



Editor's Comments

A brochure currently being used by this association to inform members and solicit prospects contains a sentence stating, "In the overall business scheme of life the structural moving industry is not equal in size to other major industries." The nature of work restricts the number of companies that are able to survive and prosper in this industry. Compare the number of structural movers to the number of gasoline stations, or restaurants, or automobile dealers, or lawyers, or architects, or religious establishments, or banks, etc. Simply because the industry is smaller in number than others businesses makes structural movers no less important. To be truly effective, however, an industry's players, regardless of size, must cooperate with others in order to develop necessary common standards and goals.

The organization representing the structural moving industry in North America and, for practical purposes the rest of the world, is the International Association of Structural Movers (IASM). When you consider the history of associations, this is a tremendous responsibility for an organization that has been in existence for only 21 years. Yet, since its inception, the association has boldly espoused, "Representing the world's oldest and largest recycling industry." How can this be?

Guilds of medieval times had some of the characteristics of a business association and thus may be considered the genesis of associations. There was Merchant guilds and Craft guilds. Each craft guild consisted of masters, journeymen and apprentices. Craft guilds restricted the activities of their members. Shoemakers could not tan hides, barbers could not be surgeons and weavers could not do any dyeing. With the introduction of the factory system and more emphasis on the quantity of goods rather than their quality, the guild system, as it was known in the middle ages, faded into oblivion.

Some business associations were formed in the 18th Century in the United States. For instance, the oldest U.S. society of businessmen, the New York Stock Exchange, was established in 1792; The National Association of Cotton Manufacturers in 1854; and the predecessor to the American Iron and Steel Institute in 1855. During the War Between the States, the U.S. Brewers Foundation was formed. The American Bankers Association was founded in 1876. Other business associations established late in the 19th Century in the U.S. include the American Pulp and Paper Association in 1878; The American Transit Association in 1882; The National Association of Retail Grocers, in



1896; and in 1910, the American Hotel Association.

After World War I the National Industrial Recovery Act (NRA) was founded in 1933, and its purpose was to "encourage codes of fair competition." World War II followed the NRA as a major force in stimulating the association movement. Industry and professional associations became of age in the 1970's. All are now an important segment of the free enterprise system. They perform services on behalf of industry and professional groups. In many instances, they take on an importance that no one company can have. This is an obvious result since so many companies contribute to an association. In dealing with government, for instance, a congressional representative often asks: "Where does the industry association stand on this?"

There are all sorts of laws, rules and regulations through which associations must navigate, the same as an individual company. The American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), an organization of which I have been a member for the past 35 years, is where association executives go for assistance, just as structural movers go to the IASM for assistance. Over 40,000 association executives belong to and support ASAE. Currently 302 companies can boast membership IASM.

The organization "Representing the world's oldest and largest recycling industry" has a lot of "growing up" to do in order to represent its members adequately. How can IASM make such a claim? It is because a group of structural movers founded the organization in 1983. But to represent members more effectively takes numbers. Who have you invited lately to become a member?

I encourage you to read Mr. Dodson's guest commentary on page 32.