

A Wellspring of Opinion

For more than 22 years, I've been dropping rocks down the well of the gear industry's public opinion. Most every issue, I drop another rock. Sometimes I think I hear a faint splash, but most times I just wait.

However, my editorial in the November/December 2005 issue ("Is Gear Expo Worth It?") splashed so hard and so loud, it seems like the water is ready to gush over the top. Admittedly, the rock was a bit larger than normal, and it caused a lot of reaction—from AGMA board members as well as members of the gear manufacturing community.

Having recently returned from the AGMA annual meeting, I can confirm that the level has, indeed, risen—substantially. The rock—my editorial—was just the catalyst in getting people thinking and talking about the role of both the AGMA and the Gear Expo. In the two days I was in Tucson for the annual meeting, members told me "you're asking the questions that need to be asked," "you hit the nail on the head," and "keep up the good work."

While it's nice to be congratulated for getting things rolling, what's needed is a continued open discussion. Last week I met with several members of the AGMA board, and I'm confident after that meeting that the association's leadership is asking the right questions, not just about Gear Expo, but also about the role of the association in the success of its members.

But the officers and board of the AGMA can't help you unless you're willing to help yourselves. What they need most is the input of the gear manufacturing community. In this forum, we've already discussed Gear Expo, so I'd like to turn the discussion toward the association itself. What I'd like to know is how well the AGMA is meeting your needs.

The AGMA states the following mission on its website: "To help members compete more effectively in today's global marketplace."

Also, in 2004, the AGMA announced a new vision and strategic objectives. They are:

- 1.) To continue AGMA's leadership role in the development of domestic and international technical standards.
- 2.) To help members compete/benefit in global growth.
- 3.) To stimulate interest in careers in gears and gear/coupling-related products.
- 4.) To provide for the long-term viability of the AGMA membership through leadership development.
- 5.) To communicate important industry information in the most effective/efficient manner to get the desired positive response.



6.) To provide value to the organization and to meet and grow revenue through membership growth and retention.

By introducing this subject, I'm not trying to pass judgment one way or another, nor am I trying to suggest that there are huge problems here. What I want is your opinions about the AGMA, its mission, its goals and how well the association is achieving them.

In today's competitive environment, all associations—not just the AGMA—are having to evaluate (or re-evaluate) the value they bring to members. The camaraderie and chance to meet your competition and suppliers are a given. But I believe all associations today need to have a greater impact on the success of their members.

What is the AGMA doing that helps ensure your success? What is it not doing that it should be? How can the AGMA better serve its members?

I'm sure that many of you have opinions about what you'd like to see the AGMA accomplish over the coming years. Don't keep those opinions to yourself. And if you believe the association is doing everything it possibly can for its members, I'd like to hear from you, too. If your company is not an AGMA member, I'd like to hear why it does not fit in with your vision of your company's success.

My job is to drop the stone in the well and see if anything splashes. Now it's your turn, so splash away! Send your replies to publisher@geartechnology.com.

Sincerely,

Michael Goldstein,
Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

