

Must Be Present to Win

By Jason Myers



As I think back on the most recent American Shotcrete Association (ASA) convention in Santa Fe and immediately following American Concrete Institute (ACI) Convention in Chicago, it makes me grateful and honored for the friendships, knowledge, discussions, arguments, and food and beverages that I have shared with my ASA colleagues. As the ASA convention was wrapping up, I was in a discussion with a first-time attendee of the convention, and he was amazed at the knowledge that was shared, the interactions of the various contractors, and the networking and information that was discussed in an effort to promote and enhance the shotcrete industry. He was highly impressed by the leaders of the shotcrete industry who gathered together to be industry-focused and not self-focused. These experiences show that the importance of ASA goes back to the old mantra of “Must be Present to Win”.

This past year, the Membership Committee conducted a survey to analyze what benefits our membership value. The results were discussed in Santa Fe, and despite the wide range of shotcrete usage, different types of members, and various needs of the organization, it was interesting that every survey noted that the importance and value of ASA is in the interpersonal relationships that occur within the group and the knowledge that is shared. What the members see as the greatest value is the conversations, contacts, and education that occur just by hanging out with other members of the shotcrete industry.

It was also amazing to read how many people first began attending ASA events because of an invitation from an ASA forefather. All of this shows that in today's attempt to have the latest electronic gadget or the newest podcast or video, the true value that people seek is in the relationships and interpersonal interactions that we are created to seek. Once again “Must be Present to Win”.

Another value that members cherish is the education, knowledge, and credibility that ASA provides: I did not attend a single educational presentation at Santa Fe that I did not learn something from. So often today when we try to self-educate, we start to read an article or watch a video,

but quickly fast forward through it because we think that we know it all and it's just a repeat of previous knowledge. When in this type of situation with my children, I always tell them to “Look for the nugget.” It may appear that it is the same information retaught, but there's always something new to discover if you pay attention to the information. At the last ASA Convention, I walked away with an ore cart of nuggets, which just proves the mantra true again. On the surface it might appear to be easier to read the latest article, but the value of the ASA is in the knowledge that we share, discuss, and refine together, which then leads to all of its members having greater credibility in our industry.

One unique aspect and value of the ASA is that an essential goal of the membership is trying to elevate the industry with better shotcrete placement. So often, trade organizations are about trying to keep the status quo or trying to make competitors look bad. Numerous comments in the membership surveys discussed the value of ASA's role in forging acceptance of shotcrete placement through education of engineers, shotcreters, and their companies, thus elevating the standards of shotcrete placement throughout the industry. Through proper engineering at the beginning, and higher quality standards, the entire level of acceptance and use in the concrete construction industry is increased. The ASA membership is about not cheating the process, but collaborating together to increase the shotcrete standards throughout the industry. It is human nature to look at a project and tear it down for what is wrong with it — but it works better for everyone to discuss from the beginning how to design and build, and ultimately building to a higher standard. How is this done and accomplished? By being part of the conversation.

As I discussed in my previous **President's Message**, the value of ASA has been given to us by our shotcrete forefathers. They have laid a tremendous foundation that we are building upon. We owe the credibility that we presently enjoy to that foundation laid for us — but, as the previous article also stated, “Where are you serving?” Are you involved, or are you waiting for someone else to maintain that foundation? Only by active participation can we all succeed and continue to grow the usage and credibility of the shotcrete industry; and the only true way to accomplish this? “Must be Present to Win.”