

## **Guidelines for Forming an Association**

Companies, institutes, and government agencies from around the world are encouraged to form a membership society or association that concentrates on additive manufacturing (AM) and related technologies and applications. If interest in AM is strong in your region, the time may be right to consider forming such a group. This document provides some suggestions that may help you begin to organize one. If you have experience and advice beyond what is included here, please pass it along and it will be considered for inclusion in this document.

- 1) First, contact others in your region with similar interests. If they are close by, consider a lunch meeting to discuss ideas.
- 2) Among the best individuals to organize a new association are university professors and staff, employees of research institutes, government employees, independent consultants, analysts, and editors. Seek out these people to help you organize the group. AM system vendors and distributors can assist in generating interest and support. It is important to maintain a balance of representation from all organizations involved.
- 3) It may be worth to create the association as a part of or affiliated with an established organization. For example, the USA's Rapid Technologies and Additive Manufacturing (RTAM) is a part of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME). And in the UK, the Rapid Prototyping and Manufacturing Association (RPMA) is affiliated with the Institute of Mechanical Engineers (ImechE). An established organization may be able to provide support and give instant credibility to the new association.
- 4) Discuss and draft a list of objectives and proposed activities for the group. The group can refine and expand the document as more people become involved.
- 5) Appoint or elect a core group of individuals (usually 3-5) to serve as the association's leaders. Many associations have a president or chairman, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. However, it's important that you define roles and responsibilities and then invite people to step in. It is advisable to first identify the tasks and responsibilities before appointing or electing a board. The reverse often results in a "solution" looking for a "problem."
- 6) Develop a list of people that might find the group of interest. Send a mailing to these people. The mailing should outline the objectives of the group and invite them to become members. Also, ask for their input and consider a meeting date where everyone can discuss the formation of the group. Consider having a mini-conference (2-3 speakers) for the presentation of technical content. This will motivate people to attend the meeting.
- 7) Eventually, you may have expenses, so a membership fee may become necessary. Hopefully, someone will cover the initial expenses such as a mailing, meeting room, etc. If possible, avoid discussing membership fees at the first couple meetings. During the

first weeks and months, focus on the association's objectives and activities and how it can contribute to the growth of the industry. Discussing expenses and determining how to cover them can come later.

8) Plan for expansion. There may be other local interest groups (e.g., consortiums, university research groups, product or company user groups) that would find additive manufacturing of interest. Consider how you might involve them.

9) Once you have an organized structure that represents the national AM community, consider joining GARPA.