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An Open Letter to FSA Members and  
Those Considering Membership

Subject: My Journey with the Fluid Sealing Association

When I think back on my journey becoming part of the Fluid Sealing Association, I can't help but feel the tingly spark of excitement ignite the fire in my belly. Thinking about how far I've come often fuels my passion for moving forward. You see, I had been working as an account rep for *Pump & Systems* magazine, and my initial introduction to the FSA had come about as a result of internal discussions relating to their *Sealing Sense* articles printed in that publication each quarter. My first *real* exposure to the association, however, happened when I attended their spring 2011 meeting in Charleston, SC. My drive to attend came from a suggestion from one of my all-time favorite clients, who was at that time the FSA President – Ed Marchese of [Proco Products, Inc.](#)

Sitting in the marketing meeting, led by its chair Janet Jessen, I certainly felt out of my element! As we made our way through the agenda however, and even though I kept telling myself "**not to talk**", I realized even then that I had something to contribute to the conversation. Following the meeting, I was welcomed by Scott Boyson who told me he knew just who I needed to meet – Ian Baynes. He then invited me to dinner, which apart from being a very pleasant surprise, gave me the opportunity to meet for the first time an amazing group of FSA members: Henri Azibert, Greg Raty, Phil Mahoney, and the lovely Pasche Raty! It was a memorable dinner, and I am still thankful for his kindness and the introduction to these amazing people. I know now... **This is the way it is at the FSA.**

By the end of the meeting, I had written a whole list of things we could do to help the FSA. Unfortunately, my enthusiasm to engage was not fully shared by my team, so I decided to look for ways that I could help based on my area of expertise – social media – figuring this was probably the best, safest, and most impactful way to jump into the action.

**Step #1** – I contacted Ian Baynes, Vice Chair of Marketing at the time, and asked him what he was doing with the FSA LinkedIn Group. This is a great story he tells, but for me, I was just trying to help find a way to better showcase the FSA to the public! **Step #2** – I redesigned the format of the LinkedIn Group as a public forum. **My first completed “action item” at the FSA!**

Shortly after this, I elected to follow a different and exciting new career path, one that would keep me engaged with the industry, but also one that would enable me to continue to participate as an FSA member. Unfortunately, during this transition I missed my first and only FSA meeting; what kept me focused on returning were the words of Ed Marchese - *“You get out of the association what you put into it”* - from a speech he made at my first meeting. So... it was my goal to go to the next meeting and get involved!

At my next meeting, and to the group’s surprise, Janet Jessen announced she was changing careers and leaving the Marketing Chair position. I never would have guessed the next steps in a million years...

Shortly after the meeting and on a business trip to visit Proco Products, Ed asked to meet with me. Thankfully, Mike gave me a heads-up (like one minute) that he was going to ask me to take the Marketing Chair position. Thankfully, I had a moment to prepare my answer without being in a pile of tears saying... WHEN AM I GOING TO HAVE TIME TO DO THAT! Not to mention, I didn’t have any experience as a Chair of anything!

Thankfully, Ed offered to help me, and said that I would have a Vice Chair to help as well. I contacted the management company to advise them of the change, and as a means of getting me up to speed, they happily sent me the last 5 years of agendas to

review. I noticed that “not much change” had happened within the Marketing Committee in quite some time. So I decided **my first mission**, again based on my area of expertise, was to get the website improved and the social media channels active. Coming from a digital media company, I couldn’t be seen as leading any organization with an out-of-date website. Thankfully, the committee was in agreement. **My second “action item” done!**

I’m forever thankful that Ian turned out to be the best Vice Chair I could’ve asked for! His skills in marketing complimented mine perfectly. We put our heads together and created real change in the Marketing Committee. This also drove improvement and action across many of the product divisions. As part of the Technical Coordinating Committee [TCC], we helped create both the Branding Guide and a Protocols Manual. I still can’t thank Ian enough for helping with those! Let’s just say “protocols” are not my thing. **My third “action item” done– ok I’m finished, hopefully you are getting the message on how this works!**

Together we built a very active Marketing Committee with **many action items to follow**. From building a new website and SharePoint intranet, to shooting testimonial videos of FSA members, to engaging governmental bodies on Twitter, our committee was known as an active and “full of energy” group. This was my mission and I am still most proud to see the **[#FSAINAction](#)**! The members of the FSA are some of the most knowledgeable and talented people I have ever met. The list is too long to mention here, but I invite you to come to the FSA’s next meeting! I will introduce you to them all!

My most proud moment was when Mike Shorts, a past FSA President, presented me with the **FSA Award of Merit**. To say I was shocked is an understatement. I was literally speechless. And if you have met me... you know that really is something! It made me feel like the hours I had put in meant something, and it gave me the drive to continue to be active in other groups; continuing my journey by increasing my participation through the Government Affairs and Strategic Planning Committees.

I have grown so much during my five years at the organization. The FSA helped me personally and professionally. It helped me understand the importance of correctly sealing pumps, valves, and compressors, which I use, every day in my business. It gave me the opportunity to serve on a Technical Committee where I learned a great

deal about standards, regulations, and equipment best practices. I have a great appreciation and respect for these amazing engineers that work hard to educate our industry on the best practices for sealing and containment devices. **This helps save energy, leads to safe working conditions, and a cleaner environment.**

I would encourage you to get involved. You don't have to be an engineer – as my story shows. We all have talents to use that will allow this amazing team to build something new and drive positive change into the industries and customers we all serve.

Can't wait to see you in action! Cheers!

Sincerely,

*Charli*  
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