



New Coupon Program Announced

The Western Canvas Products Association announces its new Membership Incentive Program Coupons!

The new MIP Coupons provides participating suppliers' \$50 off on any purchase between \$250 and \$500, and 10 percent off any purchase \$500 or more.

Interested parties can take advantage of this MIP Coupon by joining WCPA. Visit [WCPA online](http://www.wcpaonline.com) for more information. The program operates in cooperation with Supplier Members.

WCPA offers coupons and valuable discounts on products that can make joining the association free. If you would like to join WCPA, membership applications can be found at www.wcpaonline.com.

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A Message from the President of WCPA

What's New & Changing in the Association

A New Direction

By Carol Park

Hello everyone and thanks for taking the time to read the first edition of the Western Canvas Products Association's Newsletter.

I am excited to be part of the association's new direction.

Through this newsletter and other WCPA activities, the association will help educate and provide tips and resources that will help you run your business efficiently.

As we prepare for the New Year, I hope to meet many of you at the WCPA Annual Meeting and also at regional meetings.

Also, I will be helping to update and add to WCPA's Web site. This newsletter will be available to download at www.wcpaonline.com.

This newsletter is a resource for you. If you have any thoughts, comments, questions and even concerns, please feel free to let us know.

Thanks for taking the time to get up to speed with WCPA's activities.

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By Bud Weisbart

Welcome to Volume 1, Issue 1, of the new Western Canvas Products Association newsletter. The goal of the newsletter and of the other activities planned for our association is to bring value to you, our members.

Some things we are working on include this newsletter, which is written in the form of information you can use, information on what's going on in our industry and information on ways to help those of us in our industry run better.

We're also planning WCPA's annual meeting, which will be at a location still to be determined. The event will be held in the time frame of February to mid-April of 2012.

The association's Web site is being updated and will provide up-to-date information on the latest developments in the Industrial and Specialty Fabrics Products industry.

Another exciting activity to look forward to our regional meetings which WCPA will host for either a lunch or dinner in the association's coverage areas. The meetings will be directed to the craftspeople in our

industry and will feature presentations that will provide resources to help run our businesses more effectively.

Our plan is to have this newsletter both e-mailed and snail-mailed to members of WCPA. Of course, it will be less costly and more convenient to have it emailed, but we will wait for members to let us know which way they prefer to receive this newsletter. Our priority and our purpose will be to provide news you can use, and your feedback on whether we are hitting that mark is essential for us to judge whether we are succeeding or need to modify our effort.

This first issue of the newsletter will provide industry news and information on the recently held IFAI Exposition in Baltimore.

I hope you will give us feedback on this first issue; it's written for you!

Bud Weisbart, WCPA President

Import-Export Assistance from the SBA

The Small Business Administration is a great resource for loans, tips, advice, training programs and more.

One great resource for manufacturers is the SBA's [Trade Adjustment Assistance for Firms](#) federal program.

This program provides financial assistance to manufacturers affected by import competition.

The U.S. Department of Commerce sponsors this cost sharing federal assistance program.

The program pays for half the cost of consultants or industry-specific experts for projects that improve a manufacturer's competitiveness.

The government also offers a number of export financing programs to help small manufacturing firms expand their businesses overseas.

For more information on these assistance programs, visit:

<http://www.sba.gov/content/export-financing>.



By Bud Weisbart

A significant challenge to us in business is the need to ensure that we are coordinated in our efforts to provide products and services to our customers, to ensure that we are all “on the same page.” How often do we write or verbally give a directive for something to be done in a certain way, or provide the specific requirements a customer has given us, only to find that what we thought we said was not what our production staff, installers, and other staff thought they heard? How often do we rely on form only to find it was not followed by substance? How often have we communicated when we have only spoken – directed? mandated?, ordered? – without any hint of whether or not what we sent was received, or heard?

Unfortunately, our first inclination is to often waste even more energy by trying to figure out who to blame for what went wrong, rather than identify what can be done to improve the manner in which we communicate in our organizations so that we can obviate these problems in the future. We have to know that we have workers who have the willingness and capability to do what we need them to do, and that they are not “out to get us.”

Only then can we begin to build a foundation and create an environment which allows us to communicate in order that our needs, and our customers' needs for our products and services, are met.

In an article I wrote for the Review, I talked about the need to bring workers onto the team. In this article I would like to extend that concept by focusing on the communications imperative in being able to do so.

The following elements are at the base of this concept:

1. That our business at its core involves shared commitments between the workers, administration and ownership, and
2. That these commitments require inculcation from the very inception of anyone joining our organization.

There are prerequisites to the development of such commitments: there must be a desire to make the commitments; there must be a culture of inclusiveness in the organization for people to make the commitments; there must be an understanding of the importance of the process in meeting common interests for the commitments to be made; and the results of making these commitments must be shared throughout the organization.

In our company what we are committed to can be summed up in the following:

- Quality throughout our organization in everything we do
- Understanding of the need to serve customers so that their needs for our products and services are completely met
- Ensuring that we don't let each other down, so that as co-workers we share the fruits of each other's labors
- Ensuring that each individual worker is able to identify the importance of his or her part in meeting our common goals

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IFAI News

IFAI President/CEO Departs

After 35 years, Stephen Warner is departing the Industrial Fabrics Association International.

“It has been a tremendous honor to serve the industry and I hope that my contribution has made a difference,” Warner said. “This is the transition time that makes sense for IFAI as the industry itself changes around us. The parting is very amicable. I intend to continue to be a goodwill ambassador for IFAI.”

IFAI Expo

The IFAI Exposition was held October 25-27 in Baltimore. The event attracted thousands of participants who represented 43 countries. About 35% of the attendees were brand new to the Expo. Go to www.ifaexpo.com for highlights.



- The recognition that each individual worker must be nurtured to maximize his or her ability to perform

In our particular organization, we have created a number of practices by which we attempt to meet the requirements of this concept: new workers are mentored by senior staff and orientated to the policies we have developed over the years; we have established profit sharing, insurance and retirement programs which show that the sharing of our commitment to serve our customers results in the sharing of the rewards of meeting those commitments; we consistently meet with senior staff on a daily basis to plan and review what we are doing, and supervisors, in turn, meet with their staff to cover what was addressed in the senior staff meetings.

Further, since everything we do is a custom product, sales personnel, whom we call Project Managers, “own” the projects they sell. They are responsible for every aspect of the project, and thus must interface and plan their project with order entry, finance, production, and installation personnel to ensure the successful completion of their project.

Therefore, while we also rely on “form,” we have also implemented ISO 9001 as well as AS 9100 certifications with all of its incumbent policies, procedures and work instructions. It is the actual manifestation of this “form” through our focus on communication that has been the cornerstone of whatever success we have been able to achieve in our business.

Is this a blueprint for anyone else? Are we perfect in these practices? No, of course not. Do things still fall through the cracks? Yes, they do. However, they are a continuing work in process for us, and if these practices can stimulate thought about the imperative in our businesses that we communicate effectively, then I will have accomplished my goal.

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