Strengthening the Electrotechnical Sector by Participating in IEC Standardization

S. Joe Bhatia, President & CEO American National Standards Institute

Nearly every aspect of modern life is connected to the electrotechnical industry. From telecommunications, multimedia, medical equipment, and energy production and distribution, to e-mobility, fiber optics, nanotechnology, and consumer appliances, all of these interconnected electrotechnologies continue to evolve at a rapid pace. And international standardization provides the critical frameworks that enable their interoperability, efficacy, quality, and safety around the world.

But did you ever wonder who is involved in the creation and promulgation of these standards? Most people have no idea – and it's an incredibly important piece of business intelligence to have, since those at the table where standards are developed have the opportunity to shape the specifications and market acceptance of products and systems for every industry.

Who's Steering This Ship?

The International Electrotechnical Commission [1] (IEC) is a global organization that develops international standards and conformity assessment systems for electrical and electronic and related technologies – an increasingly broad scope. All IEC international standards are consensus-based, and represent the needs of stakeholders from 83 member countries participating in IEC work via their national committees and voting on technical and policy positions.

The U.S. National Committee [2] (USNC/IEC) comprises hundreds of U.S. experts from a broad range of companies and organizations involved in the design, manufacture, use, regulation, or promotion of various electrotechnologies. USNC/IEC members work together on strategies and U.S. positions that foster the development of IEC standards that will facilitate international trade for the benefit of U.S. industry. And while the overall objectives are U.S. competitiveness and consumer safety, individual organizations involved in IEC standardization activities

gain the advantage of representing their interests at the tables where far-reaching U.S. positions on technological developments are shaped.

As a two-way conduit to the global standards-setting community, the USNC/IEC also brings issues from the international arena to the U.S. for review, consideration, and response. Furthermore, the USNC/IEC serves as the U.S. point of contact for industry, government, consumers, academia, and others stakeholders in the eletrotechnical industry.

A Slew of Advantages

Active participation in USNC/IEC activities provides U.S. electrotechnical industry experts and their organizations with valuable benefits, including:

- the opportunity to influence domestic and international policy;
- the chance to take advantage of unique networking opportunities and learn from international colleagues;
- a forum for the presentation of U.S. corporate, government, academic, or, in some cases, personal positions; and
- the opportunity to affect the development of international standards.

The USNC/IEC is a totally integrated committee of the American National Standards Institute [3] (ANSI), a non-profit organization that serves as coordinator of the U.S. standards and conformity assessment system. ANSI provides administrative support to the USNC/IEC and its over 2,000 U.S. managerial, engineering, scientific, and professional participants. ANSI also provides the fiduciary framework by which the USNC's financial obligations are met, including the payment of annual dues to the IEC.

So What Do You Do?

There are a number of ways you and your organization can get involved in international standardization and directly or indirectly support the activities of the USNC/IEC:

- **Participate in a** Technical Advisory Group **[4] (TAG):** The USNC interfaces with IEC Technical Committees (TCs) and Subcommittees (SCs) through its over 150 TAGs, which designate U.S. delegates to TC meetings, develops U.S. positions, determines the USNC votes/comments on TC documents, and appoint experts to Working Groups and other teams.
- **Become a USNC Sponsoring Member:** USNC membership goes beyond just TAG participation by having a voice in broader issues both at the technical and policy level issues, gaining access to information,

opportunities, and helping to get involved in standardization activities (companies, organizations, and government agencies).
- **Purchase IEC standards from ANSI:** Revenue from ANSI's eStandards Store [5] directly supports the activities and initiatives of the USNC.

USNC/IEC standardization helps to facilitate the design and development of quality, dependable electrotechnical products and services. It also fosters innovation, promotes safety and the environment, and fuels international trade. If your technology is electrotechnology, it is somewhere within the IEC, and you should be too.

For more information contact Charlie Zegers [6] (USNC/IEC General Secretary), Tony Zertuche [7] (USNC/IEC Deputy General Secretary), or visit www.ansi.org/usnc [2].

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