

# How are **we** doing?

By Kaarin Engelmann

**NO MATTER THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY**, the organized sheet metal industry is more likely to prosper when management and labor work together. Indeed, about half of the respondents in the latest *Partners in Progress* Readership Survey said the primary reason they read the magazine is to learn about best practices for labor-management cooperation.

Two-thirds read it to learn about SMACNA and SMART programs, just over a quarter read it to learn about best practices for market expansion, and about a third read it to learn about upcoming events.

Almost all respondents are reading their own physical copy of the magazine, and it turns out that about three-quarters would prefer to continue to have a printed copy mailed to them, compared to 10 percent each who prefer to access it via e-mail or online. It's possible this result is related to the fact that one-third of respondents are retired and more than 50 percent are 50 years old or older.



Despite their desire for a paper version of the magazine, many readers are active on the internet, with 40 percent visiting the SMWIA/SMART or SMACNA Web sites within the past three months. A third of readers visited the *Partners in Progress* Web site, Sheet Metal Network, or Facebook during the same period.

Some of the most popular articles have included “*Be a Better Leader*” (Vol. 10, No. 1; pg. 3) and

“*IMHO: Facts vs. Imagination*” (Vol. 10, No. 1; pg. 18). Success stories are popular because readers find value in reading about personal experiences. Some respondents commented that they liked that stories include both labor and management, though a few wanted to see more from the labor side.

*Partners in Progress* is slowly getting the word out about the Expertise branding program. Just under half of respondents were aware of it. In addition, the magazine is the standard bearer for the Sheet Metal Network ([sheetmetalnwork.org](http://sheetmetalnwork.org)), with about 40 percent of readers learning about it in those pages.

The magazine also served as the primary source of information about the 2012 *Partners in Progress* Conference for about half of readers responding. However, almost none of them actually attended the conference. About a third indicated willingness to attend a future *Partners in Progress* conference.

Generally, content seems to be hitting the mark with readers. Half of them value it enough to save an article or issue and half have discussed or forwarded an article or issue. About 10 percent said that reading the magazine caused them to contact a labor/management partner. One reader said that he talked to his employer about expanding into service work.

Finding ways for organized labor and management to communicate what works to other members, identifying areas to improve existing business and expand markets, and assisting with workforce issues—in other words, making a difference—is why *Partners in Progress* exists. We encourage you to contact us to tell us about your success stories, ideas, and feedback. E-mail [editor@pinpmagazine.org](mailto:editor@pinpmagazine.org).

Congratulations to Wayne Lemke of Toledo, Ohio, who won an iPad from *Partners in Progress* in the drawing from among all those readers who submitted completed surveys. ■