

ISA, Industry Keep Ahead of Changing Times

A Message from the ISA Chairman

My experience in the sign industry dates to when I was just a young lad, when I would go to the sign supply warehouse with my dad. Those are fond memories of running around looking at all the products I knew nothing about, but were way cool for a five or six-year-old boy.

One thing that is constant with the sign, graphics and visual communications industry, as with most industries, is change. As the market changed and screen printing became a bigger part of the signage industry, my dad's company changed with the times. He and his partner set up a new company, which my dad ran, to sell screenprinting supplies to that industry. Although there were two separate companies, they operated in close proximity. During the summers I worked at both companies where I learned about the sign and screenprinting markets. In 2000, I acquired the companies and merged them into one company called Graphic Solutions Group, which has since become GSG.

Over the last 20 years, many changes have affected the signage industry. The Gerber Signmaker 3 was the beginning of the digital revolution in both the sign and screenprinting markets. Since then, wide-format digital printing has made an even more dramatic impact in producing signs. Most sign companies today print many of the signs on a wide-format printer, a flatbed printer, or have them printed by a wholesale printing company.

Although digital printing has certainly had an impact on the industry, there have been other changes as well. LEDs have impacted how signs are made and continue to be utilized more and more. Not many shops still produce neon signs, or have a neon plant in their facility. And fluorescent lamps have long been the way to illuminate a sign, but like neon, are being used less due to LEDs.

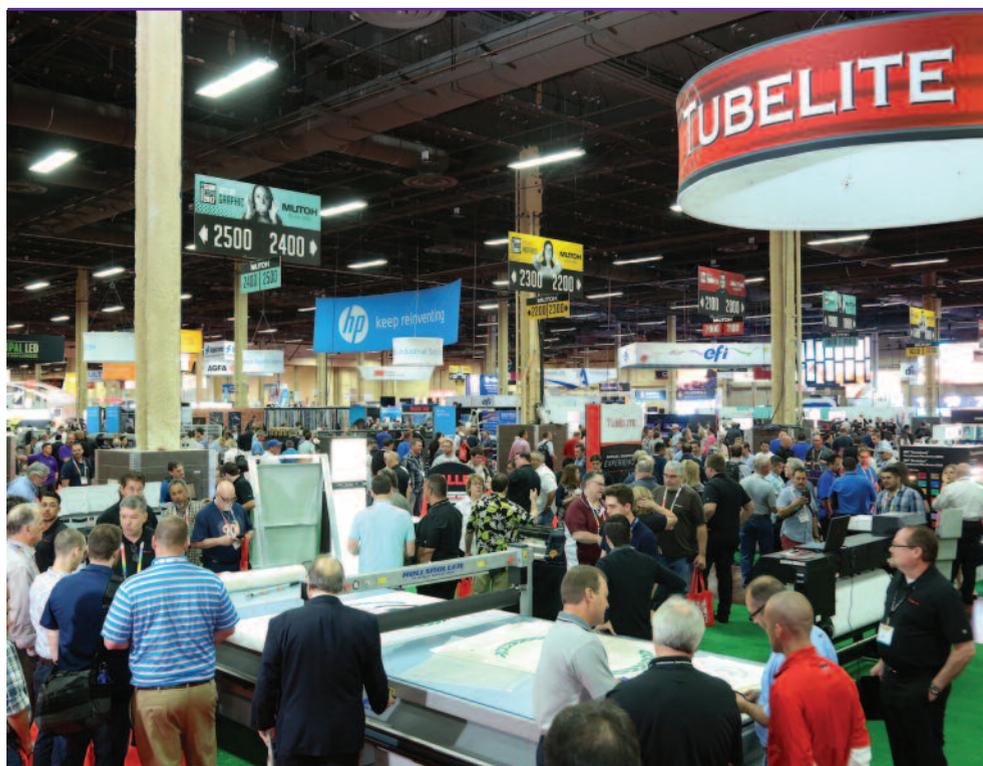
As the industry continues to evolve, ISA has led the way in helping educate company owners about new technologies and the opportunities these changes create. As the various visual communication industries continue to evolve, ISA has been—and will be—there to continue to give companies the resources they need to respond to these changes.

The ISA International Sign Expo is the best trade show to see the opportunities available to sign companies in action! Walking the trade show floor and visiting with the vendors showing their products, is the best way for sign company owners, salespeople, shop

personnel, etc., to see what is new. Additionally, the education sessions have continued to get better every year and ISA Sign Expo 2018, in March, will have even more specific, targeted information for attendees.

I always get a lot out of walking the show floor and seeing the new technology on display, but the chance to meet folks involved in the same industry as myself is invaluable. There has not been an ISA Expo where I did not learn something new from meeting a business acquaintance, or listening to an educational session which sparked an idea I could take back to my office with me. The highlight of

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Expo is having the chance to see the people most important to my business, my customers.

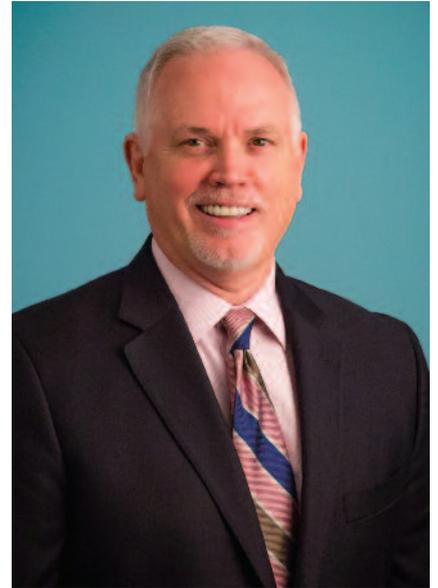
ISA started a new program about three years ago called the ISA Elite program, which is a truly unique program for young people involved in the sign industry. Each young person interested submits an application to be accepted into the program. Once accepted, they are invited to the ISA Expo where they meet with other young people in the program, they meet with the ISA Board, and they meet with other industry professionals to discuss the issues they face, and the opportunities available to them in our wonderful industry.

Besides making a difference in bringing young people into the industry, ISA is also making a major difference in working with city planners. This work has paid dividends to the industry already in helping communities develop reasonable sign codes that help, not hinder, businesses advertise their location(s). Educating city planners, as well as working with sign companies, to educate a city council

when a sign code change is being considered, is a large part of what the advocacy group at ISA does. The services that the advocacy group provides are an irreplaceable resource for everyone involved in signage.

Please plan on joining me at the ISA International Expo at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. The trade show floor is open March 22 through March 24, with education sessions beginning March 21. Registration is now open (BTW, here's a tip from me: Use the code chairman18 for FREE access to the trade show floor!)

I can assure you ISA is committed to continuing to explore new opportunities, to anticipate, drive and respond to changes that impact our member companies. And to be innovative when it comes to facing these new challenges. Looking at 2018 and beyond, we will continue to expand ISA into new areas, and as ISA expands, it will only create more opportunities for everyone.



By Mark Granberry • • •
Chairman
ISA Board of Directors | 

