

STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE

March 2002

Director's Message



Capital Engine by Kirk Grundahl, WTCA Executive Director

Every business needs a capital engine to really add value to its products and/or to get off the ground and provide services that exceed its customers' expectations. Without solid capital in place, even the best businesses, with the best people, will fail over the long term because innovation and product development is stifled and a great staff will be constrained from doing their very best work and become frustrated.

We run the association on the same principles that any sound business is run—detailed budgeting; cost accounting, which in our case means accounting for the work done each minute of each day; cash flow management; cash investment; and cash savings to maintain expected services in the event of a downturn. We also devote time to strategic planning to allow us to plan for and develop the innovative services that our membership has grown to expect from us. All of this is done with the goal of exceeding expectations and providing a solid return on our members' invested capital. In our case, this return exists in the services we provide and the tangible/valuable products we produce and sell.

To put this into day-to-day operational terms, our capital engine comes primarily from membership dues, sales of publications, BCMC and Structural Building Components Magazine. All of the capital that is derived from these sources is fully invested in industry projects. From 1993 through 2001 this has allowed us to work on 401 individual prioritized tasks, many of which have been completed, while some will go on forever along with a myriad of daily support details that are required for success. Examples include chapter and technical support.

Without this capital engine, we would NEVER have undertaken, built or created any of the following:

1. Thirty chapters to date, meeting our goal of 14 by 1996.
2. A quality assurance program with a companion computer database.
3. Truss testing that led to revising the ANSI/TPI-1 Quality Assurance Standard.
4. The Metal Plate Connected Wood Truss Handbook now being revised for its third edition.
5. The original fire video and all of our more recent work with the Houston Fire Department. We also continuously fulfill the Board mandate of being proactive in the fire endurance arena.
6. Framing the American Dream® I and II.
7. All of our Truss Technology in Building brochures.
8. Our industry-wide approach to "Design Responsibilities," customer contracts and specifications.

9. All of our Truss Technology Workshop™ PowerPoint® presentations, which began as physical slides and photos.
10. Our industry-developed Financial Performance Survey and Wage and Benefit Survey.
11. The work done on temporary and permanent bracing issues.
12. Our legislative efforts, legislative conference and meetings with Representatives of Congress, like Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott and House Speaker Dennis Hastert's office.
13. Our safety videos.>
14. Our work on fire retardant treated lumber.
15. Our work on revisions to the TPI Standards.

And this is only a list of 15 of the higher-profile, easily recalled activities, out of the 401 that we can list. As you know, it's often not the high profile items that have the biggest positive impact. It is usually all the little details that are being done consistently, every day that provide the positive impact for our industry that we are trying to achieve.

For 2002 this capital engine will allow us to focus on the following activities:

1. Industry specific insurance and safety program with a web-based support system.
2. Web-based Truss Technician Training™ and certification programs.
3. Web-based Truss Technology Workshop™ educational programs.
4. A web-based management encyclopedia, so members can have all of our best historical and current information whenever it's needed. It could be as simple as finding a few pertinent photographs to illuminate a key issue for your staff or for help in persuading a jury in a product liability suit.
5. Bracing testing and verification.
6. WTCA-QC program revisions and plant certifications to the new ANSI/TPI 1-2002 standard.
7. Work on the TPI Standards, which have a big impact on the day-to-day operations of all component manufacturers.
8. Professional engineering issues, sealed truss design drawings, and electronic seals and signatures.
9. Our Legislative Conference and continued work on the Softwood Lumber Agreement's direct impact on our industry.
10. Additions to the Truss Technology in Building educational/informational series of brochures dealing with key industry issues.

These are just ten tasks, among the 94 Board prioritized tasks, on which we will be making progress in 2002.

Without the capital investment that our members and suppliers make in our work through dues, purchasing publications, BCMC and Structural Building Components Magazine, we'd never get any projects accomplished, because they would never get started. We'd also never be an association that works hard to assist all of you in minimizing your business problems and maximizing the benefits for your business and our industry.

Thanks for providing the capital engine that allows us to work with our members and continue to assist our entire industry. Your support is greatly appreciated.

SBC HOME PAGE

Copyright © 2002 by Truss Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. For permission to reprint materials from SBC Magazine, call 608/310-6706 or email editor@sbcmag.info.

The mission of Structural Building Components Magazine (SBC) is to increase the knowledge of and to promote the common interests of those engaged in manufacturing and distributing of structural building components to ensure growth and continuity, and to be the information conduit by staying abreast of leading-edge issues. SBC will take a leadership role on behalf of the component industry in disseminating technical and marketplace information, and will maintain advisory committees consisting of the most knowledgeable professionals in the industry. The opinions expressed in SBC are those of the authors and those quoted solely, and are not necessarily the opinions of any of the affiliated associations (SBCC, WTCA, SCDA & STCA).