

Mythology

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Proudly, NASP has existed for fourteen years. Throughout its existence, NASP has weathered many storms, including a down-turned economy that threatened to impact membership numbers and conference registrations. During good times and bad, rumors have surfaced about the nature of the organization. As these rumors could compromise the future success of NASP, I will use this column to offer my perspective on those things that I've heard.

Myth 1: NASP is an organization run by attorneys.

NASP is an organization run by a volunteer Board of Directors. The Board has always been made up of a combination of Service Providers (attorneys and other non-attorney vendors) and Insurance Company Professionals. On that Board are a number of attorneys. Each year, the Nominating Committee is tasked with selecting qualified applicants to serve on the Board, along with ensuring that the overall Board demographics are an accurate reflection of the membership as a whole. The exact makeup of the board composition has fluctuated over time, generally based on the needs of the association and the qualities of the leading applicants for board service. At no time, however, has any one group had a dominant role in the decision-making process. I encourage anyone who is concerned about this issue to ask any Insurance Company Professional who has served on the NASP Board for their perspective.

Myth 2: The Conferences are only attended by Attorneys

There is no question that a lot of attorneys attend the NASP conference. I would be naïve to say anything other than that most of them are there for potential business reasons; although as you will see below, I believe there are many other reasons to attend. Attorneys attend because their clients attend. By example, at the 2011 Annual Conference in Orlando, over 50% of attendees were insurance claims professionals representing more than 100 different insurance companies, TPAs and self insureds. I would estimate that over 50% of the property and casualty insurance market's direct premium writers are represented at our annual events. This is a remarkable gathering of subrogation industry professionals.

In addition to the carriers and attorneys, the exhibit hall is packed with vendors with subrogation services to offer. Our annual conference gives exhibitors the opportunity to not only showcase their product or service, but to also create that all important first impression that they support and understand our industry. For the carriers, it is an efficient and convenient place to network and forge good business relationships, all in one location. For the attorneys, who are often asked by their clients for expert recommendations, their value is enhanced when they are able to make suggestions based on people they have actually met. Statistics show that 91% of attendees say that trade shows impact their buying decisions because the competition is in one place allowing for

comparison shopping in real time. For these reasons, I believe that having a diversity of attendees at the Conference is a major plus.

I cannot avoid the real effect that the down-turned economy has had on the ability of carriers to send as many people as they once did to the Conference. With that said, the number of carriers at the Conference is still strong. While the faces may be different from in years past, it rings true that the decision-makers from each company are attending, as are people new to subrogation who are eager and willing to meet people with whom they might want to work. From my perspective, vendors cannot afford to stay away from the Conference. This brings me to Myth 3.

Myth 3: There is no value in attending the Annual Conference anymore

With the proliferation of NASP educational opportunities being made available through webinar and local chapter formats, it may seem that it is not worth the expense and time away from the office to actually attend the NASP Annual Conference. While NASP will continue to expand these offerings, I am confident that the value of in-person attendance at the annual Conference will not be diminished. The NASP annual conference is unique – as nowhere else can you find 72 different educational sessions focused on subrogation all under one roof. What better way to sharpen your recovery skills?

There is a tremendous value to being at one location with the leaders of an industry. There is no substitute for meeting person to person with the key players in our field. As an attorney, I am more valuable to my clients when I:

1. Know who to call for information on an esoteric matter.
2. Have personally met with experts and other vendors from around the country.
3. Have spent time with attorneys who I may have to associate with as local counsel.
4. Have just heard the latest presentation on an area of developing law and had an opportunity to introduce myself to the speaker.
5. Have actually met my clients and some of their staff.

Likewise, as a carrier attendee, the idea of meeting vendors face to face is highly impactful. In this age of regional and national subrogation units, it can be difficult to develop quality and trusting relationships with vendors over the phone. NASP conferences can play a key component in creating long-lasting relationships with service providers that are relied upon so heavily.

From a marketing / networking standpoint, I mentioned that new carriers and new faces are attending each year. One new contact, one new claim, one new idea to streamline your company's process can pay for the Conference expense, ten times over.

Finally, NASP strives to be the leader in educational programming for the subrogation professional. The NASP Annual Conference is a once a year opportunity to see the best and the brightest speak on relevant issues. Every year when we put the program together, I fully expect to re-run successful programs from past years. However each year we

never seem to have room for last year's great programs. There are just too many new and different programs to offer.

When I stop to think about what I have done in my 32 year career that has benefitted me personally, and my firm, at the top of the list, by far, is attending the NASP Annual Conference. For the reasons above and for the feeling of rejuvenation it brings to me and the firm members who attend, I consider the NASP Annual Conference a must. That is NO MYTH.