

Chairman 's Letter

Partners in a History-Making Event

Last month's Chairman's Letter explored the pivotal role that technology will play in the future success of our businesses and our Association. To respond to member requests for technology-based solutions to their everyday business problems, PPAI announced at The PPAI ExpoSM the creation of a business partnership with Impact Data and Internet to provide Disk CatTM, the ultimate marketing resource and presentation tool, as a significant new member benefit.

However, another event that took place at The Expo may prove to be just as significant. The Promotional Products Association of Oregon and Washington (PPAOW) and the Arizona Promotional Products Association (AzPPA) have agreed to participate in the partnership between the Specialty Advertising Association of California (SAAC), the Promotional Marketing Association of Northern California (PMANC), and PPAI in sponsoring the PROMOTIONS West trade show August 3-6, 1999, in Las Vegas. All District 5 regional associations and PPAI are now partners in this historic effort.

Why is this such an important development? Because it is the harbinger of a new era of cooperation between our regional and national associations that will allow both distributor and supplier members to optimize their investments in trade shows.

In PPAI's Needs Assessment survey our members clearly stated that they want PPAI to take a leadership role in creating a trade-show structure for the industry that makes sense. Suppliers have sent a clear message to your Board of Directors that they want an industry trade-show format beyond The Expo that allows them to cover the country by exhibiting at a minimal number of trade shows at a reasonable cost. And, clearly, every distributor member should have access to premium networking opportunities at a professionally produced trade show featuring the industry's best suppliers and a wide array of education programs.

This member feedback, on both a national and regional level, is the impetus behind the dynamic partnership that has been established between PPAI and the regional associations. The PROMOTIONS West partnership is the most immediate result of this revitalized relationship, and a joint trade-show effort is already scheduled for PROMOTIONS West in Long Beach in 2000. Using this west coast alliance as a model, discussions are currently underway with our other regional partners.

Within the next 10 years, I predict that The PPAI Expo will serve as the industry's anchor international show, supplemented by five mega-regional trade shows taking place across the U.S., throughout the year. This will allow supplier members to blanket the country without breaking the bank. Every distributor member will have the opportunity to attend a show that is national in

scope and features a top-notch education program. You have asked us to make sense of the trade-show structure. PPAI and your regional associations have listened.

I am confident that the new Regional Association Council (RAC), in partnership with PPAI, can be counted on for visionary leadership in the future. All of the regional associations will continue to be involved in educating members to deal with technological change, improving communication within and between regionals, and staging smaller trade shows when appropriate to the market. But if the partnership between the regional associations and PPAI were to accomplish little more than making sense of the industry trade-show format through a mega-regional trade-show structure, it will have earned a prominent place in the history of the industry.



Michael Woody

BY MICHAEL WOODY, MAS PPAI CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

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