

# Effective Associating — Better Together

Where do you go to make sense of the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity that can overwhelm your ability to manage your shop?



Miles Free III  
Director of Industry Affairs

“Panic is the sudden unreasoning and overwhelming terror that destroys a capacity for self-help.” - Red Cross Lifesaving Manual 1976. Panic hasn’t been routinely encountered in our shops these past few years. The crises that we face as shop owners seldom rise to the level of existential threat. Maybe we deal with the loss of an important customer or a process breaks down. But seldom are we faced with threats that could destroy the very existence of our business.

What if it is the owner or manager of the business that is panicking? As leaders, we have plenty to do to keep our businesses operating during normal times. Add to that already full load the challenge of trying to understand, comply and implement all of the executive orders from the state governors, protocols from federal agencies such as the CDC, DHS CISA, and Department of Labor / OSHA emergency regulations on employment as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. It is understandable that we could be overwhelmed by the need to understand so much and act so fast.

Humans are social animals, and, even though as leaders it can be “lonely at the top,” we can still find support from peers and find channels to provide trusted and credible information. For PMPA members, “Effective Associating, Better Together” provided a means for all of us to make sense of the volatility, uncertainty, and complexity that this crisis threw at our shops. Sensemaking became a way of life for all PMPA members, as a shared experience, through our online Listserve forums.

## Volatility.

As of this writing, there are 43 States with Emergency Orders documented on PMPA’s COVID-19 Resource webpage. The announcements were coming in sometimes four or five per day. As these orders were announced, PMPA sent out emails with the details to our email Listserves for the affected states as well as our national Listserves for CEO’s, human resources, and general



**PMPA’s Covid-19 Resource Center webpage provided so members could keep up-to-date on Federal and State announcements and updates.**

management. We served as a central clearinghouse and repository, so that our member company’s leaders could have access to the latest and most authoritative information which allowed them to think about the information and take actions needed, not struggle just to find it.

Everything that we published was posted by state on PMPA’s website along with the Federal and Canadian Provincial material. Our member company’s leaders had a contemporaneously developed authoritative resource so they could manage, not just research.

## Better Together Means Not Alone

As the new regulations rolled out, everyone was facing the challenge alone. Our Listserves provided a channel for them to share their concerns, their issues, and their solutions with their peers and they were no longer alone.

PMPA's Listserves provided a virtual conference room for all to discuss and understand these new requirements as they developed.

Not every question had an obvious answer and that's why Better Together means effective associating. PMPA has an ongoing relationship with the Law Firm of Fisher Phillips, whose attorneys were able to inform us of the impacts and developments related to these new requirements. In addition, Fisher Phillips provided

## Where do you turn to get reliable information, advice and counsel when a disaster erupts?

summaries and digests in the form of updates which we shared with our members, keeping them up-to-date and informed.

But "effective associating" doesn't just mean playing defense. PMPA's Washington D.C. registered representatives, advocated to several agencies, Congress and the White House regarding the needs of our manufacturing companies and employees. We provided recommendations for the Federal government to consider to keep our companies and workforce secure: defining essential manufacturing, ensuring prompt payment to suppliers by federal aid recipients, maintaining lines of credit, programs to encourage employee retention and others. We are happy to see that several of our policy priorities were included in some of the emergency regulations -- making a difference for our members.

The COVID -19 virus provided a threat to all of us -- a deadly health threat. PMPA effectively advocated to a number of parties to ensure that precision machined components could be obtained for the national effort to build ventilators. PMPA obtained prints for human safety critical parts needed for several ventilator building programs. PMPA collected member capacities and capabilities and sent them to FEMA, the White House and companies who needed the parts. As a result, some PMPA member companies were contracted to make critical lifesaving components.

### Where Do You Go?

Where do you turn to get reliable information, advice and counsel when a disaster erupts? How much extra would you have to pay to get additional legal, human resource and policy talent deployed to make sense of your situation? Especially when the underlying regulations change on a daily, even hourly basis? PMPA members

know that by effective associating, PMPA will provide them with the critical information, resources, advocacy and networking tools that they can use to sustain their businesses. To retain their workforce. To serve their customers. To adapt and thrive. Even when "no one has ever been through this before." Because we are better together, and together, we can make sense of the challenges that we face, and together, sustain our industry, and North American manufacturing.

Where do you go for critical sensemaking? PMPA members know where to turn. They turn to PMPA. Peers, staff and outside experts as needed to help them make a difference. [PMPA](#)

For more information about the Precision Machined Products Association (PMPA) please visit [PMPA.org](http://PMPA.org).

*Miles Free III is the PMPA Director of Industry Affairs with over 40 years of experience in the areas of manufacturing, quality, and steelmaking. He helps answer "How?", "With what?" and "Really?" Miles' blog is at [pmpaspeakingofprecision.com](http://pmpaspeakingofprecision.com); email: [mfree@pmpa.org](mailto:mfree@pmpa.org); website: [pmpa.org](http://pmpa.org).*

## What's good separately but even Better Together?

### PMPA and You.

*(Oh, and burgers and fries)*



To see how your business can benefit from membership

please go to

[PMPA.org](http://PMPA.org)

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