



International Advertising Association - Our History

A look through our history will provide you with a snapshot of how we developed throughout the decades and what we've accomplished since our establishment in 1938.

1930s - 1940s: The beginning

In 1938, Thomas Ashwell, publisher of the Export Trade & Shipper magazine in New York, had a vision. Long aware of the need for an organization to coordinate and foster the practice of international advertising, Ashwell assembled twelve other export advertising executives for a luncheon meeting on 8 April 1938 at the Harvard Club in New York. Out of that occasion, the International Advertising Association was born.

The first public gathering of the Export Advertising Association (when the founders tried to register the name International Advertising Association, they discovered it was already taken) which attracted over 130 men and women from the export advertising business, was held that May. The first President, Shirley Woodell, described the new association as 'an organization for the interchange of ideas and experiences, in order to promote the efficiency and scope of its members in the practice of their profession of foreign advertising'. And he proposed its tripartite structure composed of advertisers, advertising agencies and the media and their representatives.

1950s: Embedding our goals

The 1950's can be characterized by several key milestones which truly embedded the IAA's goals and mission:

- During the 1950's, great strides were made towards internationalization of the IAA. In 1953, approximately one fifth of the 500 members were located outside the USA. By the time it celebrated its 20th anniversary in 1958, it had 1,160 members, of which over 600 came from outside the U.S., representing a total of 58 countries.
- The new broadening horizons hastened the discussion of a change of name to the International Advertising Association when that name became available, which it did on in October 1953. The change was officially made on 15th December of that year.
- 1955 marked an important year for the IAA. After the name change, the Board decided to give the IAA truly worldwide significance by introducing Regional Vice-Presidents and creating an IAA European Committee, and the first IAA conference to be held outside the USA took place in Zürich, Switzerland the same year. A



second IAA European Conference was held in The Hague in 1957, and the IAA initiated important efforts to promote advertising self-regulation.

- In the late 1950's, international advertising underwent many changes: a tightening of economic conditions, a recession in the U.S., and the evolution of the European Common Market all affected long-established marketing operations. The IAA also changed with the times. It modified its constitution and bylaws in 1959, by providing for the establishment of local Chapters and an increase in worldwide representation on the Board. The first Chapters were formed and a European Council organized.

1960s: A decade of "firsts"

The IAA achieved many 'firsts' in the 1960's:

- The first IAA Latin American Conference was held in Caracas, Venezuela in 1960.
- Young professional groups within Chapters were proposed for membership, with the first organized in Venezuela in 1964.
- In 1963, the IAA World Congress and the IAA European Conference were combined for the first World Congress outside of the U.S. held in Stockholm.
- In 1966, Mexico became the first Latin American country to host the IAA World Congress and in 1969 Tokyo, Japan was the first in Asia.
- In 1964, Dr. Rudolf Farner of Switzerland was elected as the first non-U.S. IAA World President.

Perhaps the most crucial trend affecting the IAA's work at that time was the emergence of consumerism as a major force in the mid-1960's, with advertising soon becoming one of its prime targets. In the past, the IAA's main role had been that of teacher, observer and reporter. Now consumerism was seen as a vital challenge to the industry and the bylaws were redefined to set the IAA on a new path for its journey to the forefront of the defense of advertising internationally.

At the end of the 1960's, IAA membership was up to over 2,100, with 15 Chapters.

1970s: Growth of corporate and organizational membership

The Association's first White Paper was presented at the World Congress in Dublin in 1973. Entitled "The Global Challenge of Advertising", the paper recognized new urgencies, demanded new accomplishments and insisted that the IAA assume a role of world leadership in certain sectors of concern to marketers everywhere. With the approval of the new bylaws in 1971, providing for a more active role for the IAA, the Association began its search for greater resources. Corporate support of major projects and services became an important and necessary reality. In 1972, the Sustaining (later termed 'Corporate') and Organizational Members program began and grew successfully thereafter. With additional funds from this



corporate support, the IAA initiated an extensive and vital publications program that produced research and publishing projects on topics ranging from self-regulation to "Controversy Advertising" to "Multinationals in Confrontation". As the decade drew to a close, the IAA started its public service advertising program and in 1979 staged the first ever World Public Service Advertising symposium in Brussels.

1980s: Launch of our education program

The IAA Education Program was formed, announced at the 1980 IAA World Congress in Durban. As introduced, it developed requirements leading to two levels of IAA Certificates and an IAA Diploma in International Advertising, aimed at providing a much needed educational standard for the marketing communications business on a worldwide scale.

In addition, an extensive publications program was initiated with studies covering different restrictions, problems and prospects in the worldwide marketing communications community. Regular summaries were circulated of such topical items as government legislation, developments in self-regulation, consumer trends, public service advertising activities and significant media changes. In pursuit of its objectives 'to establish a common platform in building and sustaining the prestige of the advertising profession' and 'to serve as spokesman against unwarranted attack or restrictions on advertising', the IAA formed a Public Action Committee, which met for the first time at the 1980 IAA World Congress in Durban, South Africa. This Committee assumed responsibility for monitoring the international advertising climate with regard to government regulation, legislation and consumerist actions. In this, the IAA worked closely with other organizations such as the European Economic Community, the European Advertising Tripartite (EAT) and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC).

The 1980's presented the IAA with new and greater challenges — included among them mergers and restructurings on both the agency and advertiser sides, new advertising restrictions and bans, threats of taxes on advertising, developments in satellite broadcasting and so on.

Chapter lobbying efforts, directly and in cooperation with a host of other national, regional and international organizations increased markedly on such issues as taxation and product advertising and gained the support of many more Organizational Members.

The Association closed out the 1980's with a strong membership base of 2,700 Individual Members and 36 Chapters in 74 countries, with 82 Corporate and 28 Organizational Members.

1990s: A truly international reach

For the Association, this decade was marked by a number of significant advances. One of these was its



continuing international growth and influence, mirrored in the geographical origins of its World Presidents; Roger Neill (1990-92), a former Chapter President both in Australia and the UK; Mustapha Assad (1992-94), the first from the Middle East; Luis Carlos Mendiola Codina (1994-96), the second from Latin America; and Senyon Kim (1996-98), the first from Asia/Pacific.

This was a time of substantial growth in the Association's membership and in the focus and effectiveness of its programs. At the end of the nineties, membership, including young professionals or Associates, totaled 4,600 in 93 countries, with 61 Chapters, 98 Corporate Members and 64 Organizational Members. Membership had also continued to spread internationally, standing by area as 40% in Europe, 21% Asia/Pacific, 18% Middle East/Africa, 11% Latin America & the Caribbean and 10% US/Canada. A second major step to achieve the mission objective of explaining the value of advertising was taken in 1994 with the first IAA-commissioned study of the economic contribution of advertising to a country's economy. Referred to as Economic Impact Studies, these were undertaken and presented to government, bureaucrats, the media and the marketing communications business in 15 countries.

With freedom of commercial speech and consumer choice increasingly under threat, the IAA recognized early in this decade the need in its advocacy to develop a bank of bedrock intellectual and sociological arguments to back-up the economic ones. This was done by the staging of a series of International Symposia under the theme Advertising & the Media in an Open Society. Outside experts, philosophers, sociologists, eminent journalists and editors were invited onto the 'common-ground' provided by the IAA's global tripartite constituency. There they spoke out on the issues from the stand-point of their own disciplines.

Major support was given to advertising self-regulation in national markets and regionally to bodies such as the Brussels-based European Advertising Standards Alliance (EASA) and to SILEC, the Venezuela-based body for Latin America.

During this period, the IAA's Professional Development program was reorganized. It is now headed by a leading Professor, the syllabus has been updated and broadened, the number of IAA Accredited Institutes has grown dramatically and includes an increasing number at the university level. A new hands-on international student advertising competition, InterAd, was introduced.

A heightened level of effective, results-oriented actions, focused on a tight series of agreed mission priorities, was one of the distinguishing features of the Association's work during the nineties. Another feature of the nineties was the growth of Associate membership - the young professionals under the age of 35. From only a few, they grew to over 1,000 members in some 20 Chapters, with their own Newsletter and an international communications program.

The IAA celebrated its 60th Anniversary in 1998 with the launch of its Give a Kid a Hand Campaign. Launched on the final day of the 36th IAA World Advertising Congress in Cairo and introduced by Madame Suzanne Mubarak as Chair of the Advisory Committee, this capitalized on the IAA's proven success in accomplishing global communications with its Campaign for Advertising. Give a Kid a Hand aimed to attract thousands of volunteers in dozens of countries, all willing to give their time to better the lives of children.



2000 +

In 2003 a new regional plan was developed to give each of the five world areas added strength to develop activities and network.

2005 saw the start of our sustainable development initiative, in cooperating with ACT Responsible. As part of the program, an annual competition is held where teams are challenged to develop an ad campaign on social/ environmental issues. The winners of the competition are featured during IAA World Congresses, as well as at additional worldwide venues.

The IAA logo and visual identity system was re-designed in 2007 and Chapters were provided with new corporate identity toolkits. The visual logo and tag-line (“Inspiring excellence in communications worldwide”) were copyrighted and Chapters were asked to sign a trademark agreement that provided uniformity to the IAA brand worldwide.

The IAA Education Program was realigned in 2008, with a new accreditation format developed. It is the course (not the university, college or tertiary institution) that is now accredited. Each accredited course is individually assessed and scored through a rigorous, benchmarked IAA Education Council process, ensuring an internationally-recognized quality of formal content and teaching required by the global communications industry for its students and future young professionals.

The IAA-Dentsu Global Student Poster Competition was created in 2008, building on the "responsibility" thread of the IAA mission. The competition, which asks undergraduate students to create a poster based on an environmental-impact theme, is in support of the United Nations' action on climate change and is made possible by a grant from Dentsu Inc.

In 2009 the “Hopenhagen” campaign was created by the IAA, representing the global advertising industry’s support of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP15). A website “www.Hopenhagen.org” was created, where 6,172,820 citizens from around the world added their messages of hope. The Hopenhagen campaign was a great success with 197.9MM in reported media value and 50+ countries reached.

Also during 2009, the Digital Download Forum Series was created - an invitation-only state-of-the-industry traveling seminar where key industry experts were asked to share their views and expertise on what the real issues are behind the headlines in the digital/online industry. Forums were held throughout the year in Paris, Madrid, Mumbai, Sydney and Singapore. A second series began in late 2010.

The 2010 Congress, held in Moscow and attended by over 1,200 delegates from both Russia and overseas.

The InterAd Competition was relaunched in 2010, with client-sponsor Canon providing the funding.