

Dear ALC Members:

Although it is not customary for the President of the ALC to send out a letter to the membership at the end of each year, as I was reflecting on these past 12 months I felt compelled to share these thoughts with you.

This was a milestone year for the ALC. As you know, we changed Management Companies and began with a new Executive Director at the beginning of the year. But the true milestone was reached in May, when we made the decision that we were ready to transition from a volunteer-run organization to a staff-run one. Part of what enabled this decision was the confidence we had that Beth Palys and her team at Management Solutions Plus could effectively and efficiently carry our load. But equally important was the realization that after being founded seven years ago by nine committed, pioneering individuals heading up nine U.S.-based language service providers, we had reached a stage of maturity as an association that required us to take this important step.

Now, let there be no confusion – our transition was from a (largely) volunteer-run organization to one operated by staff, not to an association **led** by staff. The strategic direction and the areas of focus for the ALC must still be determined by us, our members, as represented by our elected Board of Directors. We still cannot function without our industry expertise and valuable input as provided by our involvement on task forces, in our Leadership Council and by serving on our Board of Directors.

Since our important change took effect about six months ago, much has been accomplished. Beth and her team are most ably ensuring the smooth operation of the ALC “back office” on a day to day basis. Our Office Depot and UPS member programs are up and running and many have signed up to take advantage of these great benefits. Our E&O Insurance Program is in the final stages of completion and will be offered to our members shortly. Staff has also worked with numerous volunteers to accomplish progress on each of our main initiatives:

- three well-received webinars have been held on topics chosen by the members
- our ALC reception in New York in October was very well attended and included a lively signature ALC Town Hall session
- member volunteers have been hard at work side by side with staff on our new website, which will be launched within a matter of weeks
- our new Industry Survey task force has already begun working with staff on the planning for next year’s survey which will be sent out in early to mid February 2010
- and planning for our annual conference, co-sponsored by AILIA, in Miami in May is well underway as well, with the program content being planned based on member feedback.

In addition to the above, our advocacy task forces have been hard at work representing our industry-related needs:

- We are represented on the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI) dedicated to a national certification for interpreters ([www.certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org](http://www.certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org)) and we are represented along with over 100 other national associations in a national coalition supporting language access to patients of Limited English Proficiency

- LSP's are under particular pressure from state taxing authorities, specifically those agencies interested in unemployment and worker's compensation tax collection, since independent contractors produce no revenue for either agency. Currently, ALC has been successful in inserting an exemption for interpreters and translators in the state tax code of Oregon, and is in the final stages of the same in the state of Washington. An Administrative ruling has been successfully made in the state of New York, and currently discussions are underway in the states of Connecticut and Utah to accomplish the same.
- Recently in the State of Washington, one company who, while they had their interpreters cleared as IC's, were being threatened with a reclassification of their translators. Within the last few weeks, IRS has granted this company relief under Section 530, which includes what is known as "Industry Safe Haven". There is some pressure on the part of the federal government to delete Section 530 from the Internal Revenue Code. To help combat this situation, ALC has initiated a change to Section 3508 of the Internal Revenue Code. This change would exempt Interpreters and Translators from employment tax, along with Realtors, and Direct Sellers.
- The ALC has been staying abreast of worldwide developments on the issue of LSP Certification/Accreditation. So far, by making contacts with various parties such as the Committee involved in developing the ASTM standard 2575; ALLIA, the Canadian association which unveiled their own certification in May 2009, a certification based on the CEN standard 15038; and many other parties throughout Europe, Asia and North America, we know that the best bet for short-term implementation in the United States is certification, not accreditation, for translation providers, and not yet interpreting providers.

While the above sounds like a lot, and is of course in addition to the ongoing dialogue among ALC members to exchange advice and team up to work together, there is much more to do. As I stated up above, being "staff-run" does not mean these accomplishments are possible without guidance and involvement from our members. Nearly 30 ALC members currently work with staff, by serving on our board, leadership council or various task forces and we profusely thank each and every one of them. So why not you? Look for the upcoming announcements seeking board nominations and new volunteers to join the Leadership Council and consider helping out. Look for announcements about task forces seeking members and consider helping out.

If these are commitments you can't make, just help out by getting in touch to let us know your thoughts and your needs. When our Board of Directors and Leadership Council meets in Washington, D.C. next month we'll be focusing on volunteer engagement as well as the value of ALC membership. I invite you to share your thoughts with me on these topics and any others, at any time, by emailing me at [mschulman@schreibernet.com](mailto:mschulman@schreibernet.com).

Happy New Year and all the best,



Marla Schulman  
President, The Association of Language Companies  
President, Schreiber Translations, Inc.