



## ASA President's Monthly Newsletter-August 2008

Dear ASA Member:

Have you ever wondered why there are so many box-office hits based on comic-book super-heroes? Certainly, one reason is that many of us grew up reading comics like Superman, Batman and the X-Men. Add a little technology, and we're off to see our imaginations come to life on the big screen! The more impressive and expensive the special effects, the greater our desire is to see the continuing adventures of our childhood heroes ... sort of like, the bigger and better the contract, the more we want to sign it!

So what do imaginary super-heroes have to do with your business? Everything! These movies are a contrast with real life, in which various characters maintain their secret identities so we can't easily identify which "side" they're on. Ever have a contract with a client only later to discover in a crisis that it had been masking its true identity? Appearances can be deceiving. Telling the difference between who's "walking the walk" and who's just "talking the talk" when it comes to "super" behavior, i.e., ethical business practices, isn't always easy. A group of industry panelists will examine some of the challenges during ASA's Sept. 15 panel discussion "Bid Shopping & Bid Peddling: Are They Ethical?" at the [ASA Champions Academy](#).

Fighting the bad guys is harder for real people and real companies than for our super-heroes. Super-heroes get super-tools and super-powers, like "Spidey-Sense." This special power alerts Spider-Man of impending danger when a villain sneaks up. His Spidey-Sense activates and he reacts, safely and just-in-time. So, if Doctor Octopus and his eight mechanical arms are about to strike, it's not a problem for Spider-Man. Lucky for him, but what about us subcontractors? We don't have a built-in, tingly super-power to alert us to the risks and dangers of business. How can we manage to react in time when "Doc Oc" uses his arms to sneak risk-shifting language into eight different, unrelated places throughout that large-dollar contract?

That's where membership in ASA pays. ASA, unmasked as the American Sub-Sense Association, helps you develop your Sub-Sense by providing powerful tools and teaching special powers to help avoid danger from surprise villains! For example, we provide tools like checklists for evaluating clients' business practices (*The General Contractor Factor* in the member resources section of [www.asaonline.com](http://www.asaonline.com)). We also teach special powers like effective contract evaluation in programs like our new [ASA/FASA podcast series](#) that will kick off in September.

Who needs Superman and the X-Men, when you have ASA? It's time to un-mask some of the many ASA members who are real-life super-heroes! Starting with this 2008-09 fiscal year, ASA will annually grant an annual Excellence in Ethics Certificate to subcontractors that demonstrate their effort to uphold the highest ethical standards in the conduct of business. The application deadline is Dec. 12, 2008, and certificates will be presented at the ASA Business Forum and Convention in March. A complete description of this program, developed by ASA's Task Force on Ethics in the Construction Industry, is online at [www.asaonline.com/Web/ethics.aspx](http://www.asaonline.com/Web/ethics.aspx).

We may not have comic-book super-heroes to call on for help, but many of the ASA members you and I know are super-heroes. Some are ready by their "Bat-phones," waiting to help. Some have already helped us, maybe without our knowing. Either way, ASA is working to recognize these super-heroes and to help you join their ranks!

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me via e-mail at [bolmo@asa-hq.com](mailto:bolmo@asa-hq.com). Thank you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. J. Olmo, III". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

William J. Olmo, III  
ASA President, 2008-09