Forty Years at BTA: A Treasured Privilege



In 1986 I was working as a reporter for a suburban Kansas City, Missouri, newspaper. I had earned my Bachelor of Journalism degree from the University of Missouri School of Journalism in 1984 and landed my dream job (at the time). My beat was covering three school districts. I also wrote feature articles on a regular basis. Unfortunately, the pay was very low. About a year and a half into the role, I was compelled to find a new position.

I spotted an ad in the Kansas City Star newspaper for a reporter position at the National Office Machine Dealers Association (NOMDA). I applied and got an interview. I remember driving by the building that is still the home of what is now the Business Technology Association (BTA) the night before the interview. It was built in the 1960s as a private high school and, so, is a large building (only part of the building is used by BTA today). I remember thinking: "Do they actually manufacture something here?" I quickly learned I was way off base with that thought. I didn't know anything about the copier industry at the time.

The editor of the association's magazine, the NOMDA Spokesman, along with the NOMDA administrator (the title is now executive director), interviewed me for the reporter position. I got the job. My first day of service was Monday, Nov. 24, 1986. My first article appeared in the January 1987 issue of the Spokesman. The title: "Today's Yellow Pages: Redefined." Really.

You can do the math; I am approaching my 40th anniversary at BTA. I assumed I would be at the association for a few years before finding a new job. I am so glad I was wrong with that expectation. Why have I made my service to BTA my entire career? The reason is three-fold: job satisfaction, an ever-changing industry and great people.

■ **Job Satisfaction:** As noted, my career began in journalism. I'm very happy to say that, 40 years later, journalism is still a key part of my job; I've served as editor of what is now Office Technology magazine since December 1988. Plus, for the past 20 years, my service to the association has greatly expanded with my role as executive director, which has been an unbelievably rewarding experience. For me, wearing both the editor and executive director hats is the best of both worlds.

■ **An Ever-Changing Industry:** The transition from analog copiers to digital MFPs changed the trajectory of our industry, making it more rewarding for all of us. With the many subsequent transitions — including the emergence of new technology opportunities for dealers beyond imaging — there is never a dull moment. As of late, of course, AI is front and center as the new opportunity capturing our attention.

■ **Great People:** This is the area where I have really hit the jackpot. I have worked alongside so many great people through the years who stepped forward to give back to the association as volunteers. Likewise, I have enjoyed working with many wonderful fellow BTA staff members and interviewing numerous inspiring industry leaders through the years for the seemingly countless articles I have written.

As I approach my 40th anniversary with the association, allow me to thank you for the privilege of serving the office technology industry. It has been my life's work. And, no, my retirement is not imminent. I look forward to continuing to be of service in the coming years. ■

— Brent Hoskins

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FLASHBACK



The association's magazine cover 48 years ago this month — the NOMDA Spokesman, November 1978.