

Simon Inger Consulting



Four case studies in society journals publishing

Simon Inger, ALPSP Conference
and Awards, September 2016





CASE 1: A SELF-PUBLISHING SOCIETY



Situation

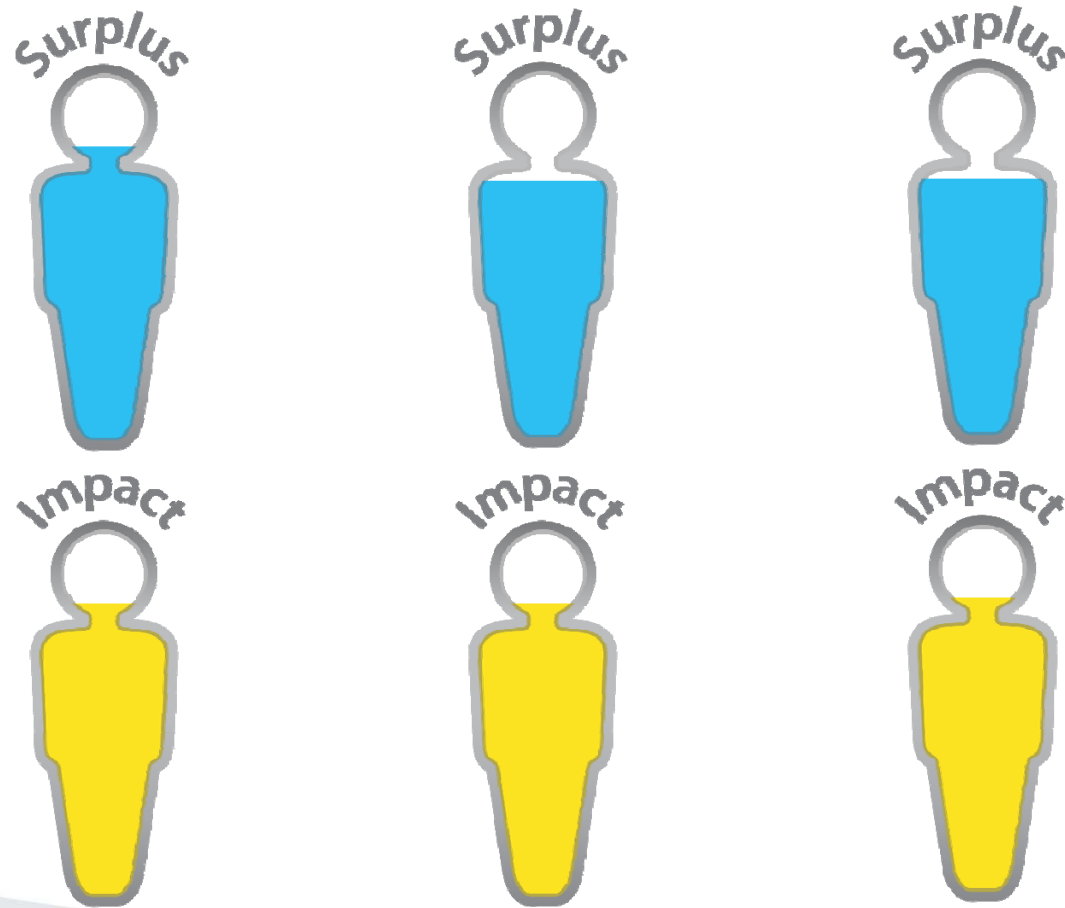
- Gross revenue of ~\$7million
- Net surplus to Society of \$1.8million
- Revenue stable or rising
- Portfolio growing
- Most journals growing
- Committed journals board chair helps drive innovation
- Highly engaged EiCs
- Staff sales manager and outsourced sales
- High staff involvement



Prognosis

- Society is above a critical revenue point
 - continue to invest in professional management, leading to innovation in portfolio, scope, business models, and delivery technologies, and outsourced sales partnerships maximise ability to reach a global market of readers.
- Could make more money through publishing partnership, but independence is key priority.
- Any shift to gold open access would not affect their surplus.

Past → Present → Future





CASE 2: SHIFTING FROM SELF-PUBLISHING TO COMMERCIAL PARTNER



Situation

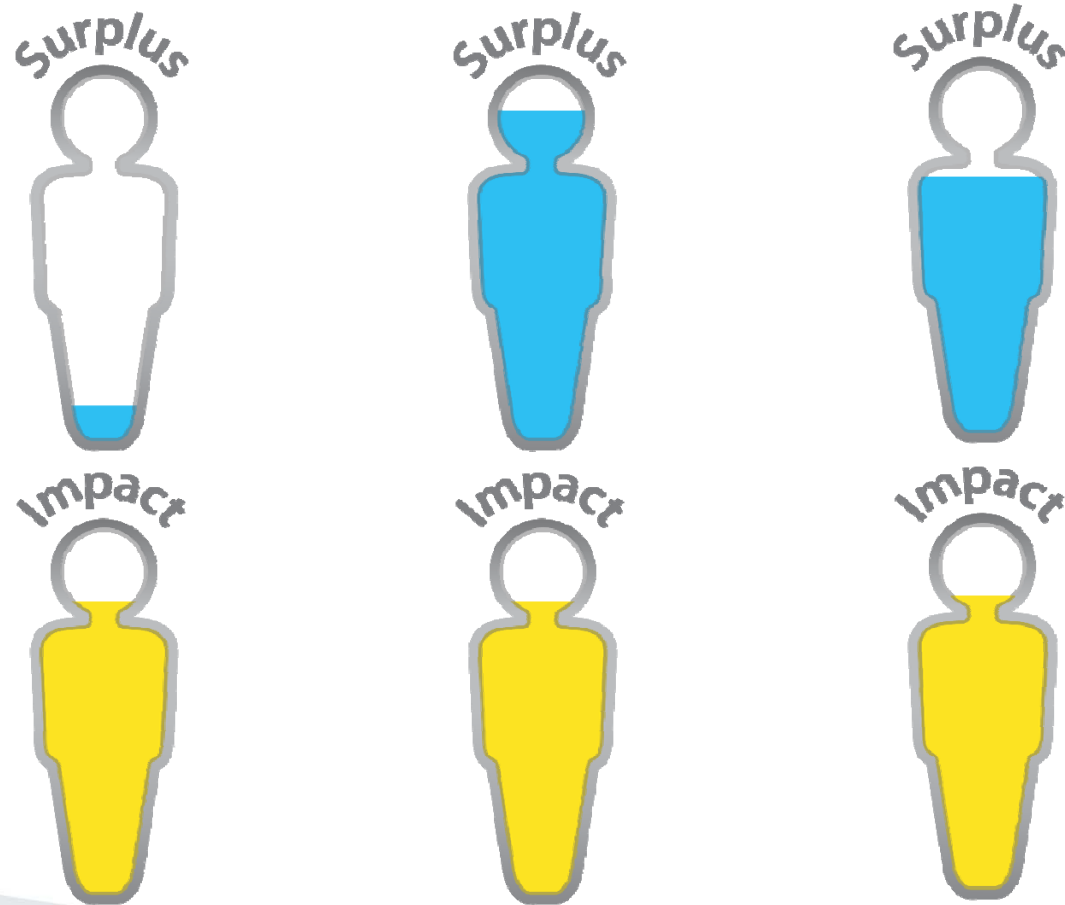
- Net revenue was \$50k from \$2.2million gross
- Now revenue share is \$1.2million, with \$350k internal costs, so net \$850k
- Content portfolio steady
- Almost all journals growing
- Highly engaged EiCs
- Loss of internal expertise, but key staff remain



Prognosis

- Once outsourced, common error is society thinks it doesn't have to worry about the content any more.
 - Lack of clarity in boundary of responsibility.
 - Leads to loss of leadership.
 - Scope drifts away from where the science is going.
- Finances longer term:
 - Likely to be steady, or slight falls, but allowing for inflation, noticeable falls in real terms

Past → Present → Future





CASE 3: LONG TERM COMMERCIAL PARTNER



Situation

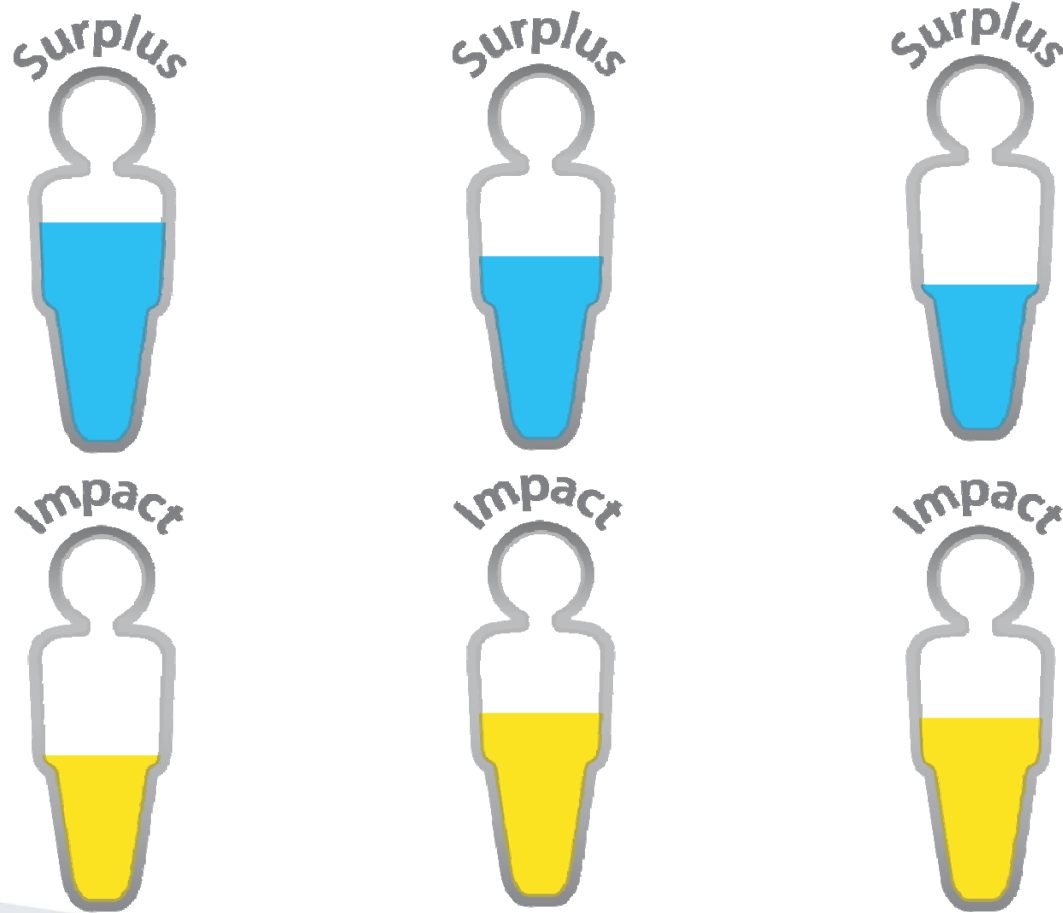
- Financial position eroded over years, partly due to a badly negotiated contract
- What started out as 800 subs. is now <100 subs. and an undefinable share of many thousands of “big deals”
- Society lost its journals’ manager some years after the partnership was made - now relies on academic members to watch the partnership, but they are adrift of current trends.
- Content still strong, but not quite where the science is.



Prognosis

- The society has become used to a certain income level, and since it is in steady decline in real terms, are unwilling to invest any of it in bolstering its own staffing and management to improve the program.
- Although the society is considering a re-tender, they are limited as to who might take over their publishing if they want to retain their income level in the short term, because of their reliance on the big deal.

Past → Present → Future





CASE 4: SOCIETY PUBLISHING ON THE BRINK



Situation

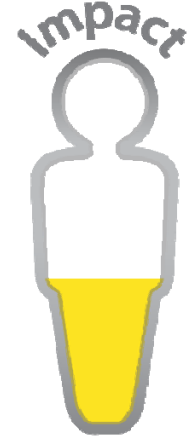
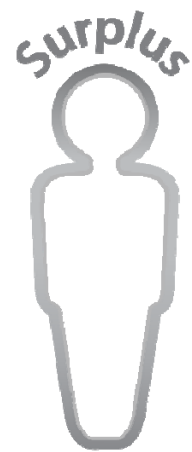
- Gross Revenue of \$137k
- Net loss to Society of \$70k
- Everything at lowest possible cost
- No investment possible – reserves dwindled
- Reasonable IF
- Low subscriber numbers means lower readership and citations than competitors



Prognosis

- Situation is critical, and publishing threatens to drag the Society itself into extinction
- Cannot invest its way out of trouble, and growing its way out of trouble is likely to be too long-term
- Effectively forced to find a publishing partner, especially one with Big Deals, to maximise readership quickly, and revenue slowly.

Past → Present → Future





CONCLUSIONS



Essential Components of Independence

- Critical mass (revenue, but also content)
- Continued investment and evolution of program
- Up-to-date with initiatives and developments
- Maximise reach and readership – sales partnerships



Essential Components of Partnership

- Keep attentive and don't relax!
- Continued investment and evolution of program
- Up-to-date with initiatives and developments
- Retain journals-savvy people on staff



Our Brands

Simon Inger Consulting

- Works with publishers to help them keep abreast of best practice, analysing journals programs, helping to realign content, delivery and business models to meet market need

Renew Consulting for Societies

- Works with societies that have outsourced their program and want to re-tender or re-negotiate

OR

- Societies that self-publish and want to find a publishing partner