

# Chairman's Letter

## H eeding PPAI's Technology Imperative

As of August 1999, PPAI members will have *free*, easy and instant access to the names, street addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers, and e-mail addresses of all companies, distributors and suppliers, in the promotional products market. This comprehensive list of industry participants, members and nonmembers alike, will be available to PPAI members online, and, unlike a printed directory or CD-ROM, this information will be continually updated.

Sound like a revolutionary new role for PPAI? It is.

In my February Chairman's Letter, I alluded to the technology imperative saying that our Association must provide solutions to specific member business problems. One problem that I have experienced as a supplier is an inability to get precisely the information that PPAI will now provide at no charge.

As a marketing executive at a supplier firm, I'll now be able to download a comprehensive list of all industry distributors, and use it to send promotional

material via mail, fax or e-mail. Distributors may download a comprehensive, industry-wide list of suppliers, and have that information at their fingertips for quick and easy reference.

The impetus behind this initiative is PPAI's Technology Leadership goal in our new Strategic Plan—"Be the technology leader and visionary for the promotional products industry." As you may recall, in the Member Needs Assessment results our members asked PPAI to establish standards and guidelines for the industry, to provide help in locating new customers and help in making their products known to customers.

Our Strategic Plan calls for PPAI to "assist members in applying technology to run their day-to-day business," and "to expand technology products and services to meet the membership needs." Member access to these newly created profiles of industry distributors and suppliers is the latest clear signal (DiskCat™, the universal identification system, and product identification standards were previously announced) that PPAI takes our Technology Leadership role very seriously.

By now it should be clear to you as a PPAI member, and to the rest of the industry, that neither the Member Needs Assessment results nor the new Strategic

Plan was drafted to gather dust on a shelf.

If you are interested in what your Association will be doing over the course of the next three years in the technology area, take another look at the Strategic Plan, presented in the July issue of *PPB*. Our committees, board of directors and staff will use it as a road map to reach our new vision for PPAI: *To be the leader for growth, innovation, and success in the evolving promotional products market.*



BY MICHAEL WOODY, CAS

PPAI CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

10

AUGUST 1999  
PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS BUSINESS