

How ISA Benefited my Career

By Graham Nasby, Eramosa Engineering

Earlier this year, I was asked to write a short article about the role ISA has played in my career. I can say that without question that ISA membership and the many volunteer opportunities afforded by the ISA have greatly shaped where I am today.

My ISA journey began in 2004 when I joined as a student member. In the following years, I made ample use of the ISA's member resources to help me at the start of my career. From reading InTech articles and accessing the ISA's many technical papers and standards, I was able to bring myself up to speed on current industry trends and techniques. It also helped me learn much the proper jargon and terminology to use when speaking to others in my field – an important skill to learn, since this was something they never covered in school.

It was early 2009 when I started to become actively involved in the ISA. At the time I was designing skidded process systems for the pharmaceutical industry and having trouble developing effective process alarms. Turns out I was not alone. Unbeknownst to me, at least until I read an InTech article about it, there was ISA standards committee working on that very topic. Wanting to learn more, I soon joined the committee and so began my journey into the ISA's committee and various leadership opportunities.

Within ISA standards committees, I got the opportunity to work with technical leaders from some of the world's leading companies towards the common goal of producing documents to help guide automation-related best practices for our various sectors. It was refreshing because I discovered that many of the technical issues I was having were in fact common issues, and there was much that could be learned from sharing experiences. Without my involvement in ISA committees, I would never have had the opportunity to work with and get to know these industry experts.

As a side effect of attending the twice-yearly face-to-face committee meetings, I also came to know the ISA's many technical divisions, conferences and geographic sections. In 2010 when the Great Recession reached Canada, and I had to change jobs from the pharmaceutical to municipal water/wastewater sector, my ISA membership and connections proved invaluable. In my new job, I was now working in a completely different sector which meant I now had new clients, new suppliers, and completely different types of automation/instrumentation. Through the ISA's water/wastewater division, I was able to make new contacts in the industry, and through my local ISA section I got to know the local suppliers in my area. To this day the contacts I have made through the ISA are one of my greatest resources.

The ISA also has an inspiring effect when it comes to publishing papers and presenting at conferences. In 2011 I presented at my first international conference, and have since then written dozens of articles for various industry publications. All of this began when a fellow ISA member suggested that publishing was a

great way to stretch your brain, meet new people, and get noticed in our increasingly global marketplace. Turns out they were right, I now regularly hear from people who have read my articles and are looking for help with their facilities. As a consultant this is a major plus.

If you ever get a chance to take on a volunteer leadership position in the ISA, I suggest you give it a try. From the various roles I have held in ISA standards committee, technical divisions, symposia, and local sections, I have learned a lot about how to work with people, strive towards technical excellence, and inspire those around me to achieve great things. The ISA has played a major role in shaping my career, and I invite you to also get involved and reap the many benefits that ISA membership brings.

About the Author

Graham Nasby, PEng, PMP is a senior ISA member and the recipient of this year's 2013 ISA Volunteer of the Year award. He is currently Co-Chair of ISA18 WG7 standards working group for alarm management for packaged systems, and Director of the ISA's water/wastewater technical division. Nasby is a senior I&C engineer at Eramosa Engineering. Contact: graham.nasby@eramosa.com

ISA Hamilton Hosts 2014 District Leadership Conference for Eastern Canada

Each year, each of the ISA's fourteen geographic districts around the world holds an annual district leadership conference. For ISA District 13 (Eastern Canada), which is the district ISA Hamilton belongs to, our annual DLC is typically held in the spring. Why does this matter, you ask? Two reasons: The first one is that our ISA Hamilton Section will be hosting the 2014 District 13 DLC on the weekend of April 26-27, 2014. The second is that, as a member of the ISA, the DLC presents a unique opportunity to learn more about the ISA, develop your leadership skills, and have a good time with other ISA leaders.

In our district (district 13), the DLC typically consists of a 2 day leadership conference that runs from Friday evening until Sunday at noon. It is held at a hotel and includes a Saturday night social event. Typical attendance is about 30 ISA leaders from the five Eastern Canadian ISA Sections: Sarnia, Hamilton, Toronto, Montreal and Saguenay/Lac St. Jean. The Saturday program consists of guest speakers on a variety of leadership topics and updates about the ISA as a worldwide association. The Sunday features a group breakfast, a short district council meeting, and a parting group photo. For ISA members who wish to attend, some travel funding is available from the local section to help cover the cost of the hotel nights and food. All you have to do is contact your section executive.

Not currently involved, but want to find out more? Feel free to contact one of our ISA section executive members to learn about this fantastic leadership opportunity.