

ESTA Directions February 2000

by Mike Wood

Just over a year ago in my first 'Directions' article in Protocol I wrote, "OK, time to get on my soapbox. Wouldn't you like to know the size of the industry you are in? Wouldn't you like to know how fast it is growing? Wouldn't you like to know which sectors are growing and which are shrinking? Wouldn't that kind of information help you in your business - whatever it is?..."

Well I meant it and so did ESTA and the time has come. ESTA has undertaken to produce a statistical survey of the entertainment technology industry this year. The survey will be undertaken in partnership with PLASA our sister organization in the UK so we will end up with more global information – not just the USA.

Also in that same article I asked for support and assistance in moving this forward and in providing guidance into the type of information needed and the questions to be asked. Well, a number of you stood up to be counted and we now have an impressive list of members and member companies who are actively supporting this initiative and providing the guidance we asked for. Here's the illustrious group as it stands today:-

High End Systems - Frank Gordon
ETC - probably Mark Vasallo but needs to be confirmed
Strand - probably Peter Rogers but needs to be confirmed
Vari-Lite - Julie Donaldson but needs to be confirmed
Tomcat - John James
Wybron - Rand Clark
Columbus McKinnon - Wally Blount
J.R. Clancy - Bob Theis but needs to be confirmed

I urge you to lend your support to this – a survey is only as good as the data it collects and the accuracy of that data is completely in your hands. The potential benefits to all members are huge. More to come...

Last issue I talked about the interest and excitement generated by the Dealers' Choice Customer Service Awards – such interest in fact that we are considering expanding the scope of this award next year by adding a new award in the opposite direction. This would be a Customer Service Award presented to the Dealers who provide the best customer service as voted for by the Manufacturer members. It turns the present award 180 degrees around. You can read more about this elsewhere in this edition of Protocol in an article by the Member Relations Committee whose great idea this all is. That article also gives you more information about the upcoming survey.

ESTA is always on the look out for new programs it can incorporate to enhance the benefit package it offers members. I can give you advance warning that a new travel program is being set up which will offer comprehensive travel and hotel services at advantageous rates for ESTA members. More news on this shortly.

So we all survived the Millennium and the Y2K bug proved to be more hype than problem I'm pleased to say. I haven't heard of any significant problems in the entertainment industry stemming from any Y2K related computer glitches. But then we don't have computer bugs in our software anyway, do we? I watched the Millennium come in on TV along with half the population of the globe and was thoroughly impressed by everything our industry made happen over that frenetic 24 hours. Well done us! My top prize goes to the Fireworks on the Eiffel tower – they were just stunning – wish I'd been there.