

# Commentary

## Critical Issues Facing the Thermal Spray Industry: Market Expansion and the Need for Volunteers (Opportunities)



Mitchell R. Dorfman

As incoming ASM Thermal Spray Society (TSS) President, it is my privilege and pleasure to serve the thermal spray community. My focus and challenge will be to move TSS programs forward with a sense of urgency and purpose. It is my goal to listen to our membership and develop strong programs with the TSS leadership team that address the needs and suggestions of industry, government, and academia in continuous evolution. It is my

belief that in order to expand the market of TSS into new businesses and applications, the TSS community will require creative initiatives, some of which have been started and some that have not. These initiatives, however, will not be successful without the support of leaders from industry, government, and academia. Peter Hanneforth's article in the May 2006 issue of the *International Thermal Spray & Surface Engineering* (published by ASM International), "The Global Thermal Spray Industry—100 Years of Success; So What's Next" discusses the future. In this article, Mr. Hanneforth feels there will be opportunities to grow the existing US \$5.4 billion thermal spray market for those organizations and individuals that "demonstrate visionary leadership and excellence in technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship."

The TSS can also help support the thermal spray market expansion by working with other professional societies to address the critical factors shown in Fig. 1. These critical factors have been identified by the TSS leadership and are:

- Engage industry and academic leaders in TSS (volunteers)
- Increase global exposure through alliances and offerings
- Increase membership in existing and new segments
- Enhance corporate visibility/value proposition
- Enhance value proposition through new products and services

- Increase outreach to promote technology outside the industry

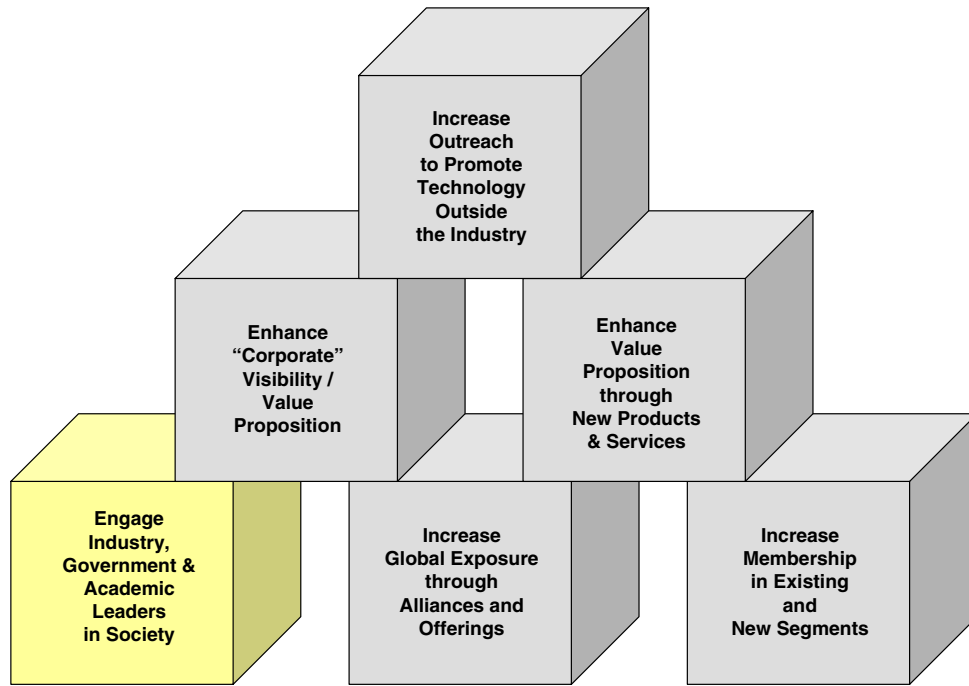
One of my goals as President will be to review these critical factors in this and upcoming JTST commentaries and discuss ways the TSS can work to achieve success in these areas. This commentary reviews and discusses the need to engage volunteers from industry, government, and academia, and the benefits to the individual and the industry. The critical question that needs to be answered is, "How do we engage management of industry, government, and academia to allow its staff to support professional societies such as TSS on a voluntary basis?"

Leadership skills, professional growth, and networking are all valuable areas where individuals can improve themselves by supporting professional societies as volunteers. Leading large, diverse, global teams through committee activities is good experience for individuals. They learn how to motivate others, set goals and directions, and are accountable to others. They also give and receive insight on how to achieve these goals. These are valuable training skills that organizations should appreciate.

The society also becomes stronger and creates value through products and services that support industry, government, and academia. This is done on the committee level. TSS has a strong volunteer base with nine key committees:

- Event Programming
- Membership, Market & Outreach (MM&O)
- Training
- Accepted Practices
- Journal of Thermal Spray Technology (JTST)
- Safety Committee
- Awards
- Certification
- Nominations

The overall goal of these committees is to bring value back to industry, government, and academia, leading to improved business growth and/or improved training and education of young professionals. Success in these areas



**Fig. 1** Critical factors affecting thermal spray market expansion

should also result in market expansion of thermal spray technology.

The proper mix of volunteers in all areas of the value chain, including subcomponent suppliers, material/equipment suppliers, independent thermal spray shops, system integrators, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), after-market service suppliers, and end-users, as well as from universities, research institutes, and government, will help demonstrate to end users the improved value of components sprayed with thermal spray coatings. Other areas of benefit are not always of the final component, but in the tooling and other upstream processes needed to

manufacture a specific component. Regardless, in order to create additional opportunities for TSS growth, management and leaders of industry, government, and academia will need to give direction and work with the TSS community to achieve the goals and objectives of the Thermal Spray Society.

**Mitchell R. Dorfman**

TSS President,

Director, Materials Development, Sulzer Metco (US) Inc.

Westbury, NY