



Thank You, George, For Making It Happen

Thank you, George. Your obvious and invaluable trait as a visionary has benefited countless office technology dealers. You could see that there is strength in numbers. That is, by bringing independent dealers together, you knew that their unity would help them reach new heights. Today, we like to refer to it as “dealers helping dealers.”



You would be happy to know, George, that independent dealerships remain our core members and dealers continue to govern the association as elected volunteers. Today, we have 22 volunteer leaders at the district and national levels. Collectively, they guide the association, working with the staff to ensure dealers have a valuable resource to lend them a helping hand whenever there is a need.

Who is George? He was our first president. No, not George Washington, but, rather, George S. Walker, the first president of what is today the Business Technology Association (BTA). The details of why he was selected as the association's first president, where he lived and even the name of his dealership are lost to history (at least for now). What we do know is that in early 1926 he was named to serve as the first president.

George took on the role following a meeting of independent typewriter dealers on Jan. 22-23, 1926, in Kansas City, Missouri. That meeting resulted in the formation of the National Typewriter Dealers Association. By the early 1930s, the organization had expanded its name to become the National Typewriter and Office Machine Dealers Association. Then, in 1943, the name was shortened to the National Office Machine Dealers Association (NOMDA) — a name (ushering in the “NOMDA Days” era) that today's industry veterans will remember. In

1994, the name was changed to the present Business Technology Association.

While that first meeting took place in Kansas City (presumably because one of the founding members was located here or because it was a central location, allowing for the meeting attendees to more easily make the trip), and while the city has been our home since 1985, the association has, in fact, had several headquarters locations. A look at BTA publication archives reveal headquarters in these cities (the years simply reflect points in time, rather than move dates): Dayton, Ohio (1946); Los Angeles, California (1954); and Des Plaines (1965), Elk Grove Village (1974) and Wood Dale, Illinois (1982). With a deeper dive into the association's archives, I suspect I would find other headquarters locations.

While our association has had several names and headquarters locations through the decades, what has not changed is its focus on strengthening the dealer channel. George and, no doubt, his fellow association leaders at the time, had it right. Their realized vision has stood the test of time. Here we are, 100 years later, and the association remains strong, vital and attuned to providing what dealers need to optimize their levels of success with technology and services for the workplace.

Throughout 2026, in this magazine and otherwise, BTA will be highlighting its rich history, focusing in part on how its creation has benefited the dealer channel for 10 decades. We also hope to hear from many of you, sharing your BTA memories and what you see as the value of membership, as part of a feature that will be launched in our February issue. Look to hear from BTA on this via email. As you stop and consider the value of membership, join me in thanking George for his role in making it happen. ■

— Brent Hoskins

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FLASHBACK



The association's magazine cover 61 years ago this month — the NOMDA Spokesman, January 1965.