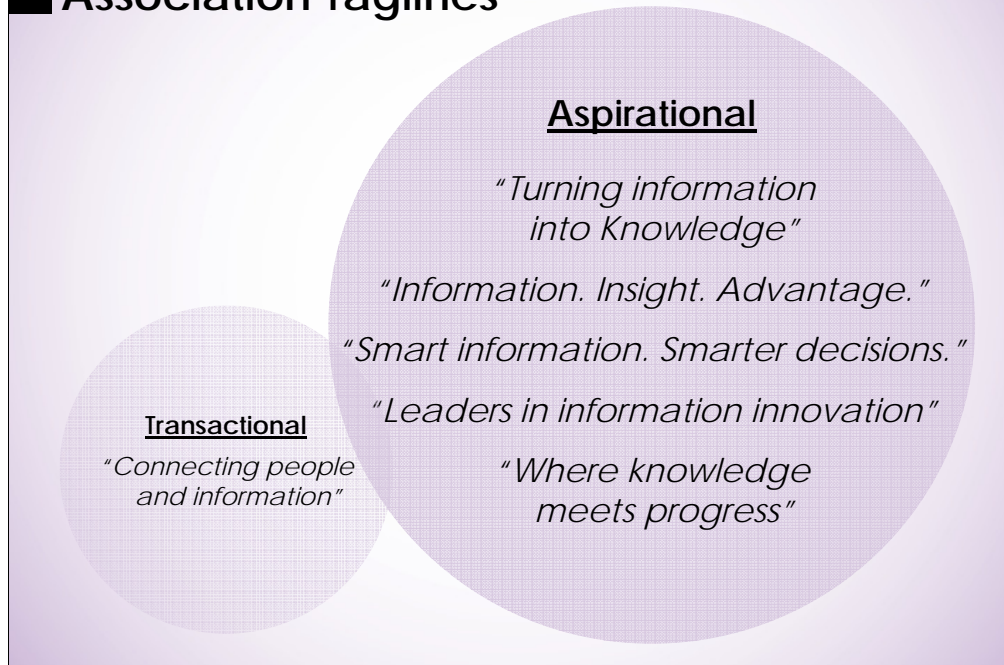
- This quote, taken from the writings of John Cotton Dana, signifies a key challenge that has persisted since special libraries were first established
- Today that the term *still* fails to capture the core values of the Association and the information profession as whole
- In both the alignment survey and the dial sessions the terms “special library” and “special librarian” did not test well unanimously across all target segments
- While the primary focus of the alignment process has been “game change” vs. “name change” the research has revealed the need to explore alternative names and taglines in order for SLA to remain at the forefront of the profession and better serve its members and the broader business community
- The need to refresh the Association’s identity is even more pressing in light of the current economic climate, and the upcoming centennial—a unique opportunity to celebrate past as well as create a unified, relevant and differentiated position for the future
- Should the board and SLA membership ultimately choose to pursue this course of action, we recommend adopting a more value-driven approach—one that is guided by the extensive research over the last two years and the concepts conveyed in the new communications platform



Notes (research signifies need for name change; recommend a more value-driven approach—starting point for discussion around potential alternatives)

- Previous attempts to rename the Association have centered on more functional, title-driven alternatives. The challenge with this approach is that it is virtually impossible to capture all of the diverse job functions—and adjacent career tracks—which encompass the information profession
- Instead, we recommend shifting the focus to more value-driven alternatives that provide a concise expression of who the Association is and the distinct value it uniquely delivers
- Names that convey the concepts of “information leadership” and “knowledge networking” and “knowledge advantage” speak to the Association’s benefits on a deeper level, are more differentiated from other organizations in the competitive landscape and ultimately more inclusive of the broad range of disciplines that comprise the information profession

## ■ Association Taglines



### Notes

- The recommended taglines also represent a shift from functional to more value-driven language.
- While the existing tagline, "connecting people with information," may provide an accurate description of the profession and Association, it tends to be more transactional than aspirational
- The taglines we recommend seek to take this concept a step further by creating a critical link between good information, strategic decisions and real results



# Positioning SLA for the Future:

Alignment Initiative **Results** and **Recommendations**

*Presented Tuesday, January 13, 2009, in Savannah, GA*

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