

EDITORIAL



Photo by Jennifer Short

Almost overnight, America's industry found itself competing against an onslaught of lower cost imported products. For this reason, the need to improve the quality of our products and simultaneously reduce their cost became imperative. Manufacturers needed to quickly acquire vast amounts of knowledge about new manufacturing methods, techniques, designs, materials, machines and manufacturing systems.

It was with this in mind that late last summer I looked with anticipation to the upcoming fall technical sessions being hosted by SME, ASME and AGMA. (The SME and AGMA sessions meet annually and the ASME conference is held once every four years.) You would think that with the wealth of knowledge to be gained and the industry interaction available, these conferences would have had terrific attendance, right? Wrong! Not counting people representing the machine

tool manufacturers, suppliers and those presenting papers, only 250 or 300 people attended these three conferences. I was surprised, however, by the large percentage of foreign attendees at the ASME conference. Many Japanese attended along with visitors from Germany, France, Holland, China, Egypt, England, Italy and many more. They thought it important enough to come to the United States, present papers, and receive the conference information.

It's time for a change of attitude, a change of priorities, and possibly things are changing. AGMA just held a technical conference in April in Indianapolis. In contrast to their earlier conferences, this one was oversubscribed and potential attendees had to be turned away.

What changed? Is business better? Has optimism improved? Are attitudes changing regarding ongoing education and the need to seek information from all sources? Probably the answer is "all of the above". It certainly isn't because the subjects and papers being presented are any better, or more timely. Many of the papers presented at the poorly attended conferences were reprinted on these pages, gathering excellent comment. Hopefully, this is the beginning of a new trend.

AGMA's upcoming Fall Technical Conference, October 14th through 16th in San Francisco, and the SME Gear Processing and Manufacturing Clinic, November 12th through 14th in Detroit, offer the opportunity to start or continue the necessary educational process. Look over the subjects carefully. If you don't see subjects that will help you, write to these organizations and tell them what kind of information you need. They want to help, but in turn, they need your support and your attendance. From each conference that you attend, you will acquire new information, but the real gains are cumulative and come from attending these conferences over a long period of time.

Is this the answer to the onslaught of competition? I don't know. But without keeping up to date on the technique and developments presented at these and other conferences, we don't stand a chance.

Thank You

Michael Goldstein

A large, stylized handwritten signature of Michael Goldstein in black ink.

Editor/Publisher