

Stand and Deliver

Jack K. Mowry, Editor and Publisher

With apologies to Jaime Escalante,* who passed away last year, S&V may well have a “stand and deliver” teachable moment to share with our readers and advertisers. As shown by the circulation history chart, S&V has lost more than half of its qualified non-paid and non-qualified paid circulation over a 10-year period.

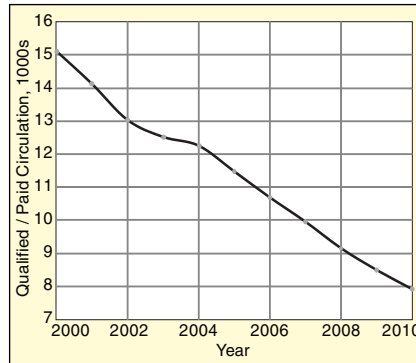
The circulation list is updated on a monthly basis. As a member of BPA Worldwide, a respected media-auditing organization, we are required to report our circulation statistics every six months (June and December). Subscribers must be qualified within a maximum of three years. We make four attempts by mail to re-qualify subscribers who are approaching the three-year limit. Subscribers who do not re-qualify and exceed the three-year limit must be dropped from the list. As you can see, we lose about 7% of our circulation every update period due to non-renewals and insufficient new subscriber applications for the period. A 93% update history is exceptional, but the slow deterioration in our total circulation is unacceptable.

I suppose that we could come up with many reasons for this loss of circulation, but that is not the point. We are not looking for excuses, we are looking for ways to bottom out the curve and make its slope positive. That is the purpose of this message.

Does S&V Stand and Deliver for its Readers? We received more than 50 detailed responses to my “A Sound & Vibration Manifesto” editorial (June 2010 S&V) – all positive. This shows that we have maintained the right editorial model, with our emphasis on practical noise and vibration control articles over 44 years of publishing *Sound & Vibration*. There were many comments such as “I’ve saved every issue I ever received” and “S&V is the only magazine I receive that is worth reading.” So we are publishing and archiving useful editorial content to a well-defined audience.

Assistant Editor Larry Basar is a professional photographer and expert “mouse master.” The graphics he prepares for our articles are second to none in quality. We do not go for fancy layouts with illustration spreads, drop shadows, and color blends. These are of little value beyond looking pretty. Our graphics, on the other hand, are meaningful and provide useful information to our readers. Our editorial content is tight, practical, well edited, and carefully selected

*Jamie Escalante was a dedicated teacher in an East Los Angeles high school who put together a remarkably successful mathematics program to teach calculus to disadvantaged students. His incredible story was dramatized by the award-winning movie “Stand and Deliver” in 1988.



Qualified non-paid and non-qualified paid circulation history for *Sound & Vibration* magazine from 2000 to 2010. Highest circulation of about 20,000 was achieved in 1985.

to maximize service to our readers.

Security. Readers will not receive spam that originates from the S&V circulation list. In our 44 years of publishing, we have never given out the list to anyone. We do an occasional direct mail job for selected advertisers, but they are required to send their mailing pieces to our own mailing house for addressing and distribution. We do not send them the names.

Paper and/or Digital? I raised the question of paper and digital editions in my June editorial. Subscribers generally do not take the time to read engineering magazines provided as digital editions. So what’s the point of providing this version? We intend to publish only a paper edition of S&V and continue to make PDF files of major editorial items available for free download from our web site. The paper edition is fully portable, does not require an electronic reader, is easily perused from front to back, always accessible, easily distributed by surface/airlift mail, and easily archived for future reference. Graphics suffer greatly when displayed on a digital reader. They may be almost unreadable even when magnified due to the limited file size that must be imposed. Printed graphics, on the other hand, are done at high resolution and are fully readable by anyone with normal eyesight.

Does S&V Stand and Deliver for its Advertisers? I have spent the four and a half decades of my publishing career providing commercial marketing services to advertisers in our fields of coverage. I make a point of keeping up to date on the product lines of our advertisers and their marketing programs. Associate Editor George Fox Lang is our technical guru. He is well versed in the technologies of our industry and has a gift for clear explanation.

Advertisers need to justify their expenditures to magazines and other media. This may be an emotional or pragmatic decision.

Because of the Internet, it is difficult to measure response to advertising on a numerical basis. Many years ago, “bingo-card” inquiries per advertising dollar was a meaningful metric. Nowadays, magazine readers look at the ads. If they see something of interest, they may launch their browser and “Google” the advertiser or input the URL if it is contained in the ad. They may wend their way through the advertiser’s web site to find the product they are looking for. The advertiser can only log “click-throughs” or page views, and they may place a “cookie” on the reader’s computer. If the reader “submits” his or her info, only then does the advertiser have enough information to follow up the inquiry. The reader consumes a fair amount of time on this process.

S&V does not have any magic to greatly improve this process, but we do offer a mechanism on our www.SandVinfo.com reader service to make it much more efficient. If readers are leafing through S&V and launch their browser, they can go to this site, select the issue they are looking at and display either the home page of the advertiser or the page that directly shows the product advertised. This will generate a click-through that will be logged by S&V. If readers click “Submit” to get more information, they will be asked to input their name and address, which will then be forwarded to advertisers. If a cookie is left on their computer, a subsequent “Submit” will automatically send their stored profile to the selected advertisers.

Many magazines that get a lot of advertising do not have any mechanism to forward inquiries to the advertisers. So why do they get the advertising? Good question. How do their advertisers justify the expense? It is possible to place a coded URL in an advertisement, but this technique is rarely used, and I doubt that it generates enough response to make the exercise worthwhile. Some advertisers query their customers about the source of their interest, and this is good.

S&V maintains both an Internet-based and bingo-card system. It is a lot of work to implement www.SandVinfo.com; the system is minimally used by our audience, but at least it is available. Perhaps it will be used increasingly as readers find out how well it works.

Do You Stand and Deliver for S&V? We derive almost all of our editorial content from the resources of our readers. There is no question about the depth of their contributions to our success. Our authors have my deepest gratitude and appreciation.

Sound & Vibration is sent **free** to qualified subscribers in the United States and


available on a nominal, paid-subscription basis to readers in Canada and other foreign countries. The qualification process takes a few minutes to either fill out and submit a web-based subscription application or a post-paid subscription card. The web-based application form is on the www.SandV.com site, and a subscription card is bound into every issue of S&V and included with the four renewal mailings. This is not “rocket science” and takes very little effort from a new or renewal subscriber to submit an application. As near as we can determine, our readers are getting a useful magazine every month with very little effort on their part. I have noted that some leading individuals in our market appear to depend on us to send

them a copy of S&V. We cannot do this and at the same time fulfill BPA audit requirements. If you fit this category, please help us by requesting your own copy through the provided channels.

I feel that our readers are our best supporters, and **I have a proposal**. Help us improve our circulation or at least stop the bleeding by recommending S&V to your associates and any of your contacts who you think will benefit from receiving their own copy of S&V. Send them to our web site, or give them a subscription card.

Do you send your own copy of S&V to other readers? This does not help our circulation statistics. “Pass-along” readership cannot be audited, and anyone can easily

request his or her own copy. Send me an e-mail if you would like sample copies or subscription information sent to prospective readers. You do the math – if half of our current subscribers each helped us get one new reader, it would add thousands to our circulation list.

This editorial may not be read by all of our readers. My simple request to our thousands of S&V readers for help may be an exercise in futility – but I hope not! **To those of you who will “stand and deliver” new readers to S&V, my profound “thank you.”** 

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