

January 21, 2019

I'm pleased to report that we have just completed our strategic planning session for the next three years.

We will continue to build on the strong outcomes achieved over past strategic plans, and the proposals coming out of this one will strengthen those successes as well as focus on some areas where the membership responded that more work needs to be done.

We continue to reach out to all of our members to ensure that they feel a part of the OGCA family. We moved the newsletter to every two weeks; the website has undergone continuous changes and upgrades, hosting material of interest to the members and we have done outreach by creating a system whereby the board members are assigned a number of members with the responsibility of calling them on a regular basis to get their input and see what is happening in their area, as well as any concerns they may have.

The APP program has been a great success the support provided by these members has not only been financial and sponsorship but in the expertise and knowledge that they bring for you the member from insurance and surety to tendering to safety. Special programs, like the Chrysler program and Cleveland Clinic benefit members and have brought a new value to your membership.

They have strengthened our ability to represent you in the halls of power at Queen's Park, in municipalities, and in various ministries like the Ministry of Labour.

Communication and being part of this family is a two-way street. While we can do everything in our power to reach out and provide information, it is up to you - the members - to do your part and participate. It can be as simple as regularly checking the newsletter, and sharing it with your employees so that everyone is kept up on the latest changes.

It is true that OGCA has been heavily focused on major provincial issues that impact you as members and the construction industry. We have worked for years with the WSIB regarding rates and the unfunded liability. Thanks to that work, each of you has received substantial reductions in your WSIB rates.

We continue to have challenges. The efforts to merge us with the residential sector will have a debilitating effect upon our rates, and it is because the OGCA is at the table and representing you, that we have an opportunity to make sure that the right thing is done.

We have spent years working and negotiating with the government on the new Construction Act. This came into play last July, and there is an even more important part coming in October. This, and other efforts by your organization, are at the provincial level. We are at Queen's Park

on a regular basis. We are there representing you; the impact of that representation has been seen across the province and each of you has benefited.

We continue to advocate for strong improvement in procurement systems. We are working on improving not only procurement systems like Bids and Tenders, and in the safety field. We are working hard to improve COR; we introduced the Safety Pass and we are working hard to ensure that you all have fair and equal access to procurement in this province.

While you may not see these efforts directly, they impact your firm and your employees. Our professional staff is dedicated to assisting and helping you with the issues and problems that you face as general contractors.

It is disappointing to hear that some still feel that we only represent the large contractors, but if you look at the facts, 80% of the tender issues that we address on your behalf occur outside of the GTA area.

The value of our large members was never more felt than during our negotiations on the Construction Act. While many other groups employed numerous lawyers, we had the benefit of over 15 top legal minds working for free to assist us in dealing with this issue. It was the large firms that made those lawyers available to us, and who also provided the resources so that we could represent all OGCA members and do our very best to get the best deal possible for this new legislation.

Thanks to those volunteers, as well as APP members, we were able to provide every single member with a handbook on how to address part one of the Construction Act changes. Those same volunteers who dedicated so many hours to creating that are now working with us to create part two to address the upcoming adjudication and prompt payment changes that will be coming in October.

As part of the new strategic plan, we intend to increase our efforts to reach out to our small and midsize members. We will increase our ability to get to you through our website, through our newsletter, Webinars, road trips, and any way we can, but no matter what we do, unless you - the members - are willing to participate, talk to us and come to the events, then we will still have a problem.

This April is our 11th Symposium. This event is recognized as the premier gathering of contractors, with access to networking and top speakers at an unbelievably fair and reasonable price. Yet over half of our membership have never sent a representative to this event. I sincerely hope that all of you will understand the need for us to stand together, united in the face of the challenges to come. I know you are all busy but without your support, small, medium, large, super large doesn't matter: we need your input, we need you to stand with us, we need you to participate.

I urge all of you who have never been to the Symposium to make the effort this year to send at least one representative to experience this event and see what it offers to you, the member.

Our AGM is in Ontario again, and that is your opportunity, as senior executives, to spend a couple of days with your peers and have your voices heard in regards to how the OGCA is operating and the direction you believe it should go.

I have been honoured to lead this organization for the past 17 years. We have created a voice for construction that has never been equaled. We have created partnerships and alliances with many associations that many thought could not be done. The strength that we now have to influence and make change has never been greater.

To continue this, the strategic planning committee has laid out a strong plan to build on. That plan will be going to the Board of Directors in a few weeks for approval and will be circulated to all members through the newsletter and through emails, and I sincerely hope that you will read it, comment on it and provide your input, because it is meant for you - the members - and the goals that we have set out are there in response to your requests.

Over the next year and a half, I will be dedicating my time to ensuring that this strategic plan is well underway and that we do everything possible to reach you. By the fall of this year, we will have begun the search for the next President of the OGCA. It is my sincere hope that when I hand the reins over, it will be to an even stronger organization that its members feel they are part of something important, part of an organization that does listen, part of an organization that works for them and for the best interests of their employees and their firms.

I want to thank everyone for your strong support over the last 17 years, because we have made significant improvement in the industry and we have achieved a number of great successes. But one does not rest on one's laurels. One moves forward, and I can assure you that I and your dedicated staff and this organization will continue to do everything possible to meet your needs and ensure the success of you - the member - and this great organization.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at this year's symposium.

Clive Thurston  
President