



# PMPA Members are Family

## A Peek Behind the Scenes at PMPA

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As the new director of technical programs and member engagement at PMPA, I was new to the industry and wasn't sure what to expect. I found out quickly that PMPA members are not members of a club; they are members of a family. I am in awe of the close-knit, knowledge-sharing, better together group that is the PMPA membership. It's as if everyone intuitively knows that a stronger industry can only benefit individual companies. And the knowledge is shared with joy!

Miles Free, PMPA's interim director, hired me, and I was "airdropped" into the execution phase of the 2019 National Technical Conference held at the end of March (I know, it seems impossible). What happened, you ask? Miles took time every day to teach me about the industry and the culture. John Detterbeck, president at Lester Detterbeck Enterprises Ltd., flew in from Florida to help me understand the conference. Tony Gemignani, vice president at R.F. Mau Co. and chair of the Technical Programs Committee, welcomed me. They both did everything in their power to help. Not one objection. Not one unkind word. Just enthusiasm and a willingness to participate. Everyone came together to do what needed to be done, just like a family.

When the Strategic Planning Committee came to Cleveland, PMPA staff was invited to have dinner with them. I sat down at a table and the PMPA president, Mike Reader, sat right next to me, the new hire. Talk about welcoming! The table was filled with members that included me in the conversation as if I had known them for years. I watched all the members in the room interact with friendship and respect; I could tell they genuinely liked each other. Just like a family.



At the Management Update meeting in Phoenix, I had a chance to meet members and see how PMPA executes its events. Renee Merker, PMPA's director of communications and events, was in charge, and I witnessed the best-of-the-best in action. Watching members soak in the wisdom of the speakers, network at the receptions and generally share knowledge was uplifting. I have worked with other trade associations and have never seen a professional group work so well together. Member after member told me how the PMPA is like no other trade association because the members are willing to share information. I have seen the members help each other daily on the PMPA listserves, which is fantastic, but to see it happening before my eyes was even more spectacular. Plus, it was fun! A conference that was not only valuable, but fun! Just like a family outing.

Another great moment was the "Women of PMPA" dinner in Phoenix. Women of every age and experience level gathered together to share stories and laughter over a meal. It was heartwarming. It was family.

We have all been in the environment where people claim it is a family, but it seems forced or just plain-old lip service. From what I have witnessed at PMPA, the family membership is authentic. I cannot wait to see what happens next.