

## 'Tear down silos', says Stuart Holmes

October 18, 2012

The election next week of the 2013 IDEA Board of Directors looks set to be unusually competitive, although the full field of nominees has not yet been revealed by the IDEA executive office.

However, as [previously reported](#), Stuart Holmes (Independent Photo) has confirmed his nomination for president, while Adeal brand manager, Gary Pertot, has put his name forward for vice-president, Consumer, and Stuart Meers, Photo Direct, is standing for a role on the board.

The usual procedure in PICA/IDEA elections has been more an managed hand-over. With little outside interest in board positions expressed by member companies, nor encouraged by the sitting board, outcomes are almost always agreed prior to the AGM, and no actual ballots required. The exception to this was when current president Dave Marshall (Fujifilm) lost the vote for another board position six years ago.



To have 'outsiders' throw their hats in the ring for the role of president and vice-president is entirely unprecedented.

*Photo Counter* has been unsuccessful in establishing whether there are other nominations for roles on the IDEA board, but IDEA members will be notified of the full list tomorrow (Friday, October 19). Nominations closed on October 9.

Consequently, we do not know whether Dave Marshall or another current board member is to stand against new candidate Stuart Holmes for the president's role, nor whether Gary Pertot or the rest of the board will face a ballot.

So while it would have been far better to speak with any or all other candidates, we frankly don't know who they are! Presumably either Dave Marshall will stand for his fifth consecutive term, or another nominee agreed upon by the current board will emerge.

We put a few questions to Stuart Holmes, Gary Pertot and Stuart Meers (Photo Direct), and here are their responses:

Stuart Holmes

Why have you decided to stand for President of IDEA? I have to admit that I wasn't intending to run until I was contacted by a number of high-profile photo industry people who encouraged me to nominate. I decided to embrace the idea and give it a serious go and since then, this prospect has literally taken off! While my primary focus has been driving an ethical independent media supply business that is aimed at supporting and growing our customers' businesses, concerns have also been raised with me regarding the apparent disconnect between our current industry representative associations.



Through a number of conversations with concerned industry stakeholders I have realised that as an industry we need to refocus our representative groups, tear down the 'silos' and unite and share our fantastic resource of expertise for the good of our industry. I guess it's time to look at this re-focusing and realise that we all benefit from a healthy industry, and therefore it's time to really commit myself to the photo industry as whole, as I have done with my own business.

What would you like to see IDEA do differently from the way it operates now? I would like to see a new era of inclusiveness, as every legitimate photographic supply company deserves a seat at the table, every voice has a valid right to contribute, and this is just not happening

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now. I would also like to see the silos torn down and honest and open collaboration between industry associations such as PMA, AIPP and ACMP for the betterment of the industry as a whole. I know this is happening in the USA with PMA working in collaboration with all sorts of other associations and groups like IPI Group and Fotosource. In fact, no one organisation has the magic bullet! As the old saying goes, 'united we stand, divided we fall'. Nothing could be truer at this time in the Australian photo industry.

As far as the annual IDEA Show is concerned, I would like to see quality rather than quantity and better value for all the exhibitors. As with all niche industries competing for the Australian consumer's leisure dollar, bigger is not necessarily better! But, the annual trade show does need to be better, and revitalised, and many of the Tier 2 and Tier 3 businesses (previous stalwarts of the Industry) encouraged back to the 2013 show next September in Melbourne. And, yes the big guys need our support as well, remembering that we need to encourage a place at the table for ALL.

Have you been receiving any feedback from the industry on your nomination? Yes, as noted this initial foray towards the IDEA President's role has spawned a flood of interested and supportive phone calls, e-mails, and social media contacts from the wider industry all wondering 'WHY'??, but then going on quickly to say 'GREAT – somebody else is having a go, and not just from the 'big end of town!' – and then offering support in any way possible. Frankly, it's a bit of an Obama moment that I've experienced because now I'd have to say, 'Yes we Can!' The industry wants and deserves a change for the better!

How do you respond to an email being circulated by an IDEA consultant which lobbies strongly for the status quo, and which describes a future if you were to be elected to the role of IDEA president of an association in financial trouble by this Christmas, and the end of PMA in Australia?

I would be very disturbed if I thought that sort of unscrupulous type of 'branch stacking' was happening in the photo industry, and I would think that most of my peers and colleagues in the industry would agree. What this industry needs is a sense of belonging, so let's get together and make it great again, and make photography and printing more top of mind with the Australian consumer than we have done over the last 12 years of the digital revolution.

Gary Pertot

Why have you decided to stand for vice-president of IDEA?

For various reasons, Adeal has not attended and/or participated in PICA/IDEA events and meetings for a couple of years. So, initially I just wanted to attend the next AGM to see what was going on, and find out if I could contribute in some way, shape or form.

As I asked around, I found that I had some support for actually contributing at a much higher level than first anticipated, hence accepting the nomination for VP – Consumer.

Being somewhat younger than the current board (Clem excluded), I believe that I have some fresh ideas and energy to contribute to our industry. Further to that, some of the younger members feel as if the current guard are not approachable, or simply are not listening.

I am approachable and willing to listen to ideas, therefore providing a conduit to IDEA.

What would you like to be seeing IDEA do differently from the way it operates now?

It is difficult to know how IDEA operates at the moment, so that is difficult to answer, however....

Fundamentally I believe that we all want to thrive in a vibrant and creative industry.

Call me idealistic, however I would love to see a more transparent IDEA.

An organisation which is truly open to the concerns of distributors, retailers and image makers. An organisation in which is safe to share ideas and which is respectful of other peoples' point of view. An organisation which can grow, and support the growth of our industry.

Have you been receiving any feedback from the industry on your nomination?

At this stage, I believe only the people who have nominated me are aware of my nomination. The few others which I have told have been supportive.

How would you respond to an email being circulated seeking proxy support from IDEA members which lobbies for the status quo and which paints a picture of IDEA in financial trouble by this Christmas – and the end of PMA – if you as VP and Stuart Holmes as president were to be elected?

The members of IDEA are highly successful business people, and that type of communication only insults their intelligence. I am sure that members would see that IDEA needs an injection of fresh



ideas and energy. Following some conversations with Katherine Singson, I think she has some great ideas and a wealth of knowledge on how to improve IDEA. Let's keep the momentum rolling, by supporting her aspirations.

As to PMA, I am not sure what their agenda is at the moment, but looking from the outside in, they need some of the same.

Steuart Meers



Why have you decided to stand for a board position for IDEA?

I'd like to be closer to what's happening with the direction of IDEA, especially the show as it forms such a large piece of IDEA's activity.

What would you like to be seeing IDEA do differently from the way it operates now?

I need to get a feel for how it is operating now before I could be specific around this. I think it's risky to want to 'change the world' without a good understanding first.

Have you been receiving any support from the industry for your nomination?

Yes, I've had a number of calls offering encouragement.

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2 THOUGHTS ON "TEAR DOWN SILOS", SAYS STUART HOLMES"



Paul Dawson on [October 18, 2012 at 6:37 pm](#) said:

*Awesome stuff guys, congratulations on standing. This is fantastic news! (although that is a pretty bad photo Steu!) The industry needs more people (such as the three of you) to help stand up and make a difference. WELL DONE ! Paul Dawson Hydro Photographics*

Reply ↓



Keith Shipton

on [October 18, 2012 at 6:51 pm](#) said:

*I accept full responsibility for the photo (Sorry Mr Meers, thought it made you look kind of strong and determined!) KS*

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