



Adhesive and Sealant Council Meeting

Columbus, Ohio

Taking the ASC forward

New association leader Sloan sees education as key

By Bruce Meyer

Rubber & Plastics News Staff

Larry Sloan, new president of the Adhesive and Sealant Council, has been with the association for more than four years, but his background is firmly rooted in the for-profit world.

He received a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the University of Pennsylvania and a master's degree in marketing from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management.

In business, he worked for Air Products and Chemicals Inc. and Nalco Chemical Co. before a more than six-year stint for his father's manufacturers representative company. While he was successful in his father's business, he decided being on the road four days a week and driving 25,000 miles a year wasn't the life he wanted.

"I had a heart-to-heart with him and said, 'I know you would ultimately want me to take over this company, and I'm honored by that, but I just can't get excited about being a manufacturers representative,'" Sloan said. He spoke about his new position during ASC's spring convention, held April 17-20 in Columbus, Ohio.

The only problem was that Sloan then had to figure out what he wanted to do. Being located in Washington made looking at the world of trade associations a natural. A friend also told him that his background would make him a perfect fit to work for a chemical trade association.

"I literally researched the trade association community on the Internet, identified a job opportunity with another trade association—not the ASC—that ended up resulting in my being hired," he said.

Sloan was there just eight months when he got a call in February 2001 from a headhunter asking if he'd be interested in switching to the ASC. He was intrigued by what he viewed as a small but dynamic association, with

great opportunity to advance. So he interviewed with then-President Rick Barry, who hired him within two weeks.

"It was the first time in my life where I left a job very quickly," Sloan said. "I thought, 'I'm going to take this risk because I would always have wondered about this new exciting opportunity, where would it have led.'"

Areas of focus

Sloan's first job with the ASC was as director of member service, where he concentrated on developing new member programs; member recruitment; strengthening member relations; conducting member visits; and better understanding the needs of the membership.

From there he was assigned in 2002 to manage the association's Building the Industry initiative, a two-year program designed to identify areas where adhesives and sealants could replace other types of fasteners. "That actually got into a whole new area of business development because this was something that the association had never addressed before," he said.

It's programs like BTI that helps set the ASC, founded in 1958, apart, said Sloan, who took over as ASC president at the beginning of this year when Barry retired after serving in the post for five years. The group is strong in traditional service areas such as government relations, professional development and networking, but then the ASC goes further.

"We've developed a strong peer group component," he said. So it hosts separate meetings for such groups as human resources officials, chief technology officers, top executives from large adhesives firms and leaders from smaller businesses.

"We're slicing our demographics more now than we ever have to develop a series of programs, each catering to the needs of a different demographic segment," Sloan said. "Now we go beyond that when we talk about BTI. That's



Larry Sloan

where we as an association are developing a program ultimately to figure out ways to grow the industry for everybody—not just for one company to take market share from another."

While attracting new members obviously will be one of his goals, Sloan said it's often more of a challenge to keep current members. "I think that applies to the for-profit as well as the non-profit world," he said. "I think that what we can do to generate a loyalty from our current members is to always be as responsive as possible; to constantly go out and check the pulse; to assess their needs; to do surveying; and hold focus groups to get a better understanding as to what their interests are and what they're looking for in an association."

One challenge for associations is that often members don't know what they want, Sloan said, a fact that can prove tricky for leaders of such groups.

"What we need to do as an association is to be in front of our members and to be ahead of their vision to better understand what we think they're going to need and

want," he said. "And that's the challenge."

There are some medium and larger-sized firms that the ASC is targeting to try to bring into the association. For those in the industry that choose not to participate, Sloan said the reason normally is clear: they don't see the value.

"And the question is, 'Are we not communicating the value clearly or is it something that we're lacking that they're not able to grab onto to justify the investment?'" he said.

First-year goals

One area the ASC will look at this year is the attractiveness of Web-based seminars. So it will present a series of Web-based training catering to the technical needs of the industry. The "Webinars" would have a live instructor going through a presentation. Members would follow along on their computers and have the opportunity to ask live questions at the end of the presentation.

"This would not replace the face-to-face training but rather complement what we already do and go after a demographic slice that cannot travel but has a need for this type of education," Sloan said.

Besides educating its members, he believes the ASC also must work to educate the communities it serves. "We as an association, I believe, have a responsibility to educate our customers and our customers' customers," he said.

He envisions the development of training guides and promotional pieces that generate awareness and familiarity about adhesives and sealants, and also educates end users to assure them that adhesives are a viable alternative as a bonding technique.

"We need to develop tools and resources that have longer legs—that have a greater life span, an applicability," Sloan said. "To me that's a really exciting initiative because it gives back and helps the industry overall. So I'm personally very impassioned by that."

Nick, associate form alliance with Special Chem

By Bruce Meyer

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Longtime adhesives and sealant industry consultant David P. Nick—along with an associate firm—has formed an alliance to provide market intelligence reports to Special Chem S.A., a European-based Web supplier of information services.

Nick—through his company DPNA International Inc. and its associate ChemResearch GmbH—said the alliance puts "timely quality market research and analysis within the reach of thousands of industry participants worldwide."

Special Chem was started early this year by three former officials from Bostik Inc. and provides information for the adhesives, sealants, coatings, plastics and inks industries, Nick said at the ASC spring meeting.

The DPNA owner said Special Chem—located on the Web at www.specialchem.com—has several tiers of information available. The first level is free, while the next tier calls for a no-cost registration where the visitor is required to give detailed information.

With this data, Special Chem is able to perform targeted marketing for such clients as major raw material suppliers. Depending on the client, Special Chem would send information about new products to subscribers who fit the target profile, Nick said.

The firm would then record all responses, which typically have a rate of 25-30 percent, and handle follow-up mail-

ings before providing the client with a qualified list of interested prospects. Thus far, Special Chem has between 15,000 and 20,000 subscribers in its adhesives database and an even larger number for coatings, Nick said.

The firm also has a technical section and offers interactive Web seminars on subjects relating to adhesives and sealants.



Nick

DPNA and ChemResearch are responsible for providing adhesives and sealant-related reports for the market intelligence section, some for free and others for sale. The reports can cover either geographic areas—such as greater China, India, Europe or the U.S.—or focus on specific market segments.

Nick said the difference between this and other Web sites in the industry is that other firms offer just snippets of a report, while data available at Special Chem goes further. "We're making a totally packaged report available," he said. "It takes a little more time, but we felt that people who would be interested would find that more useful than having a little piece here and a little piece there."

Even the free reports offer much useful information, he said. "We don't covet the information. We have no problem making some of this information available as a tantalizing teaser. But it also answers some very basic

questions that people have."

Response to date, he said, has been a "little slow, but at expectation. Word is getting out and it's starting to show growth."

DPNA and ChemResearch also recently completed the third edition of their "Global Adhesive and Sealant Industry" report, a nearly 700-page study covering all aspects of the industry from 2003-06. The report covers all major areas of the world, all market segments by technologies and region, and industry direction and driving forces, he said.

About 90 percent of the data came from direct interviews with adhesives companies, raw material suppliers, equipment companies and related firms such as end users. Nick said this direct contact sets this report apart from other studies of the adhesives and sealant industry, which he claimed rely on dated material and information pulled from Internet research.

"We don't do this from the desk," he said. "I go around the world about four times a year." Work from DPNA and ChemResearch is supplemented from information gathered by people active in associations or the industry in each region of the world.

The full price for new subscribers is \$9,600, while those who subscribed to the second edition are charged \$5,700. The cost of the report also entitles subscribers to a "free day of consulting" from either DPNA or ChemResearch, with a presentation based on the report tailored to an individual company's needs.