

# THE INDUSTRIAL PHYSICIST

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## EDITORIAL

# Who are you?

**B**efore we launched *The Industrial Physicist*, we assumed that readers would be some subset of *Physics Today* subscribers. In fact, some members of the physics community expressed strong feelings that we shouldn't even be a separate magazine—that instead, *Physics Today* should expand its industrial coverage. Some were, and still are, concerned that *The Industrial Physicist* will cannibalize the readership and economic base of *Physics Today*. We proceeded, however, on the premise that physicists in industry have unique needs related to how they do their jobs and how they navigate their careers. There isn't room in *Physics Today* to cover these concerns adequately. Besides, we felt that recognition of the accomplishments of physicists in industry was long overdue and that industrial physicists deserved to have their own publication.

The first two issues of *The Industrial Physicist* were wrapped with the July and December 1995 issues of *Physics Today* and mailed to all 120,000 subscribers to that magazine. By March 1996, more than 20,000 people had filled out qualification cards in order to continue receiving *The Industrial Physicist*, and we were off and running with a new magazine. To our surprise, however, when we compared the subscriber lists of the two magazines, we found that half of the 20,000 respondents were not subscribers to *Physics Today*. In other words, they were not members of any of the member societies of the American Institute of Physics (AIP). Where did you come from? Where had you been all these years? As the circulation of *The Industri-*

*al Physicist* has continued to grow—it's now over 50,000—the trend has deepened: three-quarters of you don't belong to any of the AIP member societies.

The answers to our questions may be found in the reactions to John Rigden's piece on hidden physicists that appeared in our September 1997 issue. So many of you responded that we created a new department—Hidden Physicists—that has run in each of the three issues since then. Another clue is the rapid growth of FIAP. When The American Physical Society (APS) realized that more than half of its membership was no longer in “traditional” physics occupations, it reached out to physicists in industry and created a new forum—the Forum on Industrial and Applied Physics (FIAP)—which quickly became, and remains, APS's largest forum. Since the inception of *The Industrial Physicist*, the magazine has been marching in step with FIAP, which initiates the Forum department in each issue.

Clearly, these responses suggest that you've been out there in industry all along and we, as a collection of societies that exist to serve all physicists, were not doing a good job addressing your specific needs. Over the coming months, some of you will receive a readership survey, which is designed to help us understand better who you are and why you are reading this magazine. It's important that you fill it out so that we can do a better job. In the meantime, you have our attention. We hope *The Industrial Physicist* holds yours.

Charles Harris  
Publisher



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