



Building on Your Foundation

When you graduated from school and made your way into the world, you probably thought you'd learned everything you needed to know to be successful. But those of us who've been out in the workforce for some time know that you never stop learning. What you graduated with was just a foundation. Over the years, I've found that one of the best ways to build on that foundation both as a professional and as an individual—is by volunteering and becoming involved in an industry association.

Most of you are familiar with the AGMA and its significance to the gear industry, not only in the United States, but throughout the world. But how many of you are actually involved with this or any other association? Not only could your association use your knowledge, your expertise and—frankly—your man-hours, but the fact is that the vast majority of you are missing out on a terrific opportunity for yourselves and your companies.

As a used machinery dealer, I have participated for 35 years as a contributor to the Machinery Dealers National Association (MDNA), having served on the board of directors from 1976-1993 and the executive committee from 1980-1993. I was also president of the MDNA's for-profit subsidiary that published the *Locator*. In addition, for 21 years, I've served on the council of the European Association of Machine Tool Merchants (EAMTM).

I've always looked at my role in



association affairs as an opportunity rather than an obligation or burden. Volunteering with these associations has provided me with the opportunity to hone my people skills, helped me develop a broader and more complex vision of the worldwide marketplace and given me insight into how different people with similar business problems have looked at and solved those problems. This exposure to different problem-solving approaches has broadened my perspective and given me more tools to work with, both in my own machinery business and right here at *Gear Technology*.

Because of my involvement with these associations, I've also been in a position to volunteer for tasks I wouldn't otherwise have been exposed to. In the late 70s and early 80s, I was involved with buying mainframe computers and computerized typesetters. I've gone to visit printing plants and negotiated printing contracts. In fact, I credit my work in these associations with giving me the experience, knowledge, insight and confidence to launch *Gear Technology* in 1984.

Although you're aware of the AGMA and you know that it serves the gear industry, many of you probably

don't know about all of the activities the association is involved in and the many ways you *could* become involved.

With that in mind, we're launching a series of *Voices* columns, beginning with this issue. Through these columns, we're going to give various leaders in the gear industry a

forum in which to talk in-depth about some of the activities they're involved in. The first column is by Joe Franklin, AGMA president. My hope is that if you're not involved with AGMA or other industry associations, you'll see the value of membership, and if you're already a member, you'll see the value of participation.

Whether you're the owner of the company, a department manager or a new hire to the gear industry, participation in association activities will provide you with a wealth of experience and knowledge that you'd have a hard time gaining any other way. I encourage you not just to read the upcoming *Voices* columns, but also, to consider how you can add your "voice" to the gear industry.

Michael Goldstein,
Publisher & Editor-in-Chief