

# Chairman's Letter

## How PPAI Features Benefit You

As a supplier, I frequently talk to distributor customers about features and benefits. Most of them find product features mildly interesting, but they are primarily motivated by benefits.

Over the course of the past few months, I've talked to many people about the benefits of being a member of PPAI. Usually, I'll rattle off things like The PPAI Expo<sup>SM</sup>, PPAIpro<sup>TM</sup>, the UPIC<sup>SM</sup>, education, the FedEx program, etc. But I have slowly come to realize that these are not "benefits" at all, but "features" of our Association. How so? Because the list of things I just mentioned are actually *vehicles* for delivering the true benefits that our Association provides to us.

What are those benefits? Well, if The PPAI Expo is a feature, then the benefits are premium networking opportunities with the industry's finest suppliers and distributors, and the convenient, effective exchange of selling information.

If PPAIpro is a feature, then the benefit is the availability of competitive informa-

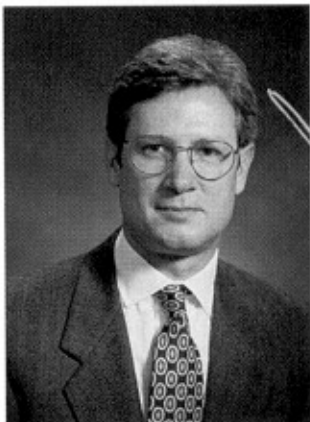
tion services, which provide options for distributors and suppliers that lower the cost of doing business. If the UPIC is a feature, then the benefit is access to universal industry data. If education is a feature, then the benefit is free and ready access to business strategies that prepare us to cope with the rapid changes and challenges our businesses will face in the near future.

These are critical distinctions because PPAI should not be locked into the "features" that have earmarked its traditional role. When those features cease to provide appropriate benefits to the members and the market, PPAI will falter. Perhaps there will be more convenient ways down the road to provide networking opportunities or exchange selling information—the Association should explore them. Perhaps there will be quicker, more comprehensive ways to give members product or company information—PPAI should be involved in its evolution. Perhaps there will be easier ways to facilitate the transfer of business management concepts to members striving to differentiate themselves from the competition—the Association must strive to develop those concepts.

The purpose of a trade association is not simply to sponsor trade shows and education programs. PPAI has a more far-

reaching obligation to serve member and industry needs, to ensure competitive services, to resist monopolistic ventures, and to provide for universal and accessible information assets. These are the true benefits to all of us. The features that deliver these benefits are changeable.

Each year, in our own businesses, we change our product lines and improve our service levels to continue to provide benefits to our customers. We focus on the benefit, then create the feature that provides the benefit. We should expect no less from our trade association.



BY MICHAEL WOODY, CAS

PPAI CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

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