The Results Were in the Performance

A Good Performance on the Wall and Ceiling Foundation’s Great Adventure Auction Earned Susan Dove a Fulltime Role—and Lined Her Up To Manage EIMA’s Affairs, Too.

With the Great Adventures Auction—its principal fund raising event—only a short time away and no manager in place the Foundation of the Wall and Ceiling Industries turned to her as a temporary assignment to get the project rolling and completed.

Despite the late start, she doubled expected results . . . set a new record.

When it came time to hire a fulltime Director, the Foundation already had its answer: hire Susan Dove.

Her performance has been such that when the Exterior Insulation Manufacturers Association needed a new Executive Director, the Association leaders turned to Susan Dove. The results with EIMA have been rather spectacular, too.

Getting it done precisely and with a cushion of good results is what Susan Dove is all about. The Washington, D.C. native began her career at the United States Chamber of Commerce—and worked her way to the top executive echelons in rapid order.

Within a year she became an executive secretary in the Chamber’s six-person association office, then managed by Jim Low, who was later to become the chief executive officer of the American Society of Association Executives. Following a one-year stint in the public relations department at the American Association of Junior College, Susan joined the ASAE as secretary to the general manager and quickly moved up to Assistant to the President.

When a Director of Personnel and Office Procedures for the fast-growing organization was needed, Low turned to Dove. For the next two years she handled that job, establishing a rather enviable reputation, before an upgrade to Director of Board and International Relations.

When Low finally retired from ASAE, Dove, who had been closely identified with the meteoric association leader, decided shortly thereafter to end her 14-year stint with that organization.

When the Wall and Ceiling Foundation gave her a call she decided to try her hand at management consulting. She took over the Foundation in 1983 and reorganized it internally while put-
When the Michigan Lath and Plaster Promotion Bureau terminated, it requested that that treasurer, Bernard “Ben” Schuemann, of B.C. Schuemann Co., Battle Creek, turn over its entire share to AWCI’s Joe Baker and Foundation Director Susan Dove in order for the Foundation to carry out its programs.

**DIMENSIONS** caught up with the fast-moving executive, she was preparing details for EIMA’s Annual meeting week—still a ways off.

**DIMENSIONS**: Why are you so busy now for an annual meeting that’s months off?

**DOVE**: That’s easy. You get an
early start on everything you can. There’ll be enough time pinches later on so I like to get the details out of the way as early as possible.

DIMENSIONS: Sue, there are a lot of contractors out there who know little about the existence or purpose of the Wall and Ceiling Foundation. A little explanation, if you don’t mind?

DOVE: —The whole idea of the Foundation is to go beyond some of the things that AWCI does . . . to engage in research and education in areas that AWCI due to the very nature of a traditional association, is not involved with and would not be dealing with—

DIMENSIONS: —areas such as what?

DOVE: Let me give you some concrete examples. The Foundation produced guide specs for asbestos abatement—the only document of its kind, I must say, that currently exists on that subject. It’s a fully recognized and accepted piece of work in that particular subject area. In fact, AWCI buys this guide spec from the Foundation for use in its own workshops.

Furthermore, the Foundation collects and catalogs various specifications pertaining to wall and ceiling work. Copies of these specs are there for anyone and everyone with an interest—

DIMENSIONS: —you did say ‘anyone and everyone,’ didn’t you?

DOVE: That’s precisely what I said. You see the Foundation exists for the good of the industry. We have members yes—and we’re constantly looking for new members—but any of the documents, research materials, specifications, information, library services are available for any wall and ceiling contractor.

I like to say we’re only a postage stamp or telephone call away.

The Foundation library is one of the best and most extensive libraries in existence for wall and ceiling related information. Our professional librarian, Betty Jacobson, had done a very good job in securing this information and cataloging it properly.

DIMENSIONS: I understand that professional designers, government, and even foreign agencies have had access to this library and they use it often?

DOVE: Yes, and that’s one of the beautiful things about the library: it’s there for everybody. That’s what the founders wanted.

Betty Jacobson was hired at the outset to set up the library so we have good continuity there. She can put her fingers quickly on any piece of information or reference that’s cataloged and in the shelves.

Today the John H. Hampshire Research and Reference Library, spon-

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sored by the Foundation, is internationally recognized for its catalogs, reference books, specifications, codes, manufacturing literature and technology data. We regularly get calls from the public, the news media, other libraries, other organizations. It’s a real testimonial to the founders’ intent.

**DIMENSIONS:** What is the actual distinction between members and non-members, can you or can’t you use the library—that sort of thing?

**DOVE:** We have no restrictions on who can use our services. The Wall and Ceiling Foundation is a charitable organization: it exists for the benefit of everyone . . . the entire industry. If a contemplated program or research project will help benefit the whole industry then, of course, we do it.

No individual or company need have any reservations about membership status when calling the Foundation on some industry-related matter . . . research or education.

**DIMENSIONS:** On the subject of education, the Foundation got involved with the ACSA project at the University of Pennsylvania, didn’t it?

**DOVE:** Indeed we did—and this is a classic example of doing something that will benefit our entire industry.

ACSA stands for “Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture.” Each year the organization conducts a major meeting of professors of architecture, a sort of updating process, letting the design profession know more about the state of the art.

When ACSA established its August 1985 “Construction Materials and
Technology Institute.” the Foundation sponsored a full-day program within the Institute. During this day we taught the professors about steel framing, exterior wall systems, pre-fabrication and panelization.

Some 40 architectural professors from across the country participated in this program and now these important individuals can, in turn, instruct their classes about the current technology within the wall and ceiling industry. When these students graduate and enter the profession, they will be that much more informed and able to assume responsible positions . . . and hopefully, much of the re-training currently being conducted by our member contractors will be minimized. I call that very, very beneficial to the wall and ceiling industry.

DIMENSIONS: What were the procedures for setting up the “wall and ceiling day” at the Institute? How did you arrange for speakers, the program titles, the logistics?

DOVE: The Foundation Board, after we were approached by ACSA, approved of the program and subject matter. Then Gene Erwin, AWCI’s Technical Director and Consultant to the Foundation, lined up the best speakers in each subject area.

I took care of general meeting logistics, audio visual and other equipment requirements, workbooks, support programs and coordinated the ad-
administrative details between what Gene and I were doing with ACSA and the University of Pennsylvania.

DIMENSIONS: Well, what about Foundation membership? You obviously are seeking new members, to obtain greater operating funds. What's the status of your membership efforts?

DOVE: We do have members and include among them contractors, architects, engineers, builders and developers—even public members with an interest in helping our industry.

Currently we have nearly 200 members, the largest membership year for the Foundation since its establishment in 1977. I should say that the AWCI members have been the magical factor: they support us better than anyone, largely, I think, because they know the value of what we're doing.

DIMENSIONS: Then there's the constantly recurring question—"what do I get for my membership dues?" What's your answer to that query?

DOVE: Keep in mind, now, this isn't a membership where you weigh the value by the pound. We're here for the good of the industry and you don't measure that by the number of letters or amount of literature we send each month.

We have a bi-monthly newsletter directed not only toward the contractor, the user of wall and ceiling technology, but the design professionals, sister organizations and others. Each issue addresses a specific technical problem or issue and provides a forum for discussion and possible solutions.

When you pay dues to the Wall and Ceiling Foundation, your money goes to support industry objectives . . . to help everyone. We're a bit different from a traditional trade organization or association.

DIMENSIONS: Let's move on a bit, Sue, to your involvement with the Exterior Insulation Manufacturers Association—EIMA. What are your major goals with this organization?

DOVE: EIMA is a traditionally organized trade association dedicated to the enhancement, improvement and promotion of the industry and use of exterior insulation products and systems.

My job is managerial and administrative. I have a deep interest in this industry and since EIMA basically grew out of AWCI, it was not all that difficult to transfer my interest and knowledge.

DIMENSIONS: It was a rather long
time in coming, but the exterior insulated wall system is pretty much an accepted technology now, isn’t it?

DOVE: Yes. From the short time that I’ve been involved, EIMA has doubled in size. Telephone calls coming in from professional design firms, contractors and the public demonstrate why new manufacturers are coming on board. The market truly is booming.

DIMENSIONS: A lot of talk has been focused on the tendency to view these systems as trowel finished. That’s not an essential, is it?

DOVE: Although my function with EIMA is managerial, not technical, I have participated in discussions where this subject has arisen. Some of these materials are available for either spray or trowel application. However, these systems in general are perceived as trowel-applied and float or textured finish systems.

Similar to my objectives with the Foundation, I administer a program aimed primarily at promoting and enhancing the concept of exterior insulated walls. This is a for-the-good-of-the-industry philosophy—and I leave the technology to the experts.

DIMENSIONS: What’s the membership status of EIMA? Do contractors take out memberships?

DOVE: We have 14 manufacturer members which leaves only one or perhaps two manufacturers as non-members. Additionally, there are nearly two dozen associate members: these are companies which provide materials and/or components for the systems. Then there are more than 25 distributors and a sprinkling of users—architects, engineers, developers, contractors.

DIMENSIONS: For a contractor taking a look at diversifying into the exterior insulated wall market, what information could he expect from EIMA . . . what assistance?

DOVE: EIMA is currently working on a generic video training program on installation of exterior insulation systems—which certainly will be of major benefit. Beyond that particular project, EIMA has achieved quite a lot for an organization so young.

It’s developed two guideline specifications as well as a classification paper on existing exterior insulation and finish systems.

The association’s publication “10
Reasons to Do it Outside,” has been a highly popular information pamphlet on these systems and why and when to use them. We’re now in the process of revamping the EIMA newsletter, which will be published on a quarterly basis.

DIMENSIONS: What are the subjects for the two guideline specifications?

DOVE: One is on Class PB (polymer based) and the other on Class PM (polymer modified) systems.

Keep in mind, too, that thru EIMA’s technical committee development work is progressing on a variety of position papers and industry documents which will lead to the publication—scheduled for 1987—of an EIMA Technical Manual.

DIMENSIONS: The EIMA Committee Week? Wasn’t that a page out of AWCI’s promotional book?

DOVE: Yes, and it works just as well as AWCI’s Committee Week, too.

It’s the major gathering of the industry, the members of EIMA. Our December, 1985, meeting at the Hyatt in Atlanta totaled the highest attendance ever and was the most productive meeting, too. In fact, EIMA gained a number of new members as a result of Committee Week activities.

With results like that it’s easy to understand why the EIMA Board wants Committee Week continued. It really does bring the industry together in one place and things get done.

DIMENSIONS: It’s been a good year for both organizations. Where to from here, Susan?

DOVE: Oh, I can’t feel anything but up. The growth of the organizations can be measured in participation, membership, meeting and financial strength. All these indicate a taking-off profile.

We’re working closer now with a number of sister organizations which call and want to develop liaison arrangements. AWCI and EIMA have just jointly endorsed a recommended practices paper for installation of exterior wall and finish systems.

Things look good. They’re moving—and in this business that’s always a good sign.