

Strategic Plan

September 2009

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Interpretation Canada



Funding assistance from



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This strategic plan for Interpretation Canada (IC) was developed as part of the Revitalization Phase 2 project, with partial funding from the federal department of Canadian Heritage through the CAHSP program.



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Introduction

This strategic plan for Interpretation Canada (IC) was developed as part of the Revitalization Phase 2 project, with funding from the federal department of Canadian Heritage through the CAHSP program.

A strategic plan is a management tool that helps an organization to:

- focus its energy
- ensure that members of the organization are working toward the same goals
- help to assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment

This plan is concise by design. It provides a coherent idea of what IC is strategically planning for, what activities to focus on, and who will do what. Information and community input used to formulate this strategic plan was drawn from the following documents, especially the first:

- *Needs Analysis Study: Interpretation in Canada* (Fast, 2009)
- *Organizational Analysis and Strategy for IC* (Renata Rosol, 2007)
- *IC Draft Strategic Plan* (Fast and Husby, 2005).

The mission, vision, and strategic priorities were developed during the May 2009 Board Retreat held at the Cowichan Lake Education Centre on Vancouver Island.

Key Findings

- A. IC can make significant contributions to the professional development of interpreters, and to other aspects of their professional lives.
- B. IC is valued by Canadian heritage interpreters.
- C. Today's interpreters are more interested in higher competencies, such as management and planning, than in core competencies such as delivery.
- D. There is a strong mandate for IC programs that enable heritage interpreters to:
 1. Share professional development within learning community, rather than only receive professional development
 2. Lobby and market externally to increase the scale and effectiveness of heritage interpretation in Canada
 3. Be aware of new approaches and developments
 4. Maintain motivation, creativity, and innovation
 5. Build capacity in advanced planning and management techniques
 6. Receive recognition as professionals
- E. Today there are other related professional associations operating in Canada, overlapping to various degrees with IC's existing programs.
- F. The IC brand is still strong and valuable, judging from the demand.
- G. Many of the organizational needs of IC identified in recent years are in the process of being met.

Characteristics of Today's Heritage Interpreters

1. Many interpreters belong to other related professional associations, such as NAI, Other, IGA, EECOM and AQIP (in order).
2. Most also belong to on average two smaller informal interpretation networks, such as included museum educators, interpreters, employer/staff, and environmental educator networks, and provincial museums associations.
3. Interpreters work at several part-time jobs concurrently, and/or change jobs frequently/seasonally. On average they work for two types of organization within a two-year period.
4. Around half work in historic sites, parks, and museums. The others are spread among many different types of organizations and workplaces.
5. Few identify themselves as working in the tourism industry.
6. Heritage Interpreters include managers, supervisors, consultants, front line staff, seasonals, and a rich variety of other work roles.
7. Interpreters recognize many benefits of their work. They also think that non-interpreters do not recognize the benefits of their work.



Mission

A mission statement is like an introductory paragraph. It lets board members, staff, members, partners, and potential members and partners know where IC is going. A mission statement must communicate the essence of IC. Any association's ability to articulate its mission indicates its focus and purposefulness.

We are a community that supports, engages, and inspires those involved in the field of Heritage Interpretation in Canada.

Vision

A vision statement presents an image of what success will look like.

Heritage Interpreters across Canada value IC as their link to a diverse and thriving community of professionals.

Strategic Goals

These originate in Key Finding 4, reflecting the input of many interpreters through the survey and workshops, as reported in the Needs Analysis Study.

To enable Canadian heritage interpreters to:

1. Share professional development within learning community, rather than only receive professional development
2. Lobby and market externally to increase the scale and effectiveness of heritage interpretation in Canada
3. Be aware of new approaches and developments
4. Maintain motivation, creativity, and innovation
5. Build capacity in advanced planning and management techniques
6. Receive recognition as professionals

Strategic Tools

These dominant themes and recommendations emerged from the input. They relate to how IC might carry out strategic initiatives. Some of these have been incorporated into the strategic priorities. Others have not yet been incorporated.

- language of benefits
- a learning community
- networking
- standards and certification
- more technology
- training

Occupational Learning Needs

Needs for various skills and types of knowledge for Canadian interpreters also emerged from the input, as per the design of the Needs Analysis Study. This information will be used in the design of IC programs in a content role. It is not included in this strategic plan.



Strategic Program Priorities

Recognizing that many existing programs do or can be designed to contribute towards several strategic goals (see Appendix 1), board members developed the following list of program priorities, and action items, and named those tasked with the work.

Priority: *InterpScan Journal* (Sue Ellen)

Addresses strategic goals 1, 3, 4, 5.

Continues as a print publication, with a shift towards regular quarterly publication dates and deadlines. Fewer pages per issue or other changes may be required. Sue Ellen to continue as editor.

- Quarterly – call on board when content needed
- Analyse budget to check – afford this?
- Dates and deadlines
- Discuss advisory board

Priority: Regional Workshops and Networks

(Margot, Cal, Pam)

Addresses strategic goals 1, 3, 4.

The board wants to encourage and enable more IC activity across the country, to take advantage of the initiative and energy of individual members and local clusters. The success of last fall's workshops have heartened board members, and several tools are being discussed to move this forward.

- Discuss planning regional meeting
- Put together tool kit on running workshop, and identify mentor
- Conversation about BC Workshop and EECOM

Priority: Online Community

(Chris Mathieson, Dave, Sue Ellen Fast)

Addresses strategic goals 1, 4.

Recognizing the current realities of a digital world and our far-flung community of members, board members will be looking at our current online programs (ICJobs, IC_Community, and the new Face book group) for more online opportunities to link together.

- Create working group and create strategy (Communications Plan) that links with other programs

Priority: Online Resources

(Chris Mathieson, Dave, Sue Ellen Fast)

Members made it very clear that they use IC online resources and that they want more. How exactly this relates to the strategic goals is unclear. Possibilities range from an unarticulated mandate for enabling interpretive research and planning, to support for the hot links in the "Online Resources" menu at IC website, to a reflection of IC as a whole being viewed as an online resource.

For online resources including inks, digital library, business directory:

- Identify curator
- Identify scope
- Update (proof) and communicate
- Address business directory

Priority: National Conference and AGM

(Cal Martin)

Addresses strategic goals 1, 3, 4, 5.

Plan for a pilot online conference and an annual general meeting in late fall. This experience will assist the board in setting a strategy and timelines for future national conferences.

- Pull team together
- Set Fall date for AGM
- Get intentions for board members, forecast, form nomination committee
- Small online conference and AGM
- Strategy future conferences (what type, when, identify venues and dates for 3–5 years, include BC conference as an option)

Priority: Training (Peter Pacey)

Addresses strategic goals 1, 2, 6.

Board member Peter Pacey championed this program and convinced the board to keep it on the priority list, partly with regard to IC's positioning, visibility, credibility and revenue stream.

- Team to make strategy – short term and long term
- Come back to board with strategy and formalize decisions
- If approved, roll out communicate



Priority: Administration/Organizational Needs (Sue Ellen)

Addresses strategic goals (no – addresses organizational sustainability goals including CAHSP)

This topic made the list because renovations are needed, including to the constitution. The current board is determined to undertake these. Another particular need is for membership-management software.

- Constitution (Chris M and Margot H)
- Membership/Donor Software (Chris and Sue Ellen)
- Archives (Margot)
- Re-evaluate membership categories for AGM 2010
- BC Section – constitution – sort out amalgamation (finances) (Margot, Pam)
- Mission/Vision finalization (Cal)
- Job descriptions, policy, etc, put stuff in one place
- Board Meeting – re-evaluate time, format (Cal Martin, Dave)
- Executive Director options (full-time/part-time) (Board Meeting)
- Membership Drive (Sue Ellen, Chris Mathieson)

Priority: “IC Presents” Workshops (Board members)

Addresses strategic goals 1, 2.

This was added subsequent to the board retreat. Board members have been experimenting in their local areas and at national management conferences with speaking out about the benefits and approaches to interpretation, under the heading “IC Presents”. Sessions are part outreach, part advocacy and part professional development.

Priority: Standards and Certification (Cal, Peter, Sue Ellen)

Addresses strategic goals 2, 6.

This was also added subsequent to the board retreat. IC is participating in the Canadian Tourism Human Resources Council’s projects regarding national standards and certification for heritage interpreter. Board members have been serving on the steering committee for the current phase, and many IC members were recruited to participate through IC efforts.

This concludes the list of strategic priorities. Each has a leader and a couple of board members assigned.

Other IC programs and activities continue in a non-priority manner. In 2010 further strategizing is planned to address these and determine whether they need to be adjusted or replaced. See Appendix A for the 1993 objectives that IC operates under. These are also scheduled for review in 2010.



Appendix A

1993 Objectives

These are the existing IC objectives, last revised in 1993, verbatim from the constitution. They are provided here for reference.

1. to encourage communication among freely associating individuals and agencies interested in the interpretation of the natural and human heritage of Canada;
2. to provide opportunities for individuals and groups to develop interpretation skills;
3. to promote, support and develop interpretation programs;
4. to act as a clearing house for information relating to heritage interpretation;
5. to advance high standards of performance in interpretation;
6. to promote the understanding of heritage interpretation and its benefits among individuals, the public, governments and organisations;
7. to recognize excellence in the field of heritage interpretation;
8. to speak out for our heritage interpretation in Canada with a view to furthering and protecting its interests;
9. to co-operate with other regional, provincial, national and international heritage associations;
10. to promote the study and research of heritage interpretation;
11. to promote employment opportunities within the field of heritage interpretation.

