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An Open Letter to the FSA Membership Community:

Subject: *FSA Membership – Making a Difference Together*

Quite a few years ago now, having just received my engineering degree, I was hired by John Crane’s Chief Engineer, Jim Netzel, a very passionate engineer and true seal industry pioneer. I’m sure many of you know Jim personally. At the time, I honestly knew very little about the “Seal Industry”. As it turns out, I realized shortly thereafter that few people did. Jim’s enthusiasm and drive to find a solution for every sealing application, push the advancement of seal technology and share that growing knowledge base to benefit the user community through countless educational forums, technical papers and books made a huge impact on my early career development and broader responsibility as an engineer. I had no idea at the time that more than 3 decades later I would be fortunate enough to still be actively engaged in advancing fluid control technologies on a global scale and now in a position to share my experiences and acquired knowledge to influence the development of the next generation of seal engineers.

So how does that relate to the FSA?

In contrast, during my early exposure to industry trade shows and associations I found that end users were constantly getting mixed messages when it came to seal application practices, were not well informed on the current broader state of sealing technology advances, and that competitor relationships were quite adversarial. This really conflicted with the concept of working together with other seal companies to cooperatively develop industry standards and best practices. So when I was approached a number of years ago to participate in the Mechanical Seal Division of the FSA, I was naturally somewhat reluctant and skeptical. While John Crane had a long relationship with both the FSA and ESA (European Sealing Association), until I became an active member of FSA I personally did not recognize the real value and genuine greater good intent or purpose of either association.

Moving forward as a more senior engineer and business leader through a period of significant seal technology advancement, I was deeply aware of the growing demands on the user community for greater equipment reliability, heightened safety standards and compliance to more and more stringent emission regulations. At the same time, I became more involved in FSA and started building internal relationships that really demonstrated

to me that fellow FSA members were a dynamic positive consortium of seal experts also passionate about making a difference and they valued my contributions as well. While certainly still competitors, there was clearly a common purpose and dedication to collaborate on the advancement of best practices, develop training material, to educate users and other industry stakeholders, to work cooperatively on important issues like environmental / social responsibility and to be an open technical forum for SME's to debate positions on how we as a group can make an impact on emerging relevant topics.

Over the past several years, as an FSA Board member and being actively involved within the Government Affairs Committee, it has been personally rewarding to see the tangible impact of member company SME's across FSA in joint efforts working with API, law makers and other parties to build a greater understanding of how today's sealing technologies can bring together and provide win-win solutions that address diverse and often conflicting environmental, regulatory and economic positions facing users. As a respected non-commercial voice of expertise in sealing technology, collectively FSA member companies have a unique platform and responsibility to work together and bridge these gaps as a positive driving force in the processing industries now and moving forward.

Personally, getting that first push into active participation was what I really needed to change my perception and understanding of the value proposition that FSA membership provides to John Crane. As FSA President Phil Mahoney pointed out, "FSA is an investment". An investment that has many potential dividends, some personal, some corporate and some at an industry level. I know that it is now my responsibility to help pass that message along internally within John Crane and to encourage colleagues and potential future members to make that initial investment. Together we will further strengthen and leverage FSA's corporate effectiveness to carrying out its strategic purpose; to be recognized and called upon as the primary source of knowledge and technology leadership in the areas of fluid sealing.



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