

connections



water and sewer distributors of america

SPRING 2004

Bringing together all elements of the waterworks and sewer distribution industry for the purpose of promoting, educating and representing its participants.

WASDA Celebrates Rich History, Bright Future at 25th Annual Meeting and Partnership Forum

There was much to commemorate and celebrate at the 2004 WASDA Annual Meeting and Partnership Forum, held March 28 - 31 in Naples, Florida.

Attendees embraced this premier event, which for the first time combined the successful **WASDA Partnership Forum** (traditionally held in June in previous years) with the **Annual Meeting**. This new format simply offered more for



everyone – more networking, more idea-sharing, more new contacts, more new ideas, more to learn and more take-home value. The new program was a hit and offered a template for success for all future WASDA meetings.



"All in all the program was very informative."

Like all WASDA events, the 2004 Annual Meeting and Partnership Forum focused on **business networking and education**. The ever-popular roundtable discussions offered valuable information on key issues: Best Practices; Technology Roadmaps; Human Resources; Benefit

"It was an excellent opportunity to network with vendors in a short time span."

Packages/Sales Compensation; Small Distributor Forum and WASDA Marketing. Participants could select the topics of interest to them, ensuring that everyone had a chance to take away and contribute new insights on the issues that matter most.



"At the contact table program, it was great having 20 minutes of a distributor's undivided attention."

Attendees also took advantage of the **Contact Table Program**, two days of face-to-face meetings between manufacturers and distributors. Pre-scheduled appointments and an efficient set-up ensured a cost-effective way to achieve 25 business meetings over two days, with just one trip!

continued on next page

In This Issue...

Annual Meeting & Partnership Forum recap . . .	1-2, 10
Association News	4
Calendar of Upcoming Events	9
Industry News	7-8
Member News	6
Message from the President	3
Scholarship News	9
WASDA 2004 Meeting Preview	5

Annual Meeting and Partnership Forum

continued from previous page



WASDA Members and guests also enjoyed the **round-the-clock networking** offered through social, leisure and sports functions that brought people together throughout the event. The Women of WASDA (WOW) provided a variety of welcoming and fun activities for the spouses and guests of WASDA members.

"Networking with other suppliers is invaluable. Interacting with Distributors from other parts of the country can offer a fresh perspective of the problems that we face on a day-to-day basis."

The 2004 meeting also featured the roll-out of WASDA's **new Associate Membership category** (see related article, page 4). This was an historic event, brought on by the member vote last fall to open up WASDA membership to include Associate members. Manufacturers were welcomed to this Annual Meeting and encouraged to add their voice to WASDA by becoming members in this new category.

"My company benefited from meeting new customers and spending quality time with existing customers."

"The Annual Meeting is a great format to develop and strengthen relationships with our vendors beyond the local level. It also gave me a better 'feel' for market conditions and other issues that are impacting our business."

Last but not least, at the recent meeting the Association **celebrated 25 years** of partnership and leadership to the waterworks industry. Attendees celebrated this momentous occasion in style, with an elegant dinner/dance and top-notch entertainment. After an evening of good food, good conversation, fond reminiscing and a variety of dance moves, attendees sat back and enjoyed a rollicking presentation by the Capitol Steps, the celebrated political satire troupe that manages to be "even funnier than congress." With no shortage of material coming out of our nation's capitol, this innovative comedic show ended the evening, and the 25th Annual Meeting, on a lighthearted, laughter-filled note.



For photo highlights from the Annual Meeting and Partnership Forum, see page 10.

"The WASDA meeting attracts the decision makers among distribution. Having access to these distributors in a single venue is a real benefit."

"This was my first WASDA meeting – it was excellent! It was a great chance to build one-on-one relationships with key principles of waterworks distribution."

Congratulations to the winners of the golf tournament, held at the WASDA Annual Meeting and Partnership Forum:

1st Place:	Rob Hickson, Walter Cooper, Bill Hughes, Pete Lisowski (score: 63)
2nd Place Tie:	Dick Parent, Wayne Holofchak, Steve Foust, Steve Watters (score: 65) Rich Old, John Collins, Brent Hildyard, Tim Bowler (score: 65)
Longest Drive Male:	Paul Leonard
Longest Drive Female:	Maria Foust
Closest to Pin Male:	Rob Hickson
Closest to Pin Female:	Rich Old

Message from the President

Spring has sprung!

Our 25th Annual Meeting and Partnership Forum held in March in Naples, Florida was a huge success. We had 44 WASDA member companies and 70 manufacturers with a total of 275 delegates in attendance. One of the highlights being the performance of the Capitol Steps at our Tuesday evening reception. The Partnership Forum has become the premier networking event for distributors and manufacturers.

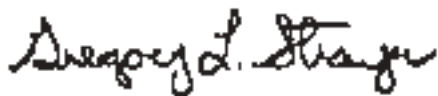
As of today we now have 13 Associate Members and applications for seven more. We look for this growth to continue. We also had three Prospective Members in Naples and one of those has applied for membership. Your recruiting committee is working hard to get information out to prospective distributor members. The Marketing Committee is putting the final touches on the plan to market WASDA nationwide.

Our industry lost two of our own in the last few months. John Peirce of H.R. Prescott & Sons, Inc. and Jerri Kormeier of Water & Sewer Supply, Inc. passed away this spring. Our prayers and condolences go out to their families.

Our Fall Meeting will be here in no time so start to plan for it. We will be in Kansas City, Missouri at the Fairmont Hotel on October 22-24th. Your Program Committee has a panel of distributors and manufacturers lined up for an industry discussion and a speaker on Human Resources. We look forward to seeing you there.

The last 25 years brought WASDA from a small group of distributors looking to work together to grow their businesses to an organization that is poised to become "the" organization in our business. With your help we believe in the next 25 years we can grow WASDA to be the premier organization in the industry for both distributors and our vendor partners.

Have a safe and healthy spring and summer. Looking forward to seeing you in Kansas City in October.



Gregory L. Strayer



WASDA Associate Member Introductory Meeting Focuses on “The New WASDA of the 21st Century”

At WASDA’s 25th Anniversary Annual Meeting and Partnership Forum, President Greg Strayer was pleased to introduce Associate Membership in WASDA to our industry partners.

President Strayer explained that WASDA members voted at the Fall Meeting to create the Associate Member category. This thinking is in keeping with the mission of WASDA, which is to promote the waterworks/wastewater distribution industry, to further improve the image of WASDA and the industry, and, consistent with the requirements of applicable laws, to enhance the collective financial well-being of the industry and WASDA members.

To help the prospective members in attendance understand the value of joining WASDA, President Strayer explained that there are several values that have been consistently identified by WASDA members as key to the membership. The number one benefit is networking with other members.

Other important points that WASDA members emphasize about the membership include:

- Sharing and learning about “best practices” in their industry.
- Manufacturers’ and Partnership Forums for meeting distribution channel partners and establishing relationships.
- Business resources, including speakers, educational programs and materials.
- Compiling industry data from member surveys in a legal manner.
- WASDA’s network outreach extends to other important industry groups whose connections help WASDA establish a presence in the state and federal legislative arenas.
- Solidarity: A unified voice for the industry, to the extent permitted by law.

Other values of WASDA membership include scholarship opportunities, complete membership directory, content-rich association website, and fact-filled association newsletter.

Associate Member dues are \$1,000 per year, per billing entity. Associate Members will have one representative on the WASDA Board of Directors that they will elect and all Associate Members may participate on WASDA’s Committees. While several issues have been decided for Associate Membership, there are still a few items that have not yet been determined. The WASDA Board would like the Associate Member Committee to provide their feedback on these few remaining issues.

Associate Members will be invited to WASDA meetings which take place in a safe, legal setting, monitored by legal counsel and are governed by WASDA’s Antitrust Guidelines.

Associate Member packets were distributed at this meeting and included an Associate Member Application, WASDA’s Bylaws, and WASDA’s new Membership Brochure. All eligible Manufacturers are invited to apply for membership in WASDA and participate on the Associate Member Committee. Additional details on membership are available from WASDA headquarters.

“Including the Manufacturers is a positive step for WASDA!”

“The meeting was well organized and gives manufacturers the opportunity to meet with a maximum number of distributors in a short period of time.”



Connections is a publication of the Water and Sewer Distributors of America.

Greg Strayer	President
Mike Dooley	President-Elect
Dave Yoder	Treasurer
Holly C. Chapman	Executive Director
Suzanne C. Pine	Management Liaison

Copyright 2004 by Water and Sewer Distributors of America, Philadelphia, PA. All rights reserved. This publication or its contents may not be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher. For permission to reprint articles or to send correspondence, write to: WASDA, 1900 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103-1498, Phone: (215) 564-3484, Fax: (215) 963-9785, or E-mail: wasda@fernley.com.

WASDA 2004 Fall Meeting Preview

“Goin’ to Kansas City...”

**WASDA Fall Meeting
October 22 – 24
Fairmont Kansas City
Kansas City, Missouri**



***It's all about Business
and Networking!***

The WASDA 2004 Fall Meeting will provide an unparalleled opportunity to pursue productive business opportunities and cultivate valuable partnerships with fellow members and colleagues in the waterworks industry. The intense schedule focuses exclusively on business and industry education and networking forums. The efficient and jam packed agenda, along with an easily accessible location, allows attendees to accomplish much in only a few days away from the office.

Real Value for Your Company!

The WASDA Fall Meeting attendees will benefit by attending:

Business Sessions:

- Identify practical business strategies
- Uncover new sales opportunities
- Learn about changing customer needs

Networking Functions

- Strengthen profitable relationships with industry leaders
- Conduct face-to-face business meetings with key industry contacts
- Discover new contacts to grow your business
- Expose yourself to a wide variety of business contacts

Kansas City: A Perfect Business Setting!

Kansas City, the heart of the Midwestern United States, is renowned for excellent food, good times and all-American hospitality. WASDA's host hotel, The Fairmont Kansas City, is a AAA, 4-Diamond property renowned for first class service and luxurious surroundings.

Rated among the “World’s Best Business Hotels” by *Travel and Leisure Magazine*, the Fairmont Kansas City provides an ideal setting for business in a comfortable setting. Convenient amenities include a 24-hour automated Business Center, high speed internet access in all guest rooms and wireless internet access in the hotel lobby. In addition, the hotel’s extensive health club facilities, fine dining options and easy access to many area attractions will help ensure a productive and pleasant stay in Kansas City.

WASDA Fall Meeting General Schedule of Events (Details still TBA)

Friday, October 22
Board Meeting
Welcome Reception

Saturday, October 23
WASDA Business Session
Morning Speaker Session
Lunch
Afternoon Speaker Session

Sunday, October 24
Morning Speaker Session
Meeting Ends at Noon

WASDA Fall Meeting

October 22 - 24
**The Fairmont Kansas City at
the Plaza**

401 Ward Parkway
Kansas City, Missouri 64112
Phone: (816) 756-1500
Fax: (816) 531-1483

For more information visit
www.fairmont.com/kansascity/

2004 – 2005 Membership Directory Available

The 2004 – 2005 WASDA Membership Directory is now available. To order your copy, contact WASDA headquarters at 215/564-3484 or e-mail wasda@fernley.com.

Thank you to all industry manufacturers and WASDA members for investing in advertising in this year's directory. Your contribution helped ensure another successful publication!

SUPPLIER ADVERTISERS:

Advanced Drainage Systems, Inc.
American AVK Co.
American Flow Control
American R/D Valve Company
Ames Company
Bingham and Taylor Corporation
Cascade Waterworks Mfg. Co.
Cherne Industries
Christy Concrete Products
Crispin Valve
Dresser Piping Specialties
East Jordan Iron Works
EBAA Iron, Inc.
Ford Meter Box Company, Inc.
GA Industries, Inc.
GPK Products, Inc.
Griffin Pipe Products, Inc.
Hancor, Inc.
Harco Fittings
Hydrant Repair Parts, Inc.
J-M Manufacturing Co., Inc.
JCM Industries, Inc.
A.Y. McDonald Mfg. Co.
McWane, Inc.

Mueller Co.
Multi Fittings Corporation
NAPAC, Inc.
Neptune Technology Group, Inc.
Northern Pipe Products, Inc.
Plastic Trends
PW Eagle
Ransom Industries, LP Tyler/Union
Reed Manufacturing Co., Inc.
ROMAC Industries Inc.
Sensus Metering Systems
Sigma Corporation
Smith-Blair
Star*Pipe Products, Inc.
United States Pipe & Foundry Co.
Val-Matic Valve & Manufacturing Corp.

WASDA ADVERTISERS:

Davies Water Equipment Co.
Groeniger & Company
Hughes Supply, Inc.
M J Pipe & Supply, Inc.
Public Works Supply Co., Inc.
Schulte Supply, Inc.
United Pipe & Supply Co., Inc.

Welcome New Members!

WASDA is pleased to welcome our new Manufacturing Members:



American Flow Control
PO Box 2727
Birmingham, AL

A.Y. McDonald Mfg. Co.
Dubuque, IA

EBAA Iron Inc.
Eastland, TX

U.S. Pipe & Foundry Co.
Birmingham, AL

The Ford Meter Box Company, Inc.
Wabash, IN

Val-Matic Valve and Manufacturing Corporation
Elmhurst, IL

Vassallo Industries
Lake Wales, FL

Hancor, Inc.
Findlay, OH

Freedom Plastics, Inc.
Janesville, WI

Advanced Drainage Systems, Inc.
Hilliard, OH

Ames Fire & Waterworks
Sacramento, CA

Star Pipe Products, Inc.
Houston, TX

WATTS Regulator Co.
North Andover, MA

Transforming Your Sales Force by Creating Specific Expectations

By Dave Kahle

Excerpted from Transforming Your Sales Force for the 21st Century Published by The DaCo Corporation, Copyright 2004 By Dave Kahle. Used with permission of the author.

I just finished a phone call with a potential client who had called to discuss a problem. His 18 person sales force was paid on straight commission. All had been with the company for 8 – 15 years and were earning healthy incomes. His problem was that he couldn't get them to do what he wanted them to do. Here's the example he shared:

He wanted the salespeople to call on new prospects to expand the company's base. Instead of just seeing established customers, he asked them to call on prospects, and report back to him on the progress they were making. There were almost no results. Instead he got comments like: "I'm not going to do this, I'm not a new salesperson." Or, "That's just more paperwork." This list could go on and on. The salespeople resented being asked to do something they saw as outside of their responsibilities, and the manager was extremely frustrated. This is a classic example of the chronic malady I call a lack of "directability." The problem is that management has not cleared up this murky difference of opinion. It may be, of course, that the salespeople choose to ignore management's direction. That's a different but associated problem. It really doesn't come into play until the expectations are made clear.

For example, one of my clients moved his company to a CRM system. He gave the salespeople six months to learn to type, offered to pay for a typing class for them, and mandated that on a date approximately six months from now, the company would totally implement the CRM system. That meant that every sales person would be expected to use it to record sales calls, customer information, and etc.

The expectations were perfectly clear. At the end of the six months, three of the salespeople had not improved their typing skills. When asked about the use of the system, they responded, "We're sales people, not clerks. We're paid to sell, not enter information." In this case, the expectations were clear, but the sales people held onto an outmoded definition for their jobs. The company's course of action was clear and those three salespeople were replaced.

While there are a number of things that should be done to cure this patient, they begin with an often-overlooked initiative – creating a clear set of expectations for the job of the sales person.

This malaise of undirectability has, at its heart, a difference of opinion as to what the salesperson should do. The sales people believe that taking care of their current customers and being rewarded by a portion of the gross profit is the total extent of their responsibilities. Management believes otherwise. The difference in these basic expectations generates conflict, resentment and frustration almost daily. This negative condition leads, of course, to dismal productivity. The sales manager continually squanders his time in the dubious effort of trying to shape the behavior of the salespeople. The salespeople focus on doing exactly the opposite of what management asks so that they can build their case and prove their point.

There is another, longer range and more sinister effect. The company caught in this kind of malaise has virtually no ability to implement any strategic initiative. For example, let's say that the company has decided to take on a new product line. Management sees the new line as holding excellent future potential to grow into a category that is a minor piece of business at the moment. As management looks ahead, they see this category growing, and want to use this line to position the company in this promising segment.

So, management makes a commitment to the new line, buys the beginning inventory, loads the SKUs into the computer, works out the pricing columns, posts the products on its website, and educates the customer service department. One last, but essential piece remains – harness the power of the sales force to generate business.

Management calls the sales force together, brings in the manufacturer's rep, and introduces the new strategic initiative. At the end of the day, the sales manager announces that, because of the importance of this line to the company's future, every salesperson should introduce it in every one of his good accounts in the next 30 days. The sales force nods gravely, and then goes out and does whatever they have been doing for the last few years. At the end of the 30 days, virtually nothing has been done.

Sound familiar? I have sketched this scenario to thousands of principals and CSOs at annual meetings and national conventions. I then ask the question, "If you were in this situation, what would be the likelihood that every one of your salespeople would do what you asked them to do?" The response is dismal. How about you? Take a moment and reflect on the state of "directability" of your sales force. Now, consider the implications. If you cannot implement a strategic initiative like this, what is the future for your business? Do you have a future?

continued on next page

continued from previous page

You can see why I am so adamant on the importance of a “directable” sales force. It is one of the most valuable assets you can have. Almost to the point that your company’s future may well depend on it. There are a number of causes of this situation: 100% commission compensation plans, salespeople who have been around a long time, highly paid sales people, a corporate culture that promotes the idea that a sales person “has his own business.” All these contribute to the situation.

The cure is to address each of these, making changes that I have discussed elsewhere in the book. But, before you can do that, you need to attend to the first step: Creating and communicating a precise set of expectations to the sales force that describes their jobs and what you expect them to do. Once you have done that, you will have laid the groundwork for the changes that should follow.

The point is this. It is difficult to create change in the behavior of a salesperson in the absence of a clear set of expectations. That document is not a guarantee that the salespeople will change, but it is necessary to direct the process. It’s necessary, but not sufficient. It’s the first step.

How to...

First, let’s start from the end. What are you going to end up with? There is room for lots of variation on the format and formula. I like to see this: One side of one piece of paper, on which you spell out the following things:

1. An overview of the job.
2. The most important seven activities for success in the job.
3. The definition of how success is measured.
4. To whom salespeople report to.
5. What sort of attitudes you expect.

The question then becomes, how do you get to that point? Again, there are multiple paths. You may want to draft it yourself, or do in conjunction with a group of key executives. You may want to appoint a task force. Should you involve the sales force? I’m ambivalent. On one side, I’m a little hesitant to advocate that you ask the sales force or that you add a salesperson to the task force. Unless the person you involve is especially mature, the likelihood is that the sales people will input in ways that are in their own personal self-interest, not necessarily the good of the company. This is especially true if they are 100% commissioned. On the other hand, I’ve seen clients who have involved a mature salesperson with good results.

So, the answer depends on the specifics of your personnel, as well as the corporate climate in your organization. Regardless, at some point, you will have a document.

Now you need to communicate that. And that calls for a sales meeting with all the key players in attendance. It’s important that the CEO be involved, to lend credibility and authority to the proceedings. The sales people must understand that there is no opportunity for an appeal to a higher source, that there is no negotiation on your expectations. It is always a good idea to give the “Why’s” of the expectations, particularly if the expectations represent a major shift from current practice.

It’s also a good idea to encourage dialogue and discussion. Use the meeting as an opportunity to encourage people to mentally process the information. There is a line, however, between discussion and negotiation. I take a hard-line view on this issue. I really don’t think it is up to the sales people to tell you what they should do. I think that is management’s job. You don’t allow your CSR to explain that they don’t think they ought to answer phones. Nor is it acceptable for your warehouse foreman to refuse to take inventory. There is plenty of room for sales people to define the “hows” of their job. But the “What’s” are the province of management.

What’s next?

The written set of expectations, clearly communicated, won’t by itself, make transformational changes in many sales people. A few may have an “ah-ha” insight, but it will take more than just this to power the change you want. However, the expectations are necessary to set up the changes to come.

It’s like outfitting a sailboat. You need to put the mast in place. A mast by itself, without a sail, a rudder and a keel, will do absolutely nothing to move the sailboat. But, you can’t hoist the sail until you fix the mast.

So it is with a written, communicated set of expectations. It is a necessary, but not sufficient, step in the process of transforming your sales force.

Based in Comstock Park, MI, Dave Kahle is a consultant, author and speaker on distribution and sales. For more information on Dave Kahle and his services, visit www.davekahle.com or call 800/331-1287.



Matt Stager Memorial Scholarship

Investing in the Future: Matt Stager Memorial Scholarship Fund

Congratulations to the 2004 – 2005 Scholarship Award Recipients:



All will receive renewable scholarships for the 2004-2005 school year. More specifically, they will each receive \$1,000 for their first year, and then based upon renewal standards - each student must remain in good standing and maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale, a requirement that is part of the operational Bylaws for the Scholarship Foundation - they will be eligible to renew that scholarship for an additional \$1,000 for the next school year, up to a total of 4 years and \$4,000.

Thank you to Scholarship Fund 2004 Contributors:

FOUNDERS

National Waterworks, Inc.



PATRONS

Davies – Northern Water Works
Mueller Co.
Water Works Supply Corp.



BENEFACTORS

Hancor, Inc.
H.R. Prescott & Sons, Inc.
Schulte Supply, Inc.
Utility Supply Company
Water Works Supply Co., Inc. (Pompton Plains, NJ)

WASDA Calendar of Events

2004

WASDA Fall Meeting

October 22 – 24, 2004
Fairmont Kansas City
Kansas City, Missouri

2005

National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA)

NUCA EXPO '05
February 08 - 12, 2005
Walt Disney Dolphin Resort
Orlando, Florida

WASDA Annual Meeting/Partnership Forum

February/March 2005
Date and location details TBA



Annual Meeting and Partnership Forum



"The information gained from the roundtable discussions was a highlight for me."



"At the Annual Meeting we picked up a couple of vendors that we weren't doing business with prior to the meeting."



"I got some good ideas out of the roundtable discussions that we will use at our company."



"I realized that communication to my sales and purchasing is key. I will pass on what I have learned."



WASDA WELCOMES YOUR INPUT

MEMBERS OF WASDA ONLY, please use this form to provide WASDA with news about your company and input on issues you'd like to see covered in *Connections*.

Member News

List any recent employee promotions, branch openings, strategic alliances, acquisitions, etc.:

Topic Suggestions

Are there any issues you'd like to see addressed, such as market conditions, improving your operations, international issues, business technologies, ISO certification, etc., in a future issue of *Connections*? Suggest an article and author or submit an article yourself.

Quality Kudos

Has your company recently been recognized for its "quality" efforts: ISO certifications, favored distributor, special awards, etc.? Share your success with other WASDA members by listing the information here:

WWW Update

Since the printing of the directory, if your company has acquired a new website or email and would like to publish the update in *Connections*, please list it here:

Submitted by:

Name: _____ Title _____

Company: _____ Phone: _____

Your e-mail address: _____ Company e-mail address: _____

Return this form by fax to: WASDA • Holly Chapman • 215-963-9785