



## TAKING THE LEAD

Larry Sloan takes the reins as president of the Adhesive and Sealant Council, Inc.

By Teresa McPherson, Editor

Larry Sloan likes art. For someone with a decidedly analytical personality, Sloan says that people might be surprised to know that he enjoys art for art's sake. In fact, at an outdoor street festival in Paris last summer he was able to enjoy the performance of an impromptu band following the Adhesive and Sealant Council, Inc. (ASC)'s Adhesive and Sealant Leadership Summit. Sloan doesn't recall the name of the group, but says that they had a great beat and everyone was dancing to them.

Sloan will take over as president of the ASC this month, succeeding Richard Barry, who has been president since October 1999. Sloan credits Barry for raising the association's level of professionalism and for turning it into a financially stable organization.

"Rick has turned around the association in terms of its level of

professionalism and the way we interface with our members," Sloan says. "His number-one accomplishment is that he brought a whole new level of professionalism to the organization. Equally important is his fiscal responsibility to the association — profit consistently since 2002. And for the first time in a decade, we are actually putting some money into our reserves, which is a really big accomplishment."

Sloan also credits Barry for expanding the ASC's scope. "There's definitely a more entrepreneurial spirit that he's helped to instill here in terms of his perspectives on expanding the breadth of programs that the ASC offers," he says. "There's so much more now that we're doing for our members than we did when he came on board."

These activities include those suggested by members themselves or

developed within the organization. He says that if someone comes up with an idea for something, the ASC is much more responsive and receptive to it than ever before.

One example of this is the "Business Lost to China" report that the organization published in 2004. The 13-page report summarizes the lost value of adhesives and sealants used directly in manufacturing goods in China, including those used indirectly in the packaging and labeling of those goods. The report covers the period of 1997-2003 for over 23 U.S. "downstream" industries that use adhesives and sealants.

"Several of our members expressed interest in trying to understand quantifying how much adhesives business is being lost to China as a result of complete customer bases moving overseas," Sloan says. With the furniture and textile industries' move to southeast Asia, the adhesives used in those products — as well as the adhesives used in their packaging and labeling — moved overseas as well. So unless a company is going to open new facilities in that area, the North American-based company is going to lose a lot of that business, he explains.

"So we attempted to quantify how much adhesives business was lost. We worked with an outside consultant who specialized in these types of studies, and within a matter of months developed this report that got at that issue.

"In my opinion, that's being very responsive to member needs — being



Larry Sloan

able to react nimbly and quickly to address an unmet need. Some programs take a matter of months to implement, and other programs evolve over time, and a lot of it has to do with relationship building and testing with the membership and tweaking — that's all part of the puzzle.”

### LOOKING AHEAD

Sloan plans to build on this foundation by way of a strong strategic plan. The organization's overall mission is to inform, educate and represent stakeholders in the industry and strengthen the overall industry environment as well as the member companies that make up the council.

The association has four main external goals as part of its strategic plan. The first is to provide training, education and benchmarking information for members by way of short courses, convention programming, and benchmarking surveys that manufacturing members can participate in to compare their performance to their peers'. Second is to provide opportunities for members to network with each other, through peer group meetings that the ASC holds, as well as conventions and expos. Number three has to do with representing the industry's viewpoint in guiding the government in design of regulations, such as working with the EPA and other agencies to make sure regulations are based on sound scientific fact. Fourth is this idea of organizing its members to educate end users on the benefits of adhesives and sealants through seminars conducted to provide a forum for industry representatives to speak to end users, such as sessions at major trade shows and conferences.

Sloan says more can be done in the way of end-user education. “I think we can do a lot more in promoting our industry's products to the audiences who need to hear about the benefits of adhesives and sealants,” he says. Through the BTI program, the association has developed the Adhesive Fastening Institute, an educational effort that is a separate organization embodied in the council housed under the auspices of the ASC.

“I see the AFI taking on a centralized role as a provider of educational tools and resources that furthers awareness about our products. That would be

## BARRY TO RETIRE FROM ASC

After 37 years of service in the chemical industry, Richard Barry is retiring.

Barry started in the chemical industry in 1968, after graduating from the University of Wisconsin with a B.S. in Chemistry and a minor in Business. He began his career with Ashland Chemical Co. as a Technical Service Chemist for polymers sold into paper and industrial coatings market segments.

Barry held senior executive sales and marketing positions with Henkel Corp. and S.C. Johnson Polymer before being selected president of the Adhesive and Sealant Council, Inc., in October 1999. His family moved from Milwaukee, WI, to the Washington, D.C. area in January 2000.

“Initially, my role was really to help re-build credibility and improve levels of communication with our members, the board of directors and our staff,” Barry says. “At that time, ASC was fortunate to have a core group of outstanding employees, but they were a bit dispirited and needed to build their ownership and sense of urgency ... We had to build a bit of the ‘for-profit’ mentality into the organization so that we could progress.”

Many significant changes have taken place within the organization since Barry took the helm, including moves to work with members to build new programs and initiatives.

“We are no longer spending time on reacting to the ‘problems of the moment.’ Inside the office, we are focused on adding real value and ‘reaching out’ to members. I spend a lot more time coaching our employees as they develop, test and implement new programs. And it is exciting to see them reaching out to our members to solicit new ideas and get them involved.

“I've also seen a change in the role of the board of directors. These dedicated industry leaders have re-confirmed their commitment to ASC and its direction. Our discussions on strategic direction are more focused today. I see a much greater level of passion for increasing the role of the council in the industry. Early on, a large part of our time was spent understanding and discussing financial and operational problems. Today, the board is focused on the future direction of the council and on ensuring the council brings more value to members.”

Barry says that one of his biggest accomplishments at the organization is the development of the end-user education programs, including the Building the Industry (BTI) member coalition.

“Although I've had a role in this program, we've had champions from our membership and our staff step up to make this program a reality,” he says.

“Creating a role for the council to help our members grow their businesses and to help them educate architects, engineers and other potential users may lead to a strategic change in ASC's focus. Five years from now, I'd hope to see the council heavily involved in these kinds of activities. When that happens, it will be an exciting change for the entire organization.”

As for the future, Barry says he and his wife Marcia plan to return to Wisconsin to be closer to their two sons and other family members.

“My plan is to really retire to spend more time with our family and our hobbies,” he says. “But after 38 years in the chemical industry, I do leave the door open a little on considering some part-time work.”

anything from setting up programs, such as at ATEexpo, to online courses, information pieces, design guides, white papers — it could be any number of tools that helps get the right information in the hands of the right people. I think that we, as an association, can do a lot more in that regard.

“The industry is going to have to improve the way it communicates its products to its customers. That’s not easy, but that’s something that we have to get our hands around because we’ve got to continue to get the right tools—the right types of information — in the hands of those who design and specify the bonding technology in order for our entire industry to grow. We want the entire market to grow, and there are lots of great opportunities out there for adhesives.

“I have a very optimistic view overall of the industry looking down the road, but there’s a lot of educating that I think we need to do,” he says.

Another area Sloan would like to grow is professional development. “We have short courses, the convention programming and the business seminars,” he says. “I think we can do more programs...I also think we can start exploring concepts like webinars that serve a niche of our membership not able to travel to meetings.

“In addition, we do a lot of good work here in the United States, but we’re trying to provide additional information from other countries. We’re reaching out to our fellow associations in China and Japan, as well as FEICA in Europe, to be a conduit of information from those countries so that we can provide more timely information to our members here in the States as to what is going on around the world.

“The world’s become a global village, so we’re trying to step up our commitment to keeping at the forefront of international regulatory issues because a lot of our members are expanding their businesses abroad. The major players all have operations in China and Europe, but some of the smaller and medium companies are starting to explore those opportunities. Or maybe they have distributors set up in China, or agents of some kind, but they’re starting to do some business overseas and they need to understand what the regulatory climate looks like. So that’s something valuable that we can add to the plate.

“We’re not going to solve these issues in a year; these are going to take some time, but we’ve got to start somewhere and that’s something that I think the association can play a role in. I think that the challenge, though, is to find ways for the association to continually add more value to the members’ bottom line so that the decision to renew is a no-brainer.”

### LOOKING BACK

Sloan’s background made him a good fit for the association. He attended the University of Pennsylvania for his undergraduate education. After graduating with a B.S. in Chemical Engineering, he worked for four years as an engineer at Air Products and Chemicals. When the group he was in at Air Products was downsizing, he used that time to go back to school full time and earned an MBA at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL.

Afterwards, he joined Nalco Chemical, a specialty chemical company that focuses on water treatment, at its corporate headquarters outside of Chicago. He held positions in production, marketing and sales at the company over a 2½-year period. Then he decided he wanted to relocate and joined his father’s business, a manufacturer’s representative, and spent 6 1/2 years as a field sales representative.

“I decided that being a rep wasn’t the thing that I wanted to do,” Sloan says. “It didn’t excite me and I didn’t have enough of a passion for it. I did well, and I had a great opportunity to work with my dad...but I just decided that it wasn’t the thing that I wanted to do long-term.”

A dinner conversation with a friend from college led him to the association world. Sloan explained to her that he wanted to get off the road and find a job where he could do more marketing and use his chemical industry knowledge and background as part of a team and provide more of a service. His friend had been in association management for several years and knew the work involved. She urged him to consider association work; based on his background, she reasoned that it would be ideal for both him and his employer. Sloan agreed.

“I just basically put my name out there and floated my resume, and I had a very brief stint with one other association downtown for about 8 months...as membership director with them,” he says. “Then I found out about this opportunity at ASC and I came up to meet with Rick for an interview and I couldn’t turn down the opportunity.

“I’m not a job-hopper, but I thought that I would kick myself if I didn’t take advantage of this opportunity...the chemistry was right and they selected me to become the director of Member Relations here, and that’s how I became a part of the council.”

The opportunity to join a smaller association allowed Sloan to become involved in a more hands-on level, which he preferred. “Over the last several years, I’ve been involved in virtually every aspect of the association,” he says. “I’ve been doing member relations, member needs analyses, member recruitment, member visits, program development, helping to launch and manage the BTI program...and then along the way I got involved with the database and some of the IT issues that the association faced.

He’s also proud to be involved with the board meetings and peer groups. “It’s really been a great opportunity for me to get a lot of experience very quickly.”

Sloan is optimistic about the association and his role as leader. “I’m really excited about everything that we’re doing around here, and there are so many opportunities to do more. I definitely have a passion for this...I think that’s what was missing when I worked for my dad. I didn’t have this motivating passion to really say to myself ‘I would do this for the next 10, 20, 25 years.’ I’m very fortunate that things have worked out the way that they have so far.

“Everything I have done in my life professionally has led me to this position. My chemical industry experience has been very helpful, my engineering experience has been helpful...and then my sales experience...it all fits together very nicely.”

“I’m committed to the ASC, I’ve got high expectations for myself in this new role and I’m going to do everything in my power to help this association grow and add more value to our members.

“I think that this is one of the friendliest and most professional communities of people that I’ve ever been associated with. I’ve seen it with my own eyes and I really believe that this is a great group of people. There are friendships that I’ve developed through the last four years that go beyond just the professional see-them-twice-a-year-at-a-meeting, and I think that’s really nice. I feel that there’s a strong community in this industry, and I want to continue to see that grow.”