



INTERNATIONAL
SAFETY EQUIPMENT
ASSOCIATION

2010

Strategic
Plan

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2010 STRATEGIC PLAN

ISEA's Strategic Plan gives focus and direction to all the association's activities. It expresses the common purpose of the standards development, government outreach and knowledge access programs that are ISEA's daily business.

Each year, a group of senior executives from member companies comes together as a Planning Task Force to review and update the plan. Revision of the plan is not about changing the association's strategic direction or desired outcomes. The purpose of the planning process is to examine progress toward meeting the strategic objectives, measured against the metrics established in the 2009 plan, and developing a new set of metrics against which ISEA can measure its progress in 2010.

Mission

Since 1933, the association has been dedicated to the pursuit of its mission:

The mission of the International Safety Equipment Association is to support and promote the common business interests of its member companies. ISEA members are united in the goal of protecting the health and safety of people worldwide exposed to hazardous and potentially harmful environments.

The association provides the forum through which its members can work to:

- promote the standardization of safety equipment,
- represent the industry's interests before government bodies, and interpret government actions to the industry,
- collect and disseminate information about the industry,
- maintain links to other organizations in the safety industry worldwide,
- promote the proper use of personal protective equipment as essential to worker safety and health.

ISEA's greatest asset is people.

It's the people who own or manage companies, who are willing to join with their competitors, and commit their companies' resources to programs and activities to make a better industry.

It's the work of all the people who attend ISEA meetings, chair product groups and committees, review standards, help shape industry policy on legislation and regulation, plan industry programs, share their knowledge and experience, all on a volunteer basis.

This focus on people is not an abstraction to manufacturers of personal protective equipment. Their efforts are rewarded when working people around the world wear, use or carry the equipment they make and sell to avoid injury, illness or death.

When the ISEA Board and planning committee met in 2009 to review the association's strategic priorities and update the plan, much of the discussion centered on people.

In recent years, the ISEA plan has addressed the association's core competencies – standards development, government relations and knowledge access – with strategic priorities in each of these three areas. The plan also commits the association to growth, with strategies for a strong and growing association.

The core competencies are what the association does, and how it returns value to its member companies. But excellence in these core competencies does not assure that the association will be strong and grow. ISEA must be able to communicate the value it brings to member companies, and sell the value of its programs and activities to members, prospective members, PPE users, and other key stakeholders in the occupational safety and health communities. Realizing this, the 2009 planning meeting was organized around an examination of how the association can encourage and sustain participation by the people who make it work.

Members addressed four questions that are key to maintaining a strong association:

- What keeps member companies from being more active in ISEA?
- How does ISEA get more member company participation on committees, activities and events?
- How does ISEA make its core competencies essential to its member companies?

- How does ISEA gain more credibility and perceived value among nonmember companies?

Some of the constraints to participation are easy to identify: cost of membership, time constraints for key personnel, limited availability of people to devote to industry activities, meetings scheduled at inconvenient times or locations. Manufacturing companies run lean, and the soft economy of 2009 means companies have even fewer people to spare.

As companies are doing more with fewer people, they rely on the association staff more than ever. Manufacturers once had people on board dedicated to standards activities, troops of in-house lobbyists and industry relations specialists. Today those functions are largely add-on responsibilities for men and women with full-time product development, marketing or management jobs. At the same time, the staff of the association has become more professional. With people on staff who are proficient in specialties such as standards development or regulatory policy, companies place greater reliance on the staff. While this helps ensure smooth operation of the association, it introduces the risk of a potential gap between the needs of the companies and the staff's perception of what's best for the industry.

There's also what some call the "free-rider" phenomenon; nonmembers reaping the benefits of the association's work without providing input or resources. All safety equipment manufacturers can make and sell products meeting the standards developed through ISEA, and share the benefits of the association's legislative or regulatory successes.

But these are not the only reasons that companies are less active. The planners felt that in many cases, people don't understand what ISEA is and does. More critically, they don't see a connection between the association and the bottom line.

Clearly, companies in the safety equipment industry understand the value of standards. But many do not see the value in participating in standards development, of having a voice in deciding which test procedures to use, or which performance characteristics to specify. They know that a favorable regulatory ruling can create a better business climate, but do not see how their companies would benefit from understanding the inner workings of a government agency, and how they can influence its decisions.

ISEA needs to establish a clear connection between what the association does and how well its member companies do in the marketplace; between standards and sales, regulatory tracking and revenue creation, information sharing and profitability. ISEA needs to communicate effectively not just with the company, but with the right people in the company – the people who make the decisions on committing resources to industry programs.

ISEA needs to communicate the value of the association, of making the connection between participation and influence, of getting the right message to the right person. Association messages must tie government affairs to revenue creation so people understand the bottom line impact of favorable regulatory decisions. They must make people feel they're missing something if they don't participate in standards drafting, or share market data. They must sell the value of the personal relationships that begin and grow in an association, where competitors can work together, legally, on programs that benefit all.

The planners felt that ISEA must define the membership value proposition for every discipline within a member company – top management, engineering and product development, legal and risk management, marketing and sales, human resources and finances.

They examined the strategic priorities with an eye to how each will enhance the business purpose of the association, and its bottom line benefit to its member companies. Where programs or plans appeared to have marginal value, they were set aside. They encouraged data collection and market research, understanding that much of the value of an association is the uniqueness of the research it can conduct and the data it can provide, and that programs driven by data have a better chance of success.

They proposed specific ideas to strengthen ISEA programs: reaching out to key decision-makers to encourage association participation; strengthening product group activities beyond standards development; involving customers and users; sponsoring research and data collection by product, industry or market sector. They discussed business and product issues such as third-party certification, international standards, market surveillance for standards compliance, and reaching out to companies outside North America.

For each of the strategic priorities, they reviewed and revised the strategies and metrics, concentrating on measurable steps that will move the association forward, sustain its strength, and encourage growth.

The result of this deliberation is this document – the ISEA's 2010 Strategic Plan.

Strategic Priorities

ISEA's strategic priorities recognize the association's core competencies, as identified in a member survey: **product standards and standardization**, **government relations**, and **knowledge access**.

The first priority of the industry and its association is to protect people. Member companies do this by providing the best safety equipment, marketing their products and services to companies and workers worldwide, and training workers and supervisors on how to select and use it. Through the association, they cooperate with workers, employers, unions, government officials, and other safety and health experts to develop standards of performance for the products they make, promote the use of these standards, and educate users and regulators on the importance of standards.

They reach out to regulators and legislators whose

decisions affect safety and health at work and in the community, and work to build a supportive public policy climate. And they use the association as a forum, to educate and learn from each other and from other stakeholders in worker health and safety.

For each strategic objective there is a statement of desired outcomes, a set of strategies to achieve these results, and metrics by which the success of the association can be measured. Product groups and committees are urged to establish their own strategies and metrics, ensuring that the strategic objectives in this Plan are shared by all member companies.

Staff reviews the plan quarterly and provides reports to the Board of Trustees, ensuring that the Plan is a living document.

A Strong and Growing Association

ISEA will strengthen its membership on a global basis, across product segments, markets and channels.

The association does not exist without its members. Membership growth provides additional resources to pursue the association's mission, while ensuring that its programs and services are broadly representative of the industry. Equally important is ensuring that the association is meeting members' needs and providing value.

Strategies

1. ISEA will focus its efforts on growth opportunities in existing product areas, new products and technologies, and areas of the world where safety equipment use may be growing.
2. ISEA will promote membership to prospective member companies and audiences.
3. ISEA will ensure that its cost structure is fair to member companies of all sizes.
4. ISEA will reach out to top levels of management in member companies to involve them in the association.

Metrics

- Identify the major manufacturers in each product group that are not members and aggressively market the association to them.
- Promote ISEA's capabilities in all its core competencies to existing as well as potential members.
- Evaluate the ISEA fee structure and recommend changes as necessary.
- Promote the value of participation and the importance of leadership in product groups to all member representatives.
- Implement additional business-related services to attract and retain member companies and add to the association's revenue base.

Standards and Standardization

ISEA is a recognized leader in safety equipment standards development.

Workers are better protected when they wear and use personal safety equipment that meets established performance standards. ISEA member companies develop consensus standards, promote their use in regulation and the marketplace, and work toward the goal of harmonizing standards for safety equipment around the world.

Strategies

1. Provide efficient and effective management for development, maintenance and interpretation of safety equipment standards and manage a process to identify opportunities to develop new standards
 - ISEA standardization activities will have broad and active participation of member companies
 - ISEA standards will achieve consensus through effective outreach programs
 - ISEA will train product groups and company managers about ISEA standard programs
2. Pursue global standards development opportunities
 - Pursue international secretariats and TAG administrations where desired by product groups
 - Educate members and users on global standards programs
3. Promote the use of safety equipment that meets established performance standards
 - Actively promote broad acceptance of new standards by regulators and government bodies
 - Inform users of how compliance with product standards enhances safety

Metrics

- Develop and publish new standards as identified by the Standards Policy and Planning Committee.
- Promote member participation in international standardization through participation in US TAGs to ISO subcommittees.
- Expand marketing of standards through electronic delivery and personal applications such as PDAs or hand-held devices.
- Identify countries and regions that show potential for standards development compatible with US standards and products, and establish contacts with their standards-developing organizations.
- Develop informational material for members on standards, certification and product regulation outside the US.
- Develop and implement a training program on ISEA operations and activities for product group chairs and product group members.

Government Relations

ISEA will be the leading advocate for public policies in the US and globally that favor worker protection through the use of safety equipment that meets established standards, and for the companies that make and sell that safety equipment.

The health of the safety equipment industry is enhanced by laws and regulations favorable to worker health and safety, enforcement of the use of safety equipment that meets established standards, and policies that enhance companies' ability to do business globally. ISEA is recognized as the leading voice of the safety equipment industry in appropriate levels of government, and the association ensures that members are informed of, and involved with, government issues that affect their products and companies.

Strategies

1. Provide a professional, member-directed government relations program for the industry.
 - Maintain an active Government Relations Committee with high-level executive participation to provide policy guidance and oversight on domestic government issues that affect members and the industry.
 - Expand Government Relations Committee to add expertise in global activities, and identify target countries for expansion of ISEA activities.
 - Maintain professional government expertise on staff.
 - Maintain contact with government officials at appropriate levels whose decisions affect the industry
2. Build the influence of the association at all appropriate levels of government
 - Identify opportunities to influence policies in government on behalf of the industry and consistent with association policies and positions.
 - Develop association positions on issues and policies important to members, and articulate them to legislators, regulators and policy-makers
 - Assist members in their dealings with legislative and regulatory agencies, where appropriate and consistent with association policies and positions
 - Influence government agencies to rely on consensus standards, and keep agency staff informed about new standards and standards in development
3. Provide a consistent communications program to inform members and policy makers about issues important to the safety equipment industry.
 - Track legislation and regulations, policies and proposals important to safety equipment and the industry, and report regulatory to the membership
 - Educate members about government assistance available to US companies, and foreign laws and regulations that affect member companies and products.

Metrics

- Identify and prioritize the top five opportunities to influence government policy.
- Work with Congress and federal agencies to mandate the use of PPE on projects funded by any future stimulus or other government job-creation spending program.
- Track federal grant programs, new regulations and procurement programs and report quarterly.
- Take advantage of trade agreements and negotiations to advocate for worker protection laws outside the US that would promote the use of safety equipment.

Knowledge Access

ISEA is the forum for the safety equipment industry, providing information and assistance to member companies, market partners and the users of safety and personal protective equipment.

ISEA helps its member companies keep track of government, standards and global market issues that are timely and germane to their business. It also reaches out to users and purchasers, to help them understand the economic benefits of protecting workers through use of safety equipment that meets established performance standards.

Strategies

1. Provide timely and accurate information services to member companies, government officials, purchasers and users of safety equipment.
 - Establish ISEA as the first stop for information about worker safety equipment.
 - Provide member companies with automated access to current information through the ISEA website
2. Plan, organize and conduct meetings that make the most effective use of time to provide education and information.
 - Strengthen the Annual and Fall Meetings and other association meetings.
3. Develop and provide market data programs that help companies identify potential markets, opportunities and trends.
 - Meet member needs for market data through product group-focused reporting programs.
4. Use surveys and data to ensure that ISEA is meeting members' needs for information.

Metrics

- Strengthen and expand market data programs in product areas, and track satisfaction with the existing programs.
- Continue publication of reports using federal data that has business decision-making value.
- Provide access to information on government assistance programs for business.
- Conduct surveys to plan activities and meetings that benefit members.
- Develop a plan for knowledge access to global business information (e.g. market access, standards, sales data).

Planning Task Force

ISEA's Strategic Plan is developed and reviewed annually by a Task Force consisting of members of the Planning Committee and the Board of Trustees.

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