

An Open Letter to Current (and Future) FSA Members
Subject: the FSA's Value to Chesterton

Dear FSA Members:

When I read Mike Shorts and Jim Richter's recent open letters to FSA members, it struck a chord. I realized that though it was clear to me that Mike and Jim's companies were invested in the FSA, I didn't have as clear a picture as to what it was about the FSA that their companies valued. Reading these letters highlighted a lot of things that the FSA is because of its members, and the value it provides to its members. I would like to hear other stories about your experience with the FSA, but to make it clear I'm invested in this association; I'd like to share some of my perspective on the FSA.

When I started at Chesterton as an Applications Engineer, my job was to know our products and services as well our competitors' offerings, and help our sales team to 'win' the battle to get an order. After attending my first FSA meeting, it was quickly apparent that our competitors are also our colleagues in a large, global industry, and there were some common goals that we could pursue to benefit all of us. Collaborating with sealing device experts yielded a lot of knowledge that would have taken me so much longer to acquire on my own. The scope and depth of knowledge of our members is astonishing when you think about it. From drafting international standards to doing business in different cultures, from addressing workplace challenges to learning about new materials and technologies, there are people at the FSA who have experience and knowledge on almost any topic. I have benefited greatly from this.

Coming to the FSA was a bit daunting, and I was perhaps a bit skeptical at first. My tendency is to sit back and watch things until I feel comfortable with what is going on rather than jumping in with both feet; that's probably a typical trait for an engineer. When I came to my first meeting 15 years ago, I knew virtually no one but my boss (Henri Azibert whom some of you may know). His advice at the time was to start small but to 'do something'. So I volunteered to take minutes at my first technical committee meeting, and I made some connections with a few other members. Those same members participated in another technical committee which they invited me to, and after just a few meetings, I made connections with a dozen more. I started to find it much easier to introduce myself to new people and start jumping into things with both feet. Chairs and members of all the committees I've been on at the FSA have been accommodating and welcomed any assistance and participation members provided. The FSA has given me an opportunity to develop skill sets that would be more difficult to acquire in my day to day office environment here in the woods of the Northeast US.

The FSA has also provided me with a broad scope of experience that extends far beyond what I initially expected.

- Working on the creation of new standards with other FSA colleagues has taught me how to better negotiate, listen to other viewpoints, and to be patient; doing things by committee takes time, but the outcomes of these activities benefits our industry as a whole. As an example, the Compression Packing Test Procedure that the FSA and ESA developed jointly has been promulgated to an industry standard (DIN EN 16752). This is the first standard available that defines a means of testing performance of a packing in rotating equipment. The current work on a test method for Spiral Wound Gaskets is another good example; other standards groups such as API are interesting in the work that this committee is doing.
- Working with the Government Affairs Committee has been the biggest stretch from my day job, but it's also been the most fascinating. All our companies can individually voice their positions on laws and regulations, but a collective voice is much louder and effective than an individual one. By simply providing our collective feedback on regulations as they were being developed, and by educating those writing these them, the FSA has helped positively shape the rules that directly affect our industry. One example I can use is draft rule on methane emissions from the ECCC (Environment and Climate Change Canada). The Government Affairs Committee arranged a trip to do a presentation to this group on available technologies to mitigate methane emissions. Each member did a short presentation on our industries capabilities and technologies. Several weeks after our meeting, the chair of the meeting sent a note back to the FSA thanking us for taking the time in doing this, and that the information we provided was invaluable in helping them understand what was possible (and commercially available today) as they drafted those rules. That is as clear an example as any that our Association can have a positive impact for our industry.
- Marketing was a foreign language to me, but participating in our Marketing Committee has taught me about Social Media, Brand Management, and messaging to a specific audience. All our good work means nothing if nobody hears about it. Our messaging is being heard, using the latest and greatest tools, across the industry via Twitter, LinkedIn, technical articles in magazines, training sessions at Conferences and via webinars. I've been able to learn and participate in all this because of the FSA; it's made collaboration with our own company's Marketing group that much easier. I've seen first-hand the benefit of this committee's work in promoting our Association to the outside world.

I firmly believe this scope of experience is the most lasting effect of my participation in the FSA, and it doesn't stop here with me. Other members of our company are participating in the FSA in different committees. Ron Frisard (Product Field Manager) is involved in multiple committees and is in charge of much of our webinar training program. Ann Attenasio (Product Development Manager) recently joined the Mechanical Seal Technical Committee and has been actively

participating in development of content for the Knowledge Base. Lucas Norton (Compression Packing Product Development) will be attending our upcoming Packing and Gasket TC Meetings for the first time.

The FSA is investment for all our members in time and money. It is an investment that pays dividends in so many ways, not the least of which is the knowledge and experience that your chosen representatives brings back to and benefits your company and. I can also tell you that those representatives appreciate the investment and opportunity our company provides by asking them to participate in the FSA.

Best Regards,



Phil Mahoney

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