

2002 Highlights – the Year in Review

Since April 2000, the recession has been remaking the industry landscape. I am happy to report the SAO is weathering the recession fairly well. Here's how we are doing.

I appreciate the ongoing support of our members, sponsors, board, volunteers, contractors and staff - especially the staff, who have had to do more with less, and have risen to the challenge.

Membership – We grew by 7% overall and ended 2002 with 630 company members, 75% from industry and 25% from business service providers. Additionally, we have 127 members who are individuals, non-profits, students, and educational institutions. 85% of our industry members are in the Portland area, while the rest are concentrated in the major urban areas of Corvallis, Eugene/Springfield, Medford/Ashland and Bend. The membership growth was from small companies, and we had a slight decline in each of the larger company size categories as companies down-sized.

Newsletter – We published eleven distinct issues (electronically), with a total of 55 articles. We added focus on international and information technology topics. I want to recognize professional writer Linda Woody for her more than six years of continuous volunteering, providing us with one company profile each month.

Programs – We produced 40 unique programs and events with a total attendance of 2,600. Our programs evolve to meet the needs of the times, and we are tending to focus on fewer, more focused topics. Our mainstays are the Portland Dinner Meeting and the Marketing and Sales SIG. In case you haven't seen the scope of our programming, the list includes:

Program	Annual Frequency
Portland Dinner Meeting	7
Marketing and Sales SIG	7
Developers SIG	4
Human Capital Forum	4
Finance Forum	4
CIO/IT Managers Forum	5
Industry CEO Network	4
Strategic Asset Management	3
Futures Forum	3
Special Workshops	3
Benefit Gala and Auction	1
Golf Tournament	1
High School Teachers Conference	2

Directory – the online, searchable, directory can be found on our web site and is continuously updated. The printed version was published this year in partnership with The Business Journal, and as a result our circulation increased ten-fold, one to each of the Business Journal's subscribers.

Salary Survey – we kicked off a new partnership with Mercer, a leader in salary surveys. This national survey offers SAO members and participants substantial discounts. For 2003 they are seriously looking at making this an “evergreen” process, so input and results would be available throughout the year, not just annually.

IT Initiative – Software pervades all aspects of our modern society, with 90% of the professional workers employed in the end-user community. The SAO launched a new program series called the CIO/IT Managers Forum to build a bridge to IT workers in both end user as well as traditional member companies. We believe this outreach enriches our industry and helps our members ultimately build better products and sell more successfully to local companies.

Sponsors and New Sponsors – Fifty Corporate Sponsors provide us with an extraordinary amount of support, so please thank them when you have a chance. These are in addition to the sponsors that support individual programs, events and special projects. New sponsors this year include Comerica Bank, Corillian, OVP Venture Partners, Planar, Preston Gates and Ellis, and Schwabe Williamson and Wyatt.

Chapters – Our chapters in Corvallis, Lane County and Southern Oregon continue to be active. In Bend, we are supporting a few programs as a way to keep involved.

Benefits – 300 companies use one form of benefit or another, with group health insurance being the most important. Our benefits program is over ten years old, and is administered by a standing committee that is continuously looking for ways to improve the offerings. Many members are under-utilizing the benefits, and if you could be one, check out what is available by visiting our web site at www.sao.org.

2003 will see the continuing evolution of our programming, with topics focused on the leadership teams of our typical company members. We will launch the new Finance Forum quarterly series in January, and continue the successful Human Capital Forum and Strategic Asset Management series. We will launch the new Futures Forum, providing a chance to look at topics that are strategically significant and that represent either an opportunity or threat to members' current businesses. We will be studying the specific needs of the different types of companies in our industry, from the more typical developer-publisher, to the end-user IT organization, to those companies producing embedded software. We have a full agenda.

As always, I invite you to let me know what's on your mind.

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Abstract: 2002 was a challenging year, but one that had mostly successes. Do you know how many members we have, how many programs we produce, or how many attend? Here is what you should know.