

New Section Development Manual

Society of Plastics Engineers

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FOREWORD

The purpose of this manual is to explain the procedures that have been most effective in promoting the development of new SPE Sections.

The Section is the basic functioning unit of the Society, and efficiency in Section operations is an accurate gauge by which to measure the value of the services rendered to SPE members. The importance of ‘starting off on the right foot’ cannot be overemphasized since the effectiveness of Section development procedures is generally indicative of the quality of Section operating procedures once a group has been awarded Section Charter.

In projecting plans for new Section development, experience has shown an indispensable requirement to be the initiative and effort of one or possibly two or three individuals willing to develop, organize and follow through on plans for establishing a Section. No matter how great the potential, Section development activities cannot be carried out successfully where they are handicapped by lack of leadership and centralized organization. Before making any extensive commitments, those interested in forming new Sections are requested to review this manual so that they will be fully aware of the manifold duties related to their undertaking.

Following the steps in this manual, in the sequence outlined will ensure the best use of energy and effort, and unnecessary work and worry will be eliminated.

Individuals undertaking Section development activities are reminded that the SPE Sections Committee and SPE Headquarters are eager to assist in every way possible. It is hoped that they will not hesitate to request assistance whenever the need arises.

THE SECTION DEFINED

An SPE Section comprises at least thirty-five (35) SPE members within a predetermined geographical area, organized in accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws and Rules of the Society and functioning under a charter granted by the Council of the Society.

SPE Sections are self-governing bodies within the International Society and operate under their own bylaws, which are in conformity with those of the Society. The objectives of the Sections are similar to and in harmony with the objectives of the Society, as indicated in Article I, C-2, of the SPE Constitution.

The objective of the Society shall be to provide and promote scientific and engineering knowledge relating to plastics. The objective shall be achieved by:

1. Technical meetings at which formal and informal seminars are conducted for the presentation of scientific and engineering reports and papers, and for the discussion of problems related to the objective, of the Society.
2. Scientific and engineering reports and papers and an official publication devoted to the dissemination of technical information relating to plastics.
3. Encouraging engineers and scientists to exchange technical information relating to plastics.
4. Cooperating with and encouraging educational institutions to establish technical and scientific courses relating to plastics and to maintain high standards of technical education.

The successful, well-organized Section operates in harmony with the rules of the Society, fulfilling its objective of service to its members and to the industry. Regularly scheduled programs, carefully planned in advance, will stimulate Section interest and attendance.

SECTION POTENTIAL

Since persons affiliated with a Section must be members of the Society, it follows that the fundamental consideration in determining the Section potential of a given area is that there is a sufficient number of individuals in the locality qualified for and desirous of SPE membership.

A second basic requirement is that the proposed Section does not fall within the confines of an established Section. While geographical boundaries are used to describe the area encompassed by a Section, distance and travel convenience are more practical indications of the region served by any one Section.

ADVANTAGES OF SECTION AFFILIATION

An SPE member derives the greatest benefits of membership through affiliation with a Section. Active participation in the affairs of the Section affords the member a unique opportunity to keep abreast of the latest developments in his or her field of technical competence and interest. At the Section level the member comes in contact with other individuals whose potential endeavors are closely allied with his or her own. In addition, members can enhance their technical and administrative capabilities by serving in various areas of Section operations and by participating in its programs.

STEERING COMMITTEE

A small group of members form the nucleus of Section development. It isn't necessary to be a member of SPE in order to be considered for a Steering Committee, but he or she should apply for membership upon accepting appointment. Steering Committee members should inform their management of their interest in organizing a Section, seeking their concurrence and possibly their assistance, particularly in secretarial and mailing operations. Each committee member should bring to their management's attention the many advantages this type of activity will afford the company.

The first Steering Committee meeting should begin with a full analysis of the interest and potential in the area to determine whether there is truly enough plastics activity to warrant a chartered Section and to maintain it successfully. If the analysis is favorable, the Steering Committee should compile a list that includes all interested individuals and companies in the area. A survey letter (see Appendix I: Suggested Survey-Interest Letter, p 10) should be prepared and mailed to all on the list. This letter will serve as the first general announcement of intentions to form a Section.

The committee should plan to follow this letter with phone calls and personal contacts, perhaps assigning a group of prospects to each committee member. Committee members should make a point of enlisting the aid of early responses to the solicitation, inviting their attendance at a future organizational meeting, which should be scheduled primarily to compile and evaluate survey returns, and, on the basis of them, to plan the first general meeting of all interested parties. This is, of course, the ideal time to initiate membership promotion, an essential part of your development activities.

FINANCES

Section income may be derived from surplus realized through fees charged for Section meetings. These fees should be projected to cover the full cost of the meeting, plus a minimum margin of profit for contingencies. Each meeting should be at least self-supporting.

To meet expenses incurred in initial development activity, the Steering Committee may seek financial assistance from SPE Headquarters. If approved, this assistance will be made in the form of an advance to be charged against subsequent membership rebates. The total of the advance need not be deducted entirely from the first rebate; it may be proportioned over two or three subsequent rebates.

The rebate of membership dues is based upon the number of Section members in good standing as of December 31 of each year. Rebates are credited according to the schedule outlined in SPE Bylaw B-14. The initiation fee of all new members is rebated to the Section for the first two years following charter; thereafter, one-quarter of these fees is rebated.

GENERAL INTEREST MEETING

Invitations for the general interest meeting should be sent two weeks prior to the event. The recipient list should include everyone who received the survey and any other likely prospects. Invitations may be sent to members affiliated with nearby Sections who, as a matter of convenience, would find affiliation with the potential Section desirable. A list can be obtained from SPE Headquarters.

Following a declaration of the purpose of the meeting and the self-introduction of those present, the agenda should concern itself with the election of temporary officers, the appointment of committee chairs and the schedule for the first formal monthly meeting. The following temporary officers should be appointed; normally, Steering Committee members assume these posts:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Councilor

The President will then appoint the following committee chairs:

- Membership
- Program
- House
- Publicity

All pro tem officers and committee chairs must either be members of SPE or submit application for membership upon acceptance of office. Those appointed to the above offices shall act as the Section Board of Directors pending approval of charter. Temporary officers and committee chairs shall be eligible for election to Section office upon charter. These persons must be familiar with the Constitution, Bylaws and Rules of the Society and the Section Operational Guidelines.

The President will direct all activities of the group. The President will preside at meetings of the membership and the Board of Directors and will appoint chairs of standing and temporary committees, working with them to ensure proper and expeditious conduct of Section affairs.

The Vice President will preside in the absence or at the request of the President and will assist the President in whatever capacity is required.

The Secretary will keep minutes of all group meetings and will notify SPE Headquarters of the names and addresses of the temporary officers and Steering Committee members.

The Treasurer will be responsible for financial matters as outlined in the Section Operational Guidelines as they affect the potential Section.

The Councilor, as the chief liaison between the Section and SPE as a whole, will represent the group at SPE Council meetings. The Councilor will present the Section petition for charter and will be prepared to offer the Council additional substantiating data concerning the development, operation and potential of the group.

The Membership Chair, with the assistance of a committee, will promote Society membership within the area of the development activity. The Membership Chair will maintain an up-to-date roster of group members and potential members, which he or she will file with SPE Headquarters, with subsequent notifications of changes or revisions as necessary.

SECTION TECHNICAL MEETINGS

Meetings should be held at a convenient, central location. Most hotels and large restaurants will be willing to cooperate with you. Be sure to gain firm commitments to rates of meals, assignment of meeting rooms and equipment for meetings. The meeting fee for attendees should be set accordingly. Section meetings should always feature attractive technical presentation(s). For the reputation of the future meetings, it is also important that presentations do not come off as a sales pitch.

During the course of any meeting, a general outline of future activities should be presented. Welcome suggestions from the floor. The Program Chair should request that each person submit a choice of technical topics and speakers for subsequent meetings. Obviously, not everyone will have exactly similar interests, but it should be possible to develop programs that will cover the major interests of the group.

Since not all attendees will be members of the Society, the Membership Chair should have membership applications available on-site. Where possible, collect completed applications that before the conclusion of the meeting. The Membership Chair should also distribute extra applications for attendees to share with their colleagues.

PETITION FOR CHARTER

Once the group appears sound, with indications of permanent interest and potential for the future the elected leadership should prepare a petition for Section charter. As soon as the group decides to move forward, the Councilor should learn the date of the next SPE Council Meeting, as the petition must be forwarded to SPE Headquarters for processing one month prior to the meeting. A letter from the President that includes additional substantiating data should accompany the petition. The Section name should be as short as possible while maintaining a description of the area.

The petition (see Appendix II: Petition for Section Charter, p 11) must be signed by at least thirty-five (35) SPE members or members in process, all of whom have indicated their desire to affiliate with the Section. It is, of course, desirable to have as many additional signatures as possible. You can provide incentive for signers by pointing out that they will be Charter Members of the Section.

SPE Headquarters will validate the signatures appearing on the petition and will request the Chair of the Sections Committee to have the petition placed on the Council's meeting agenda. The Councilor will be invited to attend the meeting and should be prepared to supplement the written data in support of the petition. Approval of charter is subject to majority vote of Council.

Following receipt of its charter, the Section will proceed in accordance with operations outlined in the Section Operational Guidelines.

APPENDIX I: SUGGESTED SURVEY-INTEREST LETTER

Dear _____

Although you may not currently be a member, you are probably familiar with the Society of Plastics Engineers. The primary objective of the Society is the promotion of scientific and engineering knowledge relating to plastics. Its objective is achieved by:

1. Technical meetings at which formal and informal seminars are conducted for the presentation of scientific and engineering reports and papers, and for the discussion of problems related to the objective of the Society.
2. Scientific and engineering reports and papers and an official Publication devoted to the dissemination of technical information relating to plastics.
3. Encouraging engineers and scientists to exchange technical information relating to plastics.
4. Cooperating with and encouraging educational institutions to establish technical and scientific courses relating to plastics and to maintain high standards of technical education.

The value of association with SPE becomes more and more evident as the expansion of the plastics industry continues, especially in our own area.

We are pleased to report that the Society has offered us facilities for forming an SPE Section in the _____ area, provided a sufficient number of persons indicate their interest in participating in such a Section. The chief activity of a Section is its monthly meeting, at which it presents and discusses technical papers dealing with plastics and allied subjects. In addition, Section activities provide an opportunity for meeting socially with persons whose professional interests are similar.

In order to get an idea of the Section potential in this area, we would appreciate your completing and returning the enclosed postcard. We would be happy to receive any suggestions or comments you wish to submit with regard to the establishment of a Section.

An organizational meeting, contingent, of course, upon the response to this survey, is now being planned, and full details will be forwarded to you later. We would be grateful if you would bring this notice to the attention of those of your associates likely to be interested in this project.

May we count on your participation?

APPENDIX III: GOALS FOR FIRST ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

The following is an outline of the objectives to be accomplished at the first meetings of a prospective SPE Section. Much of this information is covered by the New Section Formation Criteria in this manual (see Appendix V: New Section Formation Criteria, p 16). The following have been found to be quite important:

1. Explain the purposes, beliefs, and requirements of a new SPE Section.
2. Have a top-notch speaker give a technical presentation to whet the appetite of the group for more meetings of that type.
3. Obtain signatures on the Petition for Section Charter. Perhaps the Steering Committee and others can sign the petition even before the meeting so that all efforts can be concentrated on other prospective members at the meeting. It is always helpful to point out that the prospective signer stands to become a Charter Member.
4. Have Change of Address and Section Transfer cards signed at the same time and kept together with the petition. Do not give them to the signer to mail to SPE Headquarters. They should be kept together so that they can be forwarded as a group along with the petition when it is ready.
5. Explain the duties of the Steering Committee and delegate these to various members. It is recommended that those at the meeting vote their approval of the Steering Committee, with the understanding that these people will serve until the Section is chartered and an election can be held.
6. Select a name for the Section. The name should be associated as closely as possible with the geographical area. Vague or non-descriptive names should be avoided. For the purposes of good order, it is suggested that one or two alternate names be selected as well. Final approval is in the hands of the Council when a petition for charter is voted upon.
7. Select the best date and location for monthly meetings.
8. Work on new membership drives at the first meeting and all subsequent meetings. If at all possible, have prospective members complete applications at the meeting. Give these forms, along with the dues payment, to the Steering Committee. Some few will always wish to take the forms with them and to send them directly to SPE or to bring them to the next meeting. These people should be encouraged to join since they tend to procrastinate. The Membership Committee can be of great help in stimulating action.
9. Learn what topics and areas of interest should be served. Examples are: machinery, resins, tooling, decorating, injection molding, extrusion, blow molding, compression and transfer molding, laminating, reinforced plastics, foams, epoxies, potting and encapsulating. This information should be used as a guide for subsequent meetings.

APPENDIX IV: DISCUSSION OF SPE FOR PROSPECTIVE GROUPS

It is helpful to share some basic information with respect to SPE. It is helpful to put this information together in a brief ten-to-fifteen-minute talk followed by questions and answers. Since it is rather important, it should be scheduled on the program prior to the presentation by the regular technical speaker.

Q. How large is SPE?

A. SPE is an international technical Society now comprising more than 20,000 members. They are divided into geographical Sections in the United States, Mexico, Canada, South America, Asia-Pacific and Europe.

Q. Why a new Section?

A. To make it possible for more people to regularly attend monthly meetings and to learn of advances in plastics technology and related subjects, to advance the profession, to acquaint others (engineers, designers, and users, etc.) with the scope and potential of our products and our industry. Through this professional activity, we hope to offer valuable information to the members at each meeting, to help them keep abreast of new developments, to help them be of greater value to their firms and to themselves. The meeting also affords the opportunity to ask questions directly of the speakers who are recognized as authorities in their chosen fields.

Q. What is required to form a new Section?

A. Thirty-five (35) valid signatures on a petition for charter constitute the basic requirement.

Q. Who can sign a petition?

A. SPE members now in good standing or those persons who have membership applications in process.

Q. What charges are involved in SPE membership?

A. For the 2005 calendar year, a new SPE Membership includes an initiation fee of \$10.00 plus dues of \$110.00, for a total payment of \$120.00.

Q. What happens to the dues?

A. Approximately 31% of the dues covers the cost of the subscription to *Plastics Engineering*, which is the official publication of the Society. Approximately 13% is rebated in the form of cash to the local Section. Approximately 56% is used to run the Society.

Q. How are funds made available to the Section?

A. Once a year a rebate is paid to the local Section by SPE Headquarters of SPE based as follows:

- a. The sum of \$300 plus
- b. For each Fellow, Honored Service Member, Senior Member, Member, and Affiliate Member in good standing affiliated with the Section on December 31st of the preceding year:
 1. 12% of the dues rate for the first 100 members
 2. 10% of the dues rate for the next 200 members
 3. 9% of the dues rate for all members over 300
- c. \$1.00 for each Student Member, Student Affiliate, and Emeritus Member in good standing affiliated with the Section on December 31st of the preceding year.
- d. All of initiation fees from applications made within twenty-four (24) months after the granting of a charter. Thereafter, one-fourth (1/4) of the initiation fee for each new member affiliating with the Section.

Q. Can this group meet regularly before a charter is awarded?

A. Yes, the group can meet as a prospective SPE Section and we urge that it do so. During this period, the group can grow and continue its efforts in various directions.

Q. Can I attend meetings of other Sections?

A. Yes, members can attend any Section meetings at their member rate.

Q. When can petitions be voted?

A. Petitions for charter are voted upon by the Council of SPE at one of their four meetings per year. The petition must be forwarded to the Council one month prior to the meeting at which the petition will be voted upon.

APPENDIX V: NEW SECTION FORMATION CRITERIA

A. A proposed Section must meet the current minimum criteria established in the Manual. Once it meets these criteria it can request “Section-in-Formation” status from Council.

B. The Section remains in this category for a minimum of one year; most Sections remain “in-formation” for two years.

C. After one year, the Section must have had the following:

1. A minimum of three general meetings.
2. Three Board meetings with minutes (list of attendees and minutes must be submitted to SPE Headquarters).
3. A permanent Board of Directors and officers (no longer pro tem).
4. Must have submitted an annual financial report.
5. Must still meet the original minimum criteria.
6. Must have goals for the coming SPE year.
7. Must have an SPE bank account.

After all the above has been satisfied, the Section will be reviewed by the Sections Committee for recommendation to the Executive Committee and Council. The Sections Committee would take a majority vote as to recommending the Section for Charter or recommending that the Section remain a “Section-in-Formation” for another year.

D. Once a recommendation for charter is approved, the Section receives the charter at the earliest available ANTEC.

E. Any member who signs a petition for chartering a new Section, once it is declared a Section-in-Formation, must give up his or her membership in any other Section.