



The IAE Interview -

Periodically,

International Association Executive Magazine

puts a range of standard questions
to CEO's of major Associations.



This month the spotlight is on Jonathan N. Strauss, President of Strauss Event & Association Management.

Based in Winnipeg, Canada, Strauss Event & Association Management is a full-service association management company.

Q: How long have you been in the association arena?

A: When I came into the association business 12 years ago, it was an entrepreneurial venture. I jumped at the opportunity to acquire assets of a troubled event management and publishing company, and in December 1995, Strauss Communications (company name changed to Strauss Event & Association Management in 2003) was born. I've been President ever since.

Over the course of the next six years, my staff and I were able to grow the business into a full-service Association Management Company. Today, I'm proud to say we offer a full suite of services to three association clients, and consulting services to 20 clients, primarily in the area of event management and special event production. Across all endeavours, we pride ourselves on consistently delivering world-class events and association management solutions.

Since early 2005, Strauss has been a proud member of AMC Institute, the trade association that represents the association management company (AMC) industry [www.amcinstitute.org]. As our company has become increasingly active in the AMC arena here in Canada, we've taken advantage of the many opportunities to network with other member AMCs in the states and in Europe. I became Chair of AMC Institute's International Task Force in August 2007, and now help AMCs better understand what it means to practice globally, and capitalize on international membership benefits.

Q: How many staff members do you have and give a brief description of your main membership services.

A: Strauss is built on exceptional quality, attention to detail, innovation and client service. Behind the scenes at Strauss is a team

of dynamic, innovative professionals who are passionate about event and association management.

In addition to employing eight full-time staff, we utilize an extensive network of specialized contractors to fully support our clients. These seasoned event and association management professionals offer a balance of talent, creativity and experience to deliver optimal event and association management solutions.

Recognized as a leading Western Canadian event management company, we manage everything from intimate 75-person gatherings to large 10,000-person international conferences – all with the same passion and attention to detail.

On the association management side, in addition to offering integrated headquarters and staffing solutions for non-profit organizations, we offer specialized services including executive, administrative and financial management; strategic planning; membership development and retention; education and professional development; meetings management; and marketing and communication services.

Q: Do you organize conferences or exhibitions and if so how many per year?

A: We organize about 20-30 meetings, conventions and special events each year for our clients across Canada.

Since 1998, Strauss has managed the annual Rotary Career Symposium, which brings together Manitoba's future workforce with the province's industry and education leaders, to explore opportunities in Manitoba. An event of international prominence, Strauss has increased exhibitor participation by 90 percent since in the past nine years.

We also stage the annual national symposium for the Pedorthic Association of Canada, providing education, information and

networking opportunities for its members, delegates and exhibitors from across the United States, Europe and Canada.

Another shining example of our work is the International Conference on War-Affected Children. This event poses the unique challenge of being held in several separate venues, with more than 800 delegates from 130 countries arriving and departing at various times throughout the week, on schedules that would change frequently. Strauss worked as part of the operations team at the Conference Secretariat, providing full event management services to ensure the conference was a success.

Q: What is your biggest single concern at the moment?

A: Particularly of late, I've concerned myself – and my company – with the possibilities of international leads and partnerships. (This is where my job and my volunteer work really complement one another.)

As a member of AMC Institute, Strauss is “linked in” to AMCs across the U.S., Canada, Europe and Asia. Our company, and the AMC industry at large, stand to profit from developing relationships with AMCs in other countries. The prospects are two-fold:

1. an AMC in another country could help our association clients expand their global presence
2. association clients with chapters in other countries could serve as business leads for our AMC

From our vantage, it's well worth opening the lines of communications internationally.

Q: What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing associations generally, and what can association management companies do for stand-alone associations?

A: From membership development to meetings management and strategic planning, an association executive's job is never done. Association Management Companies (AMCs) – the coined “outsourced resource” of the association arena – offer full-service management and specialized management resources to help executive directors and senior management raise associations to the next level.

In essence, AMCs serve as partners to stand-alone associations, providing experienced staff, proven practices and shared resources. Services include executive, administrative and financial management; strategic planning; membership development; public affairs and lobbying; education and professional development; statistical research; meetings management; and marketing and communication services.

First in the States, and more and more on the international scene, thousands of trade associations, professional societies and charitable organizations are partnering with AMCs to help meet their association goals. Since 1986, the AMC industry has grown by 150 percent, and now spans more than 670 association management companies around the world.

Q: What issues would you like to see this magazine address in future editions?

A: It would be great to see an editorial exploration of the ways in which domestic and international AMCs can be a source of leads for each other. In my experience with Strauss, and as chair of AMC Institute's International Task Force, there are lots of opportunities to partner association clients with sister association in other countries, to the benefit of all.

Q: What is it that you enjoy most about managing a full-service Association Management Company?

A: I find it very rewarding to work with volunteer leaders from a variety of industries, and apply expertise learned from the collective AMC experience to help each client grow. Our company is fortunate to work with clients in many interesting industries, and this helps keep us motivated and engaged by the work we do.

Q: What do you do to relax?

A: As a new father I am spending as much of my free time as possible with my son and my wife. During the summer I also enjoy trying to golf.

Web site: www.strauss.ca
www.amcinstitute.org



Do you want to send targeted email mailings to your Members with **automatic response tracking?**

iMIS

iMIS is the only complete membership, fundraising and Web site management solution available in one ready-to-use software package
www.asieurope.eu tel: 08705 887700 email: info-eu@asieurope.eu