

Building Connections at MPT Expo

Jenny Blackford, V.P. Business Management Division, AGMA



What did you learn during the pandemic? We all learned a lot about how adaptable we are, what matters most both in our jobs and our personal lives, and how much we all crave human interaction. I don't know about you, but I hit "Zoom fatigue" about a month into lockdown when I realized I had six video meetings on four different meeting platforms that day and that the rest of the week looked about the same. We all tired

quickly of trying to figure out what a virtual trade show booth was, how to staff it, and most importantly how to set expectations for return on investment in a virtual show.

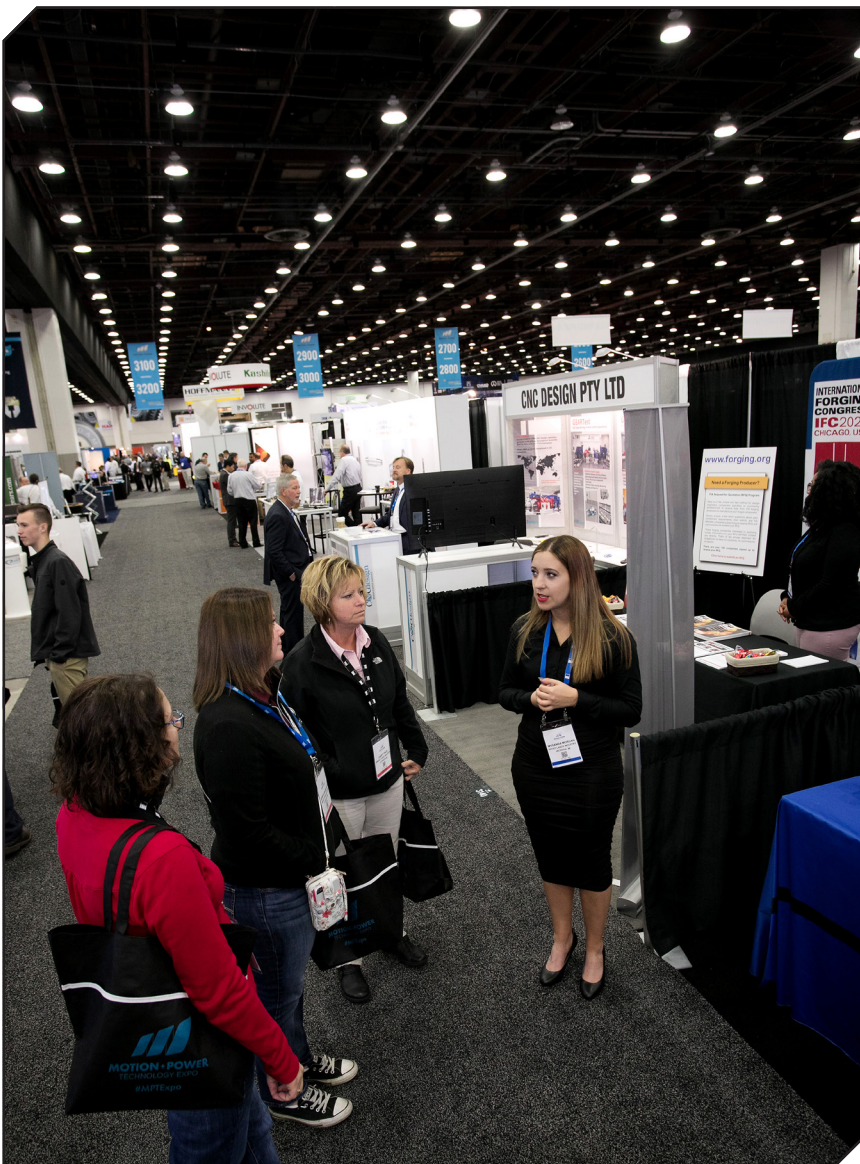
Thankfully, those days appear to be behind us and we can gather face-to-face. I can't wait to see everyone at MPT Expo this September in St. Louis—to catch up with old friends that I haven't seen in two years, to meet new AGMA

members and to see the latest technologies that the power transmission industry has to offer.

While usually the number one reason to attend a trade show, especially MPT Expo, is to see the latest products, technologies, and services that exhibitors have to offer, I would argue that for MPT Expo 2021 the number one reason to attend—by far—is to see people face-to-face. It is time to take a step back and reconnect with your friends in the industry, to welcome those who are new, see the customers you have not been allowed to visit, and just to see how everyone is doing post-pandemic. By all measures, the power transmission industry is roaring back, and economists predict that double digit growth will continue for at least the next year to 18 months. This will require capital investments. Business will happen on the show floor, new leads gathered, RFPs discussed, etc., but I believe it is the human connection that will be top of mind for everyone gathered in St. Louis.

In June AGMA held its first post-pandemic in-person meeting, the Strategic Resources Network event in Charleston, SC, and what struck me was how happy and energetic people were to be out with their peers, talking shop and generally catching up with one another. There was a buzz in the room. I also found out that people have not been sitting stagnantly but that innovations have taken place, to some degree because of the pandemic. MPT Expo will have the same energy—for most attendees and exhibitors it will be their first trade show in two years—with people exchanging tales of how they weathered the pandemic, checking in on one another's businesses, and seeing what the sentiment is for the future.

Will the show be exactly the same as MPT Expo 2019? No, little is the same post-COVID. We expect the show to be



“It occurs to me that our survival may depend upon our talking to one another.”

Dan Simmons, Hyperion

smaller; industry statistics are reflecting a 30% drop in attendees and exhibits year-to-date for trade shows in the United States. We also see that these numbers are slowly improving as more opens up. We expect that the show will continue to excel in providing the quality leads, connections and technical expertise that it has always had. I would encourage you to rethink your normal trade show strategy. Maybe in the past you focused on the number of business cards collected, LinkedIn connections gained or number of hands shaken. Perhaps now you can take time to look for value in quality of the leads, the authenticity of the connections and the information you learn from your peers.

Even before the pandemic, workforce issues were the number one challenge facing all power transmission companies. Post-pandemic, this trend

and the worker shortage is even worse. Managers, I challenge those of you who are looking to grow their workers to bring at least one of your promising employees to MPT Expo and introduce them around. We all know that recruiting and retaining talent is one of the hardest things to do today but by investing in your up-and-coming talent and bringing them to MPT Expo it shows them that you value their professional development and want them to learn more about the industry. A trade show is a great opportunity for your newer talent to get a feel for the rest of the industry, meet your vendors and customers, see the newest technologies first hand, and begin to build their own professional network that can serve your company well into the future.

AGMA is ALL IN for MPT Expo. We have great support in St. Louis — even

the Missouri Governor is helping us promote the show! We have expert keynote speakers on the pressing issues of cybersecurity and changes in the electric vehicle market. So come for the peer and customer engagement. See what people have been up to behind-the-scenes these past 18-months. Meet new contacts and make sales. The show will not disappoint in providing a forum for you to be successful.



Vice President, Business Management Division
Jenny Blackford

GRUPOS DIFERENCIALES

High precision Gears and Components.

Short lead times for any volume environment.

Latest technology for high efficiency and competitiveness.

PRESENCE IN ALL SECTORS:

- **Marine**
- **Highway and Off-Highway**
- **Industrial**
- **Railway**
- **Aerospace**

www.gruposdiferenciales.es

Portal de Bergara 32,
01013 Vitoria-Gasteiz (Álava) Spain
Phone: (+34) 945 260 100
Fax: (+34) 945 261 446

