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## Thought Leadership at SMPTE

**W**hat is thought leadership? Well, it is a bit of a thing these days. Perhaps some would say a marketing “buzz word.” Many organizations use the term to differentiate themselves in the marketplace by offering their customers a deeper understanding of their technology, thereby establishing themselves as experts and as leaders. The rationale is that as these thought leaders provide more information that is innovative and thought-provoking, customers will see them as leaders who matter and companies that they want to follow.

Thought leadership manifests itself in a variety of ways. Whether via a simple commercial on television, presenting at an industry conference, writing white papers, or even a tweet, the objective is always to get out there and present oneself as an expert in a specific domain and generate followers.

The SMPTE Board’s strategic vision includes increasing SMPTE’s visibility to remain relevant in this fast-paced and changing industry. Part of remaining relevant is telling the SMPTE story. We want to use new techniques to tell our story. To tell industry professional technologists why being part of this wonderful 102-year-old organization will change your career and your life. To tell the community of industry leaders why standards will make their businesses more efficient, thereby

making them more cost-effective and perhaps even more profitable. To tell young people why joining a group of like-minded people with connections all over the world will help shape their ideas of what a career in the creative-technical media space could look like. By doing all of this, SMPTE becomes the thought leader with many followers who spread the story.

Our thought leadership program is now under development. Recently, we sent out an e-mail survey asking questions about various media technologies, such as machine learning/artificial intelligence, immersive media, and “better” pixels. I was impressed by the response rate, which shows there is a great deal of interest in discussing these ideas within our community. Once the results are collated, we will develop a series of interviews with SMPTE thought leaders who can talk about why SMPTE matters with respect to the various issues raised in the survey results. This initiative will start, and perhaps continue, the conversation of why SMPTE fits into the ecosystem, remaining relevant 102 years on.

The SMPTE Board recently met to discuss its future at an annual strategic planning discussion. This is all in an effort to focus on developing a three-year roadmap business plan that allows SMPTE to grow and prosper. The Board used the opportunity to do a little introspection about who we are and our guiding principles. After

much healthy discussion, the Board agreed to the following statement.

SMPTE is a global professional association of technologists and creatives driving the quality and evolution of motion imaging.

SMPTE is guided by the following principles.

- We are a global organization and must operate and represent ourselves as such.
- We operate under three pillars of activity in membership, standards, and education, supported by operations.
- We seek to harvest SMPTE and Hollywood Professional Association (HPA) synergies.
- We are an inclusive community.
- We are objective in our perspective.
- We strive to understand the common needs of SMPTE stakeholders.
- We must return a net surplus each year to sustain the organization.

These statements are powerful and meaningful and will help guide the projects that SMPTE undertakes as part of our strategic plan. They will be “tests” that ensure we stay focused while exploring new areas of interest, partnerships, and industries.

These principles will also be the basis of our thought leadership efforts. As we talk about what we do, these principles will tell why we do them, enriching the story that will sustain SMPTE for many more years to come.