

TEKNION ONE

CHARLES CHOO: A DECADE OF SETTING AND MAINTAINING TEKNION'S HIGH STANDARDS

PAST ISSUES



Charles Choo, Teknion's Senior Test Engineer, was recently recognized by BIFMA for his decade of volunteer service with a letter, thanking him and congratulating him for work done well.

In a competitive industry, how do you keep the quality bar high while making sure it isn't raised to impossible levels? Ask Charles Choo.

Charles is a Senior Test Engineer at Teknion's Toronto office, but he also represents Teknion at several industry organizations. These include BIFMA (The Business Institutional Furniture Manufacturer's Association), which, among other things, sets and monitors engineering safety standards for the office furniture industry in North America. It's a role that Charles finds very satisfying.

"I get to contribute my knowledge and know-how to developing safety standards that work for the industry," he says.

BIFMA recently recognized Charles' 10 years of volunteering with a letter thanking him and congratulating him on

- [August 2008 Issue](#)
- [August 2009 Issue](#)
- [August 2014 Issue](#)
- [December 2007 Issue](#)
- [December 2008 Issue](#)
- [December 2009 Issue](#)
- [Fall 2010 Issue](#)
- [Fall 2011 Issue](#)
- [Fall 2012 Issue](#)
- [February 2007 Issue](#)
- [February 2009 Issue](#)
- [July 2007 Issue](#)
- [May 2007 Issue](#)
- [September 2007 Issue](#)
- [Spring 2010 Issue](#)
- [Spring 2011 Issue](#)
- [Summer 2011 Issue](#)
- [Summer 2012 Issue](#)
- [Summer 2013 Issue](#)

work done well.

The letter lists a number of Charles' contributions, including three years as Vice Chair of the Desk/Table Subcommittee. It comments on the importance of people like Charles who volunteer their expertise to measure manufacturing standards. But Charles points out that it's not just about leadership.



Charles Choo and one of the lab's technicians check for signs of deflection in a Marketplace worksurface.

BIFMA, which is accredited by ANSI (American National Standards Institute), is based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where many of the leading furniture manufacturers are also based. Their size and location could give them advantage.

"Part of my job is to protect our products," Charles remarks. "If we don't participate, the standards get set by those big players."

There are several major standards organizations worldwide, and Charles is connected to all of them. In addition to BIFMA, he sits on the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) and Underwriters' Laboratory (UL). And he is a voting member of the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB), which sets the standards that Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) – a significant Teknion customer – reference in tender documents.

Charles was also appointed to chair the ISO's Canadian Technical Advisory Committee on ISO-TC-136, which sets furniture standards.



All of Teknion's products are tested and certified to a number of international standards, and Charles is involved with all products. Here, he checks the MAST monitor arm.

"Canada is member of the World Trade Organization," says Charles. "The Standards Council of Canada holds the votes for Canada, and it relies on technical experts to provide information to support the Canadian furniture industry. As chair of the ISO committee, I review documents, chair the meetings and submit reports to the Council that they use to cast the vote for Canada."

Whether the standards being managed are Canadian, North American, European or worldwide, Charles' work helps maintain the balance of quality and possibility in the contract furniture industry. BIFMA's letter to him sums it up well:

"The ANSI/BIFMA standards are widely used in the North American Furniture industry and are also respected globally. The success of ANSI/BIFMA standards is due to volunteers like you that work diligently to keep these standards current and meaningful."