

Position Specification

International Species Information System

Chief Executive Officer

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AND ASSOCIATES

Integrity. Quality. Success.

Organization

International Species Information System was founded in 1973 when Drs. Ulysses Seal and Dale Makey proposed the idea of an international database to help zoos and aquariums accomplish long-term conservation management goals. At that time, 51 zoos in North America and Europe responded to the invitation to participate in this network. The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians (AAZV), and other zoological associations provided grants and endorsements for the organization. In addition, the doctors raised development funding from private foundations and the United States Department of the Interior. The Minnesota Zoological Garden hosted the program for 15 years.

Since 1989, the International Species Information System has been incorporated as a non-profit entity under an international Board of Trustees elected by subscribing member institutions and has sustained annual membership growth over the last 40 years. Today, members number in excess of 900 institutions in almost 80 countries on six continents. The global database for the zoological community contains information on 2.6 million animals—10,000 species—and is constantly growing. Members use this information to manage their inventory; control the genetic and demographic makeup of their animal collections; find appropriate unrelated new animals; identify institutions seeking animals; discover facilities with experience in breeding and raising certain offspring; and create reports for governments and other official accrediting bodies, among other uses.

International Species Information System also serves as a center for cooperative development of zoological software for in-facility use. This allows software development costs to be spread across more institutions—making professional software and professional-level support available to all participants at a reasonable cost.

For more information about International Species Information System, please visit their website at: www.isis.org.

Location

Bloomington, Minnesota

This Minneapolis/St. Paul area location offers a high quality of life, modest housing costs, and some of the best public schools in the United States.

Mission, Vision, and Goals

Mission: It is the mission of the International Species Information System to facilitate international collaboration in the collection and sharing of knowledge on animals and their environments for zoos, aquariums, and related conservation organizations to serve institutional, regional, and global animal management and conservation goals.

Vision: The International Species Information System provides the world's most current, comprehensive, and reliable source of knowledge on intensively managed species and their environments for zoos, aquariums, and related organizations to serve institutional, regional, and global animal management (ex-situ, as well as in-situ) and conservation goals.

Goals: The International Species Information System works to obtain the broadest possible participation in data collection and sharing for zoos, aquariums, and related organizations worldwide; develop and support comprehensive software systems and tools that support the mission; provide services that are essential for members and prospective members to manage the animals in their care; serve as an independent, impartial body that promotes the development of standards and practices that enhance the integrity and usefulness of data on animals and their environments; promote the general scientific use of the knowledge beyond animal management; and plan and manage the resources (i.e., human, financial, and technological) needed to meet all of these goals.

Reporting Relationship

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is an exempt position reporting to the Board of Trustees. The CEO will directly supervise 19 staff in Minneapolis through the following direct reports: the Chief Information Officer, the Financial Director, the Science Director, and the Director of Global Member Development. The organization also employs six full- and part-time permanent contractors.

The Chief Executive Officer has oversight for information technology and zoological professionals, including distributed member-support positions located around the world. The International Species Information System has an operating budget of approximately \$5 million.

Position Concept

The organization seeks an experienced, results-oriented Chief Executive Officer to lead the management team and collaborate with the Board of Trustees to enhance and grow the brand to the global membership, as well as to expand to markets outside the traditional zoo and aquarium community. The CEO will provide overall leadership for the organization with an emphasis on strategic issues of relevance to a global information technology and data management organization.

The Chief Executive Officer, while possessing the necessary technical skills to carry out the defined responsibilities, should also have the personal capabilities and character to effectively interact with and be sensitive to the varied needs of a global membership. S/he will take a long-term view that focuses on sustainability, while obtaining interim, quantifiable results.

The successful candidate will inherently recognize the balance between the organization's limited resources and the need to think in a manner that is entrepreneurial, innovative, and service focused.

Specific Duties

Under the direction of the Board and directly managing the senior staff, the CEO is responsible for the administrative aspects for the organization, as follows:

1. Lead the largest international non-profit zoological information services membership organization, implementing the mission and vision developed by the Board of Trustees. This will include the ongoing review and, as appropriate, revision of organizational structure, objectives, and goals.
2. Assess the organization and develop a growth-oriented strategic plan, focusing on sustainability, the international conservation community, and appropriate unrealized markets.
3. Develop and implement rigorous and disciplined project management processes/methodologies that will improve efficiency, productivity, costs, and the timely, successful completion of projects.
4. Assure the recruitment, development, training, and evaluation of qualified personnel to support the operations of the organization. Evaluate, develop, and implement human resources policies and procedures to ensure efficiency, exceptional service delivery, and ongoing personnel assessment opportunities.
5. Offer strong, credible, and consistent professional management to the staff.
6. Provide direction and oversight to outside vendors to ensure all contractual obligations are met on time and within budget.
7. Prepare and monitor budgets to assure fiscal health, accountability, and stability, working closely with the Treasurer, for Board review and approval.
8. Build and enhance living collection information services and trust-based relationships with all member institutions worldwide.
9. Maintain organizational awareness of best practices while promoting the effective use of current and emerging technologies.

10. Identify new member institution services and suitable new revenue opportunities that transcend current competitor's offerings. Ensure the generation of additional income necessary to sustain the organization and enable growth.
11. Provide the Board of Trustees with regular reports on projects, process improvements, service levels, and operational issues.
12. Engage the membership in the proactive exploration, discussion, and assessment of all services and offerings. Deliver on membership needs as a result of this input and communicate the outcomes with transparency.
13. Act as a sponsor and forward thinking custodian for the community collection-management software project (ZIMS). Ensure that all project related deadlines/deliverables are met.
14. Provide sound business judgment as well as entrepreneurial leadership and vision to technology functions worldwide. Build a business plan supported by a credible and reasonable business case.
15. Serve as the ambassador to zoo, aquarium, and related professional associations at global, regional, and national levels worldwide.
16. Support the Board of Trustees in policy and strategic organizational development.

Candidate Qualifications

As the chief executive, the CEO must possess and project the utmost integrity and highest standards of professional conduct, and must be an individual qualified by accomplishment and experience to exercise the leadership of a collegial, mission focused, and motivated professional community. Expected qualifications include:

- The ideal candidate will be a highly energetic, diplomatic, and entrepreneurial leader with a minimum of ten years of progressively responsible management experience, five of which will include executive level experience gained in either the non-profit or business sectors. Management experience gained in a technology or software company, software consulting/professional services firm, and/or highly technology reliant organization would be of strong interest. Experience leading a membership organization and/or association as well as familiarity with zoos and aquariums is a plus.

- The successful candidate will have a fundamental appreciation and understanding of conservation and its impact on the global community.
- Must have excellent planning, administration, leadership, and financial management skills as well as a high degree of emotional intelligence and the ability to embrace constructive feedback with openness.
- Must be able to build cooperation cross-culturally and worldwide; an appreciation of the organizational dynamics of an international membership organization is essential.
- Will be sufficiently competent with technology and its attendant issues to ask the right questions, give appropriate guidance, innovate through product development, and ensure that decisions serve the best short- and long-term interests of all stakeholders.
- Be able to present complex information system issues in straightforward and uncomplicated terms to zoo, aquarium, and other professionals who do not have technical backgrounds.
- Will have the intelligence and interpersonal skills required to effectively partner with the Board of Trustees and other sources of influence.
- The CEO must have a strong commitment to and demonstrated experience in providing high quality, client-oriented service where membership needs are the centerpiece of decision making.
- Management style must be characterized by a commitment to collaboration and creativity. Must have the ability to initiate and foster constructive communication by maintaining positive, cooperative, and collegial relationships with key constituents.
- Will be pro-active rather than reactive; this individual must possess strong decision-making skills, be willing to take action, and be capable of implementing work plans within appropriate deadlines to ensure goals are met.
- The following personal traits are extremely desirable: unquestioned integrity, a passion for excellence, self-awareness, persuasive communications skills, an entrepreneurial spirit, political astuteness, an open mind, and diplomacy coupled with decisiveness.
- The ability to function as a catalyst, coach, and doer, guiding people at all levels of the organization by utilizing a facilitative approach.

- A demonstrated knowledge of managing people and global technology operations through change and expansion.
- This executive should have the ability to control and move forward on several priorities simultaneously.
- Knowledge of other languages, in addition to English, would be a strong advantage.
- Ability to travel internationally to meet with member organizations as needed throughout a given year.

Education

The successful candidate will hold a bachelor's degree; a graduate degree is preferred.

Process

A review of applications will commence immediately, continuing until the position is filled. Interested individuals are encouraged to submit their credentials as soon as possible for full consideration. Complete applications should be submitted electronically and should include: a current resume reflecting work experience from college forward and a list of names, telephone numbers, addresses, and email addresses for five professional references. **References will not be contacted without the candidate's approval/consent.**

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