

International Municipal Signal Association



BC SECTION



**SECTION – 2004 STRATEGIC PLANNING
SESSION SUMMARY REPORT**

(FINAL) Report

September 2004

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1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to summarize the results of the 2004 IMSA BC Section Executive Strategic Planning Session held in Whistler, B.C. on August 21, 2004.

This first ever Strategic Planning session, for the BC Section, was held in effort to establish a forum for discussion of the IMSA BC Section overall direction, initiatives and vision. Organized by Paul Sung, the Executive members that were able to attend met in Whistler for an intense ½ day session (noon to 5:30PM) where they discussed items generally laid out in the initial agenda:

- Welcoming Remarks
- Background on IMSA (International, Local, Other Sections)
- Certification Programs (Background and Updates)
- Upcoming Events (2004, 2005, 2006)
- Business Plan (Trade Shows, Certification, TARP, New Ideas)
- Strategy in Engaging Our Membership
- Potential Partnerships (Suppliers, Post-secondary Institutes, etc.)
- Outline of Strategic Plan

Not all the details of each of these agenda items are covered in this report. The primary focus of this report is to log the specific resulting strategies, impacts and identify any specific issues that arose during the discussions.

Members that were in attendance were:

- Paul Sung, City of Richmond
- Ed Jantzen, Retired - City of Richmond
- Dave Franklin, MoT
- Len Mierau, Retired - City of North Vancouver
- Patrick Livolsi, MoT
- Bob Baillie, City of Burnaby
- Craig MacKenzie, City of Vancouver
- Don Goto, Interprovincial Traffic Services Ltd.
- Graeme Kraft, City of Vancouver
- Joseph Quan, City of North Vancouver
- Brian Olsen, City of Coquitlam
- Larry Parks, LCP Signal Management Inc.

It is the wishes of the Committee that this document becomes a document that is reviewed and strategies are updated on an annual basis from here on forward.

2 KEY ISSUES ARISING FROM PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS

The initial portion of the session revolved around a summary of some historical issues and the creation of the BC Section (over 10 years ago) and the evolution to the existing conditions.

Larry Parks, Len Mierau, Craig MacKenzie, and Patrick Livolsi each orated some specific aspects of the IMSA International and BC Section histories. The following items were some specific items that were presented/discussed as being relevant to the future strategic planning for the Section.

2.1 International Office vs. the IMSA Education Foundation

The International Municipal Signal Association (IMSA), referred to herein as the International Office, is our parent organization. The International Office is an Association that operates as a not-for-profit Association (similar the local BC Section corporate structure). They work (most of the time) in concert with the IMSA Educational Foundation in the final production and distribution of certification programs.

The Educational Foundation has historically provided a service beyond the basic provision of funding, however within recent years this model became dysfunctional and changes were made this last year to reflect the necessary contractual arrangement between the International and the Foundation to make it functional once again.

Relating to the BC Section the key issue to be presented and recognized within this report is that between the International Office and the Foundation – specifically over the past few years – there has been poor preparation and distribution of timely and current Certification and other materials for our Section and Member use.

Some examples of the impact on our Section are:

- We have not been able to present the Signs and Marking Certification for over 3 years !! – yet we have had many Members on a waiting list to participate, since no product has been available.
- The Work Zone product we have used over the past few years has not been current nor directly representative of the local BC marketplace.
- The Traffic Signals Certification has some outdated materials not necessarily appropriate to be presented any longer, as well as it appears to be lacking in some newer market material references (that would benefit those attending).

2.2 New Certification Material

The IMSA International has, within the last couple of years, appointed Mr. Brian Stotler as our overall Director of Education. He has been instrumental in promoting the timely progress on

several of the Certification courses. Resulting from his efforts and those of the International Certification Committee we were made aware at the meeting of the advancement of the updated materials for:

- Traffic Signals (Levels 1,2, and 3)
- Work Zone Safety
- Signs and Marking (Level 1 and 2)

There was also mention of the Special Education Committee being formed (see below for more details).

In addition, there was discussion on the Canadianization of Certification programs and adoption of common programs across Canada. Recent meetings (at the Denver Conference) have initiated talks between the Ontario Section and the rest of Canada in effort to combine efforts and materials. Len Mierau is pursuing establishing a Canadian Certification Committee – at the direction of Brian Stotler, Director of Education.

2.3 Re-Certification for IMSA Certified Persons

As of this year's International Conference in Denver Colorado, within the coming years all IMSA Certified persons will require re-certification once every three years for each certification they hold (at the highest level of the specific discipline of Certification they hold).

The ability to be re-certified will be based on a combination of TARP points, CEU's, writing a short exam, etc. There will also be a cost associated with all re-certifications. Details on this are available directly from the IMSA International Office and therefore are not covered in this report.

However, the impact to the local section may be significant. In that people may want to hold only limited certifications, as opposed to the many discipline Certifications offered, in the future – and hence will potentially impact the participation in local Certification schools held.

A potential positive impact will be that those holding Certification may want to take the option of additional Educational credits – and hence an opportunity exists for the BC Section to present (and potentially charge for) related course materials.

2.4 Special Education Programs

Larry Parks introduced the BC Section Executive to the new Certification Committee formed at the Denver Conference – for Special Education Programs. He is the appointed Chairperson for the International Certification Committee for this new Committee.

The Committee is tasked to prepare a set of Special Education Programs for the International Office distribution. The Committee will initially be preparing a couple of test programs for presentation and ultimate distribution to all the Sections of the IMSA.

Len Mierau has accepted the role of the Vice-Chairperson of the Committee as well, and he has already started on the program gathering task. In the near term Len and Larry will be concentrating on a package for Traffic Signal Preemption.

The development of these Special Education Programs will be critical to expanding our (BC Section), as well as the overall IMSA, market exposure and overall viability to grow financially through added session presentations, etc.

2.5 Joint Session with the Western Prairie Section (2006)

As noted in some of our recent Section Executive meeting minutes, there has been a possibility of a joint AGM/Technical Presentation to be held in Alberta in 2006.

This has recently be formalized with the Western Prairie Section and it appears that we will be going ahead with it in the Spring of 2006. There is a potential that it may be combined with the International Executive and Certification Mid-year Meeting (closer to a February date) – giving our local Section a higher profile with the International.

3 STRATEGIC EVALUATION OF THE IMSA - BC SECTION

Paul Sung presented the concept of SWOT to the Executive team as the tool we were to use in this portion of the session to assess our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (hence the SWOT designation).

3.1 Strengths

The following are the specific Strengths of the IMSA BC Section identified at the meeting:

- Trade Show – well attended, value to the attendees as well as the Vendors that participate.
- Technical Sessions – well attended and valuable to anyone attending, boosted our recognition as an Association locally.
- Well run organization (at the Executive and all volunteer levels).
- Very good relationship with equipment suppliers/vendors – mutually respectful and appreciative.
- Financially sound with reasonable cash-flow (resulting primarily from Certification Programs and the Trade Show components of our Technical Sessions).
- Good relationship with Municipalities/MoT for use of facilities at little or no cost.
- Strong commitment from those that do volunteer (low turnover of Executive, yet introduction of some new people as well).
- Strong representation and respect from the International Office and at the International Conference.
- Our Certification courses (with the exception of some of the older ones) are well received by the participants.
- Strong communications with our local membership —and beyond (because we distribute our newsletters and announcements to anyone who wants it).
- Good access to municipal and MoT “practical” and “operational” type staff – most beneficial to Vendor interaction as well as strong peer to peer discussions at our sessions.

3.2 Weaknesses

The following are the specific Weaknesses of the IMSA BC Section identified at the meeting:

- Old Certification material – and the negative image that it creates for our Section.
- Need for stronger voice in the Signs and Markings area.
- Need for stronger voice in the Roadway Lighting area.
- Recently Technical Sessions have been limited to the Lower Mainland – limited exposure to the rest of the Province.

- Lack of proper research to determine the “needs” and “desires” of our membership (regarding things ranging from technical presentations to Certification).
- Limited resources (Volunteers beyond the Executive).
- Lack of appreciation and/or recognition of the IMSA (and specifically the BC Section) by the “higher” levels of Management at the Municipal Agencies and the Contractors.
- Need for expanding the people participating at the Executive level.
- Negative perception of IMSA by some relating to the ability to put on Certification Courses – specifically relating to some mishaps in the past with the cancellation of Certification Schools due to lack of projected attendance, etc.
- The impediment of having “Signal” in the International Municipal Signal Association (IMSA) name.
- Length of our 1 day Technical Sessions – consideration should be given to having a 2 day program instead. The primary issue relating to this is that some people (out of the Lower Mainland) are less likely to come to a 1 day session, or can only make 1 day and hence if it were over 2 days more people could attend.

3.3 Opportunities

The following are the specific Opportunities for the IMSA BC Section identified at the meeting:

- Expansion of the 1 day session to 2 days will enable the ability to incorporate a participatory “Discussion Group” concept.
- NEW Material required – and the impact of expanding into the Special Education forum.
- Special Education Programs working directly with the equipment Vendors and Manufacturers.
- Tighter partnership with the Vendors.
- Having the Vendors more actively pursue the TARP program as part of their technical training sessions and product awareness sessions (held outside the IMSA technical sessions).
- Higher exposure to other Associations by sending an IMSA Representative to participate in their activities.
- Public Relations efforts to expand understanding and appreciation of what the IMSA and the BC Section can do for employers, as well as the “liability” associated with not having persons Certified in their field, etc.
- Pay for services rendered to ensure successful delivery of ideas and programs for the BC Section.
- Signs and Markings – exposure to Contractors and Certification requirements/recognition.
- Expanding training and possibly Certification to post-secondary environments.

3.4 Threats

The following are the specific Threats to the IMSA BC Section identified at the meeting:

- Complacency of the Executive and lack of overall volunteers.
- Competing training and certification being offered by the ITE organization – both on-line and locally presented.
- Lack of recognition of the merits of IMSA Certification may cause a significant decline in participation of persons in Certification courses.
- Lack of products from the International.
- Lack of standardization across Canada relating to Certification – in particular the issue of the rogue activities of the Ontario Section regarding program creation and adoption for Canadians.
- Occurrence of “repeat” presentations at our Technical Sessions.
- Trade shows occurring too often and becoming stale.
- Scheduling conflicts for our Technical Sessions and Trade Shows.
- Decreased funding due to reduced Certifications being pursued due to the re-certification demands.

4 ESTABLISHED STRATEGY

This portion of the session was focused on the specific identification of Short and Long Term strategic components to be addressed – based on the previous discussions and items identified in the SWOT process.

4.1 Short Term (0-3 years)

The following specific tasks were identified and names assigned to them to pursue either review or completion within the 0-3year term:

Tasks	Responsible Party(s)
Canadian Version of Certification Materials and the integration of the Canadian Sections	Len Mierau, Patrick Livolsi
Special Education Programs – developed locally and distributed Internationally	Larry Parks
2 day Technical Session	Paul Sung, Ed Jantzen
AGM Outside of the Lower Mainland	Bob Baillie
Signs and Markings – Executive Representative, Technical Sessions	Len Mierau, Bob Baillie, Brian Olsen
Explore other ways in getting the IMSA message out.	Graeme Kraft
Explore other methods in getting additional resources.	Patrick Livolsi, Larry Parks, Brian Olsen
Determine how to get more participation from general membership.	Dave Franklin
Methods in looking up TARP points from the International – to use as a marketing tool and promote participation.	Don Goto
Getting the TARP points registered automatically when someone takes Certification course.	Craig MacKenzie, Len Mierau
Awareness and sending Representative to other Associations/Agencies – attend TAC, ITE, etc.	Don Goto
Get web site area to post Vendor sponsored training and/or awareness sessions, etc.	Paul Sung

4.2 Long Term (3 + Years)

The following specific tasks were identified for future consideration:

Tasks	Responsible Party(s)
Research partnerships with post-secondary institutions.	??
More recognition for IMSA – work with International on marketing, presentations, etc.	??
Web based training	??
On-going efforts to increase membership participation at the Executive and organizing levels.	??
Explore new methods in attracting member participation through refresher courses and additional benefits in reviewing IMSA membership.	??
Establish new and on-going partnership with suppliers in sponsoring technical presentation or training sessions.	??
Work with International to explore a more effective method in distributing info and in passing resolutions by the International Directors before and during the International Conference.	??
Continue to work with the Canadian chapters to achieve the Canadian content in IMSA certification courses and in future joint conference(s).	??

5 ACTION PLAN

In essence our “Action Plan” will consist of addressing the Short Term objectives listed.

5.1 Development of Detailed Short-term Plan Implementation Programs

Within the next few months (prior to the Fall Technical Session in early November) the assigned Project Teams for each of the Short-term objectives are to develop a more detailed implementation plan – which will be posted on our BC Section web page.

Example of more detailed table:

Strategy	Project Plan	Resources	Timeline
2-day trade show and technical session	To extend one of our future Fall Technical session from 1-day to 2-day. This will expand the number of technical sessions and include a discussion panel on latest technologies or products.	- Paul Sung - Ed Jantzen - TBA	- Nov. 2005 or - Nov 2006