



Who Does What to Ensure WTCA's Success

by Suzanne Grundahl, WTCA Managing Director

The recipe for a successful organization is balance.

On its surface, the formula seems simple: an involved and active membership plus a competent and service-oriented staff equals a successful trade association that provides excellent benefits to its members.

In my opinion, WTCA has both parts of this basic equation covered very well. But for the association to reach its full potential, this formula becomes much more complex. How exactly should member volunteers and staff work together to reach WTCA's goals and make sure that the unique needs of its membership are addressed? How do the myriad priorities turn into programs that harness the expertise of the collective industry and allow members to take advantage of the benefits a trade association provides?

A Conundrum: Member-Driven or Staff-Driven—Which is Better?

Since working with WTCA, I've consistently heard the words "staff-driven" and "member-driven" to describe how the organization functions.

On the positive side, many members have commented that WTCA has an excellent, responsive staff that completes a great deal of tasks to help advance our members' interests. On the other hand, sometimes it seems members feel a bit confused when they get involved. This happens when they realize staff is handling the majority of the operational details, and they expected to have greater involvement on that level.

In my opinion, neither a member-driven nor a staff-driven organization is best for the success of WTCA. Rather, it makes more sense to define the unique roles and responsibilities of the membership and the staff. Some areas must be member-driven in order to truly understand and meet the needs of the structural building components industry. But in other areas, being staff-driven is essential in order to move things forward and get things done in a timely manner.

Dan Holland, president of Clearspan Components in Meridian, MS, believes that in any volunteer organization, the place that involved members get sidetracked is being too focused on the details of running the organization. "Members need to remember the fact that they're not there to manage the organization or the staff, but they're there to do the big picture thinking for the industry," he explained. "Their purpose is to serve the industry, not themselves. There are too many members who think that their role is to manage, when that's a role that needs to be delegated to staff in order for WTCA to be effective."

"Members' greatest focus should be on expanding our markets through additional uses and approaches," commented Lenny Sylk, retired 1987 WTCA Past President, "and staff's role should be 'organizing, expediting and supporting the efforts of the members.'"

Following is a summary of member- versus staff-driven activities, based on responses from members I queried:

at a glance

- ❑ Many members have commented that WTCA has an excellent, responsive staff that completes a great deal of tasks to help advance our member's interests.
- ❑ Neither a member-driven nor a staff-driven organization is best for the success of WTCA. It makes more sense to define the unique roles and responsibilities of the membership and the staff.
- ❑ All of WTCA's products are created in collaboration with many members providing real world perspective. But one of the biggest frustrations that staff faces every day is wishing that we could capture more of that real world perspective.



What We Are...

WTCA – Representing the Structural Building Components Industry.

WTCA is the information conduit for our membership to stay abreast of leading-edge marketplace issues. We disseminate this information through educational seminars, membership support, WTCA chapters and our industry publications.

Our Purpose...

We provide the services our membership needs to continue expanding the market share of all structural building components by promoting the common interests of those engaged in manufacturing trusses, wall panels and related structural components to ensure growth, continuity and increased professionalism, which will strengthen the structural building component manufacturing industry's influence.

What We Do...

- WTCA formulates policy that protects and advances the interests of its members by initiating and carrying out projects that address membership concerns and promote industry marketplace interests.
- WTCA acts as the voice of the structural building components industry to legislative, regulatory and standards-generating agencies.
- WTCA provides membership services, including addressing technical questions, serving members through the creation of various products and publications, and providing support to each WTCA committee.
- WTCA supports each of its chapters to enable our industry to put a human face on the structural building components industry.
- WTCA supports research, development and testing of structural building components - trusses, wall panels, and related structural components - to root the industry in sound engineering and improve the quality, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of our products, for the purpose of achieving greater product acceptance.

For Whom...

All structural building component businesses, material and equipment suppliers, and industry professionals.

Why...

WTCA desires to promote the consistent, safe, economic, and structurally sound design, construction and use of structural building components, thereby increasing their market penetration.

By successfully implementing its policies and serving the needs of its membership, WTCA will have the potential to make a significant difference on behalf of the entire structural building components industry.

Roll Off Wall Panels & Trusses Damage Free!

New & Used Trailers in Stock!

ANU PROSPECT

100 South Service Road - P.O. Box 89 - St. Marys, Ontario N4X 1A9
(519) 349-2202 or 1-800-615-5122

For reader service, go to www.sbcmag.info/anuprospect.htm

Member-Driven Activities

- The greatest focus should be on expanding the market for components.
- Policy with respect to suppliers, customers and regulators.
- Being directly involved with committee, chapter and industry initiatives that affect market share and economics of structural components.
- Direction on priorities and projects that should be accomplished on behalf of the industry.
- Bringing industry problems to the table so that industry wide solutions can be found.
- Market education on the use and handling of our products.
- Approval of investments and budgets.
- Support services the membership will need in both the short- and long-term.
- Supporting staff by providing the component manufacturing perspective so that the support services meet member needs.
- Framing each issue in the context of how our industry's best interests can be served in all the actions WTCA takes.

Staff-Driven Activities

- Organizing/expediting the initiatives and policies of the members and execution of association tasks, plans and strategy.
- Being the people that represent the voice of our industry.
- Gathering the myriad information on a given industry issue, digesting it and providing membership with a recommended course of action which may be refined by membership.

Continued on page 62

**Quick Delivery
Reliable Supply
Consistent Quality**

MSR Inventory Available
in Aurora, IL, & Reading, PA

State-of-the-Art Sawmills
in Perry & Preston, GA

SPIB Grade Marked SYP
#1, #2 & MSR

Tolleson Lumbermen Since 1919
LUMBER COMPANY • INC
We believe in long term relationships!

SLMA WTCA

Call 1-800-768-2105 today!
sales@tollesonlumber.com
www.tollesonlumber.com

For reader service, go to www.sbcmag.info/tolleson.htm

We Sleep Well at Night!

We were starting to wear out our current motto, so our staff suggested the following:

- "We do what's right for you."
- "Honest solutions from honest people."
- "We are introducing new language... we call it the TRUTH!"
- "Don't be oversold, contact Wasserman."
- "Purchase with confidence."
- "Bigger is not always better."
- "Your future is our business."

And my favorite...

"Tell everyone...we're nuts!"

In short, we are dedicated to providing the best new or used solution for your truss, wall panel and stair production needs.



Call Toll Free 800/382-0329, fax to 402/438-2524 or visit our website at www.wasserman-associates.com.

For reader service, go to www.sbcmag.info/wasserman.htm

Giving & Receiving Value

Continued from page 61

- Development of draft educational, marketing and risk management-oriented material for member review.
- Research and analysis.
- Development of budgets and implementation of all fiduciary responsibilities.
- Advice and counsel.
- Coordination of meetings and other communication.
- Maintenance of records and documentation.

In summary, members must provide direction for anything that has to do with why WTCA exists. Staff must then take that direction and implement the projects and tasks associated with moving the industry forward. As part of that process, staff must get further input from members while going through the implementation process, and then report back to the members to ensure the mark has been hit.

Those Devilish Details

The fact is that managing an organization requires a completely different focus than leading it. Staff is not equipped to lead the organization because we don't work in the component manufacturing business day in and day out. So that leaves WTCA's strategic direction to the members—not always a place where they feel comfortable.

But how can individual members take those small leadership-oriented steps that make a difference on behalf of WTCA? Here are three ways.

1. Take direction from those who've come before you. I'd hate to have members read this article and think that if they can't write a self-help book on how to lead an organization, there's no place for their involvement in WTCA. The reality is that most times strategic direction is gained one idea at a time. Each new idea and tweak in direction refines the existing shell of the strategic plan put in place by the members who have been involved previously.

Let me give an example. Since WTCA was organized, a section of the association's mission (see mission statement in the sidebar on page 61) has included text supporting research, development and testing:

WTCA supports research, development and testing of structural building components—trusses, wall panels, and related structural components—to root the industry in sound engineering and improve the quality, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of our products, for the purpose of achieving greater product acceptance.

And in 1998 WTCA created a policy with respect to research and testing:

POLICY: The WTCA Board of Directors establishes task priorities at least yearly...to meet the foregoing mission statement. Where it is deemed appropriate by Board approval, the WTCA will invest in research to accomplish priority tasks, using the following guidelines:

- A proposal is made to the WTCA Board of Directors for a specific project to be funded.
- All technical project proposals will be prepared in concert with WTCA's Engineering & Technology Committee and will define the research objective, procedures, cost, critical path timetable, and the potential outcomes that seek to improve the market for component construction.
- All marketing oriented project proposals will be prepared in concert with WTCA's Marketing Committee, and will define the research objective, procedures, cost, critical path timetable, and the potential outcomes that seek to improve the market for component construction.
- The complete proposal will be approved by WTCA's Engineering & Technology or Marketing Committee and submitted to the WTCA Board of Directors for evaluation and possible funding.
- Once funding is approved, a project contract will be written by WTCA before any funds are dispersed.

Strategically, the Boards of Directors that crafted the mission of WTCA and then the 1998 policy with respect to research and testing may not have envisioned that in 2007 WTCA would be building its own research and testing facility. But their strategic plans have made it possible to follow their path to the next logical step.

And it's happening. Scott Arquilla of Best Homes, Inc. in Hazel Crest, IL believes one thing has caused WTCA to provide true tangible benefit to its members: "A group of dedicated people are casting aside the competitive nature of their companies and are working together to help the industry as a whole. We all have succeeded in that goal."

If you get involved with WTCA, you will be surrounded by smart businesspeople who will work to define the direction of the organization. What's more exciting than that?

2. Provide your perspective, one thing at a time. The membership involvement isn't always needed in a "big picture" way like strategic planning. For instance, staff relies on member feedback for each and every program and publication that WTCA creates. The end goal of this development process is to help members improve their professionalism and allow them to focus on capturing more market share.

But none of us are naive enough to think that every WTCA product and program can't be improved. That's where new, fresh ideas from members come in. The next time you review a WTCA product or educational program, take just a few more minutes with an eye toward making it a little bit better. Maybe you'll find just one thing that you think could be better. Send it to staff and we'll add it to the list of modifications to make in the next production cycle.

Richard Brown, president of Truss Systems in Oxford, GA, commented that one of WTCA's strengths is the "flexibility to adjust to our members' desires, wants, and needs, and provide the necessary services and products in a timely manner to accomplish our members' goals."

All of WTCA's products are created in collaboration with many members providing real world perspective. But one of the biggest frustrations that staff faces every day is wishing that we could capture more of that real world perspective.

Members are very busy, but when you take a few minutes to give us your input, the result is that WTCA's materials are much more useful. Mike Ruede, 2002 WTCA Past President notes, "We've done a great job over the last several years developing our products and services but still have a great deal of members and non-members not using them." Continual improvement will move us closer to the goal of having the entire industry make use of and benefit from the tools WTCA creates.

Another area to provide feedback is to participate in **SBC Industry One Minute Polls**. This is an excellent way to provide a quick perspective and get back to your day. And staff is very sensitive to really making it take only one minute to reply.

3. Talk about the positives—the exciting places the industry is going and the benefits of being part of WTCA. Even if you don't have time or resources to participate right now, Koss Kinser of Kintec, LLC says, "Talk about the good things WTCA has done for the industry."

Everyone chats with the people around them. How about generating some "good gossip" about where our industry is going? We have a lot to be excited about and this excitement is spread when each individual member encourages those around them to join with us in moving forward.

If you're talking with a non-member, whether it's a supplier or another component

Continued on page 64

the HAINCOMPANY
www.haincompany.com
6125 Enterprise Drive Units 1 & 2, Diamond Springs, Ca 95619
530-295-8088 Ph - 530-295-0468 Fax

Our Measuring System can be used with any saw and setup is simple!
(Shown with Vista Angle Boss® Saw)

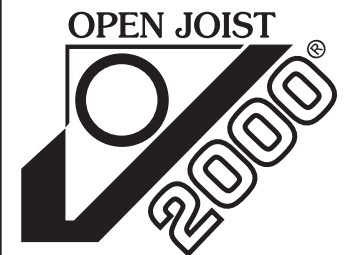
Hain Measuring System
Changes are instant, accurate, and it's the most durable system on the market!

Hain Sub Component Nailer
Our new DVD is here! Request your copy today or watch it online!

www.haincompany.com

For reader service, go to www.sbcmag.info/hain.htm

Peace of mind underfoot



Reengineering Wood Components

www.openjoist2000.com
(800)263-7265
mike@openjoist2000.com

For reader service, go to www.sbcmag.info/openjoist.htm



PANELS PLUS
Building Technology into your Craftsmanship™

Wall Panel Equipment and Accessories
* Customer Service * Quality * Durability

PANELS PLUS...
providing solutions for the wall panel industry.

Example: Staggered Nail Pattern Solution: Sheathing Bridge w/ Infinite Shift Option

Call today! For detailed information call or e-mail on how we can: Build Technology into your Craftsmanship™

505 West Front Street, Albert Lea, MN 56007
Toll Free: 866-726-7587
Email: sales@panplus.com

PANELS PLUS® an INNOVANCE™ co.

www.panplus.com

For reader service, go to www.sbcmag.info/panelsplus.htm

Giving & Receiving Value

Continued from page 63

manufacturer, tell them about the benefits of membership in WTCA. The stronger our membership base, the more we all can get done on behalf of the industry.

Are all your suppliers exhibiting at BCMC and/or advertising in *SBC Magazine*? As a customer, you're a much more effective salesperson than one of our staff members making a random sales call.

What's Next?

Where specifically should members and staff be focusing our energy right now? A few members shared their strategic perspective.

Chapters and Strength on a Regional Basis. Holland believes that one of WTCA's highest priorities is to focus on helping the chapters do useful things on the local level. "The success of WTCA rests on the success of the chapters and having a person push these chapters the same way that staff pushed our organization in the early years," he says.

Ruede agrees. "Keep pushing to the grassroots level and keep engaging those member and non-member companies about the good things coming out of our association for our industry," he encouraged.

The local level is where it's at for John Herring, President of SelectBuild. "We have to keep the chapters focused," he said. "WTCA must do things that can help the chapters stay in communication and keep that lifeblood going."

Research & Testing. Several members agreed that the launch of the SBC Research Institute was a key place our energy should go. "WTCA's highest priority in the coming

year is the successful launch of the testing facility and generation of meaningful results," said Kendall Hoyd, President of Idaho Truss & Component Co. in Meridian, ID.

This goes hand-in-hand with code knowledge and monitoring. Holland believes that the research and testing initiative is closely tied to building codes. "As painful as dealing with code issues can be, it's a market-growing issue. It's something we have to focus on—we have to have more of the market," he says. Kinser adds, "We must promote a level playing field for stick built houses so that the requirements are the same as they are for trusses."

The Changing Marketplace. Herring sees major changes taking place in the marketplace. "We have to focus on where the industry is going to be in a few years," he stated. "Are we going to be

an industry that is strictly generic or are we going to be an industry that is identifiable through our engineering expertise and coupled with quality and service? From the industry standpoint, will we serve and direct it or be subservient and go with it?" He also sees WTCA needing to involve the big conglomerate companies that are making up a large part of the industry. "We have to keep in touch with our members, and keep our members in touch with us, big and small," he explained.

Hoyd concurred: "WTCA's main weakness is in its future. How will an increasingly consolidated industry interact with the association? Can the current organizational structure be maintained effectively if a high percentage of the production capacity is owned by a few large companies? We need to formulate a game plan for dealing with the changing face of the industry. [It will be essential to] establish contact with large company management to assess needs and concerns so that their involvement can be worked into the mix without disruption."

Guidance from members on these and all the other important strategic issues facing the structural building components business will benefit WTCA the most in the coming year.

The Correct Formula

The members I talk with across the country agree that our industry has both substantial challenges and enormous opportunities. But the appropriate division of responsibilities between members and staff results in a multiplication of benefits to the industry in the near-term and into the future. With a track record of passionate member leaders and a supportive staff, the formula for continued success is within our reach! **SBC**

Membership with Benefits

Why does WTCA's membership continue to grow every year?

Because our members have realized the value our association provides.

WTCA is a support system where members can use the products and services provided to:

1. Put a fence of protection around their business.
2. Provide staff training to help them grow professionally.
3. Develop individual company marketing and differentiation strategies.
4. Provide marketplace education to maximize knowledge and reduce misunderstandings that can constrain product use.

Members receive discounts on ALL WTCA products and services, including:

Publications: JOBSITE PACKAGES, BCSI, truss tags, Truss Technology in Building documents, and more!

Education: Truss Technician Training (TTT) Levels I – III, Truss Basics, Technical Assessment Tests Online (TATO), Truss Technology Workshops (TTW)

Programs: In-Plant WTCA QC, Operation Safety, In-Plant Basic Training, ORisk: Online Risk and Liability Management

WTCA brings members together to learn and network through:

Meetings: WTCA Open Quarterly Meetings, Annual Workshop & Conference, local Chapter meetings, Building Component Manufacturers Conference (BCMC)

Communication Tools: Weekly Board Report, Chapter Focus, Legislative Action!, WTCA's Quarterly Snapshot, SBC Industry News Top Headlines, *SBC Magazine*

WTCA offers additional tools and resources FREE for members:

Technical & Codes: WTCA Technical Notes, The Load Guide (TLG), online resources at www.sbcindustry.com and technical calls to staff

Legislative: Annual SBC Legislative Conference, online resources at www.sbcleg.com and assistance with tours for local and state legislators

Business Management: WTCA Management Notes, Insurance Broker Program, Financial Performance and Wage & Benefit Surveys, Lumber Trading Data (LTD), WorkForce Development (WFD)

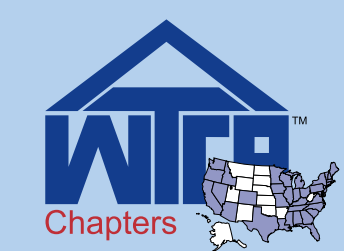


The value of membership is clear. Join today!

For more information or to become a member of WTCA, visit our website at www.sbcindustry.com or contact Anna at astamm@qualtim.com or 608/310-6719.

"What provides me the most value? That's hard to pick. Many people have the perception that WTCA is strictly a technical organization and it's not. It has evolved so much. It is still a great technical resource, but there are marketing tools and even help with production issues – there are just so many resources available to draw upon."

– David Horne,
Universal Forest Products, Inc.,
Burlington, NC



STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS™

THE FUTURE OF FRAMING

www.sbcmag.info

Dear Reader:

Copyright © 2007 by Truss Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. For permission to reprint materials from **SBC Magazine**, call 608/310-6706 or email editor@sbcmag.info.

The mission of **Structural Building Components Magazine (SBC)** is to increase the knowledge of and to promote the common interests of those engaged in manufacturing and distributing of structural building components to ensure growth and continuity, and to be the information conduit by staying abreast of leading-edge issues. SBC will take a leadership role on behalf of the component industry in disseminating technical and marketplace information, and will maintain advisory committees consisting of the most knowledgeable professionals in the industry. The opinions expressed in SBC are those of the authors and those quoted solely, and are not necessarily the opinions of any affiliated association (WTCA) .



6300 Enterprise Lane • Suite 200 • Madison, WI 53719
608/310-6706 phone • 608/271-7006 fax
www.sbcmag.info • admgr@sbcmag.info