

Founder's Forum

TEN YEARS AFTER

BY JEFFREY BAILL, YOST & BAILL, LLP, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA FOUNDER AND PAST PRESIDENT OF NASP

In one of the final episodes of *The Sopranos*, Tony sits with a group of friends and talks about the good old days. Obviously bored, Tony stands up and says, "Remember when is the lowest form of communication." In other words, focusing on the past somehow takes away from the here and now and more importantly the future. In all due respect to Tony Soprano, I want to take a few inches of space here and "remember when" about our first ten years of NASP; what we tried to do and what the story means for our organization.

Ten years ago, a group of us got together with a somewhat amorphous goal of creating a bond between all members of the subrogation community. We knew that most of us felt like we were on an island in a sea of liability defense claims. There were few, if any, connections between people whose work was dedicated to subrogation. The lawyers in the group had no one to talk to about tactics and strategies. The Insurance Subrogation Professionals had no way to interact with other similarly situated people about the challenges they faced. Our goal was, simply, to bring people together.

Ten years later, I believe we have succeeded beyond our wildest dreams. In the beginning, we thought 100 members would be a home run. Today, we have in excess of 2200 members and we are still in a growth mode. The scope of services provided by NASP continues to grow. No one in the beginning thought we would create a Subro College or hire a full-time education director.

So what lessons can be derived from this experience that may apply to our own companies? I think there are several:

1. Good ideas often lead to many other beneficial outcomes. Ten years ago we never envisioned some of the initiatives NASP is involved in today. They grew out of the process of bringing constituent groups together.
2. Never underestimate the power of collaboration. A group of people with a plan can accomplish incredible things.
3. Change is really possible. It requires the commitment of a group of people.
4. Don't let the naysayers stop you. It is always easy to find people to tell you it won't work.
5. Don't be afraid to make mistakes. The only people who don't make mistakes are people who never take risks. Risks are almost always necessary to make progress. I could write many columns on the mistakes I have made. I like to believe I have learned from them and have used the experiences to grow.
6. Celebrate your successes. We spend so much time at work dealing with our problems that we often ignore when we succeed. Success motivates people to cause more success. Every time we have done something at NASP that has worked, people have been motivated to build the organization.

For me, the most exciting part of NASP is that everyone involved is committed to continually recreating who we are, what we do and the services we provide. I think I know where we are going. However, taking a lesson from the past, I recognize, the future may lead us in many new directions. Isn't that what truly makes life interesting?