

Commentary

Critical Issues Facing the Thermal Spray Industry: Need for Increased Global Alliances and Outreach



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The December 2008 issue of JTST discussed how the TSS Board and Committees work together to understand the critical issues facing our industry. The critical question that was previously discussed was *“How do we engage management of industry, government and academia to allow their staff to support professional societies such as TSS on a voluntary basis?”*

This issue will present some of my views and those of various TSS Board Members on two other critical factors. Issues to be discussed in this commentary will be: (1) increased global alliances and offerings, and (2) increased outreach to promote thermal spray technology outside of the industry (Fig. 1). Some of these action plans are already in place in some of the TSS committees, while others are just being initiated or are in the embryonic stage. In the areas of “Increased Global Alliances and Offerings”, the TSS community has a strong relationship with the DVS, German Welding Society, but this is not enough. My goal as TSS President will be to help foster relationships and understand other thermal spray communities from around the world.

Many societies, such as the TSSEA (Thermal Spraying & Surface Engineering Associates; www.tssea.org) in the UK, have interesting and valuable information. The awareness that these sites exist not only can reduce the duplication of effort, but can also increase knowledge and improve the transfer of information and technology. Today the world is a lot smaller with the internet; through the correct business model there should be ways for professional societies, with common goals, to have hyperlinks to common websites.

The United Nations of Thermal Spray (UNTS), which started at ITSC 2006 in Seattle, is one way to improve communication between organizations with common goals. This informal body meets once a year at ITSC events. Typically each society discusses what they are doing, and if there are ways to work together. One key goal is to share resources of people whenever possible.

TSSEA is one of many members that support this UNTS initiative.

In addition to the UNTS initiative, there are many individuals from around the world who may not be involved in any formal thermal spray societies. These individuals may have many years of thermal spray knowledge, however, as well as key contacts to industry and government that would help the penetration into new and existing markets. TSS is capturing these “ambassadors” and adding them to ASM’s UNTS database. One future goal will be to have a quarterly newsletter that is released to the UNTS and its ambassadors of thermal spray. The goal of this electronic newsletter is to have greater worldwide communication.

In addition to our UNTS list, we will need to work with ASM staff to identify key trade and professional societies outside our traditional thermal spray industry to inform societies, industry, government and academia of what TSS has to offer, and its value proposition. Below is a list of key products and services.

- International Thermal Spray Conference
- Topical Events
- Journal of Thermal Spray Technology
- iTTSe Newsletter
- TSS Web site
- Thermal Spray Videos
- Thermal Spray Handbook
- Practical Learning Services
- Courses & Seminars
- TSS Discussion List
- Proceedings/Publications
- Membership
- Safety Guidelines
- Accepted Practices
- New Products & Services
- Member Recognition
- Spray Tips

The Membership, Marketing & Outreach (MM&O) Committee is critical to the success of these initiatives.

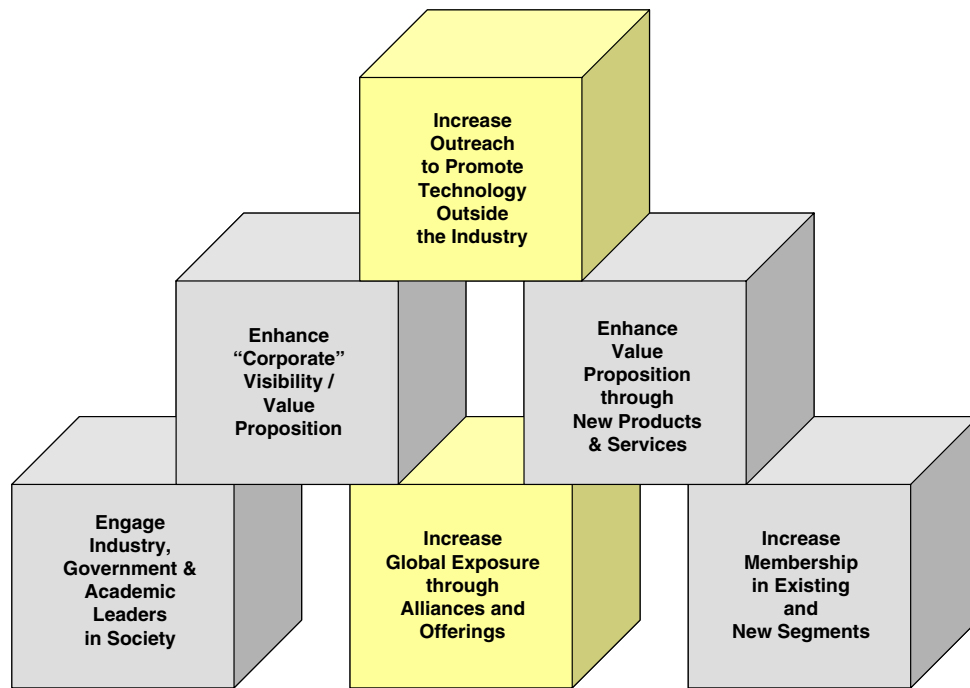


Fig. 1 Critical factors facing TSS (two lighter colored boxes identify topics being discussed in this edition)

This committee will need to work with other committees to clearly identify our value proposition and offerings. Key initiatives will be to work with ASM staff to identify other societies and to personally contact key personnel from these organizations.

Increased outreach to promote thermal spray technology outside the industry has many initiatives planned by TSS. Among those are the following: (1) improved marketing awareness of ASM staff and greater TSS support back to ASM; (2) with the support of the TSS Programming Committee, have greater technical presence at other engineering conferences (automotive, aerospace, biomedical, electronics and trade shows; and (3) through MM&O, promote application case studies and the technical successes in iTTSe and on our website.

In addition, our TSS Training Committee will need to become more involved in supporting the training in the following areas: (1) engineering students on a university level; (2) students and teachers on the high school level; and (3) individuals and organizations at local ASM chapters.

Another area of outreach is the eventual promotion of an accredited operator certification program, as well as the need to develop best practices for on-site spraying. Key newsletters such as iTTSe and JTST are, and will continue to be, critical distribution networks for disseminating and

transferring technical and commercial information to the industry.

Critical to the success of TSS will also be the continued improvement of the TSS community website. Key areas of improvement will be: (1) speed; (2) ease of navigation; and (3) an improved home page. The goal for TSS members and non-members will be that of easily finding information on thermal spray products and services. All committees continue to actively work in the effort to both increase and improve the technical content that is accessible to site-registered and TSS members. This includes spray tips, safety practices, practical learning series, as well as other content. There will be “much more to come in 2009” that will continue to add value to the site and attract users to the website.

Therefore, to summarize, the TSS committee volunteers, in close coordination with TSS Board mentors and ASM staff, are critical for the implementation of these action plans. These committees create the TSS products and services which add value to its membership. The goal is to find creative ways to expand the knowledge base of TSS products and services.

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