

WPMA[®] President's Message



WPMA President,
Steve Clark

2020

The Year that Wasn't ... or a Necessary Reset?

It seems like far longer than a year ago that we were rolling up to 2020 with excited anticipation. 2020 was to be the year of “perfect vision.” A new decade of prosperity, achievement and milestones. 2019, by most measures, was a great year. A year to be the foundation of even greater things to come in 2020, as our economy was hitting on all cylinders. Alas, the new year barely began before that idyllic vision was blurred with fear and uncertainty. And what was initially thought to be only a pause for a few weeks — maybe a couple months at the very most — turned into a yearlong freeze. Have we been transported to Narnia where it is always winter, but never Christmas? Is 2020 to be a throwaway year?

Certainly, we cannot take lightly the pain and sorrow that has come to those that have lost loved ones to this pandemic. But perhaps, as we lean into 2021 with cautious optimism, we should look at 2020 another way. Perhaps we should not simply throw it away or cross it out as if it never happened. Can we find value in it? A course correction, a necessary reset, a time to take stock of what we really value? It was, after all, costly to all of us and will be for generations. But life is a compounding interest of our experiences, and negative years will change the Internal Rate of Return. Perfect vision may mean something different than we thought.

On a personal level, I was finally able to get some distance from extreme busyness and a lot of “should do’s.” Instead of moving through life going from one event to the next, weekends returned to what they used to be — restful. I needed that break. For many, home projects that never seemed to get checked off the list were finally completed. And we were all given unexpected time to be with our kids, a chance to walk in the neighborhood, and to catch up on books (or Netflix). For some of us, 2020 was a good time to figure out which things we would forgive about ourselves and which to say, ‘enough is enough’ and finally change.

So, now that we are approaching the end of 2020, we have the opportunity once again to look forward to a ‘new’ vision. And there are hopeful signs. Business Insider reports a recent study that shows 83% of small to medium size business owners say they are optimistic about 2021. This sentiment reflects the resilience of small business owners to not only survive, but to thrive — to find new ways to reach customers, leverage technology to accelerate growth, and adapt operations to maximize efficiency. Many companies ramped up backup plans for all aspects of their businesses, not just the critical ones. But for this optimism to take root, we need to bring with us what we learned in 2020, as much as we might rather forget it.

On that note, WPMA has a well thought-out backup plan. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Gene Inglesby and the WPMA staff have been in constant communication with the Mirage staff regarding the 2021 EXPO. The Mirage is now open for business and is following strict safety protocols. Therefore, at this point, we are still planning on a ‘live’ meeting in Las Vegas. If the situation changes, and a live meeting can’t occur, we will still have a show, putting ‘Plan B’ into action.

2020 is almost over, and we will all give a collective cheer when it is. Our new vision isn’t perfect, but it is renewed and refocused. Winter is here, but 2021 is right around the corner and it will be great.