



Message from the President

by Geoff Hall

In wishing every member of EMWA a happy and prosperous New Year, I think warmly of the many friendships forged through the Association over the past decade. Not surprisingly, I picture a few of the friends I have made as I write in an attempt to make the message as personal as possible.

But, all of a sudden, that's not so easy. Because this year, there are more members than ever before—over 300 for the first time—and so there may be hundreds that I don't know. Even more scary, there are EMWA members out there who don't know me or the other members of the Executive Committee too well either.

So for this short article, I thought I would introduce the jobs which the team undertake with, if you read on to the finish, a definite ulterior motive.

EMWA is a corporation, a limited company under English law and every member is a member of the company with voting rights. The members of the Executive Committee are the board of directors. The constitution tells us that there has to be a minimum set of members of the EC of a president, vice-president (who is also president-elect), treasurer, education, public relations and membership officers. However, we can have additional EC members. Currently, the hard-working editors of the website and, of course, this magazine, *The Write Stuff* are co-opted members together with Kay Duggan-Walls, who is managing local arrangements for the conference in Dublin.

The constitution states that no one can stand for president unless they have held some sort of office at some time. As well as my long-standing, unofficial role as a general interferer and uninvited advisor to most previous presidents, I was joint PR officer in the early days of the Association, and next year's president, Keith Veitch, was magazine editor.

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It is surprising how many of the EC members first became involved in the work of running EMWA in their first or second years in membership. So come along new members, how about offering to stand for office. There is always room for people to be involved in the work and no objections to people becoming assistants to current officers to share the burden. Don't be shy. Get in touch with me, by e-mail preferably, and we can talk about how you can play your part.

While I was at the huge AMWA conference in Philadelphia last year, I was amazed that the business meeting was held in one of the smallest rooms and that the election of officers was en bloc as a slate suggested by the EC.

The Write Stuff

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While we probably will always need to cajole people into accepting a job in order to fix the availability of candidates, I hope that behind the scenes fixing never replaces real democracy in EMWA. But democracy cannot work without participation. So get in touch with any EC member even if you just want to know more.

I hope to extend my circle of EMWA friends considerably at the annual conference in Dublin in May. I look forward to seeing you there.

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P.S. I hope everyone is impressed that I managed to write this first piece for the year 2000 without once mentioning the word millennium - Oh bother, now I've done it.

The Changing Face of EMWA

Results from the questionnaires: 1997 – 1999 compiled by B Drees

After the very disappointing response to the survey distributed at the Madrid conference in 1998, the EMWA Executive Committee decided to change the way the survey was conducted for the next year and mail it out with a copy of TWS. This not only had the advantage of reaching people at home or work where they might have a few free moments to fill the thing out (unlike the hectic pace of a conference), it would also offer the first opportunity to hear from the silent members who never or only rarely attend the yearly meeting. Much to my delight, it worked even better than we had hoped and we more than doubled the response of any earlier survey. So, it's time now to take a look again to get an idea of who we are and what we want from EMWA.

So, what do we see? The basic message is that despite highly variable sampling, in terms of numbers and kind of members, the profile has remained pretty consistent, and this despite a doubling in the total number of EMWA members. I am particularly pleased to see that the proportion of members attending their first meeting that year has remained at about one third and that the average number of meetings attended remains at about two. This shows that we have a real healthy proportion of new members at meetings and are in no danger of ending up with the always the same old crowd. One of the real attractions at our meetings is the delightful mix of new and familiar faces. On the other hand, a change that ought to be a call to action for EMWA members is the drop in people who say that EMWA provides social contacts, from 16 and 15% in 97 and 98 to a lowly 9% last year. What is happening? Are we taking ourselves so seriously? Let's all make a concerted attempt at Dublin or wherever to reach out to other members we perhaps haven't met yet.

One thing that has changed is the percentage of freelancers has hit an all-time high (27%). Does this reflect a true trend in the profession or merely the fact that freelancers

do not attend EMWA meetings as frequently as people in industry (and thus constituted a higher percentage of the poll when the form was sent to all members)? At any rate, here is a summary of the results. More details and answers to any questions are available from the editor. You'll be getting another questionnaire with the next issue, featuring a new section designed to poll EMWA members about their favorite writing conventions. Stay tuned.

Summary of the responses for each year (where meaningful)

Category	97	98	99
Response			
Total number	41	29	93
Rate (approx.)	50%	30%	40%
Satisfied with EMWA costs (answered "just right" or "what a bargain")			
Membership	84%	93%	89%
Conferences	57%	79%	75%
Workshops	87%	93%	83%
Prior background			
Research	50%	32%	37%
Pharma. industry	28%	48%	31%
University	13%	16%	9%
Publishing	13%	3%	7%
Biometrics	3%	0%	
First heard of EMWA			
Colleagues	54%	63%	62%
AMWA	17%	10%	18%
Literature	10%	17%	4%
Other	9%	3%	16%

Category	97	98	99
Membership			
Duration	2.9 yr	3.8 yr	3.0 yr
New member	29%	28%	25%
EMWA provides (multiple answers possible, % of all responses)			
Education	26%	31%	30%
Networking	26%	26%	24%
Information	25%	25%	30%
Social contacts	16%	15%	9%
Freelance work	7%	1%	7%
Other	0%	1%	3%
Previous meeting attendance			
Average (no.)	2.2	2.3	2.1
First meeting that year	23%	33%	33%
EMWA website			
Visited	61%	69%	70%
No access	15%	17%	17%
Unaware	22%	10%	13%
Job status			
Industry	84%	73%	63%
Freelance	16%	17%	27%
Consulting	0	7%	8%
Academic	0	3%	2%

Workshops, in order of most popular:

Most desired

- Advanced Data Presentation
- Writing an Investigator's Brochure
- Ins-and-outs of ICH
- Regulatory Aspects of Drug Development
- Preparing a Dossier
- Introduction to Population Kinetics
- Proof Reading
- Business Aspects of a Freelance Career
- Improving Comprehension
- The Study Protocol
- Punctuation for Clarity and Style

Most completed (number)

- Data Presentation I (36)
- Statistics for Medical Writers (33)
- Punctuation for Clarity and Style (25)
- Introduction to Pharmacokinetics (24)
- Project Management (22)
- Effective Paragraphing (19)
- Organizing the Biomedical Paper (17)
- Data vs. Information: the CER (13)
- Understanding Ethics Committees (11)
- The Author-Editor Relationship (11)