
Design Effectiveness Awards Entry

1. Project title

**Incorporated Society
of Musicians rebrand**

2. Category

1.0 Corporate/Brand Identity

3. Sub category

**1.2 Design and
implementation costs
under £100,000**

4. Client Company

**Incorporated Society
of Musicians**

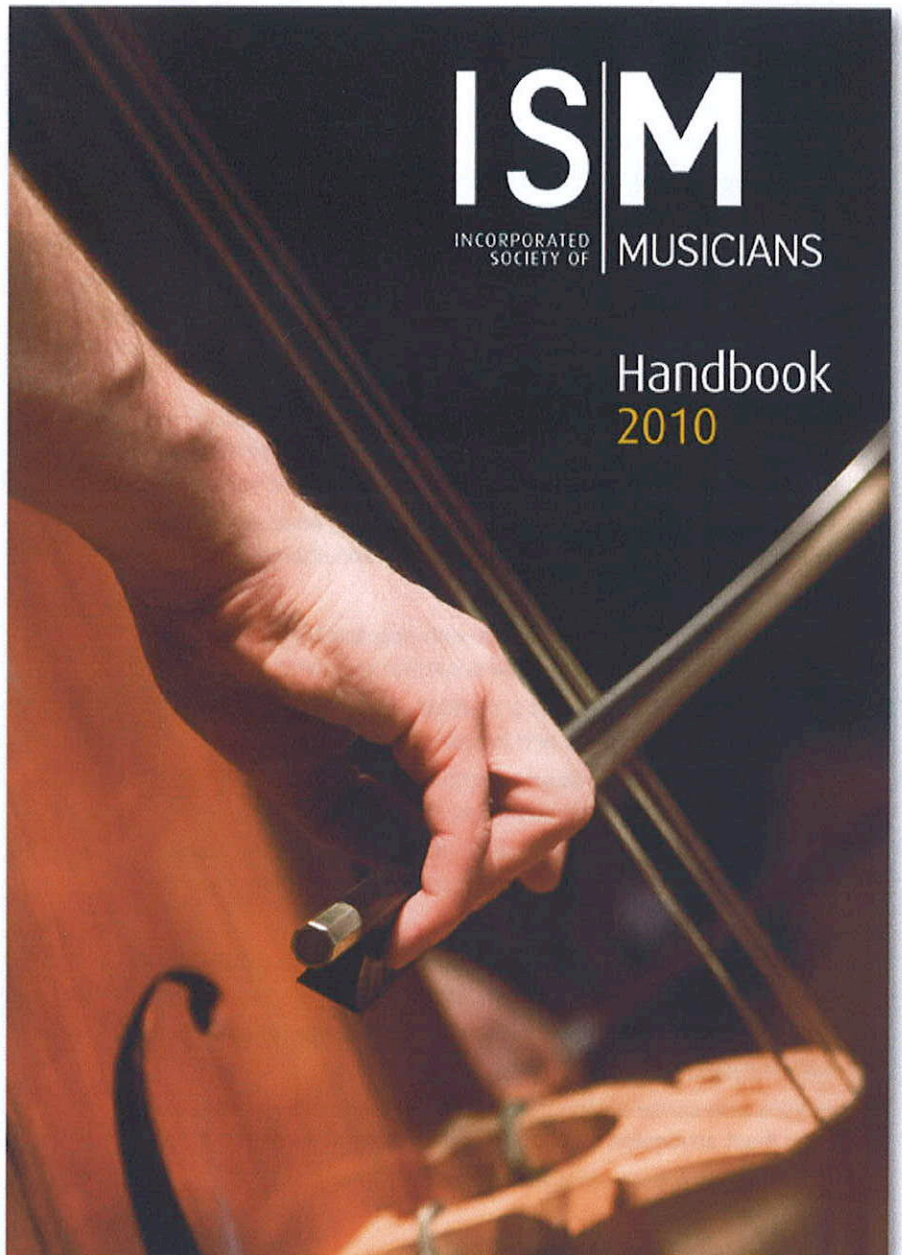
5. Design Consultancy

Cog Design Ltd

6. Current date

30th May 2010

**PUBLICATION
VERSION**



Executive summary

Founded in 1882 and currently with a membership of approximately 5000 individuals, the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) is a membership organisation founded to:

'promote the Art of Music, and maintain the honour and interests of the musical profession'.

The ISM has an amazing heritage but it had become convoluted in its structure and tired in its operation. It was perceived as irrelevant by its core audiences. Potential members weren't joining and existing members weren't engaging. Membership numbers had been stagnant for many years and the age demographic was rising at unsustainable levels.

We worked with their staff team to transform the way they perceived themselves. Then we implemented a rebrand to reposition them and alter the perception of their members, potential members and industry peers.

We brought the whole organisation on the journey, ensuring that staff, volunteers and members felt included and weren't scared of the change

A year on...

New membership increased to 260% with unprecedented increases in younger members and corporate members

Their members' journal became a credible opinion forum, receiving astonishing reader feedback and industry plaudits.

Their website transformed the interaction with members, and has driven new membership and communication methods.

Significant savings have been made in the use of paper and print.

These alone would repay their investment in design within three years.

The work has...

Catapulted them into industry consciousness, positioning them as the authoritative voice of professional musicians.

Attracted the kinds of new members that would not previously have considered joining.

Brought a new sense of vigour and rigour to their staff and volunteers, making them advocates for change and ambassadors for the brand.

Kick-started the process that will secure their future.

'We were all a little sceptical; we just wanted our logo to be tidied up and our magazine to be slicker. But now we get it. We constantly think about our brand and personality; it's inseparable from what we do; it shapes everything, from the venues we hire for conferences to way we address our envelopes'

Kim Davenport Gee,
Head of Publications & Events

[Word count 281]

1. Outline of the project brief

The ISM's original brief was to take their existing logotype, tidy it up and apply it to a range of stationery, publications and website. Rather than just doing what they asked, we proposed giving them what they needed – a collaborative examination of their brand, a list of clear objectives and the tools necessary to achieve these objectives...

Enable the ISM to become fully recognised as the UK's professional body for musicians. *Target: significantly raise the profile of the ISM and its Chief Executive within the professional music industry.*

Enable the ISM to secure its financial future by reducing costs (whilst increasing income). *Target: reduce paper use by 50% in 2 years. Investment in design to be repaid in 3 years.*

Enable the ISM to build a firm base for its long term future by attracting new members; specifically younger members and students. *Target: increase new members' numbers by 100% (25% to be students or recent graduates) within 12 months.*

- Create a new brand (including visual identity and use of language) that accurately projects the ISM as the voice of professional musicians.
- Engage the core staff to ensure that they are advocates for change and ambassadors for the ISM brand.
- Relaunch the members' magazine and reposition it as the authoritative journal for professional musicians.
- Rethink all existing printed communication materials, to increase efficiency and effectiveness.
- Redesign and rebuild the website and integrate a new members' database.



2. Description

The ISM is a membership organisation. It exists *to promote the Art of Music, and maintain the honour and interests of the musical profession*. It could be compared to a professional union but it is wholly independent of political affiliation or ownership.

3. Overview of the market

Founded in 1882 the ISM has an amazing heritage but had become convoluted in its structure and tired in its operation. Staff and volunteers had become exclusive (almost officious) in their use of language/communication. They had lost credibility within the industry and with existing and potential members (individual and corporate).

The ISM relies on fees from its members; numbers were stagnant and costs were rising. In an austere financial landscape, where memberships could be considered a luxury, the ISM was in an ever more competitive market. Competitors were squeezed by the market and were beginning to entice existing members away.

4. Project launch date

The project was launched in stages: the visual identity was launched in **May 09** and continued to be rolled out throughout the year. The big push (including website) was in **September 09**.

5. Size of design budget

Total budget for rebranding, design and implementation: £39,600

6. Outline of design solution

The ISM exists for the benefit of Musicians – so that's what the brand expresses: at all levels, the ISM 'is Musicians'.

The visual palette (logo, type treatment, weighting, colours) were all chosen to reinforce the professional nature of the organisation. It was apparent, early in the process, that potential members were looking for a solid and trustworthy, professional body. They could do the creative music-making themselves; they wanted the ISM to provide the professional advice and support to make that happen. Our solution 'speaks' in the visual language of professional advice (solicitors, doctors, accountants etc).

We deliberately avoided all of the clichés of musical notes and treble-clefs but there is a nod to that side of things (as the 'points' of each of the ISM letters sit on a five-bar staff). And, whilst the 'ISM' element is hand-drawn, the 'type' is based on Dax, designed by an accomplished professional musician Hans Reichel – which made a nice addition to the narrative when talking to stakeholders.



We worked with the ISM to change the way that they approached everything from the way they greeted people at conferences to the way they framed images in publications.

Perhaps the most important change was a shift in the use of language. Previously, all communication had been from a passive and officious perspective. Demands and edicts were issued from anonymous officials; now requests are made by real (named) people who take responsibility for actions.

We redesigned all of their communications materials (on and offline) to express the new brand and created tools that everyone can use to communicate effectively and efficiently to all of their audiences.

[Word count for column 274]



‘Cog’s pitch was head and shoulders above the others. They showed a depth of understanding about us as a professional but non-commercial body. They challenged our preconceptions and showed us what is possible through design and branding. Together we make an excellent team’

Deborah Annetts, Chief Executive

Engaging the staff

Key to the success of the project has been the engagement and support of all stakeholders. The process began at the outset when our counter to the request for a free creative pitch was acknowledged and a fee was made available, establishing a firm base of respect once we’d been awarded the work.

We took the staff team on a journey. It is fair to say that many of the team regarded branding as an unnecessary, dark-art.

Through workshops and interaction (shown above), we talked about personality and communication.

It was great to see the team being gradually turned on to the value of the ‘branding’ process.

When we subsequently presented our argument for change, to the (very conservative) Board, we did so with the full support of the staff team. Their enthusiasm for a total branding solution was invaluable in persuading the Board to unanimously approve our proposals.

The staff and the Board are now firm advocates for the changes and have been invaluable in implementing the brand across a national network of stakeholders.

Beyond the existing staff, the brand has had a direct impact on external peers and is cited as a major factor in persuading top-quality applicants to join the team

‘I’d never heard of the ISM; I spoke to other musicians who said it was just a ‘stuffy club for retired piano teachers’. But I’ve watched them transform themselves into a really dynamic company. The logo, and stylish job advert grabbed my attention, and I was really excited at the prospect of working for this re-energised group. Now I spend my time promoting the ISM and it’s made so much easier with great, and understandable, branding – what a difference a year has made.’

Henry Vann, recently appointed as Public Affairs & Policy Officer

Credibility

Perceptions in the industry have changed dramatically. The Chief Executive is now an in-demand speaker and board member.

Press agencies are clamouring for the attention of the new-look Music Journal and additional copies are ordered by many corporate members.

We asked the Chief Executive’s PA, Elizabeth Fulton, to sum up the changes for us:

‘The profile of the ISM, and of our Chief Executive Deborah Annetts, has grown tremendously since the redesign. In the last six months Deborah has been invited to speak at many high profile music conferences including the annual conferences of the Association of British Orchestras and Federation of Music Services, Music Learning Live!, and she was also invited to speak at the Tune In Conference organised by the DCSF. Deborah was also elected to serve on the national music education body, the Music Education Council.

Our redesign has helped the ISM shift its position from being disregarded to now, where we are viewed as the organisation that understands the sector and speaks out on behalf of professional musicians. For example, we are now contacted on a daily basis by organisations, including some of our competitors, for advice on issues affecting the sector.

Many opinion formers and influential figures in organisations right across the music world have told Deborah how wonderful they think the new look is and have asked her how we have transformed our organisation. While we have heard that some of our competitors are facing decreases in membership.”

Music Journal

The cornerstone of the ISM's communication is their (currently monthly) members' magazine, Music Journal.

We completely changed the focus of this publication. We overhauled the structure and content, dividing it into distinct sections to give pace and clarity. We increased the size of the type and gave it all more room to breath – setting a professional but accessible aesthetic tone.

And, by using an uncoated (FSC) paper we've reduced glare and added warmth (but not weight), making it especially appealing and accessible to the older demographic of most of the readers.

The redesign has been enthusiastically received by all audiences; it has become the perfect tool for the ISM to regain credibility with peers and opinion formers, and is relevant to new members whilst not excluding the existing membership.

Although the paper quality and bulk are significantly improved (and are now FSC approved) the weight is the same as before and the distribution costs are therefore the same.

Despite increases in quality, we were still able to produce the new magazine with the clients existing print suppliers at the same price:

36pp pre-launch (Feb 09) £4116.99
36pp post-launch (May 09) £4174.00

We have also incorporated the Society's annual report and accounts into the Music Journal so these are no longer produced separately – an annual saving of £2400.

A year on we have shifted much of the 'listings' content online and have implemented the relatively major change of going to a bi-monthly format; in the process we have increased credibility through focused content (whilst not upsetting the existing membership) and halved the production and distribution costs.

A request for feedback was included in the Editor's introduction to the redesigned issue. Dozens of positive responses came in; here are some of our favourites:

"Thanks for sending me your new-look magazine which is a triumph. So too is the new clean logo. Congratulations."

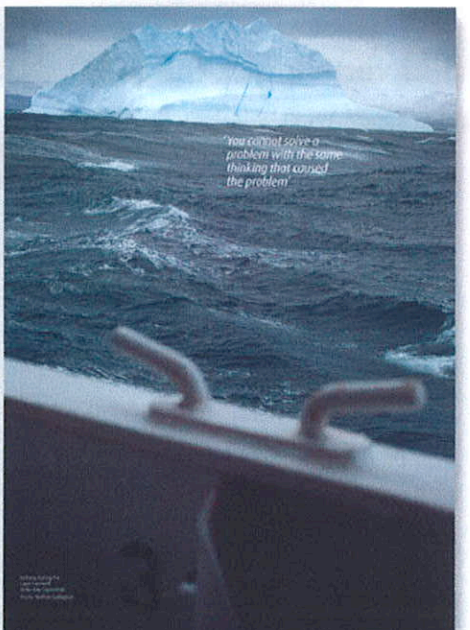
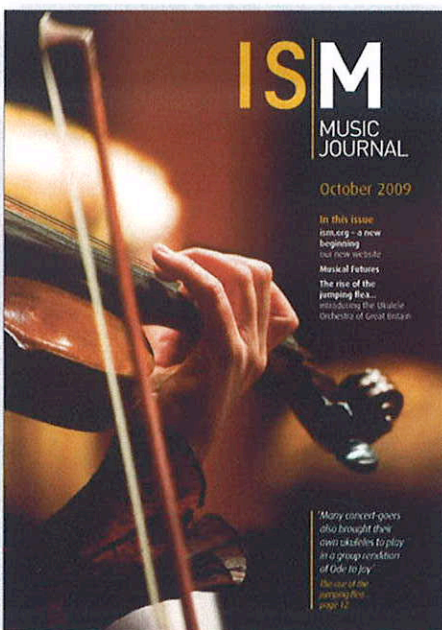
Chief Executive, Musicians Benevolent Fund

"I have eyesight problems and have not been able to read Music Journal or most other magazines for some years. I shed tears of joy when I opened the new style Journal and found I could read it – the font is clear, the contrast is good and there is no glare because it is not on glossy paper. I sat down and read the whole thing. It is truly wonderful. Thank you so much."

ISM Member – by phone

"Congratulations on the new look for MJ - what an improvement! I love the paper quality, print size, better photographs and the general much more modern look of it all. Can I confess now that when we were revamping Organists Review magazine 5 years ago, MJ was used as an example of what not to do!!"

Managing Editor, Organists' Review



New website

Through the use of test 'personas' and live beta-testing we were able to create a home page that delivers any user directly to the content they want. Members are presented with a huge (but easily managed) array of information, much of which was previously only available through printed sheets. The most notable is a members' diary, allowing them to filter the listings information that is relevant.

We developed an aesthetic and written language (and codified it in a handbook) to ensure consistency.

All of the front-end design and coding was completed in-house by our team. The site is built to strict W3C standards and is accessible to all (including those with sight impairments, who use screen readers or Braille converters).

The site is fully integrated into the back-end database of members details (built concurrently by a third-party developer), and utilises a powerful content management system so that anyone in the ISM team can update any content.

Previously it had not been possible to join the ISM, online. Within one hour of the site going live (and still in beta-testing) someone had found the site, filled in their application and paid for their membership.

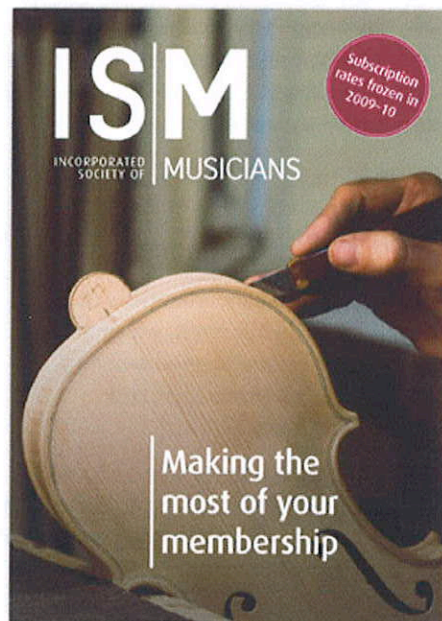
Since its launch in September 2009, 617 (of 632) new members have joined online.

Advertising spend

The ISM team had been habitual bookers of advertising space in a variety of specialist journals. Together we decided to cut almost all of that advertising and to concentrate on a very small number of high profile placements.

The increase in credibility and profile, through the rebrand, has meant a large increase in journalistic interest and editorial coverage, balancing out (or overshadowing) the lost column inches.

We've reduced advertising spend from £14,539pa to £3,070pa whilst increasing credibility and profile.



An additional document

Whilst most of our work was about reducing the amount of print, we did introduce one new publication to the mix.

Engaging the existing members and ensuring that they value their membership is vital. We created an A6 pocket booklet (shown above) that summarises the services available to members and is posted with renewal notices. This small booklet, alongside the articles in their members' magazine, has been hugely successful in increasing engagement of members (evidenced by increased use of services).

Calls to the in-house legal team increased by 20% in 12 months whilst calls to the 'emergency' helpline number decreased.

Savings in paper use

Through efficiency of language and design we've been able to dramatically reduce the amount of paper generated by the ISM. We were able to sweep away much of the bureaucracy and replace many cumbersome systems with more effective solutions. And, the website has replaced a huge amount of previously posted material.

For printed materials we've been able to increase type sizes and improve legibility, paper and print quality with no increases in production or distribution costs.

Internal paperwork:

The process is ongoing but we've already had a significant impact. Typical examples (which have been replicated throughout) include:

Council meeting papers :

98 sheets per person, per meeting (2008)
46 sheets per person, per meeting (2010)
a reduction of 4680 sheets per year

Section meeting papers :

49 sheets per person, per meeting (2008)
11 sheets per person, per meeting (2010)
a reduction of 4560 sheets per year

We have not included these in our cost analysis as there is no mechanism to count the total savings but it can be confidently estimated that hundreds of reams of paper are saved each year across the organisation.

External communications:

Joining pack: the ISM's main sales tool, taken to conferences or sent in response to a new enquiry, used to be a folder with 10 or more A4 inserts (20pp).

Almost all new enquiries are now dealt with through the website but we've also produced a printed booklet which we've been able to reduce to 10pp of A5.

Yearbook/handbook: constitutionally, the ISM is obliged to send a full list of all members to every member, each year. This year we made type bigger, clearer and more accessible and still managed to reduce the document by 16pps (down to 184pp). It may not be terribly sexy but it is very effective. And our impetus is being used to put forward a change to the constitution so that the whole document will be put online in 2011, eliminating production and distribution costs.

New, younger members

The ISM has seen a dramatic increase in all membership since the rebrand was rolled-out.

In the 12 months since the relaunch (9 months since the big push and new website)...

632 new members

joined, compared to an average of 242 across the past 5 years.

145 are recent graduates

having joined on the new reduced graduate rate

106 are students

compared to an average of 17 across the past 5 years.

9 are corporate members

an unprecedented figure, comprising 7% of the number of corporate members.

Return on investment

From the outset, our client had committed to a relatively high financial investment to ensure their long-term financial security.

The prospective income from modest annual membership fees takes time to accumulate but once a member has joined, they are (through now modest maintenance) likely to continue to contribute fees for many years, and to recommend membership to others.

However, for an organisation with no history of paying for external design (all work was previously undertaken in-house) it was important that we were able to justify costs by making savings and minimising any additional expense (whilst increasing quality).

Savings alone will repay the investment within three years and additional revenue from new members has already contributed an additional £29,063 pa of income.

The investment will be repaid before the end of this calendar year with a positive balance of at least £44,254 by this time next year.

Figures for 09/10

Rebranding & implementation
(£39,600)

Increase in revenue from new members
£29,063

Savings in print & advertising from 08/09
£3796

Balance at end May 2010 (£6,741)

Figures for 10/11

Revenue from new members (even if the number of members stays constant)
£29,063

Savings in print & advertising from 08/09
£25,728

Balance at end May 2011 £44,254

Figures for 11/12

Revenue from new members (even if the number of members stays constant)
£29,063

Savings in print & advertising from 08/09
£36,497

Balance at end May 2012 £109,814

Graphs and tables 1

New members joining dates

Full, individual members

	04 05	05 06	06 07	07 08	08 09	09 10	09 10 breakdown	
							Graduate	Full
Jun	1	15	12	16	21	30	0	30
Jul	23	15	13	8	17	22	0	22
Aug	15	14	13	19	20	34	0	34
Sep	9	20	17	14	12	69	0	69
Oct	27	21	28	19	34	66	34	32
Nov	18	25	36	17	26	38	13	25
Dec	12	10	2	12	12	27	8	19
Jan	13	17	20	11	17	58	20	38
Feb	32	27	12	25	16	46	20	26
Mar	24	22	28	16	21	40	17	23
Apr	28	33	2	17	20	37	19	18
May	2	11	18	16	30	39	14	25
Totals	204	230	201	190	246	506	145	361

Students

Jun	0	1	0	3	2	3
Jul	2	4	3	0	0	2
Aug	1	0	0	1	0	1
Sep	1	2	1	0	0	12
Oct	0	1	2	0	0	12
Nov	4	4	1	0	3	9
Dec	0	0	0	1	2	7
Jan	1	1	1	2	0	11
Feb	0	3	2	0	1	19
Mar	5	3	3	1	2	7
Apr	1	2	0	3	3	11
May	2	2	0	3	2	12
Totals	17	23	13	14	15	106

NOTE: Not included in these figures are the non fee-paying members (Emeritus or Honorary members), Associate members (who pay a fee but are supporters only) and Corporate Members.

We have not included these as their numbers are statistically too small to be useful – averaging less than 12, in total across the past 5 years.

This year, the total number of new members was 632.

506 were Full members, 106 were students and 24 were in the other categories, of which 10 were Corporate Members.

Fee income, full and student joiners:

Total for 08 09	£34815
Total for 07 08	£26950
Total for 06 07	£28465
Average across 3 years	£30077

Total for 09 10	£59140
6 students at £25	£150
100 students at £12	£1200
361 at full price (£140)	£50540
145 at reduced rate (£50)	£7250

There were an additional 9 corporate members (at £189) but we have not included these as we have been unable to confirm whether any new corporate members had joined in the comparison years.

Therefore, comparison figure of additional income in 09|10 **£29063**

Graphs and tables 2

Ongoing production costs for communication

	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11*	2011/12*
Music Journal	49,402	50,088	26,797	28673
Handbook	11,495	12,315	13,177	0
Joining pack	0	1100	1177	1259
Making the Most of...	0	998	1068	1143
Report & accounts	2,400	0	0	0
Press advertising	10,000	5000	5350	5725
Total spend	73,297	69,501	47,569	36,800

*Projected figures allowing for a 7% inflationary rise. NB distribution costs are not included in these calculation but represent a significant additional saving.

Breakdown of our fees

Initial branding work	£13,400
Website design and build	£15,000
Implementation...	
Stationery	£ 400
Music Journal**	£ 4,480
Join Us pamphlet	£ 1,120
Exhibition stands	£ 560
Membership card etc	£ 400
Making the Most of...	£ 800
Handbook	£ 3,440
Total	£39,600

Legal and helpline calls

May 08 – April 09: 170 cases

May 09 – April 10: 205 cases

An increase of over 20%.

Helpline figures are in a steady decline – currently at about 1,000 calls a year.

Members now feel more comfortable with ringing the in-house team, and confident that they will receive the answers that they need.

**Although all of our work was presented as templates, to be completed by our client's in-house team, they took the decision that their staff resources were better used in other ways. They therefore decided to outsource a lot of ongoing implementation work (including the members' magazine, and publicity materials for various seminars and conferences).

We are fortunate that we were commissioned to do that work. But we have not included our fees for that work in the financial calculations.

Other influencing factors

ISM membership represents excellent value for money (especially for students and recent graduates) – all we have done is packaged that offering in a useful and accessible way.

The organisation is staffed by enthusiastic and talented people – all we have done is helped them to empathise with their audiences and provided them with the tools to help them to communicate more effectively.

A new Chief Executive

We were appointed by a recently recruited Chief Executive, with a mandate for change. Her energy and enthusiasm has undoubtedly contributed to the success of the organisation and the rebranding. Deborah has been a real advocate of our work and we have provided her with the tools she needed to spread the word throughout the UK.

Change in membership criteria

Whilst we were working on the rebranding, the new Chief Executive championed a change in criteria for joining. Full members used to have to seek recommendation from an existing member and a professional referee. A change to their constitution was voted through in April and implemented in September 2009*.

Now, a professionally qualified (degree/graduate diploma level) musician can join by providing evidence of qualifications. This will undoubtedly have made the application process less fraught, although it is unlikely to have attracted potential members to seek membership and will have had no effect on any of the other measures of success. We have no claim to have instigated the change, but it could be said that the change is directly aligned with the principles of the rebranding process. It was certainly through our design that the change was communicated to members and potential members.

Database build

Concurrent to our work in building the ISM's new website, they appointed a consultant and development company to completely overhaul their membership database. This will definitely make admin an easier task for the ISM team (although work for the first few months has increased as the database has been built and populated). Our part on this work was integral to the process but the actual database was built by the third-party, 3SI; we liaised with the consultants JLS Consultants, throughout to ensure the integrity of the process and the data.

Financial incentives for younger members

The annual rate for student membership was cut from £25 to £12 per year from September 2009, alongside a new discount rate for full members who were recent graduates (£50 per year for the first two years after graduating).

Whilst these incentives would not have attracted new people to the organisation, it may have been the 'push' that encouraged some to join once our designed materials were in front of them.

This encouragement was entirely in-line with the brand values and goals that we established but we obviously didn't make the decision to cut the rates.

*Both the financial incentives and the change in membership criteria coincided with the full launch of the new brand, website and marketing materials.

Advertising

As mentioned, elsewhere, we have dramatically reduced the advertising spend. All usual advertising has been cut and replaced by two or three ads, positioned to raise credibility (rather than directly appeal to potential members).

Additional marketing

There have been no additional mailings and no additional marketing. The only change is that we dramatically reduced the amount of paper that has been sent to existing members during the year.

PR campaigns

There have been no specific, new PR campaigns but the rebranding has afforded many new press stories and opportunities, beginning with the very first outing of the new logo, on a runner at the 2009 London Marathon. The specialist press have been enthusiastic about the many changes at the ISM, and the National press are beginning to pick up on the ISM as being the authority on professional music – all as a result of the rebrand.

"Our old adverts had very little effect (on our applications, no one cited adverts as a way they heard or saw info about the ISM). Since the rebrand, journalists have been keen to talk to the ISM and they've noticed our events and advocacy/campaigning work. We have therefore got some serious editorial coverage in the trade magazines – far better for our profile than any paid advert space.

Kim Davenport Gee,
Head of Publications & Events

Where has the data come from?

Most of the data in this document has been sourced by our client's administrative team.

Details about membership numbers were compiled by JLS consultants, drawing on data from the membership database that they commissioned.

Additional data about the number of legal cases and helpline calls was sourced by the ISM's legal team.

Design Effectiveness Awards Entry

1. Project title

**Incorporated Society
of Musicians rebrand**

2. Category

1.0 Corporate/Brand Identity

3. Sub category

**1.2 Design and
implementation costs
under £100,000**

4. Client Company

**Incorporated Society
of Musicians**

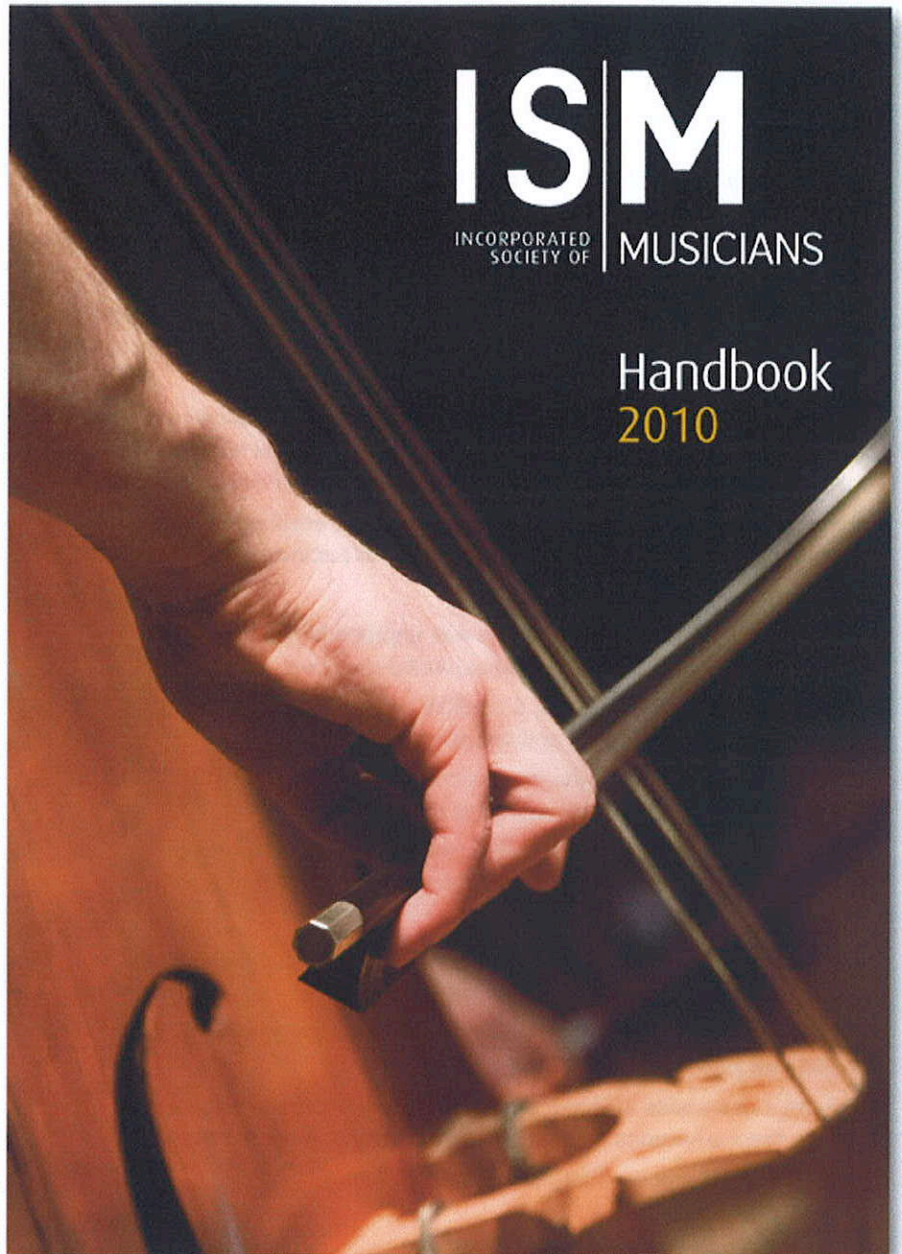
5. Design Consultancy

Cog Design Ltd

6. Current date

30th May 2010

**PUBLICATION
VERSION**



Executive summary

Founded in 1882 and currently with a membership of approximately 5000 individuals, the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) is a membership organisation founded to:

'promote the Art of Music, and maintain the honour and interests of the musical profession'

The ISM has an amazing heritage but it had become convoluted in its structure and tired in its operation. It was perceived as irrelevant by its core audiences. Potential members weren't joining and existing members weren't engaging. Membership numbers had been stagnant for many years and the age demographic was rising at unsustainable levels.

We worked with their staff team to transform the way they perceived themselves. Then we implemented a rebrand to reposition them and alter the perception of their members, potential members and industry peers.

We brought the whole organisation on the journey, ensuring that staff, volunteers and members felt included and weren't scared of the change

A year on...

New membership increased to 260% with unprecedented increases in younger members and corporate members

Their members' journal became a credible opinion forum, receiving astonishing reader feedback and industry plaudits.

Their website transformed the interaction with members, and has driven new membership and communication methods.

Significant savings have been made in the use of paper and print. These alone would repay their investment in design within three years.

The work has...

Catapulted them into industry consciousness, positioning them as the authoritative voice of professional musicians.

Attracted the kinds of new members that would not previously have considered joining.

Brought a new sense of vigour and rigour to their staff and volunteers, making them advocates for change and ambassadors for the brand.

Kick-started the process that will secure their future.

'We were all a little sceptical; we just wanted our logo to be tidied up and our magazine to be slicker. But now we get it. We constantly think about our brand and personality; it's inseparable from what we do; it shapes everything, from the venues we hire for conferences to way we address our envelopes'

Kim Davenport Gee,
Head of Publications & Events

[Word count 281]

1. Outline of the project brief

The ISM's original brief was to take their existing logotype, tidy it up and apply it to a range of stationery, publications and website. Rather than just doing what they asked, we proposed giving them what they needed – a collaborative examination of their brand, a list of clear objectives and the tools necessary to achieve these objectives...

Enable the ISM to become fully recognised as the UK's professional body for musicians. *Target: significantly raise the profile of the ISM and its Chief Executive within the professional music industry.*

Enable the ISM to secure its financial future by reducing costs (whilst increasing income). *Target: reduce paper use by 50% in 2 years. Investment in design to be repaid in 3 years.*

Enable the ISM to build a firm base for its long term future by attracting new members; specifically younger members and students. *Target: increase new members' numbers by 100% (25% to be students or recent graduates) within 12 months.*

- A) Create a new brand (including visual identity and use of language) that accurately projects the ISM as the voice of professional musicians.
- B) Engage the core staff to ensure that they are advocates for change and ambassadors for the ISM brand.
- C) Relaunch the members' magazine and reposition it as the authoritative journal for professional musicians.
- D) Rethink all existing printed communication materials, to increase efficiency and effectiveness.
- E) Redesign and rebuild the website and integrate a new members' database.



2. Description

The ISM is a membership organisation. It exists *to promote the Art of Music, and maintain the honour and interests of the musical profession*. It could be compared to a professional union but it is wholly independent of political affiliation or ownership.

3. Overview of the market

Founded in 1882 the ISM has an amazing heritage but had become convoluted in its structure and tired in its operation. Staff and volunteers had become exclusive (almost officious) in their use of language/communication. They had lost credibility within the industry and with existing and potential members (individual and corporate).

The ISM relies on fees from its members; numbers were stagnant and costs were rising. In an austere financial landscape, where memberships could be considered a luxury, the ISM was in an ever more competitive market. Competitors were squeezed by the market and were beginning to entice existing members away.

4. Project launch date

The project was launched in stages: the visual identity was launched in **May 09** and continued to be rolled out throughout the year. The big push (including website) was in **September 09**.

5. Size of design budget

Total budget for rebranding, design and implementation: £39,600

6. Outline of design solution

The ISM exists for the benefit of Musicians – so that's what the brand expresses: at all levels, the ISM 'is Musicians'.

The visual palette (logo, type treatment, weighting, colours) were all chosen to reinforce the professional nature of the organisation. It was apparent, early in the process, that potential members were looking for a solid and trustworthy, professional body. They could do the creative music-making themselves; they wanted the ISM to provide the professional advice and support to make that happen. Our solution 'speaks' in the visual language of professional advice (solicitors, doctors, accountants etc).

We deliberately avoided all of the clichés of musical notes and treble-clefs but there is a nod to that side of things (as the 'points' of each of the ISM letters sit on a five-bar staff). And, whilst the 'ISM' element is hand-drawn, the 'type' is based on Dax, designed by an accomplished professional musician Hans Reichel – which made a nice addition to the narrative when talking to stakeholders.



We worked with the ISM to change the way that they approached everything from the way they greeted people at conferences to the way they framed images in publications.

Perhaps the most important change was a shift in the use of language. Previously, all communication had been from a passive and officious perspective. Demands and edicts were issued from anonymous officials; now requests are made by real (named) people who take responsibility for actions.

We redesigned all of their communications materials (on and offline) to express the new brand and created tools that everyone can use to communicate effectively and efficiently to all of their audiences.

[Word count for column 274]



‘Cog’s pitch was head and shoulders above the others. They showed a depth of understanding about us as a professional but non-commercial body. They challenged our preconceptions and showed us what is possible through design and branding. Together we make an excellent team’

Deborah Annetts, Chief Executive

Engaging the staff

Key to the success of the project has been the engagement and support of all stakeholders. The process began at the outset when our counter to the request for a free creative pitch was acknowledged and a fee was made available, establishing a firm base of respect once we’d been awarded the work.

We took the staff team on a journey. It is fair to say that many of the team regarded branding as an unnecessary, dark-art.

Through workshops and interaction (shown above), we talked about personality and communication.

It was great to see the team being gradually turned on to the value of the ‘branding’ process.

When we subsequently presented our argument for change, to the (very conservative) Board, we did so with the full support of the staff team. Their enthusiasm for a total branding solution was invaluable in persuading the Board to unanimously approve our proposals.

The staff and the Board are now firm advocates for the changes and have been invaluable in implementing the brand across a national network of stakeholders.

Beyond the existing staff, the brand has had a direct impact on external peers and is cited as a major factor in persuading top-quality applicants to join the team

‘I’d never heard of the ISM; I spoke to other musicians who said it was just a ‘stuffy club for retired piano teachers’. But I’ve watched them transform themselves into a really dynamic company. The logo, and stylish job advert grabbed my attention, and I was really excited at the prospect of working for this re-energised group. Now I spend my time promoting the ISM and it’s made so much easier with great, and understandable, branding – what a difference a year has made.’

Henry Vann, recently appointed as Public Affairs & Policy Officer

Credibility

Perceptions in the industry have changed dramatically. The Chief Executive is now an in-demand speaker and board member.

Press agencies are clamouring for the attention of the new-look Music Journal and additional copies are ordered by many corporate members.

We asked the Chief Executive’s PA, Elizabeth Fulton, to sum up the changes for us:

“The profile of the ISM, and of our Chief Executive Deborah Annetts, has grown tremendously since the redesign. In the last six months Deborah has been invited to speak at many high profile music conferences including the annual conferences of the Association of British Orchestras and Federation of Music Services, Music Learning Live!, and she was also invited to speak at the Tune In Conference organised by the DCSF. Deborah was also elected to serve on the national music education body, the Music Education Council.

Our redesign has helped the ISM shift its position from being disregarded to now, where we are viewed as the organisation that understands the sector and speaks out on behalf of professional musicians. For example, we are now contacted on a daily basis by organisations, including some of our competitors, for advice on issues affecting the sector.

Many opinion formers and influential figures in organisations right across the music world have told Deborah how wonderful they think the new look is and have asked her how we have transformed our organisation, while we have heard that some of our competitors are facing decreases in membership.”

Music Journal

The cornerstone of the ISM's communication is their (currently monthly) members' magazine, Music Journal.

We completely changed the focus of this publication. We overhauled the structure and content, dividing it into distinct sections to give pace and clarity. We increased the size of the type and gave it all more room to breath – setting a professional but accessible aesthetic tone.

And, by using an uncoated (FSC) paper we've reduced glare and added warmth (but not weight), making it especially appealing and accessible to the older demographic of most of the readers.

The redesign has been enthusiastically received by all audiences; it has become the perfect tool for the ISM to regain credibility with peers and opinion formers, and is relevant to new members whilst not excluding the existing membership.

Although the paper quality and bulk are significantly improved (and are now FSC approved) the weight is the same as before and the distribution costs are therefore the same.

Despite increases in quality, we were still able to produce the new magazine with the clients existing print suppliers at the same price:

36pp pre-launch (Feb 09) £4116.99
36pp post-launch (May 09) £4174.00

We have also incorporated the Society's annual report and accounts into the Music Journal so these are no longer produced separately – an annual saving of £2400.

A year on we have shifted much of the 'listings' content online and have implemented the relatively major change of going to a bi-monthly format; in the process we have increased credibility through focused content (whilst not upsetting the existing membership) and halved the production and distribution costs.

A request for feedback was included in the Editor's introduction to the redesigned issue. Dozens of positive responses came in; here are some of our favourites:

"Thanks for sending me your new-look magazine which is a triumph. So too is the new clean logo. Congratulations."

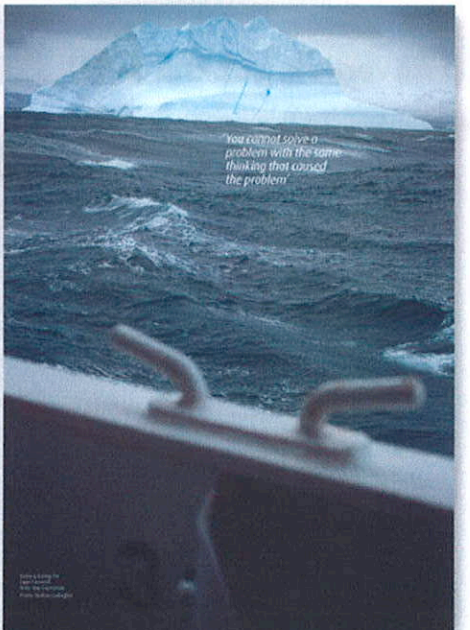
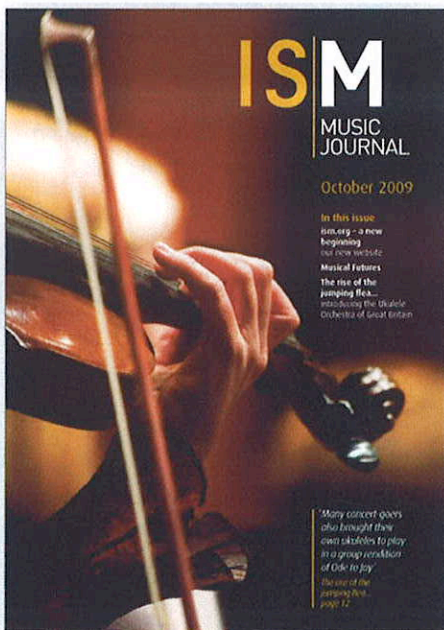
Chief Executive,
Musicians Benevolent Fund

"I have eyesight problems and have not been able to read Music Journal or most other magazines for some years. I shed tears of joy when I opened the new style Journal and found I could read it – the font is clear, the contrast is good and there is no glare because it is not on glossy paper. I sat down and read the whole thing. It is truly wonderful. Thank you so much."

ISM Member – by phone

"Congratulations on the new look for MJ - what an improvement! I love the paper quality, print size, better photographs and the general much more modern look of it all. Can I confess now that when we were revamping Organists Review magazine 5 years ago, MJ was used as an example of what not to do!!"

Managing Editor, Organists' Review



New website

Through the use of test 'personas' and live beta-testing we were able to create a home page that delivers any user directly to the content they want. Members are presented with a huge (but easily managed) array of information, much of which was previously only available through printed sheets. The most notable is a members' diary, allowing them to filter the listings information that is relevant.

We developed an aesthetic and written language (and codified it in a handbook) to ensure consistency.

All of the front-end design and coding was completed in-house by our team. The site is built to strict W3C standards and is accessible to all (including those with sight impairments, who use screen readers or Braille converters).

The site is fully integrated into the back-end database of members details (built concurrently by a third-party developer), and utilises a powerful content management system so that anyone in the ISM team can update any content.

Previously it had not been possible to join the ISM, online. Within one hour of the site going live (and still in beta-testing) someone had found the site, filled in their application and paid for their membership.

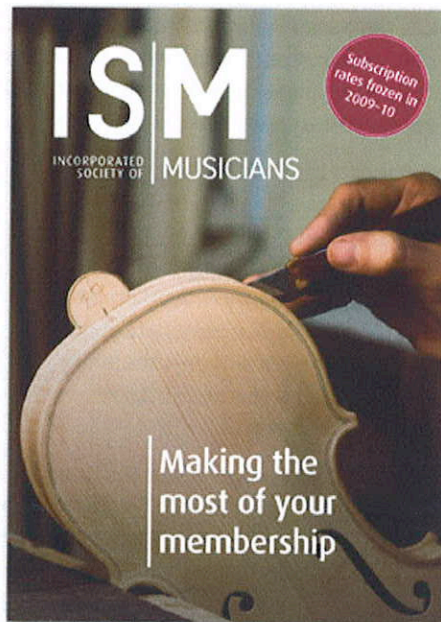
Since its launch in September 2009, 617 (of 632) new members have joined online.

Advertising spend

The ISM team had been habitual bookers of advertising space in a variety of specialist journals. Together we decided to cut almost all of that advertising and to concentrate on a very small number of high profile placements.

The increase in credibility and profile, through the rebrand, has meant a large increase in journalistic interest and editorial coverage, balancing out (or overshadowing) the lost column inches.

We've reduced advertising spend from £14,539pa to £3,070pa whilst increasing credibility and profile.



An additional document

Whilst most of our work was about reducing the amount of print, we did introduce one new publication to the mix.

Engaging the existing members and ensuring that they value their membership is vital. We created an A6 pocket booklet (shown above) that summarises the services available to members and is posted with renewal notices. This small booklet, alongside the articles in their members' magazine, has been hugely successful in increasing engagement of members (evidenced by increased use of services).

Calls to the in-house legal team increased by 20% in 12 months whilst calls to the 'emergency' helpline number decreased.

Savings in paper use

Through efficiency of language and design we've been able to dramatically reduce the amount of paper generated by the ISM. We were able to sweep away much of the bureaucracy and replace many cumbersome systems with more effective solutions. And, the website has replaced a huge amount of previously posted material.

For printed materials we've been able to increase type sizes and improve legibility, paper and print quality with no increases in production or distribution costs.

Internal paperwork:

The process is ongoing but we've already had a significant impact. Typical examples (which have been replicated throughout) include:

Council meeting papers :

98 sheets per person, per meeting (2008)
46 sheets per person, per meeting (2010)
a reduction of 4680 sheets per year

Section meeting papers :

49 sheets per person, per meeting (2008)
11 sheets per person, per meeting (2010)
a reduction of 4560 sheets per year

We have not included these in our cost analysis as there is no mechanism to count the total savings but it can be confidently estimated that hundreds of reams of paper are saved each year across the organisation.

External communications:

Joining pack: the ISM's main sales tool, taken to conferences or sent in response to a new enquiry, used to be a folder with 10 or more A4 inserts (20pp).

Almost all new enquiries are now dealt with through the website but we've also produced a printed booklet which we've been able to reduce to 10pp of A5.

Yearbook/handbook: constitutionally, the ISM is obliged to send a full list of all members to every member, each year. This year we made type bigger, clearer and more accessible and still managed to reduce the document by 16pps (down to 184pp). It may not be terribly sexy but it is very effective. And our impetus is being used to put forward a change to the constitution so that the whole document will be put online in 2011, eliminating production and distribution costs.

New, younger members

The ISM has seen a dramatic increase in all membership since the rebrand was rolled-out.

In the 12 months since the relaunch (9 months since the big push and new website)...

632 new members

joined, compared to an average of 242 across the past 5 years.

145 are recent graduates

having joined on the new reduced graduate rate

106 are students

compared to an average of 17 across the past 5 years.

9 are corporate members

an unprecedented figure, comprising 7% of the number of corporate members.

Return on investment

From the outset, our client had committed to a relatively high financial investment to ensure their long-term financial security.

The prospective income from modest annual membership fees takes time to accumulate but once a member has joined, they are (through now modest maintenance) likely to continue to contribute fees for many years, and to recommend membership to others.

However, for an organisation with no history of paying for external design (all work was previously undertaken in-house) it was important that we were able to justify costs by making savings and minimising any additional expense (whilst increasing quality).

Savings alone will repay the investment within three years and additional revenue from new members has already contributed an additional £29,063 pa of income.

The investment will be repaid before the end of this calendar year with a positive balance of at least £44,254 by this time next year.

Figures for 09/10

Rebranding & implementation
(£39,600)

Increase in revenue from new members
£29,063

Savings in print & advertising from 08/09
£3796

Balance at end May 2010 (£6,741)

Figures for 10/11

Revenue from new members (even if the number of members stays constant)

£29,063

Savings in print & advertising from 08/09
£25,728

Balance at end May 2011 £44,254

Figures for 11/12

Revenue from new members (even if the number of members stays constant)

£29,063

Savings in print & advertising from 08/09
£36,497

Balance at end May 2012 £109,814

Graphs and tables 1

New members joining dates

Full, individual members

	04 05	05 06	06 07	07 08	08 09	09 10	09 10 breakdown	
							Graduate	Full
Jun	1	15	12	16	21	30	0	30
Jul	23	15	13	8	17	22	0	22
Aug	15	14	13	19	20	34	0	34
Sep	9	20	17	14	12	69	0	69
Oct	27	21	28	19	34	66	34	32
Nov	18	25	36	17	26	38	13	25
Dec	12	10	2	12	12	27	8	19
Jan	13	17	20	11	17	58	20	38
Feb	32	27	12	25	16	46	20	26
Mar	24	22	28	16	21	40	17	23
Apr	28	33	2	17	20	37	19	18
May	2	11	18	16	30	39	14	25
Totals	204	230	201	190	246	506	145	361

Students

Jun	0	1	0	3	2	3
Jul	2	4	3	0	0	2
Aug	1	0	0	1	0	1
Sep	1	2	1	0	0	12
Oct	0	1	2	0	0	12
Nov	4	4	1	0	3	9
Dec	0	0	0	1	2	7
Jan	1	1	1	2	0	11
Feb	0	3	2	0	1	19
Mar	5	3	3	1	2	7
Apr	1	2	0	3	3	11
May	2	2	0	3	2	12
Totals	17	23	13	14	15	106

NOTE: Not included in these figures are the non fee-paying members (Emeritus or Honorary members), Associate members (who pay a fee but are supporters only) and Corporate Members.

We have not included these as their numbers are statistically too small to be useful – averaging less than 12, in total across the past 5 years.

This year, the total number of new members was 632.

506 were Full members, 106 were students and 24 were in the other categories, of which 10 were Corporate Members.

Fee income, full and student joiners:

Total for 08 09	£34815
Total for 07 08	£26950
Total for 06 07	£28465
Average across 3 years	£30077

Total for 09 10	£59140
6 students at £25	£150
100 students at £12	£1200
361 at full price (£140)	£50540
145 at reduced rate (£50)	£7250

There were an additional 9 corporate members (at £189) but we have not included these as we have been unable to confirm whether any new corporate members had joined in the comparison years.

Therefore, comparison figure of additional income in 09|10 **£29063**

Graphs and tables 2

Ongoing production costs for communication

	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11*	2011/12*
Music Journal	49,402	50,088	26,797	28673
Handbook	11,495	12,315	13,177	0
Joining pack	0	1100	1177	1259
Making the Most of...	0	998	1068	1143
Report & accounts	2,400	0	0	0
Press advertising	10,000	5000	5350	5725
Total spend	73,297	69,501	47,569	36,800

*Projected figures allowing for a 7% inflationary rise. NB distribution costs are not included in these calculation but represent a significant additional saving.

Breakdown of our fees

Initial branding work	£13,400
Website design and build	£15,000
Implementation...	
Stationery	£ 400
Music Journal**	£ 4,480
Join Us pamphlet	£ 1,120
Exhibition stands	£ 560
Membership card etc	£ 400
Making the Most of...	£ 800
Handbook	£ 3,440
Total	£39,600

Legal and helpline calls

May 08 – April 09: 170 cases

May 09 – April 10: 205 cases

An increase of over 20%.

Helpline figures are in a steady decline – currently at about 1,000 calls a year.

Members now feel more comfortable with ringing the in-house team, and confident that they will receive the answers that they need.

**Although all of our work was presented as templates, to be completed by our client's in-house team, they took the decision that their staff resources were better used in other ways. They therefore decided to outsource a lot of ongoing implementation work (including the members' magazine, and publicity materials for various seminars and conferences).

We are fortunate that we were commissioned to do that work. But we have not included our fees for that work in the financial calculations.

Other influencing factors

ISM membership represents excellent value for money (especially for students and recent graduates) – all we have done is packaged that offering in a useful and accessible way.

The organisation is staffed by enthusiastic and talented people – all we have done is helped them to empathise with their audiences and provided them with the tools to help them to communicate more effectively.

A new Chief Executive

We were appointed by a recently recruited Chief Executive, with a mandate for change. Her energy and enthusiasm has undoubtedly contributed to the success of the organisation and the rebranding. Deborah has been a real advocate of our work and we have provided her with the tools she needed to spread the word throughout the UK.

Change in membership criteria

Whilst we were working on the rebranding, the new Chief Executive championed a change in criteria for joining. Full members used to have to seek recommendation from an existing member and a professional referee. A change to their constitution was voted through in April and implemented in September 2009*.

Now, a professionally qualified (degree/graduate diploma level) musician can join by providing evidence of qualifications. This will undoubtedly have made the application process less fraught, although it is unlikely to have attracted potential members to seek membership and will have had no effect on any of the other measures of success.

We have no claim to have instigated the change, but it could be said that the change is directly aligned with the principles of the rebranding process. It was certainly through our design that the change was communicated to members and potential members.

Database build

Concurrent to our work in building the ISM's new website, they appointed a consultant and development company to completely overhaul their membership database. This will definitely make admin an easier task for the ISM team (although work for the first few months has increased as the database has been built and populated). Our part on this work was integral to the process but the actual database was built by the third-party, 3SI; we liaised with the consultants JLS Consultants, throughout to ensure the integrity of the process and the data.

Financial incentives for younger members

The annual rate for student membership was cut from £25 to £12 per year from September 2009, alongside a new discount rate for full members who were recent graduates (£50 per year for the first two years after graduating).

Whilst these incentives would not have attracted new people to the organisation, it may have been the 'push' that encouraged some to join once our designed materials were in front of them.

This encouragement was entirely in-line with the brand values and goals that we established but we obviously didn't make the decision to cut the rates.

*Both the financial incentives and the change in membership criteria coincided with the full launch of the new brand, website and marketing materials.

Advertising

As mentioned, elsewhere, we have dramatically reduced the advertising spend. All usual advertising has been cut and replaced by two or three ads, positioned to raise credibility (rather than directly appeal to potential members).

Additional marketing

There have been no additional mailings and no additional marketing. The only change is that we dramatically reduced the amount of paper that has been sent to existing members during the year.

PR campaigns

There have been no specific, new PR campaigns but the rebranding has afforded many new press stories and opportunities, beginning with the very first outing of the new logo, on a runner at the 2009 London Marathon. The specialist press have been enthusiastic about the many changes at the ISM, and the National press are beginning to pick up on the ISM as being the authority on professional music – all as a result of the rebrand.

“Our old adverts had very little effect (on our applications, no one cited adverts as a way they heard or saw info about the ISM). Since the rebrand, journalists have been keen to talk to the ISM and they've noticed our events and advocacy/campaigning work. We have therefore got some serious editorial coverage in the trade magazines – far better for our profile than any paid advert space.

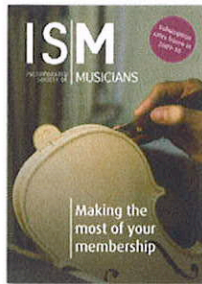
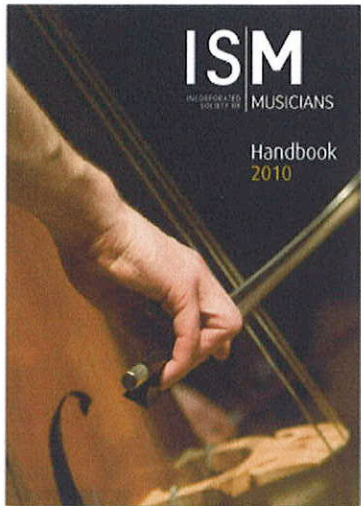
Kim Davenport Gee,
Head of Publications & Events

Where has the data come from?

Most of the data in this document has been sourced by our client's administrative team.

Details about membership numbers were compiled by JLS consultants, drawing on data from the membership database that they commissioned.

Additional data about the number of legal cases and helpline calls was sourced by the ISM's legal team.



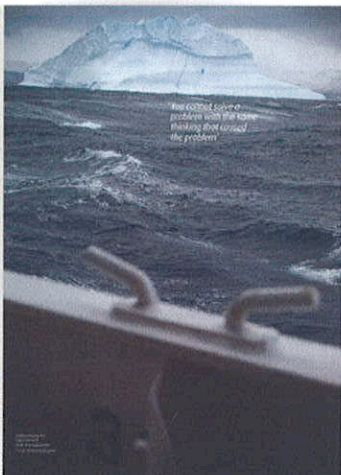
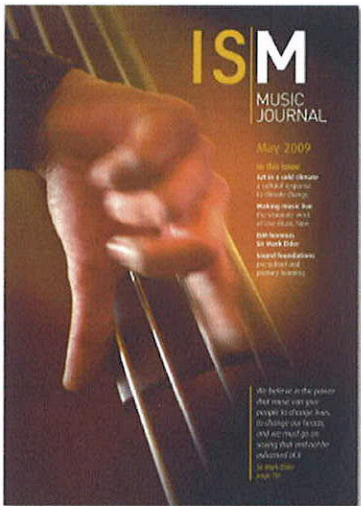
About us

The Incorporated Society of Musicians is the UK's professional body for musicians. We promote the art of music and the interests of professional musicians through campaigns, support and practical advice.

Play your part

Help us to grow

Our new 100-page handbook, containing everything you need to know about the ISM, is now available in PDF format. We've also updated our website to make it easier for you to find what you need. We've also updated our membership application form to make it easier for you to apply. We've also updated our newsletter to make it easier for you to stay up to date with the latest news and events.



ISM | **COG**

INCORPORATED SOCIETY OF **MUSICIANS**

Contact sheet

Cog Design - ISM rebrand



