

# Introduction

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*Leveraging Corporate Assets: New Global Directions for Business Archives.*  
([http://www.shibusawa.or.jp/english/center/network/01\\_icasbl/Tokyo/leverage.html](http://www.shibusawa.or.jp/english/center/network/01_icasbl/Tokyo/leverage.html)) April 2012.

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# Introduction

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## 1. Background

The Section for Business and Labour Archives (SBL) of the International Council on Archives (ICA) was born in 1990 out of an earlier ICA committee dedicated to business records. Since its inception, the SBL has attracted a broad range of members from around the world involved in similar activities and sharing common professional interests. As of May 2012, the SBL comprised more than 100 members from nearly 40 countries<sup>1</sup> and was lead by a bureau of 24 dedicated members from 15 countries.<sup>2</sup>

The SBL lists its five primary objectives as being:

- 1) To promote professional and scholarly co-operation and communication between business and labour archives and archivists;
- 2) To promote interest in such archives on an international scale;
- 3) To develop guidelines on the appraisal and disposal of business and labour archives;
- 4) To study the question of access to and accessibility of such archives; and
- 5) To co-operate with public archives which keep business and labour archives.<sup>3</sup>

To realize these objectives, the SBL arranges annual or biannual seminars and symposiums on related topics. Since 2010, these seminars and symposiums have been arranged with the particular aim of sharing experiences in the management and administration of archives. Thus the SBL cooperated: in 2010 with the Saint-Gobain Group and Patrimoine et mémoire d'entreprises to hold “Corporate Memory, A Tool Serving Management” in Blois, France; in 2011 with the Shibusawa Eiichi Memorial Foundation and the Business Archives Association (BAA) of Japan to hold “The Value of Business Archives: Their Use by Japanese Companies and New Global Trends” in Tokyo, Japan; and in 2012 with A.P. Moller – Maersk to hold “With Constant Care...the Business Archivist in the 21st Century” in Copenhagen, Denmark.

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<sup>1</sup> “SBL Members,” *International Council on Archives*. <http://www.ica.org/?lid=2744&group1=25> (accessed May 7, 2012)

<sup>2</sup> “SBL Steering Committee,” *International Council on Archives*. <http://www.ica.org/2696/steering-committee/sbl-steering-committee.html> (accessed May 7, 2012)

<sup>3</sup> “Section for Business and Labour Archives,” *International Council on Archives*. <http://www.ica.org/2685/about-section-for-business-and-labour-archives-sbl/about-section-for-business-and-labour-archives-sbl.html> (accessed May 7, 2012)

The Tokyo symposium focused on the idea that business archives have multifaceted value and can serve as a tool for corporate management. In other words, the use of business archives in business management. Image 1 is a diagram illustrating this idea.

Image 1 – The Multifaceted Value of Business Archives



With this figure in mind, the three terms: “History Marketing,” “Story-telling,” and “Proactivity” were offered to SBL bureau members as suggestions to guide their presentations in Tokyo. Over the past few years these terms have become regarded as instrumental in adding value to the function of archives programmes and archivists in the corporate setting. The terms can also provide a direction for business archives and the daily work of records management professionals. An explanation of the terms is as follows:

**History Marketing:** Leveraging the historical information contained in past records and for use in business and marketing. Using the history of certain products, services, brands, or companies as a tool to differentiate them from other products, services, brands, or companies. This historical information provides credibility and creates customer trust.

**Story-telling:** Telling the story of a business or company, its history, and how it has contributed to society at large through its business activities. While all stakeholders including shareholders, customers, members of local communities, management, and staff are concerned with story-telling, it is especially important for staff and management. It has been empirically shown that a clear definition of the meaning of their job significantly encourages and motivates employees at all levels. Business archives are closely linked to human psychology and an archival department, with its collection of records and archives, is the only place within a company that can provide trustworthy stories based on historical evidence.

**Proactivity:** Identified as a desired behavioural trait for professional archivists, especially those in corporate settings. In addition to basic tasks such as collecting, organizing, preserving, maintaining control over, and providing access to information and materials in the archives, proactive business archivists help develop products, services, and brands, and carry out planning and employee training in order to actively support business. Creating content for media outlets and various sources both inside and outside the company is another area where proactivity is important for today's business archivists. In the end it is the proactivity of professional business archivists that will make history marketing and story-telling effective tools for management.

Based on presentations given at the Tokyo and Blois symposiums as well as previously published articles, the Resource Center for the History of Entrepreneurship (RCHE) of the Shibusawa Eiichi Memorial Foundation compiled and published *Sekai no Bijinesu Akaibuzu: Kigyo Kachi no Gensen* (English title: *Leveraging Corporate Assets: New Global Directions for Business Archives*) in March 2012. *Sekai no Bijinesu Akaibuzu* was the

Image 2 – Panel Discussion, Tokyo symposium (Photograph: Naoyuki Takagi)



first book in Japanese on business archives and has attracted interest from a wide range of Japanese readers. Impressed by the quality of the articles and wanting to share the publication with a wider audience, the Shibusawa Foundation decided to compile an English version in cooperation with the SBL and contributors to the Japanese version. It was decided to provide the English version as an e-book on the website of the RCHE. Thus this e-book, *Leveraging Corporate Assets: New Global Directions for Business Archives*, was born. It is hoped that the case studies provided herein will prove to be useful and practical resources for the international business archives community.

## **2. The E-book: *Leveraging Corporate Assets***

Part 1 comprises case studies that deal with history marketing. Henning Morgen, of the worldwide shipping group A.P. Moller – Maersk, demonstrates the importance of history documentation and communication by giving two examples of the usage of information from historical records, relating to environmental protection and CSR, being used in external public relations. Naomi Aoki, of the 400 plus year-old Toraya Confectionery, describes the use of records in a traditional Japanese industry. He explains how records, such as confectionery sample books and historical sales records, are used by Toraya to provide a historical context for individual products and the company as a whole. Paul C. Lasewicz of IBM outlines how IBM's corporate archives and archivists contributed to defining the corporate brand.

Part 2 looks at the role of archives and corporate heritage in business management. Alexander L. Bieri, of global pharmaceutical giant F. Hoffmann – La Roche, analyses the shifts in management characteristics and how the Roche historical archives have been used to influence the socio-cultural environment of the company's management. Didier Bondu, of habitat and construction market leader Saint-Gobain, traces the historical development of business archives in France in general and the case of the Saint-Gobain Archives in particular. He then explains the unique usage of the structure of an Economic Interest Group (EIG) for the business model of the Saint-Gobain Archives. Claudia Orlando, of the nonprofit Ansaldo Foundation in Genoa, describes the changes in public and professional perspectives on business archives during the past decades in Italy and illustrates how the Foundation has made use of business records collected for various purposes.

Part 3 is composed of case studies of archives being leveraged as a tool for change. Becky Haglund Tousey of Kraft Foods looks back at the role of the archives team in the merger of Kraft Foods and iconic British confectionary Cadbury in February 2010. Francesca

Pino, of Italian banking group Intesa Sanpaolo, discusses the professional requirements for archivists working in group archives, particularly the need for a proactive commitment to the group archives. Vrunda Pathare, of Indian conglomerate Godrej Group, describes the vision behind the Godrej Archives, how it was established, and how it has thrived and effected change within the Group.

Part 4 explores public sector involvement in business archives, including the archives of public corporation business enterprises and the relationships between governmental agencies and private business organizations. Ashok Kapoor of the Reserve Bank of India Archives details the history and role of the Archives since its establishment in 1981 and reveals the implications this has for maintaining democracy in India. Alex Ritchie of The National Archives of the United Kingdom outlines the National Strategy for Business Archives in England and Wales that was launched in 2009 and the development of this remarkable yet unique cooperation between the private and public sectors. Lan Wang of the State Archives Administration of China details the introduction of the ‘assets’ concept and its impact on business records management in China, especially over the last decade, and illustrates how innovations in records management have accompanied the development of the market economy in China.

In closing, just as a business enterprise needs to be able to adapt to a new environment in order to maintain its sustainability, so too do business archives and archivists. They have worked, and will continue to work, in circumstances that are constantly changing due to innovation, mergers and acquisitions, or sometimes even failures. The SBL is expected to facilitate this and assist its members to keep up with cutting edge ideas and practices for responsible management of archives and records by being a hub for information and networking among business archives and records professionals. Hopefully this publication can contribute in this way not only to the professional archival community, but also to businesses and organizations with corporate archives and society at large.