Strong relationships, resources the result of ISA involvement

A Message from The Chairman

Helping a friend with a job was my first introduction to the sign industry. While attending college for graphic design, I began working for a company in Denver and then moved back to Buffalo where I worked for two sign companies before I started my business in 1993. It was a quick transition to sign company owner—and a steep learning curve.

It didn’t take me long to find ISA, a valued resource that has helped me grow my business from a vinyl company to one that now offers a variety of services in the sign and visual communications industry.

My company could not have survived and would not be thriving if not for the people who helped a newcomer into the industry. Strong distributors and suppliers were able to provide information. Strong sign companies willingly shared their knowledge as we expanded. Because of the people that I met through ISA and its Affiliated Associations, I had someone to call.

That’s why, as I become chairman of ISA for 2015, I hope to share the many benefits that come through getting involved.

I see those benefits every day in my business. For instance, my company is now doing some work outside of our typical Upstate New York area. It gives me great confidence to be able to tell a client, ‘I’ve got someone that I can call’ and to not have any concerns about taking on a project in Florida or Pittsburgh. I have the utmost confidence that the job will get done because I know the company through connections made at ISA.

ISA provides resources to deal with a sign company’s most pressing business concerns. Throughout the coming year, we will continue to do so. I want to highlight a few key areas that I know keep sign company owners—whether as a small custom shop or a national player—awake at night.

Advocacy and outreach.
ISA remains committed to helping sign companies by educating regulators and planners about the importance of signs to businesses.

I know the value of this myself. When I ran into difficulty in getting a sign variance approved, I used resources developed by ISA and the Signage Foundation, Inc., to educate the zoning board, including a case study of a business in a situation similar to my client’s. The owner had received a variance and the result was a successful, thriving business. When I presented this information, the variance my client needed was approved—all because I could show the positive results.

ISA’s government relations efforts are one of the most valuable benefits for ISA and Affiliated Association members. The team travels to communities to help sign companies and end users influence codes, receive variances.
In the next decade, 35.9% of companies expect to have a high level of difficulty finding qualified workers, according to Frost & Sullivan.

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 Isa  International Sign Expo.

I hope you’ll plan to join us in Las Vegas April 8-11 at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center. Registration for ISA International Sign Expo 2015 is now open at www.signexpo.org.

This is where I’ve made some of my most valuable connections. I love the networking events, especially because I love to get to know my fellow sign company owners as well as exhibitors, suppliers and distributors. We’ve got a number of new, fun events planned for 2015. You can find more details about those at the website as well.

ISA Sign Expo will have 550-plus exhibitors and more than 21,000 attendees. You will find the products and services—and the people with the knowledge about those products—to help you grow your business. They can help you see how those fit with your specific needs. That’s not something you can get from reading a product brochure or website.

Involvement.

Finally, I hope that you’ll join us at the state and regional level as well as at ISA. Getting involved in ISA has allowed me to grow from a sign industry newcomer to one who is serving the sign and visual communications industry’s largest trade organization. There’s an opportunity for you as well. Contact ISA or your local state/regional affiliate. And if you don’t know your affiliate, visit www.signs.org/affiliatedassociations. We need your involvement and your input. By helping, you will find that you’ll learn more yourself.

It’s because ISA and its members have brought so much to me that I look forward to the coming year. I hope you’ll continue to invest in ISA by volunteering. I can assure you that it will pay off for many years to come.

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By Chris Flejtuch • • •

ISA Chairman