

Branding FAQ

What is the proposed Association name and tagline?

Association for Research and Innovation Advancement (ARIA)

Transforming Ideas into Opportunities

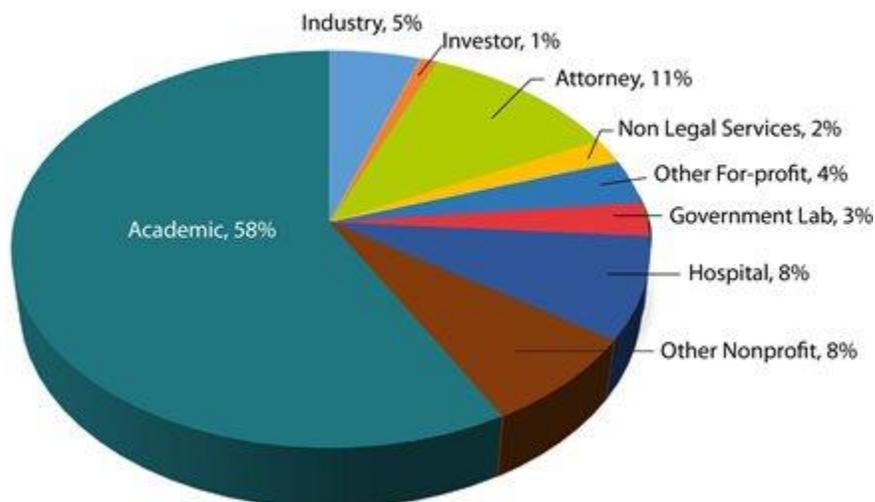
Why do we want to change AUTM's name?

The AUTM Board of Directors considered a name change for nearly a year before agreeing to rebrand to a name that better represents our members and their multi-faceted roles as they support the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

- Our members are being asked to do more within their offices. That's a great thing.
- ARIA better represents our community of diverse members as their jobs get more complex—from those shepherding the evaluation, protection and commercialization of inventions, to those working in startup formation or engaged on the industry side of the profession.
- Of our members, about 60% are from universities, another 10% come from government labs and hospitals, and the remaining 30% percent are entrepreneurs, VCs and patent attorneys, or work with industry and foundations.
- Whether our members work inside or outside the university ecosystem, whether they engage in patent licensing, startup formation, industry engagement or corporate in-licensing—there is one common theme: our members are focused on advancing academic research and innovation for the public good.

AUTM Membership

August 2017



Would a rebrand change our organization's mission or values?

No way. Neither the Association's core values nor the underlying principles will change. A rebrand will serve only to strengthen the Association's position as it continues to advocate for the profession as it grows.

What about the Association's strategies? Are those changing?

Yes. Flexibility is important in a changing landscape. That's why we are taking important steps to keep our Association strong, today and tomorrow. What does this mean for you? A lot. Over the next year we've got many things in store. We're working hard on the launch of new and expanded initiatives to:

- **Empower Membership** with a broader scope of professional development programs intended to reinforce your role, and position you for changes in the profession
- **Grow and Diversify** by expanding partnering opportunities for corporate engagement
- **Lead the Charge** in support of academic innovation advancement on Capitol Hill, and
- **Increase our Influence** by expanding our partnerships with vital stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem.

How has AUTM’s Board pursued this rebrand?

AUTM hired the Gigawatt Group in Washington, DC to conduct a corporate identity analysis. They undertook market research, conducted focus groups with AUTM members, assisted the Board with the potential brand change, and directed the renaming process.

Where were focus groups conducted? What did you learn?

Focus groups with a sample of AUTM members were conducted at the AUTM 2017 Annual Meeting. Some of the messages received were:

- **General member:** “Technology Manager” does not accurately or completely describe the work done by me or my office
- **Industry member:** The Association brand is not inclusive of our work
- **Veteran member:** The name is a barrier to growing membership—I don’t work for a university and didn’t realize for years that AUTM was the right association for me

How many names were considered?

The Board was presented with more than a dozen names and conducted debate for months as it looked for a name that was inclusive enough to represent the multi-faceted, evolving nature of technology transfer, and clear enough to simply explain our members’ work.

How is ARIA more inclusive than AUTM?

AUTM is the sum of its parts, representing “University Technology Managers.” But that phrase no longer represents who we are. The Board considered the meaning of many dozens of words that are central to our members' work to find a name that represents our community of professionals. These rose to the top:

- **Association:** a group of people organized for a joint purpose or common interest
- **Research:** Investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws
- **Innovation:** The introduction of something new, such as an idea, method, or device
- **Advancement:** The progression of research and innovation to a higher stage of development to maximize its utility for the public

I’m not sure about the phrase “Research Advancement.” It has funding connotations at my institution.

The Board considered that. But the context in which the word is used in “ARIA” supports the evolution of innovation and research and will not be confused with fundraising.

Is this the Association’s first name change?

- This is the *second* name change for the Association since its foundation in 1974 as SUPA [Society of University Patent Administrators].
- In 1988 members voted to change the organization's name from SUPA to AUTM to better represent its membership.

Why change our name now?

- A rebrand to ARIA is vital to the health and longevity of our organization, and one that positions us well for the future as our profession evolves. Our members no longer just license patents and manage the transfer of work from the lab to the marketplace. While many of today's technology transfer professionals focus on patent licensing, the field has broadened to include startup business creation, corporate engagement—even before an invention is created—economic development and teaching, and supporting entrepreneurial activities.
- A name change is important to engage these varied stakeholders who all play a crucial role in the successful commercialization of tomorrow's innovations.

The AUTM brand is known internationally. Will a name change harm the Association?

No. While the Association enjoys healthy name recognition, we expect ARIA to quickly supplant the AUTM brand and be considerably more futureproof than the Association's current name. Companies around the world conduct rebrands every year to better position themselves. Let's face it—rebranding is no cake walk. But ARIA is poised to shepherd our Association into the future.

- Consider for a moment how many times you've tried to explain the phrase "technology transfer" to your father (no offense, Dad). He probably still thinks you fix printers or sell cloud computing software.
- It's vitally important that our Association communicate its work and goals—with policymakers, stakeholders and the media, among others. AUTM is a fine name for those who live "technology transfer," but it does not translate to a larger audience, an audience that is key to helping support government-funded research for science and commercial advancement. It is also not a good fit for those of our many members who do not work in the university setting and are not technology managers.

What will change in our organization?

The change to ARIA reflects the ongoing evolution of the organization to a more strategic, multi-faceted, outward-facing group aimed at better educating the public and key stakeholders about the value and contributions of technology transfer professionals.

How can I share my thoughts on the proposal?

You can attend one of two free webinars that are scheduled on [Oct. 2](#) and [Oct. 12](#) (follow the hyperlinks to register and participate). Board members will be online to answer questions. The webinars will be recorded and made available on www.AUTM.net. If you can't attend, you are encouraged to submit a question in advance by following the webinar links above. If you'd simply like to share a comment with the Board, [use this link](#).

When can members vote on the name change?

Voting on the name change begins October 16 when the 2018 Board election opens. Members will have three weeks to cast their ballots before the election closes on November 6.

When will the name change take effect?

The name change will only take effect if there is a two-thirds majority of support from voting members. If it is approved, the new name will be rolled out in phases.

When will we know the election results?

The outcome of the election will be made public on November 7. Results will be emailed to members.

Would a name change have any effect on the status of my membership or AUTM benefits?

None whatsoever.

How often does the Association expect to change its name?

We hope this is it for a good, long time. This is the second name change for the Association in its 43-year history. This recommended change was made in response to significant evolution of the industry. The new name was recommended in part because it helps position the Association for the future in a durable, sustainable manner.

Will there be any confusion with other businesses named ARIA?

Unlikely. The other companies/organizations using a similar name operate in unrelated industries and do not directly compete or provide services similar to ours.

- [Aria hotel](#)
- [American Risk and Insurance Association \(ARIA\)](#)
- [Australian Recording Industry Association \(ARIA\)](#)

When does the voting take place?

Voting will be conducted electronically beginning **October 16, 2017**, and end on **November 6, 2017**, 5 pm (US Central Time). All AUTM members will be emailed their user ID, password and voting instructions.

How did the Association arrive at this name change?

The Association has evolved since its beginning as SUPA. To see some of the significant milestones in the Association's history, [visit the timeline page](#).

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