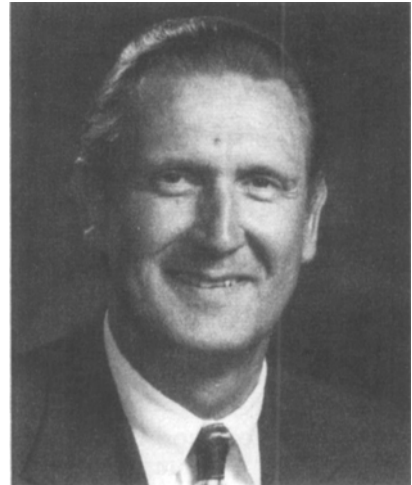


MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT JOHN L. MASON

Beginning with this, the September issue of the *SMPTE Journal*, the Executive Committee launches a new communications initiative. In all aspects of our personal and professional lives, good and frequent communication is the lifeblood that allows other good things to happen, such as better understanding, stronger levels of commitment, and improved teamwork or morale. During the next few months, each member of the Executive Committee will write about the key responsibilities, challenges, goals, and programs of his office, in order to provide greater awareness of how the Executive Committee works. An explanation of how these activities relate to the health and welfare of the Society as a whole will, hopefully, result in greater levels of involvement throughout the Society.



Duties of the Executive Vice-President

The main responsibility of the Executive Vice-President is to provide backup to the President in the execution of his, the President's, duties. The second major role of the Executive Vice-President is to direct the long range and strategic plans of the Society. Currently, there are three initiatives in progress and I will summarize them briefly.

Long Range and Strategic Planning

First, there is a renewed effort to strengthen our established relationships with historic or traditional industry and trade partners, and to forge new relationships with associations in allied areas where both parties may benefit from working together. Examples of the former include our relationships with the Montreux Television Symposium and Technical Exhibition, the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), the IBC, the Association of Cinema and Video Laboratories (ACVL), and the American Society of Cinematographers (ASC). New partnerships are being developed with the National Association of Television Programming Executives (NATPE), SIGGRAPH, and ShowBiz Expo. Initiatives include working together to better understand the business and membership profiles of our respective organizations, information sharing, and mutual conference and exhibit participation.

A second activity related to the goals of long range planning is the recently completed 1999 SMPTE Membership Survey published in the July *Journal*. Executive Director Fred Motts and Marketing Coordinator Linda Alexander spearheaded this work. It contains a great deal of useful information about our current membership, what value the SMPTE has to offer, our products and services, and where members feel the Society should be headed in the future. Much of the data has implications for long range planning, for example, it appears that a little less than half our members regularly attend Section meetings, a data point that affects the ongoing and future growth of membership. Almost 70% of members have not attended a conference in the last year; a modest increase in conference attendance could have a major impact on our balance sheet. I urge all of you to review this material and look for ways to improve Society functioning and offerings.

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A third long range and strategic activity has just been completed. In April of this year, we joined with the firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers to conduct a formal planning review of the Society. President Charlie Jablonski was and has continued to be the champion for this multi-phased project. Initially, in-depth interviews were conducted with all members of the Executive Committee and other representative voices in the Society, including international members. These interviews produced a list of relevant critical issues and concerns to the Society. In early May, the Executive Committee met in an all-day session to begin the process of identifying pathways to practical and feasible solutions to some of these issues. These were the findings:

Membership. The Society needs to grow its membership. This growth can come from new industries (such as computing and new media), expansion into new or existing geographical areas, students, and/or targeting “non-traditional” groups, such as management or non-technical practitioners.

Organization. The Society must address how it functions and is organized. Volunteer models of organization are becoming harder and harder to maintain, as volunteers throughout the Society and industry have increasing pressure to stay put on their “day jobs” and to curtail association participation. The Society’s professional staff is left with an increasing workload, and may not be adequate in number to provide existing and enhanced services to its membership.

Products and Services. The *Journal* is the most prized aspect of membership, but what else should the Society provide to add distinctive value to its membership? Major conferences used to generate large revenue streams for the Society; that is no longer the case. We have an attractive Web site, but how can we use the Internet to greater serve members and/or generate revenue? We need to put in place mechanisms for faster time-to-market for our portfolio of products and services.

Image/Communications. There was uniformly consistent concern about the need to communicate the relevance and value of SMPTE to current and future members. SMPTE has played a defining role in the motion imaging field for over 80 years; what is its role and image as we enter a new era characterized by convergent, hybrid, and new media? The study identified several “consensus” points:

- Members who are loyal and committed to the SMPTE.
- A need to grow membership.
- A challenge to balance the needs of the “traditional core” of members versus the needs of potential members from computing and new media.
- Volunteers are time constrained.
- The professional staff is over-extended.
- An international strategy is needed.
- We must continue to market and communicate the value of SMPTE.
- A plan for long term financial stability is a top priority.

Optimism for the SMPTE

This report was given and shared with the Board of Governors at the June Board meeting in San Francisco, so the dialogue and planning on next steps has just begun. There is much to digest here, and as daunting as some of these challenges and findings appear, it must be emphasized that SMPTE is healthy. It has a growing worldwide membership, a dedicated and skilled staff, and a loyal and committed constituency.

Your comments and questions are always welcome, and the Executive Committee hopes you will enjoy this series of SMPTE Officers’ updates in subsequent *Journal* pages.

— John L. Mason