

The Future of our Society— Strategic Planning

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There is little doubt that the face of our industry has changed within the last five years. Although the old adage that “the only thing constant is change” continues to apply, the rapid introduction of packetized television has led to the deployment of network infrastructure at an unprecedented pace.

The rate at which this change is being driven shows no sign of abating, and, indeed, the deployment of networking and associated data processing technologies into our professional environment is the fastest ever—even faster than the introduction of television and the migration from analog to digital video and audio systems.

This has led to a shortage of qualified computer/network/data engineers in the fields of production, post-production, and broadcast. Technical personnel already operating in these fields have to acquire new networking and computer-related skills, while those from the computer community wishing to enter the motion picture, audio, and television fields from the outside must acquire the skill sets necessary for those respective disciplines.

The question is: What role will SMPTE play in training and supporting its members in this changing environment? How will we solicit new members from these allied fields and, at the same time, support our existing traditional membership base? Does the structure of the Society need to be changed to reflect and accommodate a technological revolution occurring in our traditional areas of business?

Issues relating to long range planning are always being addressed within the Society. Recently, however, the Board of Governors and the Executive Committee have started to formulate a more definitive Strategic Planning Initiative. In some cases, the results of this work are already evident: the new SMPTE Website is one example. This site has been totally redesigned to accommodate the present and future needs of our members: electronic commerce and personalized e-mail addresses are scheduled for the near future. An expanded range of member services will also be available.

Beyond this, the committee is looking at how our Society is structured and how it will need to change to be an effective, professional support organization for the next decade. To this end several groups have been formed to develop an integrated, long-term plan for the Society.

We are soliciting input regarding how you see the future and what you need from SMPTE in the future. As a result of the long range planning process, we have identified five core issues important to the future of the Society, and a strategic group has been formed to address each.

Website: This group is headed by David Juhren (djuhren@smpte.org) and is working on ways to further improve SMPTE’s new website. The new website

already has many features to help SMPTE members, but the group will investigate ways to make it even more useful. The group is also developing a business model for how the web infrastructure will be supported as the Society makes more use of the internet, and how to identify, create, and manage web content.

Headquarters and Elected Official Structure: This group, led by Fred Motts, is reviewing the operating structure at Headquarters, as well as all issues relating to elections and the structure of the Board and Sections.

The *Journal* and Editorial Policies group, headed by Ed Hobson (ehobson@omneon.com), will examine issues such as what the *Journal* will look like two years from now, how education and professional services will be implemented, and what standards and practices (with respect to editorial policies) will be necessary for the support of existing and future SMPTE members.

The complex and important area of Membership Services is being addressed in a group also headed by Fred Motts. The issues of offering enhanced membership services—online services, membership records, sustaining membership benefits, conference registrations, and value added services such as insurance, commercial discount programs, and the like will be examined. The marketing and professional stature of SMPTE will also be evaluated.

The Engineering Diversification group is headed by Carl Girod (cgirod@smpte.org). Historically, the core engineering function of the Society has centered on standards. While standards-related activities will continue to be the central focus of the Society, this group will look at providing additional engineering services—perhaps more responsive to timing issues than the existing (more formal) standards accreditation process. Another focus is how the new information technologies can add value to the standards process.

Because these discussions address the fundamental structure of the Society, the process of long range planning tends to be slower and more deliberate than usual. As in all aspects of SMPTE management, your input is important: after all, you are the membership we are supporting. If you have any specific views regarding the topics listed above—or wish to participate more directly—please feel free to contact the team leaders by e-mail. Another way is to communicate with your regional Governor, who is actively involved in the process.

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