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# What a Difference a Year Makes

**I**n July 2022, we were still cautiously optimistic that we could finally live in a world post-COVID. The names of variants were beginning to fade from our conversations. We began to focus on returning to a new normal. For the first time in years, live gatherings ranging from SMPTE's Media Technology Summit to industry awards ceremonies and conferences were becoming a reality.

That was the world when I began working as your executive director. SMPTE's elected leadership made it clear that we needed to self-assess and chart a path for the SMPTE of the future. This required planning and executing internal and external reviews, reviewing policies, and addressing issues. Members, current and former, needed to be engaged for us to hear their opinions and identify trends that would help us formulate what people liked, disliked, wanted, and did not want.

Getting to know our members has shown me their dedication to the Society and the industry. Discovering how people "in the trenches" felt was amazing. I heard some hard truths. It was not all sunshine and roses, but it was shared with passion because they knew what I had quickly discovered: SMPTE has a role to play in the lives of professionals everywhere, from the heart of a large production studio to a small studio in a fly-over town.

After a year of gathering qualitative and quantitative data from people, it is time for action. We must begin to adjust the Society to meet

the needs of the industry today and tomorrow while remaining firmly seated on our pillars of membership, standards, and education. This includes inviting new voices into the decision-making. It means leveraging the technology daily for the benefit of all members. And, of course, reviewing, assessing, and modifying what is not working. As our SMPTE President advises, use science. This will be challenging, but our membership supports this approach. Strengthening what we do now and addressing the new realities of our members through education and networking based on interest areas as well as geography are what our members value.

In the coming months, we will launch new services and opportunities to address these challenges. The Media Technology Summit is being refreshed based on previous attendee comments to produce a stronger event focused on emerging technologies.

We are embarking on a new partnership enabling live and on-demand streaming of Section events for all members. And we are working with the Sections to leverage their unique local opportunities, establishing the reality of a local network with global connections.

SMPTE has survived for more than a century because we have a history of evolving to meet the demands and needs of the ever-changing industry. But it has not always been easy, and we should not delude ourselves into thinking it will be now. Today's industry is moving faster than ever before. We see corporate mergers change the landscape and technology changing rapidly, so we wonder how we will

keep up. The audiences we ultimately serve have ever-increasing demands, which require more data security of the intellectual property we create. And do not forget that the pool of content creators grows daily as we make the tools of magic available to more and more people.

All of this is made possible by the engineers and technicians who comprise the Society. We have data-informed opportunities coming in SMPTE's future because of your input. Many of you share strong beliefs about the importance of SMPTE in your careers and the greater industry. Thank you. In the past year, I have received both positive and negative feedback from people. But I know that as the staff executive, I must be open to hearing different points of view to make informed decisions and recommendations.

People often ask me if I am enjoying the job. Yes, I can say truthfully. It is challenging, but it is amazingly rewarding to see members engaged and caring because of the community SMPTE creates and the impact bringing the industry together makes. The SMPTE of tomorrow will not and should not look like the SMPTE of today or yesterday. However, like any solid structure, one can renovate and change many elements as long as the foundation is secure and that is most certainly true.

Thank you to everyone I have had an opportunity to meet and converse with over my first year. I look forward to meeting and listening to more of you in the coming years, so we can continue to evolve and adapt to meet the needs of this incredible industry.

