

SPE 2014 Thermoforming Conference Conference Recap

The SPE Thermoforming Division 23rd Annual Conference got off to a great start on Tuesday with an inspiring and informative keynote presentation "Pathways to Growth-Better Pick the Ones That Work!" from **Christian Majgaard of Majgaard Brand & Business Development**. Majgaard, a former top global manager **with the toymaker LEGO®**, talked about the importance of companies taking paths that increase their likelihood of doing well and decrease the risk of negative scenarios. He emphasized making sure that an idea or product is liked by the customer and not only by the company. It is key to understand the customer, what the company is uniquely offering them, and how it will be accomplished.

During the roll fed technical presentations, **Tim Wilson from Strainoptics, Inc.** overviewed how to diagnose stress-related problems in thermoforming. He introduced the topic by summarizing causes of residual stresses, some of which are desirable or intentional such as those that produce orientation of molecular structure in bi-axially oriented films. Measuring stresses is important for optimizing processes, improving product quality, and preventing failures

Ryan Hunt of ALGIX, LLC presented a cut sheet presentation on life cycle assessments, which quantify and interpret the flows to and from the environment for a product. Environmental impacts can include air emissions, water effluents, solid waste, energy, and resource usage over the life cycle of a product or process. **He pointed out that brand owners and top tier companies such as Walmart, Apple, and ExxonMobil are very interested in life cycle assessments analyses because they care about how customers view their environmental impact.** Ryan has been working with Primex at our new JIF Technology and Innovation Center, located at Richmond, IN to continue development and ultimately commercialization of the Agix based HIPS and other polymers.

The cut sheet technical presentations included **Blake Johnson from Lanier Color Company**, who gave practical advice regarding the information needed to produce accurate color matches. **Don Hone of LTL Color**, presented on color and UV compounds for thin gauge extrusion. This is of particular interest to Primex as we continue to expand our capability in the extrusion of thin gauge acrylic cap stock that utilizes our unique triple manifold die technology to promote alternatives to Korad.

The conference's theme of "Ideas Worth Forming" was apparent during the afternoon Innovation Briefs. **Nate Bachman from Arkema** presented the first Innovation Brief on the company's SolarKote T Acrylic Capstock System and Elium liquid thermoplastic composite resin. SolarKote T bonds SolarKote to a TPO substrate using a Tacryl 1080 tie layer. SolarKote T fills in some of the characteristics not available from TPO. It achieves good scratch and mar resistance, and SolarKote blocks UV, protecting substrates underneath it

SPE Thermoforming Awards Dinner

The SPE Thermoforming Awards Dinner recognized many of the great leaders who have helped make the industry what it is today and also looked to thermoforming's future by awarding scholarships. Paul Uphaus was awarded "Outstanding Board Member", of the SPE Thermoforming Board division. Paul was also announced as the 2015 SPE Thermoforming Conference Chair to be held in Atlanta Georgia. Paul said in a statement: "I am honored to be part of such a prestigious organization and have truly enjoyed working with, and learning from, my fellow board members. Next year is Primex's 50th anniversary and I hope to use the Conference as a format to showcase some of the unique capabilities and technical capabilities that Primex offers". "The goal of the SPE is to expand both learning and communication between all factions of the Plastic industry. As chair, I plan to use this opportunity to make some changes to the conference to attract both vendors, customers and OEM's. The key is to get more traffic so everyone benefits from this unique setting".

Bill Kent of Brown Machine was named 2014 Thermoformer of the Year. He has been in thermoforming for more than 50 years, starting work at Brown Machine in 1961, where he worked with Gaylord Brown. Bill began as a technician and was soon traveling the world as a sales engineer. In 1985, he was named Vice President of Advanced Technology and remained in management at Brown Machine until he retired in 2012. Bill was a founding member of the SPE Thermoforming Board in the early 1980s and was re-elected to the Board of Directors in 1998, which he served on until 2011. He attended almost every NPE show from 1966 to 2012 and every SPE Thermoforming Conference from its inception in 1988 to 2011.

Wednesday

Wednesday morning began with an engaging and inspiring keynote presentation from **Tony Bridwell, Chief People Officer of Brinker International, the parent company of Chili's and Maggiano's restaurants.** His talk, "Culture is No Longer the Softer Side of Business," emphasized the importance of accountability, which is part of an organization's culture: not skills.

John Davidson of Distortion Arts, LLC presented a Cut Sheet Technical Presentation on the exciting opportunities and advancements in distortion forming. For many years distortion forming was based largely on trial and error, but now it is all becoming digital. A computerized approach can be used to gather the data needed for repeatable distortion forming, and this approach is better, faster, and cheaper because it eliminates the trial and error.

The **Roll Fed Technical Presentations** on Wednesday included one from **Dino Caparco of Yushin America, Inc.** on the advantages of using robotic stacking for thermoformed parts. He noted that robotic system installations often show payback times of one year.

Dennis Lauzon of Bixby International, presented on the benefits of synergistic business relationships. Primex Plastics has worked with Bixby for years on various developmental projects that required multiple companies such as Bixby and CET working together toward a common goal.

During the **afternoon Joint Session, Jonathan Kirschner and Rachel Benyola of AIIR Consulting, LLC** led an interactive workshop on succession planning. The presenters introduced the topic by explaining the importance of succession planning in making transitions in leadership smooth and keeping the company profitable even with changes in leadership.