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HOW A PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY SURVIVED (AND THRIVED IN) THE PANDEMIC

Abstract

The worldwide COVID pandemic of 2019-2022 caused a organic reengineering of most business processes. Travel restrictions, meeting restrictions, distancing, communications issues, loss of staff, and change in customer base caused many businesses and enterprises suffer stagnation and closure. Those that survived, reorganized, and restructured their business practices around the new environment. The same is true for professional societies. Most societies chose how to restructure their business and activity to survive in the new world. Some chose wisely, others chose poorly.

The American Astronautical Society (AAS) survived (and even thrived) the pandemic rollercoaster. It kept its membership base, expanded its customer base, and continued its activities with only minor and transient interruption. This paper will describe how the AAS engaged its members, changed its internal business processes, redesigned its symposia and meetings, endured a 100

About AAS: Since 1954, the American Astronautical Society (AAS) has been the premier network of current and future space professionals dedicated to advancing all space activities. The Society has long been recognized for the excellence of our national symposia, technical conferences, and publications and for our impact on shaping the U.S. space program. AAS members have opportunities to meet and connect with leaders in the space industry to exchange information and ideas, discuss career aspirations, and expand their knowledge and ability.

AAS is a member managed organization with a professional staff of only three. Members are responsible for the planning and execution of all its events including the following: AAS Symposia: Robert H. Goddard Memorial Symposium John Glenn Memorial Symposium Wernher von Braun Memorial Symposium Student CanSat Competition Technical Conferences: AIAA/AAS Space Flight Mechanics Meeting AAS Guidance, Navigation and Control Conference ISS Research Development Conference Technical Sessions AAS/AIAA Astrodynamics Specialist Conference AAS Publishes the on-line Journal of the Astronautical Sciences. AAS also publishes the hardcover the Advances in the Astronautical Sciences series, the Science and Technology series, and the the AAS History series.

More about AAS can be found at https://astronautical.org/