

# ASPI NEWS

A Periodic Publication of the Association of Suppliers to the Paper Industry

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## Amelia Island welcomes Spring '06 Meeting

**W**ith its excellent educational program and abundant networking opportunities, ASPI's Spring 2006 meeting is a can't-miss event. The Spring 2006 Annual Meeting will be held at the Amelia Island Inn and Conference Center, March 15-17, 2006. The meeting will kick off with a social hour and informal dinner on Wednesday evening, March 15. As further described in this issue of ASPI News, there will be a very dynamic, interactive and educational program designed to describe new industry opportunities and challenges within our shared marketplace.

Appropriate recreation and an active spouse/companion program will also be a featured part of this meeting. Full meeting schedules and registration information will be available in mid-January with an expected hotel registration cut-off date in mid-February. Attendees will have the option of arriving early or extending their stay at the special ASPI meeting hotel rate. In addition, as a convenience to ASPI membership, meeting registration can be made electronically using credit card payments.

Further meeting details will be distributed electronically to ASPI membership and invited guests, and will also be available online at [www.aspinet.org](http://www.aspinet.org).

Remember... **March 15-17, 2006 at Amelia Island Inn and Conference Center.**

### Amelia Island program will be top-flight

Members and invited guests should be prepared for a provocative and invigorating program at the upcoming ASPI meeting at the Amelia Island Inn and Conference Center, March 15-17, 2006. On the heels of the uniquely successful October 2005 meeting in Stone Mountain (see story on page 2),

the Program Committee is focused on continuing to "raise the bar."

Six program modules promise valuable content for every attendee. The modules include program slots featuring the following:

- A mill manager responsible for a major integrated complex presenting his views

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**Spring '06 Meeting**  
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on the evolving role that suppliers can play in rejuvenating mill financial performance

- A major consultant discussing techniques used in other industries for product development and management
- The executive editor of a leading trade press publication offering his commentary on the future development of the global pulp and

paper industry

- A paper industry executive responsible for corporate technology, research and engineering discussing the developing role of industry suppliers in new product development and innovation
- A new ASPI member profile followed by an insightful commentary on the developing shortage of skilled industrial labor, and how companies should respond.

Each program module, as well as the overall meeting schedule, will allow ample time for open questions and answers as well as opportunities for one-on-one dialogue with the program participants. Don't miss your chance to be a part of this important event! Look for registration information in the mail and online by mid-January. ♦

## Stone Mountain program sets a new standard

More than fifty supplier executives and their spouses and companions attended the ASPI meeting at the Evergreen Resort and Conference Center at Stone Mountain, Georgia on October 19-21, 2005. Recently compiled attendee feedback information confirms the success of the conference program.

Upon their departure, the attendees completed a detailed Meeting Evaluation. The results of these evaluations were extraordinarily positive. On a scale of 1.0 - 4.0, with 4.0 signifying "superb", the following areas received the highest ratings:

Program content	3.78
Mix of business and social	3.54
Program structure	3.39
Meeting length	3.39

The 3.78 rating for the program content is the highest rating that an ASPI program has received in its history.

All of the individual program modules received at least

a good rating. The individual program modules receiving the highest ratings were:

- Chuck Reaves: "Value-Added Selling—How Industries Implode"
- Willis Potts: "The Way I Believe it is, But Wish it Wasn't"
- Klaus-Gunther Strack: "Strategy Considerations in Mature Markets"
- Marcus Pillion: "Training to Be Remembered Forever"

The Program Committee was particularly pleased with the very interactive responses from the attendees in response to the following item: "Please list, in order of importance to you, three topics you would

like to have covered at a future ASPI meeting." After eliminating duplication, the Committee identified seventeen different topics. Three of these have already been incorporated into the developing Amelia Island program.

The strongest indication of the value of the Stone Mountain meeting to attendees was the fact that all attendees except for one indicated that they gained specific ideas/concepts that could be directly applied to their company. One attendee indicated that he "was not sure."

Based on the strong endorsement of the attendees

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## Stone Mountain program

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at Stone Mountain meeting, the Program Committee will continue to develop unique, provocative and aggressive programs that give ASPI members the following:

- Insight into the global pulp and paper industry
- Ideas on how to increase revenue
- Concepts for improving efficiency and reducing costs
- Lessons on mitigating inherent business risks
- Understanding of the lessons learned from other industries. ♦

# Executive Committee Editorial: *Exciting Times*

by Tom Vaughn, ASPI President

The holiday time of the year results in a time of reflection and anticipation for many of us. This is usually the case with me. However, it seems particularly so this year, as I approach the end of my two-year term as President of ASPI. Perhaps it is even more so the case since ASPI is returning to Amelia Island for our Spring 2006 meeting. This was the same venue where I became your president, when we met there in the spring of 2004.

Two years ago I, my company, many of you, and ASPI were all dealing with the sobering realities of a mature marketplace. Furthermore, the skills and approaches that may have been successful in the past just didn't seem to be working anymore.

Two years ago, ASPI's Executive Committee decided to attempt a dramatic change for our association. We recognized that ASPI must deliver unique benefits and value to our member companies for the association to survive going forward. To this end, our 2004 meeting at Amelia Island launched several changes:

- The name of our association was changed to more accurately reflect that we no longer were focused on

"American companies" and that our common interests were our shared marketplace.

- We re-tooled our programs to make sure they were "business-relevant."
- We selectively recruited key companies into our membership to make sure our meeting forums were diverse and fully reflective of our industry segment.
- We designed several initiatives to help ASPI work to stimulate real industrial change and improvement.

There is no question that what we have done over the past two years together has been extraordinary. ASPI now has an exciting future; one sure measure of this is the outstand-

ing attendee rating of our recent meeting at Stone Mountain. However, the job is not finished. I am conveying to the new leaders of ASPI, who will be installed in office at Amelia Island next spring, a more serious challenge than I faced two years ago. Our focus two years ago was survival. The job my successors will face is to ensure that ASPI can live up to its extraordinary potential. I am convinced that ASPI membership can become a unique competitive advantage for its member companies. However, our new leaders must not forget that what got us here will not get us there. These truly have been and will continue to be exciting times for ASPI.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you. ♦

## Survey yields “best practices” information

The initial Customer Characterization surveys are in! ASPI has confidentially compiled the data from surveys completed by the membership, and a feature article is being developed. This initial feature article will focus on the “best practices” that form the basis for the survey. The article will discuss the processes and procedures that, when characterizing the relationship between an industry supplier and its customer, can result in unique supplied benefits for the customer. Once the article has been fully developed, the Board of Directors will decide whether a specific rating of one or more customers will be publicly disclosed.

In the near future, and with the assistance of ASPI’s new support staff, we will further define and officially launch the benchmarking and field safety training modules. ♦

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## ASPI Members’ Forum

### This month: New product introduction

By Bob Harrison, ASPI Consultant, Staff Support-ASPI Members Forum, [rharrisoninc@aol.com](mailto:rharrisoninc@aol.com)

*Editors Note: The ASPI Members’ Forum is an ASPI News feature that was introduced in the August 2004 issue. It is designed to stimulate a written dialogue openly or anonymously among ASPI members on subjects of collective interest to the industry. In each issue, ASPI staff will pose several questions on a general industrial subject. Member companies are encouraged to respond to these questions, either authored or anonymously. Likewise, members are encouraged to submit topics for examination.*

The September 2005 issue of ASPI News featured questions regarding the various effective ways to introduce a new product or service to the pulp and paper industry. The following are responses received from the membership to these questions and other issues related to the introduction of new products to the pulp and paper industry:

- “My company’s assessment is that the industry is no longer one wherein truly new products can effectively be introduced, especially in this part of the world. There are several reasons for this, not the least of which is the true total cost of developing new products and introducing them into a market that is this mature. The customer base is ‘risk averse’ and they no longer have the time and skills required to truly evaluate new products.”
- “We are only focused on evolutionarily improving our existing mature products. Furthermore, this market place only understands one type of product improvement: cost/price reductions.”
- “We advertise and participate in trade shows for only one reason: our employees get insecure if we don’t.”
- “Our product development budgets have been totally eliminated, with those funds being fully diverted to the sales and marketing of our existing product lines into developing pulp and paper markets and into non-pulp and paper markets.”
- “The only thing that we have seen that could be remotely described as ‘successful product development’ is when we cooperate with a customer in developing a new product to reduce his fundamental cost structure. The problem with this approach is, if successful, the customer wants to exclusively retain the technology as a competitive advantage while we want to openly sell it to all his competitors. As such, we have

## ASPI Members' Forum

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learned to fully address this conflict, on the front end, assuming success... easier said than done!"

### ASPI Questions

The Members' Forum Question for this issue of *ASPI News* is: ***How and what can your company profitably and effectively outsource?*** We encourage you to respond to any or all of the

following questions:

- Have you outsourced anything other than "administrative services"?
- If you have outsourced key order fulfillment functions, how can you protect against creating a future competitor?
- How have you contracted for key outsourced functions in a way that insures win-win, long-term relationships?

- What is your prime motivation for outsourcing—cost? Competence? Surge capacity? Asset re-deployment? Other?

What do you think? What experiences have you had with the issues described above? Send your responses to the ASPI Members' Forum staff contact Bob Harrison at [rharrisoninc@aol.com](mailto:rharrisoninc@aol.com). Authored and anonymous responses are welcome. Confidentiality of anonymous responses will be maintained. The editor would also like to hear from members suggesting questions and issues for future newsletters.

Be sure to look for member responses on the subject of outsourcing in next month's Members' Forum column! ♦

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**ASPI**  
Association of Suppliers to the Paper Industry  
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