

**INDA, ASSOCIATION OF THE NONWOVEN FABRICS INDUSTRY,
AND ITS COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

**Cos Camelio
INDA
Cary, NC**

Abstract

INDA is a trade association representing the entire value chain of the nonwovens industry. Although our members are primarily North American companies, our membership does include international companies from Europe, Asia and South America as well.

INDA is unique among associations since only 20% of the operating budget is received from membership dues. The remaining 80% are generated from conferences, exhibitions, educational programs and publications. Our conferences and exhibitions rely heavily on our various committees' conference leadership, session developers, moderators, technical, and marketing papers.

This paper will review the committee structure within the INDA Association and review the functions of the various committees and their contribution to INDA's success.

Introduction

INDA is a trade association that represents the entire value chain of the nonwovens industry. Although our members are primarily North American companies, our membership does include international and multi-national companies from Europe, Asia and South America as well. Presently, INDA has a total membership of 272 companies, universities and consultants.

INDA is unique among associations since only 20% of the operating revenue stream is received from membership dues. This compares favorably to the average of all associations, which is about 60%. The remaining 80% is generated from conferences, exhibitions, educational programs and publications. In addition, our Board of Directors has mandated that we keep a reserve that is equal to one year's expenses.

The success of our conferences and exhibitions relies heavily on our committees' volunteer leadership, session developers, moderators and the technical and marketing papers presented. Figure 1 shows the major committees working under the INDA umbrella.

Technical Advisory Board

Perhaps the largest committee working within INDA is the Technical Advisory Board. This committee is comprised of chemists, engineers and research and development individuals from the entire nonwovens value chain. This committee advises the Association regarding technical matters that affect the entire industry. The TAB also plays an advisory role to the other INDA committees if they have a technical issue that they can not resolve. Additionally, the TAB sponsors two committees of its own--the Standard Test Methods (STM) committee and the International Nonwovens Technical Conference (INTC) committee. The TAB meets four times a year.

Standard Test Methods Committee

The Standard Test Method Committee has been in existence almost as long as INDA itself. The members of this committee come primarily from the producer companies and most of them are involved with the test and quality functions within their organizations. The STM has several key functions. First of all, it works to reach a consensus on specific test methods for testing nonwoven fabrics. This includes doing testing on the same fabrics in different laboratories in order to prepare precision and bias statements. Once consensus is reached, the test method is published in the INDA Standard Test book (IST).

A second function of the STM is taking the IST methods to ASTM committee D13.64, which deals with nonwovens test methods. These IST methods are worked through the committee for approval as ASTM test methods.

Another important function of the STM is to bring about the harmonization of test methods between INDA and the worldwide nonwovens community. This work, however, has been focused mainly with EDANA, the European Disposable

and Nonwoven Association. Presently, there are 11 test methods that either have been harmonized or are in the process of being harmonized. The intent of the committee is to harmonize as many of the test methods as possible since so many of our members are multi-national companies. The STM meets four times a year.

INTC

The second committee that the TAB is responsible for is the INTC. This committee is responsible for developing the annual International Nonwovens Technical Conference. Up until 1999, the conference was known as INDA-TEC and was solely sponsored by INDA. In 2000, INDA joined forces with TAPPI to jointly sponsor the INTC conference. Therefore, the INTC committee is composed of both INDA and TAPPI members and the workload is shared accordingly. The joint conference these past two years has been a huge success and has benefited from the synergies of the two associations. Both associations receive more revenue through the collective effort. In 2000, 550 people attended....almost double the INDA-TEC attendance. The INTC Committee meets a number of times during the planning phase and many of these meetings are by teleconference.

IDEA Committee

By far the largest revenue generator for INDA is the IDEA Conference and exhibition, which is held every three years. This exposition is put together by the IDEA Committee, a group of volunteers from member companies. The committee is responsible for developing the conference portion of the exposition by developing the session topics, calling for papers, selecting moderators and generally defining the rules and regulations of the conference and exposition. The committee also aids the INDA staff with on-site administration. The last IDEA show was in March 2001 in Miami Beach and drew over 6000 people in a three-day period. The proceeds from this exposition and conference help fund INDA's operating budget over a three-year period. Because the time between shows is long, the IDEA Committee meets often with quite a number of telephone conferences.

Filtration Steering Committee

The Filtration Steering Committee advises INDA on matters and activities that are of interest to the filtration industry even if the focus is not entirely related to the use of nonwovens. This committee is also responsible for the development of the annual Filtration conference and exhibition by indicating the hot topics that are of concern to the industry and building a program that addresses these topics. The exposition is open to any company that plays a part in the filtration business. The success of this conference and exposition has been building over the past few years and today is the second largest conference that INDA sponsors. This committee meets at least four times a year.

Needlepunch Committee

Another committee that is responsible for a conference is the Needlepunch Committee. The members of this committee are closely related to this nonwoven technology and include machinery manufacturers, fiber suppliers, producers and end-users. They are responsible for developing a program that meets the needs of the industry. Because this is a very specialized segment of the nonwovens business, this tends to be a smaller conference. The Needlepunch Committee meets four times a year.

Vision Advisory Group

Our newest group is the Vision Advisory Group. Earlier in the year, our membership felt that INDA should consider presenting a conference that dealt with consumer products. This would be a new venue so we invited a group of members who either manufactured and sold consumer items which utilized nonwovens or supplied components to this market to meet with us to brainstorm the idea. The results were overwhelming and this Advisory Group has put together an exciting program with top-notch speakers. Our first conference will be held on January 21st to the 23rd in New Orleans. We are expecting an excellent turnout for our first conference.

Industry Statistics Committee

We have the Industry Statistics Committee. This committee, as the name implies, is involved with the gathering of statistical data on industry capacities, production and sales by business segment. This committee uses an outside market research firm to help gather information and correlates this with internal information. This committee also works with other nonwovens associations around the world to gather worldwide statistics. This data is then put together for publication and sale to our industry. This committee meets frequently on an as needed basis.

Automotive Committee

All of the committees mentioned above are not only involved with the problems and activities that deal with their particular segment of the business but are also responsible for preparing conferences and expositions. However, there are a number of committees within INDA that only focus on matters that are important to their particular business segment. One of these committees is the Automotive Committee. Their prime focus is to promote and provide exposure for engineered nonwoven fabrics to the automotive decision-makers. The members of this committee represent their companies at automotive shows in order to teach the engineers about the value and effectiveness of nonwovens in various applications within the car. The Automotive Committee meets at least twice a year and many times present outside speakers with topics of interest in dealing with the auto companies.

Healthcare Committee

The Healthcare Committee is made up of members, who manufacture nonwovens, fabricate finished products and sell them into the medical field. They deal with issues that are relevant to the industry such as medical waste management, recycling and safety. They also are involved with promoting the use of single-use nonwovens in medical applications, advocating tariff positions and protecting the interests of single-use nonwovens on committees setting national standards. Along with INDA's Director of Government affairs, they lobby for the industry's legislative interests and sponsor Legislative Committee Days in Washington to make their legislators aware of the benefits of single-use products in medical applications. This committee meets three to four times a year or whenever a situation arises that requires action on their part.

Hygiene Task Force

The Hygiene Task Force is made up of member companies who have a direct interest in this segment of the nonwovens business. This task force meets as needed in order to deal with government officials on matters related to manufacturing, tariffs and product standards affecting the hygiene business. This committee meets as required.

Wipes Committee

Finally, the Wipes Committee, which meets three times a year, is another committee with a narrow focus. They are concerned about legislation and rules that could have a detrimental effect on the single-use wipes business. They are presently involved with the EPA in trying to level the playing field between single-use and reusable wipes with regard to waste disposal. The Wipes Committee meets three times a year and when necessary in order to deal with a hot topic affecting their industry.

At present, these are the committees within INDA. However, INDA is always willing to explore the possibility of additional committees if there is a need. The normal procedure for doing this is to hold a brainstorming meeting with interested participants, both members and non-members to assess whether a need exists. If so, then a committee is established and a mission statement agreed to. The members choose a chairman and establish a meeting schedule. If, in time, the committee feels that they would like to present a conference that focuses on their business segment, INDA staff works with them to set up a location and work through the logistics and helps the committee prepare a program.

I hope this paper gives you some idea of the importance of the committee structure within INDA. We are always prepared to explore new opportunities and new committees to help further the needs and interests of the nonwovens business. If you have an interest, please contact me at ccamelio@inda.org or call me at 919-233-1210, ext. 114.