I have been asked many times why my family and I have put so much time, energy and money into our trade association, the Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industries—International. The reason is simple: “You reap what you sow.” Every dollar and every hour spent in service to and with AWCI has returned many times in one form or another.

Several years ago, the theme for one of our conventions was “Has Your Ship Come In?” The tag line that went with the theme was “If Not, Have You Sent One Out?” In colonial times, European traders would send a ship to the New World with the expectations of great riches when and if their ship came back. However, no one could expect his ship to return if one had not been sent. How does this apply to AWCI and your business?

The answer is a single word—PARTICIPATION. Many members recently returned from AWCI’s Industry Executives Conference held this year in Vail, Colo. This meeting is one of the primary events that advantage the attendees and strengthen our industry. Much of the committee work is actually done here, including business forums, codes and standards, technical publications, awards in excellence and nominating actions that move the association forward from year to year. In addition, the Foundation meets and holds a great fund-raising golf tournament. In all, it is a busy time for those who attend and participate. From the feedback I received during this meeting, I can assure you that the members receive much more from this meeting that they give. They have truly sent their ship out and have seen their “Ship Come In.”

This year AWCI will have other activities such as AWCI’s Academy, AWCI’s new mold inspection and certification program to be held in Tampa, Fla., in January 2003. Also, AWCI’s Expo: Construction Directions, the annual convention and trade show, will take place in New Orleans in March 2003. I ask everyone who is involved in the industry to attend these meetings and participate. Your benefits will increase with your level of participation.