



The Personal Part of Developing Technical Standards

Paul Mesibov
VP of Engineering
Pentek, Inc



What is it like to participate in a Technical Working Group?

- Last year, Dylan Lang of Samtec already covered why you should be in a TWG
 - If you're not at the table, you might end up on the menu
- Like companies, different standards organizations have different cultures
- Within the organization, Technical Working Groups (TWG) also have cultures
- Culture typically set by chairperson



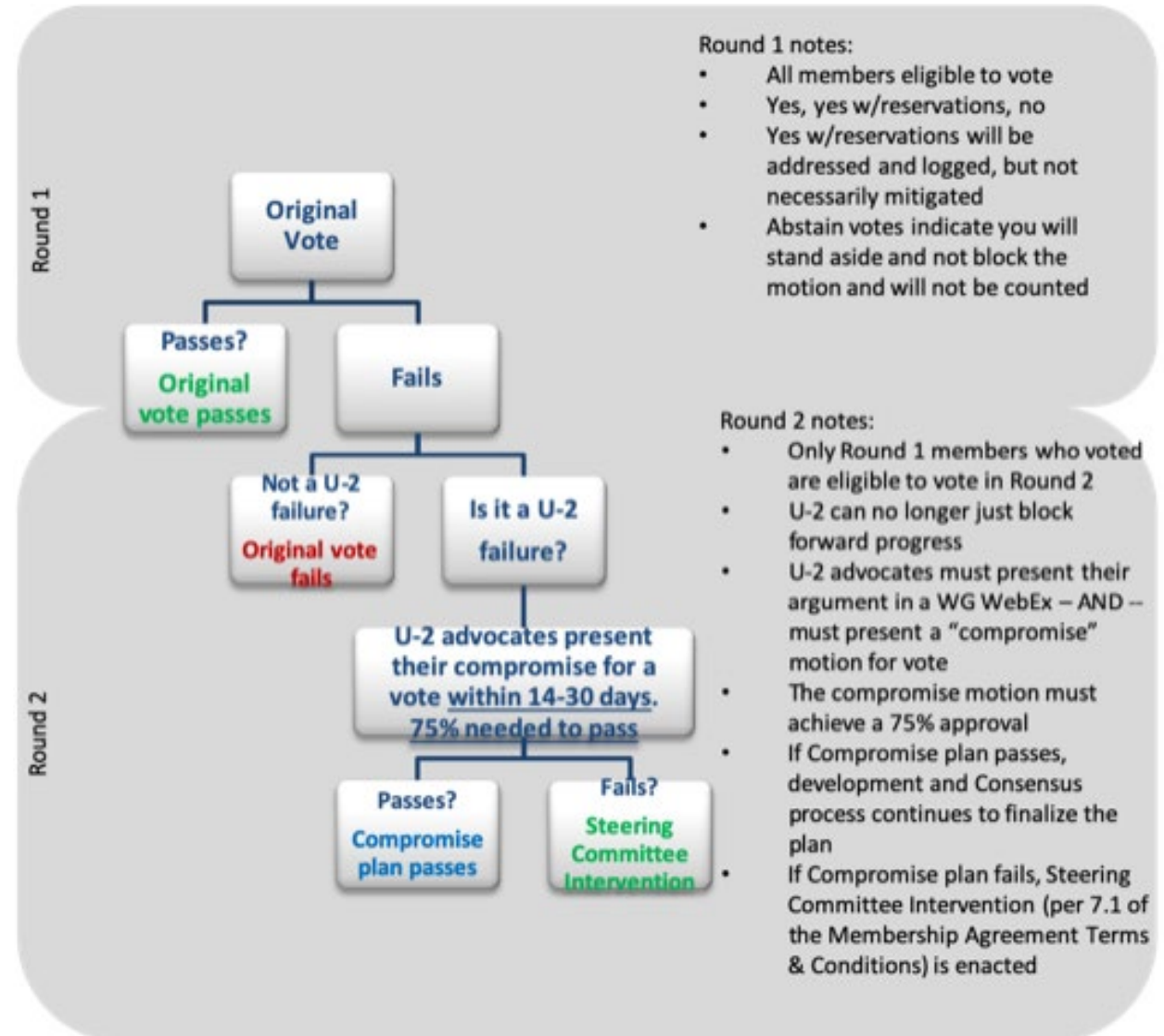
Building Consensus

- Technical credibility is important but so are “people” skills
- Be self-deprecating but express your views confidently
- Lead with “maybe I’m wrong” but make your point
- Be as concise as possible – avoid long speeches
- Conference calls with 30 people require special courtesies
- Learn and use people's names
- Volunteer for work
- Compose emails with care
- Know when to hold ‘em and know when to fold ‘em



Open Group Consensus Process

- Some TWGs have trouble with informal consensus building
- Most standards organizations have formal mechanisms for debate resolution





VITA 49 Story

- VITA 49.0 Developed from 2004 to 2009
- VITA 49.2 Developed from 2012 to 2015
- Created by working group members from “scratch”
- Over that many years there were times when inadequate notes were taken, and some members’ contributions were lost
- Some balloting generated resentful responses. These were responded to by the whole group with care and attention to detail
- Feelings were mended and ultimately both specifications were very successful
- In wide deployment today



SOSA Backplane Story

- During 2019 about half of the HWG members wanted some formal rules for constructing backplanes
- The other half were vehemently against backplane rules
- The discussion went on for many months as more members started to pay attention
 - Newer participants needed to be brought up to date with other members' reasoning. This always ate up meeting time but was necessary.
- Language was developed to treated everyone's concerns
 - Backplane rules were so diluted they became meaningless
- Even so, there were many still opposed
- Effort was dropped without resorting to formal resolution



Conclusion

- TWG membership behavior is a microcosm of working life
 - What you get out is a direct function of what you put in
- If you are lucky you will work with wonderful people and grow as an engineer as a result