

MCOY Focus Group Notes

June 19, 2019

For those familiar with why ASAM/MCOY was founded, can you share the inspiration behind its creation? What was the initial goal(s) for ASAM/MCOY?

- Steve Hilger – Charter board member, remembers Jack and Mike starting the organization. Wanted to use the SE version of ASA. Steve did not want to have sessions where everyone is complaining and talking bad about the GC's and was conflicted about joining unless it was a way to work together and create positive relationships
 - GC's were concerned with how this would play out
 - Linda came on and added the idea of the COTY awards to engage the general contractors
- Ann Plummer – Copyright infringement 2-3 years in with the name, sued and needed to change to MCOY
- Ken Misiewicz. – GC's thought the idea of the award would play to favorites
 - Became a turning point when they wanted to win the award, they read the comments, saw the results and made changes in order to try to win
- Jon Lunderberg – Nov. 30, 2005 – Jack sent “millions” of letters to trade contractors to get things going – Fred Pileman (sp?) and Jack really kicked things off. Linda's involvement was instrumental
 - The first event was approved with a \$3,500 budget
 - RMD's playbook helped bring the awards to a professional level
 - GC's started to make changes, before trade contractors could not get a copy of the prime contract, but now they can
 - Jon has binders of all meetings and original letters
- Tim Burgess – To give us a voice, some meat behind what we say. Linda seeing the need for it and driven to see it happen.
- Nate Koetje – There for the first COTY Award in 2010, spoke at COTY
 - Criteria is largely the exact same as they wrote it when it started
 - In trying to get the organization started, “fake it till you make it”
 - ASA across the country has a tendency of being a complaining little brother to the general contractors
 - It was important to not sound like victims; celebrate what we want to see more of—praise the good behaviors and ignore the behaviors we don't want to see, classic parenting 101
 - In the basement of 2010 downtown – what do we want from GCs – talks with Linda, Nate, Jack and Mike Powers (sp?) wrote down the criteria that ASA still uses today
 - Linda was the behind the scenes planner and getting it off the ground – didn't want to be the face, Nate became the face
- Linda Vos Graham – Why did you first get involved with the ASAM organization? Recruited by founders Mike Powers & Jack Austoff, wanted to contribute to a positive impact to subcontracting community and my business

Were any of you at the inaugural awards event in 2010? What do you remember most? Describe a few of the “pinnacle” moments for MCOY. What were the key points in our history that has brought us to where we are today?

- Jon Lunderberg – Goei Center – tight fit, created a buzz in the construction industry, wanted a positive award
- Matt Fennema – The face-to-face meetings really helped
 - E&V added the MCOY criteria/feedback as part of their business plan to improve
 - GC’s no longer warding over us
- Susan Johnson – Comedians at the Goei Center – did not go over well???
 - When Chuck was the MCOY chair was when the videos started
 - Videos gave the feel of the academy awards, nominees talked
- Tim – I was at the first event and remember the success of the night. The class of the event. The response to its importance. The exclusiveness of the award.
- Nate – Giving away tables and begging people to come as opposed to what it has turned into today.
 - Asked family and friends to put butts in seats. People felt the need to buy seats and tables, but many did not show.
 - GCs not interested
 - Decided to try to meet with nominees to talk through results, most not interested, hard to get meetings to sit down with them. We felt it was important to share results as we as Trade Contractors are always looking for feedback on bids.
 - Coty/MCOY Awards helped to change image of ASAM from winning subs to partners, made it something that the GCs wanted to win and hear feedback
 - Few member votes to start and then grew each year to what it is today

How has ASAM/MCOY grown/changed/improved over time? What has MCOY done to make the construction industry as a whole more rewarding? What ideas have MCOY generated and implemented—how did they work out? What has changed with how you interact/are treated by GCs/CMs over the last ten years?

- Jon – Payment terms have been affected, GC’s are now looking to see if a sub is a member of ASAM, which determines who they work with
- Wolverine took a look at their payment terms and made changes due to feedback from MCOY
- ASAM has changed over time because it started to focus on positive criteria such as safety
- MCOY award and ASAM has switched to partnership side of the business – collaboration and voice is being heard
- Mike – The GC’s really appreciate the comments and feedback from MCOY voting process
- Susan – ASAM gave the trades a unified voice, it forced the GCs to look at the whole
 - One GC used to talk candidly about “these are just these little guys who we’ve hired” now ASAM changed how GC talked about subcontractors
- Matt – ASAM started during the great recession – everyone came together in a tough time – says a lot about the companies that came together in hard times to try to improve things
- Ken – Started inviting GCs to sit in on a few meetings – created Construction Advancement Forums for 2-3 people from GC company to sit on panel at a few monthly

meetings. GC's wanted to participate and talk to and hear from the trades – they wanted the dialogue

- GCs wanted to do this, they felt it would be beneficial
- We wanted to see the GCs do better
- Some folks (GC's) used this to sell their company but was good feedback
- Jon – ASAM brought competitors together to discuss issues and problems. Able to work on the same jobs, at one point several trades came together and realized they were all having the same issue with a GC, they shared all approaches to the issue and ultimately, they took legal action. However, outcome was actually positive.
- Changes in last 10 years – technology and communication and how they communicate, iphones
- Ken – Back then you couldn't get a contract – when you asked what was in it no one would give it to them – this has changed – the organization gave a voice to the trade made a huge difference in the way people do business
- Dan – this makes it ideal to work in West Michigan, you go outside of West Michigan and the atmosphere is different working with competitors
- Started to meet with John Doregthy (sp?) to make sure not doing the same thing as ABC
- Ken – Remember trying to see payment terms and told, “come to my office if you want to see them”
 - Award really focused on the positive outcomes, membership input
 - The face to face meetings with the GC's changed how the C-suite saw the subcontractors
- Tim – I believe it would be hard to find another ASA chapter as “quality” as ours. West Michigan contractors striving to do it better every year – refreshing.
 - It gives a clear picture of what subs want in the workplace, what matters. Relationships matter.
 - Great question for the GC's. I think we could make quite a list.
 - We have been given the opportunity to share the good, bad and ugly with the MCOY being the standard. This has been very helpful. Some continue to take the results and improve, some never will.
- Nate – All of the categories that are voted on have improved between GCs and subs; MCOY helped draw attention and put on a pedestal what we loved and praised to help these things become the norm that it is today.
 - It helped lift the entire industry as a whole and developed better relationships between the trades and the GCs. Not just viewed as sub/general, now looked at as trade partners.
 - From ASAM position: Helped give credibility to ASAM, ASAM struggled to get real credibility before the award. If you don't have members you don't have credibility, MCOY helped build members and credibility
 - MCOY has become the signature event in construction, need to keep it that way

How has YOUR company felt the impact of ASAM and the award? Do you think MCOY has had anything to do with that? Why/how? What does this award mean to you?

- Ken – It was invaluable that we went with a high dollar professional award – if we are really going to hit a home run – one really nice award– people want to show it off
 - Ken Bing from Town + Country Group designed the award, all trades represented – a lot of thought and construction went into it – a lot of meaning
 - Dan – Pioneer wanted to order a second trophy because they were so proud they won this award – turned down and told they had to earn another

- Matt – Winners put the MCOY logo in their emails to show it off
- One of a kind award – really reflects who the company is
- Susan – Piece of art not glass, heavy, expensive
- Ken – As a trade contractor: The award means professionalism and positive values if I want Pleune's name attached to something I want it to be meaningful and solid
- Matt – Trades have used the MCOY criteria internally as well to better themselves
 - High quality trades are only allowed into membership, board has final say on who is admitted into ASAM
 - It's a fraternity of high-quality trade contractors
- Tim – Can't say exactly but know doubt MCOY/ASAM has benefitted all of us.
 - What has changed with how you interact/are treated by GCs/CMs over the last ten years? Maybe a bit more in the driver's seat, but that is also a result of the economy and shortage of trades.
 - Do you think MCOY has had anything to do with that? Why/how? Possibly. It has given a more clear picture to the GC's/CM's about what matters.
 - What does this award mean to you? When you as a GC do the right things well it is noticed.
- Nate – All voting categories have improved working with the GCs because of MCOY. It called out the behaviors that were done well and gave a standard for those that needed to improve.
- Linda Vos Graham – I found business mentors & and lifetime friends in other Subcontractors/members.

Do you think the award still means the same thing as when it was first introduced?

- James Bockheim – Does this award still have validity, should it be changed up at 10 year? Yes, still has validity – keep it the same
- Matt – Because Pioneer won last year, it gave renewed hope to underdogs or those that have been on the nominee list for many years but never won. Pioneer raised it to another level
- Dan – Went to another association event and there was no comparison to MCOY, heard lots of comments about how much better MCOY is, freshman competing against varsity college level. Jealous of ASAM/MCOY event
- Jon – Likes that BeeneGarter gives voting process integrity of data
 - Data is used as a tool not a hammer towards GCs
 - Don't give away the secret sauce, but shows where improvement is needed
 - Voting
 - Do you take opinions from everyone? Yes.
- Ken – A lot of us aren't just subs – we are also contractors so we are very much “do unto others as you would like”
- Ann – Criteria has stayed the same, but the evaluation and feedback has improved
 - RMD handing surveys now, BeeneGarter assessing and reporting results
- Do you think this award/association makes sub-contractors strive to be better?
 - Not everyone gets into ASAM
 - They have denied people
 - It's great to see the general purpose that everyone has in ASAM to come together and work – part of this group that became very beneficial
 - Sitting in a board meeting where there are five to six trade contractors with a particular GC, and then they joined together in the same legal action and address issues in the construction world

- Tony – Contractors struggle with “well I got 6th, so what did the 1st place team do that I didn’t do?”
 - Would be great to have the group that wins tell a story about what they do, maybe one piece for example what they do in regards to safety, not give away everything, but share, one part and how they do it – possibly put in event?
 - Rockford has said they appreciate the data, but don’t know what to do with it, can’t compare
- Tim –Still need to be careful it doesn’t become watered down. It hasn’t but I fear it may at some point. I would warn against it.

What is the most impactful story that you’ve heard about a nominee and/or annual winner? Tell us about it. What stories can you share about scholarships recipients? Are there any real-life stories about individuals/companies being positively impacted by the increased safety standards spear-headed by ASAM & MIOSHA.

- Nate – Story: E&V did not win, so asked for actual voting criteria, raw data and language and used that to embed in their business practices, to help improve how they work and move their business forward. They then won at a later event.
- Jon – Payment terms have been affected, GC’s are now looking to see if a sub is a member of ASAM, which determines who they work with. Wolverine took a look at their payment terms and made changes due to feedback from MCOY
- Tim – Probably the most impactful is when I hear some questioning the same winners. I would encourage them to find out why they keep winning.
- Linda – The fact that several CM’s use the MCOY criteria and award as operational guidelines and goals speaks for itself.

What are MCOY’s goals for the next three to five years?

- Stay pure/true to what we have done
- Expand membership – but still be selective
- We don’t need any more awards – one major award is worth it
- One night...One award
- Matt – Because Pioneer won last year, it gave renewed hope to under dogs or those that have been on the nominee list for many years but never won. Pioneer raised it to another level.
- Nate – The event itself is the signature event-it’s a high bar to keep and people are trying to catch up and one-up; it’s a noticeable event, and it’s important for MCOY to stay on top of the heap
 - Sold out status creates demand and people feel privileged to go
 - Make sure that the process stays fresh – it can go stale when the same company wins over and over again
 - The voting process, how can we make it easier? So that more people vote...how can we drive votes through employees?
 - Think about how we get votes, how reflective of reality are they – what is a way to freshen it up and get more data points
 - We have 30 project managers that work with different contractors...there are 30 unique perspectives, casting a wider net may increase credibility, when saying 400 people voted versus 20 companies
 - Keep it leading and cutting edge, we have more attendees than voters

- Large trade contractor members consistently voting may not be representing the whole
- How do we make sure ten years in that it stays fresh and stays a desirable thing?

MCOY Event advice

- Don't talk through dinner at event
- Ken – ASAM Founders video would be powerful
- Tony – GC's hate the videos, need to see them before they are played, makes them nervous, no control.
- Steve and Matt were the first to have funny videos, don't go back to that, awkward
- Ken – one year they only had one bar and the backup was bad
- Nate – Keep the great speakers
- Tony – Would be great to have the group that wins tell a story about what they do, maybe one piece for example what they do in regards to safety, not give away everything, but share, one part and how they do it – possibly put in event?
- Tim – Love it when the scholarship winners show up

One Word description of MCOY/ASAM:

- Professionalism
 - Excellence
 - Cooperation
 - Collaboration
 - Partnership
 - Community
- Steve Hilger – Very proud to be a part of this organization