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WTCA Update

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The Benefits of WTCA Membership: Curing Component Manufacturer Insomnia by Bob Becht, 2004 WTCA Membership Chair

On the fence about joining WTCA? With the benefits of the new Operations Safety Certification, you can't afford to pass up membership!

As 2004 WTCA Membership Chair, my job is to sell WTCA membership. With an excellent product in tow, my job becomes a lot easier. An excellent product that has no competition makes that job even easier. An excellent product that is also a bargain is a salesman's dream. WTCA membership is that dream product. My challenge is to convince truss manufacturers that they need WTCA's excellent product. In South Florida I don't have to convince builders they need to buy trusses, but it is a battle to convince them that it's my trusses they want. Since no one else offers the products WTCA does, my challenge is opposite of what I am used to.

Fortunately, WTCA has given me plenty of ammunition for the battle to convince tight-fisted truss manufacturers to join up. The newest part of the WTCA arsenal is the WTCA Operations Safety Certification (OSC). WTCA says OSC provides "a consistent and measurable safety program through education, training and certification, which will help companies better protect workers by minimizing injury and loss of life while reducing workers' compensation, management and insurance costs." Who doesn't want to minimize injury and save money on insurance? My accountant tells me that if I could just bring insurance costs down we could make some real money. What is it worth to reduce workers' compensation multipliers?

If I weren't WTCA Membership Chair I might ask, "Chambers Truss has a safety program recognized by the State of Florida that gets us a workers' compensation discount. What more do we need?"

The answer begins at the end of the safety program—with certification. If you have ever been deposed in the course of a lawsuit, you know that the first thing the lawyer does is find out what your educational background is. Next, the lawyer becomes mean and asks what in your background qualifies you to build safe trusses, run a safe truss plant or even walk the face of the earth safely. The best answer I know is that while I may not be a qualified expert, I hired one to design a system for me and the expert certified that my plant conformed to the system. WTCA OSC is that expert with a nationally recognized safety system.

Next comes measurement and record keeping. Judges, juries, insurance companies and OSHA inspectors love records that show you have stuck to the system. Without measurement and record keeping no one knows, including you, that your safety program is being followed. In fact,

we all know that if we don't measure and record, any system will be quickly forgotten. WTCA OSC provides the record keeping system that will defend you and allow you to sleep at night.

Safety program certification, measurement and recording can't happen until employees are educated and trained. WTCA OSC builds from the ground up by training employees in the use of WTCA OSC and educating them in safety.

I began with the end result of certification and worked backwards to education because I wanted to start with the payoff. You cannot duplicate the protection a third party certified safety program gives you on your own. You also cannot create a comparable system for anywhere near the cost that you can buy it from WTCA. I know because I have tried, and the cost is staggering. I did it because I had no other options, but now I do. WTCA OSC provides a well thought out third party certified safety program. WTCA OSC should be part of what Steve Yoder called "Building a Fence of Risk Management Around Our Company" in the August 2003 issue of SBC Magazine. You can sell this fence of protection to your insurance company in return for lower rates. You can even sell the fence of protection to your customers in return for their business. Builders are terrified of risk and the bigger they are, the less they like it. If you look less risky than your competitor, you will sell more products. And if your company is less risky you will make more money and survive in an increasingly dangerous world.

One of the greatest benefits of WTCA is the way ideas move back and forth between the national organization and chapters. The South Florida Chapter (SFTCMA) is talking to the local chapter of the National Safety Council to arrange for them to do regular third party inspections based on WTCA OSC. At that point, I will have double third party protection.

Forty years ago Henry Chambers took a big part of his company's profits and hired John Hoolahan to schedule his shop. That investment has paid off thousand-fold for Chambers Truss. Forty years ago the world was simpler and the truss business was a new industry. Today we face a more complicated world of government regulation, litigation and crippling insurance costs. Unlike Henry, we don't have to invest most of our profits in a solution. WTCA provides many of the answers like OSC at bargain prices.

So what more do I have to say? When do I get the order? If you aren't a member of WTCA what are you waiting for?

Bob Becht is the president of Chambers Truss. Bob has been with Chambers Truss since 1981 and first worked in a truss plant in 1965. He serves WTCA as the South Florida Truss & Component Manufacturers Association (SFTCMA) board member. He developed the Florida accredited "Safe Truss Partnership" to improve truss installation safety.

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