Focus: Five Areas To Provide Members With Critical Support And New Opportunities

By Michael Lasinski, President, LES International

It is hard to believe that it is already October. The time since we were together in Montréal a few months ago seems to have just flown by. We are only about seven months away from our next annual meeting in the wonderful city of Madrid. Speaking about Madrid, the meeting team is hard at work creating a wonderful program, networking opportunities and beautiful venues. Please take a moment to go to the website at www.LESI2024.org to register, sponsor and share the program with others. It is so important that we get together in person and share our experiences, struggles and accomplishments, because the relationships we build are not just for work but also friendships for life.

Getting back to Montréal for a moment. For those of you that were able to attend, you know that it was a wonderful meeting. It is the roadmap for future meetings and we are taking all that we can from that experience. In addition to all the wonderful programming and events, it was a financial success for the home society of USA and Canada and LESI as well. We are grateful to the committee and especially Bob Held for his (and his team’s) efforts. These funds are important for us to be able to do the important work of the society.

As I mentioned in the last message, as a board we are focused on five areas that will provide our members with additional critical support and offer new opportunities.

Those areas are:
- Revamp the Website (and Make it Society Friendly).
- Consider Global Organizational Memberships.
- Create a Partnership Position to Manage Business Development and Consider Alternative Funding Sources.
- Continued Support for the Thought Leadership Program.
- Rethink our Committee Support Systems.

The teams are hard at work on all of these opportunities and I will provide updates to you on all of them in future messages from the president. That said, I would like to focus on just one here today. It is our efforts related to offering companies and firms the option of global membership. We initially formed a small team to study this. It has now been expanded to include people from LES societies in North America, South America, Europe, and Asia. We have representation from small societies, large societies and those in between. I have also personally spoken with many society presidents and representatives about this concept and have received great feedback. The idea is to offer companies an option to join as a company or firm. The company will then get global employee access to all LESI has to offer at rates at a level as if every (or at least a large group of) employee(s) in the company is a member.
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For this to work, we need to revamp our thinking as regional societies in some cases. We need to act as one global society while maintaining our regional strengths. We need to embrace sharing our membership information with the whole LES community throughout the world. We need to revamp our internal systems, so we have a good handle on our member data. We need to develop databases of all the content, sponsorship opportunities and beneficial interaction we have to offer a global corporate partner. If we do this correctly, we can use this information to tailor our offerings, provide regional societies with more information about individuals interested in our community and strengthen our relationship with our sponsors.

While we hope that this new offering gains traction, it will take time to develop correctly. Therefore, we remain focused on our current membership structure of individuals and smaller groups. We continue to work to make sure that our current structure works well. And critically, we have no intention of transitioning away from the individual memberships or small groups that the various LES societies have been built upon. We are focused on providing, when appropriate, another alternative to grow.

Finally, thank you all for all the work that has happened in the last five months. We have had a great start to the LESI year. Our societies have held wonderful meetings, our committees continue to do great work supporting our members and their missions, and the LES network continues to be a great resource for me and I hope for you as well. ■

Best, Mike