



BTA History Logged Within These Pages

During 2026 in this space, I am taking the opportunity to look back at various aspects of the association as we celebrate its 100th anniversary. This month: BTA's monthly magazine itself. It was first published in November 1938 as *Dealers Topics*, the magazine of the National Typewriter & Office Machine Dealers Association. Later, we had the *NOMDA Spokesman* during our 50 years as the National Office Machine Dealers Association. Then, for a few years, we had *Solutions* magazine. Since September 2001, the title has been *Office Technology*.



I have a copy of that first issue from 1938. A scanned copy can be found on the BTA website (Visit www.bta.org, click on "About Us," then "History" and scroll to the bottom of the page). Just outside of my office are hundreds of copies of other past issues in several filing cabinets, dating from the 1950s to the present. I am not sure there is any greater source of industry and association history than these magazine archives.

Each month on this page of *Office Technology* (at the bottom right) is the image of a cover from a past issue. We call it Flashback. I simply select a copy from the archives that is for the same month as the current month and scan the cover. This month our Flashback is from the March-April 1965 issue of the *NOMDA Spokesman*. I don't normally select a combined issue, but I was intrigued when I saw the cover story: "Profile of an Office Machine Dealer."

So, as we celebrate the association's 100 years, allow me to share a bit from that March-April 1965 article. It begins: "The results of a recent dealer profile indicate that the average office machine dealer has annual sales in excess of \$100,000! The \$100,000

and higher group now accounts for 63.6% of NOMDA's membership with the remaining 36.4% falling into the less than \$100,000 category. The most interesting and encouraging fact revealed by this survey is that the largest group of dealers (29.6%) do over \$200,000 per year."

You may be wondering: What would \$100,000 in 1965 U.S. dollars be equivalent to today? ChatGPT tells me it's \$1,038,635 (after adjusting for inflation). Think about that for a moment. If the dealers of 1965 could have seen what was in store for the office technology dealer channel 61 years later, I am not sure they would have been able to believe how well future generations would be doing in terms of annual revenues. It brings a smile to my face to think about how this industry has allowed so many to make a great living.

Thumbing through the March-April 1965 issue I see a few more treasures — a promotion for the association's new IBM Service course; an article previewing the upcoming June 12-15, 1965, NOMDA Convention in Chicago, Illinois; an ad placed by SW Typewriter Co., a Division of Button Industries, promoting three Underwood typewriter models priced at \$89.50, \$185 and \$225. There is also an article from a dealer sharing his advertising strategy for each month of the year. For March, he writes: "With income tax time approaching, the need for better records becomes more prominent. Promote photocopiers, adding machines, typewriters, calculators and other recordkeeping equipment."

As I look at the 61-year-old magazine, I find myself wondering what someone looking at this current issue will be thinking 61 years from now. I suspect they will be thinking about how many thousands of dealers have benefited from membership during the association's 161-year history. ■

— Brent Hoskins

Office Technology

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Executive Director/BTA Editor/Office Technology

Brent Hoskins
brent@bta.org
(816) 303-4040

Associate Editor

Elizabeth Marvel
elizabeth@bta.org
(816) 303-4060

Contributing Writers

Dr. Tommy Cooke, TommyCooke.com
www.tommycooke.com

Greg Goldberg, BTA General Counsel
Business Technology Association

Troy Harrison, Troy Harrison & Associates
www.troyharrison.com

Jenna Miller, Emerald Strategic Marketing
www.emeraldstrategicmarketing.com

Lee Rubin, LeeRubinSpeaks.com
www.leerubinspeaks.com



Business Technology Association

12411 Wornall Road
Kansas City, MO 64145
(816) 941-3100
www.bta.org

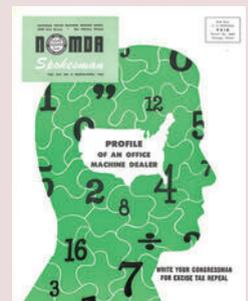
Member Services: (800) 505-2821
BTA Legal Hotline: (847) 922-0945

Valerie Brisen
Marketing Director
valerie@bta.org

Brian Smith
Membership Sales Representative
brian@bta.org

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FLASHBACK



The association's magazine cover 61 years ago this month — the *NOMDA Spokesman*, March-April 1965.