

Thinking ahead
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The idea of merging the Industrial Safety Equipment Association and the Safety Equipment Distributors Association is to be complimented in concept. But I don't necessarily agree that the Safety Equipment Association (a proposed name for the group) would (or should) be a "vertical" association.

Vertical to me is what each of us—ISEA, SEDA, SEMAA (Safety Equipment Manufacturers' Agents Association)—are individually now. Another example is the National Industrial Glove Distributors Association's (NIGDA) coverage of the glove market.

We do need to streamline and reduce redundancies and share more thoughts, ideas, strengths, mass, knowledge, resources, and so on. We may be now a "mature industry," and an important industry, but we are very small in comparison to other really mature industries such as electronics and medical. Let's study our future through their experience.

HIMA (Health Industry Manufacturers Association), HIDA (Health Industry Distributors Association) and HIRA (Health Industries Representatives Association) operate separately while sharing some resources, meeting sites, and speakers. Still, each group attends to its own vertical agenda.

ASMMA (American Supply & Machinery Manufacturers' Association, Inc.), IDA (Industrial Distributors Association) and NIRA (North American Industrial Representatives Association) follow a similar format, as do other groups.

ISEA, SEDA, SEMAA, NIGDA and/or other groups could initially combine talent and resources not as a formally structured entity, but rather as an informal alliance. This coalition could begin immediately as a council—the Safety Equipment Associations Council—to share strengths and work to develop and explore additional commitments, nationally and then globally. SEAC would present itself as the global high-profile authority of safety equipment associations and their interrelated constituencies.

The ISEA-SEDA merger is a separate ongoing issue, a worthwhile adventure that should be carefully explored with all channel trade partner associations. It's deeply appreciated that SEMAA has been included in this exploration. We welcome the opportunity to travel in this journey into the next millennium!

Think about it.

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