PARTICIPATION IN ASME CODES AND STANDARDS ACTIVITIES

This represents the observations of Walter J. Sperko, not the official opinion of ASME

For the past 125 years ASME has successfully attracted volunteer technical experts to develop, maintain and promulgate ASME Codes and Standards. Participation by volunteers in ASME Code Committee activities is the life-blood of the ASME standards-writing process.

Encouraging individuals to contribute and getting their employers to recognize that supporting the standards-writing process is worthwhile and critical to the health of the industry. Since it is not always immediately apparent what the benefits of participation are, this document presents three aspects:

1) The personal value of committee participation to the individuals involved
2) Committee participation makes good business sense for employers that will be financially supporting those who are involved.
3) Noble causes

These are complimented by a list of specific examples that could be used to illustrate the benefits of doing Code Committee work.

This paper is intended to help current committee members recruit new members and to help those who are already thrilled by doing committee work describe the benefits to their employers (i.e., a good sales pitch) when trying to get funding for the next meeting.

BENEFITS TO INDIVIDUALS

Individual volunteers have a significant influence on the direction and quality of Codes and Standards, although many times the advantages to self and professional gratification seem dubious since we are promoting an intangible product. On the other hand, doing work on Code Committees is personally rewarding since a broad range of different organizations and technical experts participate with you in the process providing broad exposure to the subject matter and technical resources not readily available in any other venue. Some specific rewards are:

- Opportunity to interact with and learn from the best-of-the-best technical experts in the field. Discussions about state-of-the-art technologies such as behavior of Grade 91, bolted flange joint maintenance, toughness requirements for specific materials, and cyclic thermal stress loadings are common at committee meetings, particularly at subgroup and working group meetings.
- Opportunity to create a personal network of contacts for sage technical advice and for interpretation of Code requirements. One gets to know fellow committee members personally, and those committee members routinely provide guidance and insight to fellow committee members *gratis* as a professional courtesy.
- Provides a beneficial overall career development opportunity through the network of contacts
- Participants become aware of revisions to standards way ahead of the rest of industry. This allows them to plan current activities to minimize future cost, again resulting in heroic performance sure to be noticed by the boss.
- Becoming aware early of technical problems in the industry, and finding out find out how others are dealing with them, This allows participants to preclude similar problems within

their own organizations or to have solutions already developed should the problem arise. This allows one to provide competent and defensible answers to questions on code and other technical issues.
- Provides knowledge of who to hire as knowledgeable and experienced consultants in time of such need
- Provides the opportunity to become intimate with the codes and standards they work with. This allows participants to be more thorough and confident and heroic in their application of code rules, leading to increased efficiency and ability to get work done expeditiously. .
- Allows participants to see work that they have been directly involved with become part of a international engineering standard that everyone uses. The first time you see your work published in the Code is a real trip. The cool part is when someone asks you questions about those rules and you can answer them with complete confidence – because you were there!
- Provides experience in teamwork and the art of consensus building that is directly transferable to other work areas.
- Allows participants to see how to run meetings that are productive, and focused – or maybe not! Young candidates should be pointed in the direction of interactive and exciting meetings, not Standards Committee meetings (except for SC IX meetings which are always exciting . . . .)

BENEFITS TO SUPPORTING ORGANZATIONS

- Ensures that the interests, practices and experience of the organization are thoroughly considered in developing and updating Code requirements
- Reduces the risk that competitors will set a direction of requirements that will be incompatible with your product development effort. Impacts could include avoidance of costly design, pattern, and tooling modifications, with a resulting potential competitive advantage due to early compliance with critical standards.
- Ensures that the organization has early access to and is continuously aware of upcoming revisions and their technical basis so that these changes can be incorporated in new designs while the standards development and publication process is taking place.
- Participants are continuously aware of technical problems in the industry and how others are dealing with them; this allows participants to avoid these problems within their own organizations or to have already developed solutions should the problem arise.
- Participants become knowledgeable in the Codes and Standards in which they are involved. This allows them to be more thorough and confident in their application of Code rules, leading to increased efficiency and reduced cost to their organizations.
- Provides knowledge of how to access the ASME system and to receive a timely response when an official code ruling is needed.
- Gives the organization the opportunity for shared participation in research and development efforts for subjects such as bolted flange joint maintenance, toughness requirements for specific materials, and cyclic thermal stress loadings at a much lower cost than it could be done by a single entity.
- Provides the ultimate in benchmarking opportunities.
- Provides knowledge of who to hire as knowledgeable and experienced consultants in time of such need
- Participants have complimentary access to the ASME codes and standards related to their committee work
- Participants get to know other technical experts personally; these contacts provide unmatched resources for solving technical problems.

- Participants meet and socialize with committee members and observers who are your customers and supplier. When there is a problem with a specification or product, having direct access to the technical experts at your customer or supplier allows you to resolve technical and contractual issues quickly and reasonably.
- Participants have the opportunity to interact with other technical experts with similar interests and gain experience in teamwork on technical matters.

NOBLE CAUSES

- Improves public health, safety and welfare, making everyone safer
- Reduces barriers to trade, reducing the cost of goods and services to everyone.
- Gives the participant and his organization the opportunity to participate in United States Technical Advisory Groups (US TAG's) for related International Standards Organization (ISO) standards development efforts, thereby influencing those standards.
- Increases awareness of changes being made in related codes and standards, including those developed by standards development organizations based outside the USA.
- Superb forum for identification of trends and offer insider knowledge which provides a competitive edge.
- Reduce the risk of investing in inappropriate technology

SPECIFIC CASE ILLUSTRATIONS

Committee members might want to add their personal experiences in doing committee work to the above points. Members should provide specific examples that illustrate the benefits, particularly if they show documented bottom-line benefits. For present members who are struggling with funding, illustrations of past benefits and victories should be used shamelessly. Examples to consider are:

- Initiated a change in the standard that resulted in a product that is less expensive or higher quality.,
- Reduced "special" requirements, resulting in improved service life, reduced cost or both, all without reducing safety or reliability
- Convinced the committee to take an alternative but equivalent approach to a problem that resulted in less costly changes to the organization's manufacturing process or to the cost of using the product
- Incorporated a pending change to a standard into a new product line that resulted in virtually no extra cost to the organization
- Incorporated a pending change to a standard into a new product that got a new product out the door ahead of the competition.
- Learned about a Code Case that saved the organization $xxx on a particular project.
- Determined the best way to solve a particular problem by discussing the issue in a non-proprietary manner with committee members.