

During a Pandemic, We're Here to Help

By Lou Caron

While 2020 is a year we'd all be happy to forget, the first couple of months of 2021 have shown us a glimmer of hope that foreshadows better times ahead.

According to the Los Angeles Times, "L.A. County has seen significant improvement across virtually all of its coronavirus metrics over the last few weeks — leading to growing optimism that the region is finally putting the worst wave of the pandemic behind it."

Due to COVID-19, many members of our Association have made significant adjustments to stay in business. We, too, made tough decisions and drastic cuts to make sure we could continue serving our members. By mid-April 2020, through layoffs and furloughs, we downsized significantly.

While we cut about one-third of our staff, we increased our engagement with our members. Our focus as an association moved from networking events like Graphics Night and Cocktails & Conversations to confronting Essential Business

and H.R. issues and PPP financial assistance. To help members get through the pandemic, PIASC and our network of specialists, in essence, became a private consulting firm. These efforts continue today.

Federal, state and local representation during the pandemic

With a new administration in Washington and an ever-changing business landscape here in California, PIASC continues to help its members navigate governmental rules and regulations on a national, state and local level.

If you remember back to the whole "Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers" list in 2020, it was through the tremendous efforts of our network of specialists that we were able to secure "Essential Worker" status for printers throughout California. RJ Cervantes of Fernández Cervantes Government Affairs, our lobbyist in Sacramento, assisted us at the state and county levels. Lisbeth Lyons and Michael Makin from Printing Industries

of America helped us on a national level. And Ken Perkins and his colleagues at Musick Peeler & Garrett assisted us at the county and city level.

We have a long-standing relationship with Lisbeth Lyons, Vice President of Government & Political Affairs for PRINTING United Alliance. Lisbeth is responsible for providing direct advocacy before Congress and the Administration on crucial industry legislative initiatives. She also provides strategic direction for the printing industry's grassroots and external outreach activities. In addition, she serves as Treasurer of PrintPAC, the only industry political action committee dedicated solely to electing pro-print lawmakers. Our relationship with Lisbeth continues through our participation in Print Powers America. The importance of having a voice in Washington D.C. is invaluable. If you haven't already, I encourage you to connect with Lisbeth on LinkedIn and consider a corporate contribution to Print Powers America.

I can't overemphasize the importance of these relationships. For example,

during the past year, California's Governor would issue a statement regarding quarantine or essential workers or some other COVID-19 related matter, and I would read it. Next I would contact PIASC's Director of Member Services, Kristy Villanueva, and we'd review it together. Then we would talk with Rodney Bolton, HR|BIZZ, our Human Resources specialist. Finally, to make sure we had dotted all the i's and crossed the t's, we would tap our network of specialists, including R.J. and our labor counsel at Musick Peeler, before communicating with our members. In several cases, we used our connections with the local authorities to confirm our interpretation of the official statement. Even with all this research, within days, sometimes hours, the State's direction would change, and we'd have to make modifications to our communications and provide updated information to our members. To say the situation was, at times, "fluid" is a vast understatement.

By tapping into our network of specialists, PIASC has continued to demonstrate the

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BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

The Easiest Way to Get FSC® Certification

For printers, Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) Certification is a way to ensure that the paper we use comes from responsibly managed forests that provide environmental, social and economic benefits. Products that have been certified as having been made with wood and paper from FSC forests can be marked with the FSC's distinctive logo.

Many print customers specifically ask for FSC certification

At PIASC we get many inquiries about FSC certification from our members, because many of their customers are demanding this. With more organizations focusing on what's known as "ESG" initiatives (Environmental, Social and Governance), this demand is only likely to increase.

Unfortunately, getting FSC certification on your own can be difficult, costly and time-consuming. That's why we are pleased to offer our members a better option.

Group certification simplifies the FSC certification process

Back in 2010, PIASC became a founding member of the Regional Affiliate Certificate Group (RACG). Since then RACG has helped numerous members obtain FSC certification.

The Regional Affiliate Certificate Group is a program developed by U.S. regional graphics industry trade groups to help open new markets and demonstrate members' dedication to ensuring responsible forestry. RACG provides group FSC® Chain of Custody Certifica-

tion for graphic communications companies with wood-based product sales of up to \$5 million. Those with sales from \$5 to \$100 million can be individually certified through RACG's Large Printer Program.

Why go through RACG?

RACG's programs offer numerous benefits for printers of all sizes. When you use RACG to obtain FSC® certification you:

- **Save money** – The cost-effective, all-inclusive fees provide significant savings.
- **Save time** – You'll get an efficient process, documentation that's as close to "fill in the blank" as you can get and a streamlined audit process.
- **Avoid frustration** – Instead of trying to go it alone, you'll have continuous and prompt customer support from trained specialists with extensive knowledge of the printing industry.
- **Get two certifications** – Both FSC® and SFI® (Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Inc.) certification are included.

How do you get started with the RACG program?

As a PIASC member, all you need to do is go to <https://racgus.org/> and click on the "ENROLL NOW" button on the top right. Then choose either "group certification" (if you have printing sales of \$5 million or less) or "large printer program" (if your printing sales are \$5 to \$100 million) to get started.

HUMAN RESOURCES

CDC Changes Quarantine Guidance for the Fully-Vaccinated



On February 10 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) changed their guidance regarding quarantining after an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. Now if someone who has been fully vaccinated has such an exposure they will not need to quarantine, *provided they meet all three of the following criteria...*

- **Are "fully vaccinated" against COVID-19.** This means that it has been at least two weeks since the person received the second dose in a two-dose series, or the single dose for a single-dose vaccine.
- **Are within three months** following receipt of the last dose in the series. [Note: The CDC plans to update this timeline as more data become available.]
- **Have remained asymptomatic** since the current COVID-19 exposure.

While those who meet all three of the above criteria do not need to quarantine, they should still watch for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following the exposure.

Those who do not meet all three of the above criteria should continue to follow the current quarantine guidance after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

In addition, whether or not they have experienced a COVID-19 exposure, the CDC recommends that those who are fully-vaccinated continue to follow all of the current guidance regarding protecting themselves and others. This includes wearing a mask, staying at least six feet away from others, washing hands often, etc.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Passwords: The Extremely Vulnerable Keys to the Kingdom



If you're not paying attention to your business' cybersecurity, you're putting your livelihood—and that of your employees—at serious risk. Two of the biggest risks are phishing and ransomware attacks, which account for most cybersecurity breaches today.

That said, as Scott Hagizadegan, CEO of PIASC partner Shield IT Networks, explains, "When you look at the mechanism through which breaches happen, you see that 80% of incidents are caused by compromised passwords. Passwords, the 'keys to the kingdom,' are often one of the weakest links in your cyber defense system."

Why are passwords such an issue?

The unfortunate reality is that many people use the same login and password for everything. The password that an employee is using to get into your system might be the same one they're using for

five social media accounts, two bank accounts, seventeen online retailers and their personal laptop. "What happens," Scott relates, "is that hackers simply target the weakest link and steal the passwords from there."

What happens to stolen passwords?

It often takes just minutes before stolen passwords are sold on the dark web. Those who purchase these passwords have ways of identifying what else their password will open—and potentially using it everywhere that it works.

When major companies get hacked it can take months before millions of people are notified that their information has been compromised. By then the damage has been done.

When small companies get hacked, they may not even realize it, so users will never be notified of the issue.

What is at risk here?

Essentially your employees' habit of using the same password everywhere puts your entire business at risk. Surprisingly, Scott reports that when a criminal uses a stolen password to get into your system, they usually lay low for a while.

"The average time," Scott says, "between when they get into your system and when they lock down all your digital assets and hit you with a ransomware attack is 90 days. During that time they might steal everything in your system. Even if you pay the ransom—and the average ransomware demand is currently \$282,000—your entire business remains compromised anyway."

How can you prevent this problem?

The solution is to combine better password policies with proactive monitoring of the dark web. Proactive monitoring solves the otherwise impossible problem of being immediately notified when any password associated with your system is put up for sale.

To ensure your systems are safe, Shield IT is offering PIASC members a Complimentary Network Performance Analysis and Cybersecurity Audit. To schedule yours, visit <http://bit.ly/PIASC-ShieldIT-21>.

MESSAGE FROM PIASC

Verlita Halili Retires after 17 Years with PIASC



Since first joining PIASC in 2004, Accounting Manager Verlita Halili built a well-deserved reputation as someone who was always willing to go the extra mile to ensure that others got the assistance they needed. Whether she was helping our staff members with their timecards, managing our 401(k) or handling accounts payable and accounts receivable for the International Printing Museum, she was friendly, helpful, good-hearted and—perhaps most of all—extremely patient.

Although she is still helping out on an as-needed basis, Verlita officially retired last month to spend more time with her family. Please join us in wishing Verlita well as she moves on to the next exciting stage of her life!

FEATURE ARTICLE

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power of membership.

New cost-effective medical options

Despite the pandemic, the Printing Industries Benefit Trust introduced a new self-funded set of medical benefit plans, similar to PPO plans. These plans are in addition to the medical, dental and vision plans we already offer. PIBT's new Freedom Plans help you to control costs. Plan benefits are the same whether you seek care from an in-network or out-of-network practitioner (e.g., Freedom Plans benefits are network agnostic). Plus, members have an advocate to help them navigate the healthcare system.

These plans seek to control claim costs by auditing major claims and paying reasonable reimbursements based on reported costs and a fair margin.

New multiple employer retirement plan - Graphics Communication 401(k) Plan

As the pandemic began, we introduced a new retirement plan for the industry, the Graphics Communication 401(k) Plan. Employers with existing 401(k) Plans can transfer these to the Graphics Communication 401(k) Plan or start a new plan. The new Plan was seeded with PIASC's Retirement Plan.

Employers can personalize their participation, while most of the administrative burden of offering a 401(k) plan to employees is offloaded to PIASC's staff. Just think, if your Plan requires an annual audit, you can eliminate the audit hassle because the Graphics Communication 401(k) Plan files one 5500 (including the required audit) on behalf of its participants.

Because we are aggregating investments under one Plan, we can secure beneficial pricing from Transamerica, resulting in improved returns for employees. We took this step because we believe that this will help our members! The Association does not profit from the Plan.

Help with compliance issues

During these trying times, the last thing you want to worry about is compliance issues. PIASC has numerous regulatory and safety resources, all designed for our industry. Many of these resources are online and require little or no in-person meetings. These include:

- Sales Tax Guide
- SB198-compliant Injury & Illness Prevention Program
- Forklift Training Manual
- Safety Compliance Checklist
- Storm Water Permit Checklist
- Lock Out / Block Out Form
- Back Injury Prevention

- Record Retention Guide
- And More

However, when you just need to talk to someone, the Association staff has years of business management experience. And now, with our new staff member Cathy Skoglund, we have experience with print production, too.

Money-saving options for Association members

In addition to helping our members with legal, medical and compliance issues during the pandemic, PIASC continues to help printing companies control costs with money-saving discounts. These include discounts on short- and long-haul shipping, credit reports, computer products, online compliance training, background checks, business insurance and more.

Staffing assistance for Association members

If Los Angeles traffic is an indicator, the recovery is on its way! The good news of the recovery will be coupled with the need to rebuild staff.

While we would have never predicted a pandemic, strengthening our Employment Services team was a top priority. Our team is here to help members connect with candidates. This service is purposely not offered through a portal because we want to make sure that we understand the job requirements, and we do not want to bog down our members with fighting through online forms. Just think, this is a free member benefit without the typical fee, AND our policy is not to recruit from member companies.

This pandemic has challenged all of us, yet the Association has adapted to meet our members' ever-changing needs. I think we are now a leaner, more agile organization that is better positioned to fulfill our mission of serving members.

I am bullish on the future. Our industry, as it has done time and again, is going to return stronger than ever. It is my hope that our members continue to rely on our expertise and exploit our services. Let us help you and please tell us what we can do better and what services we are missing. The key to the success of the Association is its members. Together let's work towards a safe, healthy, and profitable 2021!

CONTACT US

Address:
5800 S. Eastern Avenue, Suite 400
Los Angeles, CA 90040

P.O. Box 910936
Los Angeles, CA 90091

Phone: 323.728.9500
www.piasc.org

Key Contacts

Lou Caron, President
Ext. 274, lou@piasc.org

Dennis Bernstein, Commercial Insurance
Ext. 222, dennis@piascins.com

Evie Bañaga, Employee Benefits
Ext. 224, evie@piasc.org

Kristy Villanueva, Member Services
Ext. 215, kristy@piasc.org

Rodney Bolton, Human Resources
Ext. 218, piasc@hrbizz.com

Susan Levi, Human Resources
Ext. 218, piasc@hrbizz.com

Upcoming Events

WEBINAR: COVID-19 Vaccines and Your Workplace



Date: Thursday, March 25, 2021

Time: 10:00 am PDT

Cost: Free for PIASC members

As the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out progresses, many members have been asking what this means for their businesses and workplaces. Join us for this complimentary webinar as Susan Levi from HR|BIZZ answers your burning questions, such as:

- Can I make vaccination mandatory for my employees once they're eligible?
- Can I offer incentives for employees to get vaccinated?
- Do I have to offer paid time off for employees to get their vaccine?
- Do I have to offer paid COVID-19 sick pay if employees experience the illness that is a common side effect of the vaccinations?
- Can I let fully vaccinated employees go mask-less around other fully vaccinated employees? The CDC's new guidance seems to say yes, but Cal/OSHA's Emergency Temporary Standards don't address this.

To register <http://bit.ly/VaccineWorkplace-21>

CLASSIFIEDS

A PRINTING COMPANY IS BEING SOLD. Located in Canoga Park, the business is in "move in" condition. For more information contact Kristy Villanueva, 323.728.9500, Ext. 215.

SELLING YOUR PRINTING/DIRECT MAIL COMPANY? A well-established Orange County marketing service provider is looking for a bolt-on acquisition to expand mailing capability. If your annual sales are over \$1 million, contact Lou Caron, 323.728.9500, Ext. 274.

LOOKING TO EXPAND? Lease approximately 3,200 square feet (650 sq. ft office and 2,450 sq. ft production, all air-conditioned) in a secure 11,600 sq. ft building in prime west San Fernando Valley, for \$3,200 per month. Ample parking and two ground-level loading doors in rear. Great opportunity for a growing printing/graphic arts company to expand, with a profitable million-dollar plus specialty offset printer in the same building. Call Lou Caron (323) 728-9500 Ext. 274, lou@piasc.org.

Want to place a classified ad? Contact Wendy Ferruz, 323.728.9500, Ext. 262, wendy@piasc.org

MEMBER NEWS

Member **Image Options**, a brand experiential design and fabrication company, has recently promoted Joseph Im from VP of Finance to Chief Financial Officer. <http://bit.ly/ImageOptions-21>

Member **Clear Print** is looking to connect with other business owners in

the Los Angeles area who are struggling with how the homeless issue is affecting their businesses. If interested call Geoff Pick at (818) 259-9778.

To participate, please email your *one-sentence announcement* to Wendy Ferruz at Wendy@piasc.org.

PIASC Events Calendar

MAR
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WEBINAR: How to Gain Client's Trust in Managing Their Data (Presented by PIM)
Wednesday, March 24 at 9:30 am PT
Online
www.piasc.org/events

MAR
25

WEBINAR: Packaging Legislative Webinar
Thursday, March 25 at 4:00 pm PT
Online
www.piasc.org/events

MAR
25

WEBINAR: COVID-19 Vaccines and Your Workplace
Thursday, March 25 at 10:00 am PT
Online
www.piasc.org/events

For full list of workshops and virtual classes, please visit www.piasc.org/events