


 Success

Looking Toward Future Success

In my acceptance speech at the 2007 AGMA/ABMA Annual Meeting, I talked about what an exciting time it is for the industry and the Association. Business levels and conditions have been and are expected to stay exceedingly strong. This of course, brings with it its own set of challenges and opportunities. From the Associations perspective, we need to understand how we can help members respond to these changing issues and needs. This is no small task, when you consider the large diversity that exists among all of our members. Never the less, if the Association is to continue to grow and be viable in the future, we must expand upon what we do and how we do it.

Of course, it all starts with the needs of our members. The challenge for the Association is to identify these needs and develop ways to satisfy them. Therefore, during the coming year we will increase our communications with all members. We will be looking for your input regarding other programs that you feel would be of value in helping you run your business. In addition, we will be very interested in your feedback about the programs and activities that are currently available through AGMA and to what degree they are or are not of value and what we can do to improve them.

At the same time, we will work to better promote these programs and activities as well as all the benefits available to members. Interestingly enough, we find that even long time members aren't always aware of everything that AGMA has to offer and therefore, they are not necessarily taking full advantage of their membership.

An additional challenge comes in getting members to understand the value that their individual organizations get from having their employees participate in the committees and councils that make up AGMA. AGMA is a membership driven Association and its past growth and outstanding success has been the direct result of the on-going work and dedicated involvement of so many from within the industry.

In talking to those who are participating, we invariably hear about how this involvement has added to their professional growth, not to mention expanding their contacts within the industry. At the Annual

FINDING SUCCESS AT JOB FAIRS

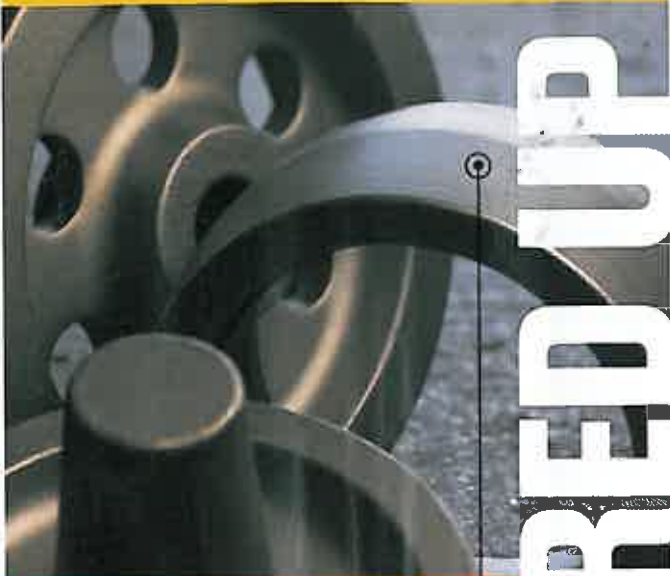
By Rick Fullington

Like a lot of small companies, we find ourselves competing in the market place against some bigger, more well known companies for workers. Yet our experience in attending a local job fair has left us with hope that if you've got a good story to share that there are those who will be interested in hearing it. We recently attended a job fair put on by the local newspaper. Our booth was staffed by our operations manager and our director of engineering. They displayed some of our product and had two laptops running. One, with a power point presentation on our company and the other the AGMA DVD on the gear industry.

All though we had numerous visitors fill out applications, just as importantly, contact was made with a representative of the local technical college. When he indicated that they were having trouble with getting employers to visit the school and to address some of the classes, we immediately made arrangements to make a presentation to them within days of the job fair. The class that we made a presentation to, and that was about to graduate, were then invited to visit our plant, which they subsequently did the following week. From those mutual visits and presentations we hired a total of 8 individuals who have subsequently started working for us.

Of course the success of these efforts will be measured a year down the road when we look back to see how many of these individuals are still working for us. The experience though, has taught us that we have to work as hard or harder in marketing who we are as an employer, as we do in marketing the products that we make.

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Meeting, I threw out a challenge to everyone to go back to his or her respective companies and identify those employees who would benefit by getting involved. There is opportunity for those at all levels of our organizations, from management to engineering, from sales to quality, from finance to human resources and operations. The committee and council chairs are always looking for talented and interested people to join in the fun and would personally like to have the chance to invite these individuals to attend some meetings, to check out what takes place and to talk about how they can contribute.

To facilitate the identification and development of those who are and will be playing an important role within the industry and hopefully within AGMA, we will also continue to develop the Future Leaders group. In fact, as part of the development of this group, they have decided that a better name would be the Strategic Resource Network. All though still in the development stage, this group offers participants a unique opportunity for personal as well as professional growth within the AGMA organization.

During the coming year we will also be going through a full Strategic Planning session. This is critically important as we look at where we are today and the direction and changes that we need to work towards over the next three to five years, in order for the Association to continue to grow and be viable. The strategic planning work that is done really sets the direction and identifies those key elements that will be focused on as we move forward. Here again, input from the membership is key in helping us understand these key elements of value.

Finally, we will continue to work this year towards the expansion of our educational offerings, which has clearly been identified as a high priority need by our members. From entry-level machinists, to inspection, to more advanced engineering education, there will be a continuing need to fill the skill gap, as well as to replace an aging work force. A related issue is one of how to attract qualified people to fill the many job openings that currently exist. This is a local issue in most cases and will challenge each of us to market the industry and manufacturing in general, as an attractive job alternative, as well as to market who each of us are as an employer (see side bar) to potential employees.

As I stated at the beginning of this article, it's an exciting time for the industry. Full of challenges and opportunities. I look forward, during the coming year, to engaging all the resources of the industry to further advance the many important initiatives that are being worked on. I hope you will join us in these efforts. □