Here’s looking at you...

Ten not-so-random facts about STLE members are helping to drive our strategic plan.

1. Our largest membership segment, about 44% of the total, is individuals involved with lubricant sales, marketing and technical support.

2. Perhaps not surprisingly, 40% of members are employed by companies that manufacture finished lubricants. 14% of members work for additive suppliers, while 10% are involved in the academic or research portion of the profession.

3. Which technical topics are of interest to the most members? Gears and bearings are close competitors for the top two spots, with grease, hydraulics and engine technology rounding out the top five. Interestingly, surface engineering was picked as the top category for new members (less than a year with the society). That topic was near the bottom of the list for members with tenure of more than one year.

4. Baby boomers, more specifically those individuals born between 1950 and 1960, comprise the largest age demographic at 36%. However, more than 40% of members were born after 1960 and 15% were born after 1970.

5. Science and engineering traditionally has been a male-dominated profession, and STLE is no exception. 92% of members are male. However, don’t overlook the fact that among new members, the ratio changes to 84% male and 16% female.

6. About three-quarters of STLE members live in the United States. But among new members, the mix shifts to about 31% outside the U.S.

7. Among members residing outside the United States, the largest single concentration is in Canada (271). But it should be noted that we also have members in 63 countries other than the United States and Canada. These locations range from the familiar (United Kingdom, 40 members) to the exotic (Sri Lanka, one member).

8. STLE members are well-educated. Nearly 40% of members hold an advanced degree. Among that group, 21% have a doctorate.

9. Students are a growing segment of the STLE membership population. The number is approaching the 200 mark, which puts it at about 5% of the total membership.

10. There are 28 active Local Sections spread throughout North America and around the world. The top three in terms of membership size are Chicago (324), Houston (268) and Philadelphia (198).

While there is only so much you can conclude from a list of random facts, this demographic research is actually part of a much more purpose-driven project. A Strategic Planning Subcommittee of the STLE Board of Directors has been working with management and a planning consultant to research and organize trends in demographics and the external environment and to analyze STLE members’ needs.

Later this month, STLE’s board will meet to review the initial draft of a new plan for the society. Work will continue in the months leading up to the 2013 Annual Meeting in Detroit, May 5-9. A finished planning report will be released in midyear.