

Editorial

Activism in Thermal Spray: A Call to Arms!



Chris Berndt

Free rides and free lunches come back to haunt you. What a way to start a commentary that aims to ask you to commit to the Thermal Spray Society!

The TSS has more than 1000 members worldwide who have paid to be recognized as having an affiliation with thermal spray. This has been a conscious decision on their part that implies that they see tangible benefits “in belonging to TSS.” The benefits in being a TSS member are numerous and can be segmented into soft and hard categories. The soft benefits include criteria such as “TSS is in your area of interest; thus you should belong to this Society!” These emotive arguments are important ones; however, many people also need to look at the so-called bottom line.

Therefore, TSS has worked very closely with staff at ASM International to create hard products that can be offered to TSS Members at a discounted price. For example, ITSC conference fees, JTST subscription rates, TSS Workshops (advertisement: there is a Cold Spray Workshop later in 2007), and many other tangible products are priced in such a way that the cost reflects on your bottom line. Both of these types of benefits have a direct impact on how TSS members perceive *value in belonging*.

So where does the title of this editorial “Activism in Thermal Spray” come from? It is as simple as this, volunteer members of TSS drove the creation of these benefits so that *every member* could realize commercial (viz. hard) and philosophical (viz. soft) opportunities. These volunteers constitute the grass-roots activism that has been the hallmark of ASM and, especially, TSS. The volunteers include the TSS Board of Directors, the various committees, and the people who help out at events as Chairs of Sessions, as well as the speakers themselves.

The committee structure of TSS incorporates, probably, about 60-80 people who dedicate their time and energy to make things happen. These are the people who work behind the scenes to create the framework for the ITSCs, to publish within JTST, and to formulate standards and best practices guidelines for the TS industry. All of these products are driven by active TSers who are not only concerned with important parts of the industry; but can also see that they need to be part of this action.

So, where does the “free lunch” come in? And why can’t I just sit around and let others do the work? This is a quite common response because we are all busy people and we may not have the time or inclination to jump in and volunteer. Yet, as professionals, we all know that you only get back what you put in; often the more you invest, the more you will reap in terms of positive outcomes. My argument here is that individuals must be active so that their personal needs are best suited. Therefore, if an individual has a burning need or desire for certain products, then it is imperative for that person to stand up and be counted as a contributing volunteer. You will find that you will be welcomed with open arms and that you will harvest so much more than what you put in via networking contacts, knowledge, and respect from like-minded colleagues.

An excellent example of where volunteer activism by TSS members has led to a tangible product is the new TSS web portal that has been created over the past 18 months. The project planning for this commenced in mid-2005 and will be rolled out in mid-2007. A working group of TSS volunteers and ASM Professional Staff has been prototyping a silent website since September of 2006. The new web portal that has been produced is magnificent. The functionalities of the new TSS web portal will outstrip any other professional society development that is available. The value of TSS membership has just increased enormously.

My call to arms is “Volunteer: The TSS Needs You!”

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