

From The Lab



BY BOB NEVES

CCA & Regional Circuit Associations Are Growing Up

The California Circuit Association (CCA), like many of its regional counterparts, has a long history (over thirty years) of service to the PWB industry. For many years, the only way for managers, engineers and technicians in our industry to gain technical knowledge and industry fellowship was through the regional circuit associations.

This year I have been honored by being nominated and elected as President of the California Circuits Association. Over the last two years, the California Circuit Association has been working diligently to revitalize interest and participation in its efforts. I was elected to the CCA Board of Directors two years ago when the organization was at a transitional turning point. Interest and participation in CCA activities was disparagingly low at the time, and the Board had to take a hard look at the direction and goals of the organization in an attempt to revitalize it. We strongly believed that there was still need for local circuit associations like the CCA.

One of the first actions this new Board took was to form a direct association with the IPC. The IPC has taken the leadership role of organizing the interconnect industry on a national level and has enjoyed tremendous growth and prosperity during the last several years. The CCA Board believed that the IPC was headed in a direction that was most beneficial to the industry, and believed that the CCA should follow some of the steps that the IPC has taken. Another significant action taken by the Board was to hire an executive director for the organization. We found that an all-volunteer organization was unable to keep up with all of the duties required to effectively operate and meet the goals of the CCA.

Another key issue we looked at was the composition of the CCA membership. The CCA does not have a significant membership base from the assembly and OEM community. We felt that it is important to solicit membership from this group in order to have all the players from the electronics interconnection industry represented as members. The Board of Directors also created education and nominating committees comprised of volunteers from the California board industry.

There were several issues that the Board wanted to explore. In years past, the CCA has held monthly meetings in the evening where technical and marketing information was presented. Over the last several years, participation in these meetings waned and we wanted to explore the dynamics of this situation as well as the needs of our members. In order to research the situation, we sent out a survey to find out when the best time for meetings would be. The results of this survey showed several interesting trends.



1 With today's current work schedules, people value their personal evening time highly. It was resoundingly suggested that meetings should be held in the early morning-breakfast time-frame. This would allow members to participate in the meeting and still get to work by mid-morning. Interest was also shown in continuing both the half- and full-day educational workshops which the CCA has been successful with in the past.

2 Every company's travel dollar has become scarce. Engineers and management have had their time budgets pushed to the limit, and participation at all of the IPC functions becomes more difficult. The regional circuit associations needed to step in and provide a forum for local participation in international standardization, training, and technology information.

Through this survey, we were also able to identify key issues our members face in their work environment. The Board was able to use this information to assist in planning their strategy for the coming years. Below are some of the areas identified in the survey that the CCA Board considered:

- Qualified workforce
- Decreasing share of market
- Value for dues
- Legal issues: harassment termination
- Regulatory issues: environmental, E H & S
- Taxes
- Wages
- How do we keep up with industry?
- Competitiveness
- Survival
- Changes in supply web, changes in who suppliers sell to
- Training: ETP, business skills, and ISO 9000

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At the September 1997 CCA strategic planning meeting, the Board of Directors approved a new mission statement which better reflects where we are going and focusing our resources. This new statement is: "To promote the competitive excellence and financial success of the electronic interconnect and packaging industry in California." To help further this new mission, the CCA Board of Directors approved the following goals for the organization. These goals are:

1. To deliver educational resources and opportunities to meet members' needs for management and workforce development.
2. To provide forums which encourage networking and information exchange among members.
3. As an inclusive organization, CCA will achieve maximum levels of membership and member participation.

4. To collect and disseminate data on the industry in California.
5. To communicate the right information, to the right person, at the right time, in the right forum to assist in making sound technical and business decisions.
6. To actively represent and promote industry interests to external public.
7. To provide value-added benefits to members through group programs and services.

Another issue that was addressed at the CCA strategic planning meeting was the memorandum of understanding between IPC and CCA. This memorandum indicated that in exchange for administrative services, CCA would merge with IPC at the end of 1996. In November of 1996, the board voted to delay action on this memorandum until late 1997. At that time, CCA would evaluate the administrative services provided

by IPC and, if acceptable, propose to the CCA membership that CCA become an operating division of the IPC. In September of 1997, the CCA Board of Directors voted to propose the merger between CCA and IPC to the general membership and effective January 30, 1998 CCA has become an operating division of the IPC.

Now with the merger in place and the CCA strategic plan developed, we can all work together to strengthen our regional circuits association so that it can provide technical education, industry data (specific to California), and networking opportunities to continue the growth and success of the interconnect industry in California. Local Circuit Associations provide grass roots opportunities for participation which can be difficult at a national level. Get involved! These local organizations are there for your benefit. Without your participation, they will not be successful.