

TAPPSA NEWS

BERG CONFERENCE A HIT – ONCE AGAIN

82 delegates, 141 family members and 9 speakers – the TAPPSA Berg Conference certainly continues to attract the crowds, even with the economic recession stopping a number of further delegates from attending.

Over the Valentines Day weekend, TAPPSA held its annual Berg Conference at the Champagne Sports Resort, Drakensberg. Although the conference is always a great hit as a family weekend, with the spouses and children of delegates encouraged to join in the weekend activities, this year's conference also proved to be a great opportunity to discuss the challenges awaiting the pulp and paper industry this year.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES...

The conference began with a look at the environmental challenges the industry faces, as Dr John Scotcher of ForestLore Consulting discussed the latest trends in environmental legislation.

John explained that there is no such concept as a safe polluter. "Duty of care" is becoming an important element of the NEM (National Environmental Management) Amendment Act of 2008. Even if industry members are allowed to pollute legally (ie. have a licence or permit), we are still eligible to be held liable under "Duty of care" to minimise or stop our actions entirely.

John cautions that environmental law in South Africa focuses on people's needs as much as it does on natural requirements. People are placed at the forefront, with social and cultural sustainability key. This means that the promotion of access to resources as much as it does the protection thereof – a point that will become an increasingly bigger part of environmental restrictions placed on the paper industry in the near future.

Ursula Henneberry, Operations Director of PRASA (Paper Recycling Association of South Africa), also gave a passionate speech on the packaging levies and recycling by-laws that the government will soon be implementing. Her talk is discussed in greater detail on page 4.

Peter Wheeler, Technical Manager of Buckman Laboratories, looked at how one can implement green technologies within each mill – namely through the use of Buckman's enzymes for fibre modification. For the not-so-technically-minded, Peter provided a break down of what enzymes are – namely protein-based catalysts that lower the activation energy for reactions and speed up naturally occurring reactions.

Focusing on Buckman Laboratories' cellulase enzymes, Peter explained how cellulases give the papermaker many opportunities to improve operations through the reduction in applied energy at refining, fibre source rationalisation and improved quality (strength, formation, etc.).



Peter Wheeler of Buckman Laboratories talks on the use of enzymes for fibre modification

Gala Dinner:
"Island in the Sun"



Best dressed couple:
Chris Cox and
Heidi Alcock

Cellulase degrades cellulose in fibre wall structure, initiates wall stripping & fines generation. Refining then delaminates cell walls, which causes the cell wall to collapse and starts fibrillation – this provides the strength of the fibre with more bonding sites. Peter backed up his successful findings with a linerboard and tissue case study on the implementation of Buckman’s enzymes.

... AND MILL OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges inevitably bring about the chance for opportunities – which in turn encourage innovative ideas. For this reason, the conference was certainly not restricted to the challenges we face but instead embraced the success stories of our industry as well.

Neil Hunt, Technical Manager of Mondi Felixton, gave a very insightful talk on Mondi Felixton’s expansion project, Project Khulisa (meaning ‘we are growing’). The innovative project has enabled Mondi Felixton to minimise their environmental footprint (with regards to water and energy usage in particular) while increasing their processing of recovered fibre. Perhaps most commendable of all, was that Project Khulisa was on time, within budget and did not result in a single serious accident. More on how Neil and his team got this right on page 40.

Success is also achieved in hard times by thinking out the box – and how more out the box can you possibly get than the successful pairing of an engineer and an accountant. Amidst many laughs, Chris Cox (Technical Development Manager, Mondi Shanduka Newsprint) and Vereesh Ramphal (Chief Financial

Officer, Mondi Shanduka Newsprint) provided an insight into how, by working together, one can maintain the competitiveness of a South African paper company.

ESKOM SHEDS LIGHT ON SA’S POWER SUPPLY

Perhaps the most pertinent speaker at the Berg Conference was Helmut Ollerman, Sales and Marketing Manager of the Eskom Eastern Region, who had every delegate on the edge of their seats with his frank and informative talk on how the industry and Eskom can manage electricity constraints in South Africa.

Whether each delegate was perched on the edge of their seat out of interest or simply to get a better swing at the Eskom representative when his talk ended, only Helmut will know. Most would judge the former; Helmut’s speech provided a well structured and honest explanation of Eskom’s various electricity cuts and price hikes, as well as a frank outlook on what industries such as the pulp and paper sector can expect in the next few years.

According to Helmut, electricity demand will outstrip supply by 2010 if our 4% growth in electricity capacity continues. “Going forward, if we are to solve this, it has to be a collective initiative by Eskom, industry and government.”

Collectively then, Eskom hopes to increase supply through cogeneration, a number of new builds and through improving plant efficiency and maintenance. Although Eskom is competing for international



Golf at the Berg...

resources and equipment to expand South Africa's power generation, Helmut believes we can safely bank on the main generators coming in by 2013. "We are calling on private power companies to provide 5MW where possible," says Helmut.

Helmut explains that Eskom's only viable option to reduce demand will be through energy conservation via co-generation and DSM (demand side interventions). DSM include mandatory regulations to reduce demand and voluntary reduction by us, the consumers. Eskom will also be increasing their pricing – Helmut suggests banking on a 30-33% price hike in the next 3 years.

BRINGING EFFICIENCY TO THE MILL

The Berg Conference also showcased a number of technologies that provide a practical reduction of a mill's energy costs. Jouni Dahllund of Sevenfold, the local representative of the EV Group, discussed a number of case studies that implemented EV Group's runnability technology for a paper machine's single felted drying section.

Roland Berger, Product Manager of BTG Instruments, discussed online monitoring control in the wet end. Looking at a complex wet end, from fixing agents to white water, Roland discussed how BTG can overcome wet end quality issues such as pinholes, brightness, sizing, opacity and dry strength – amongst others.

FROM THE OLD TO THE NEW – HOW TO RETAIN SKILLS

To many TAPPSA members, the real challenge currently facing the industry is how to manage the various generations present at a single mill: from the cellphone-obsessed Generation X, to the respectful Baby Boomers, to the workaholic Veterans.

In a time where technical skills are few and far between, it is imperative to retain staff across all generations that each hold precious knowledge and skills. In order to keep such employees around, however, one needs to understand what keeps each generation happy.

In his thoroughly entertaining talk, Phillip Viljoen (Engineering Manager of Sappi Stanger) showcased the differences between each generation working at the typical pulp or paper mill – and what makes each generation worth having around. Take Generation Y, for example – "These are the original yuppies – they've just evolved into yuppies with a conscience," Phillip explains. Or take Generation X, the under-30 year olds: "These guys take a broken piece of

machinery and don't throw it away. Instead they take it apart and see what makes it tick, and then how they can fix it... I think: am I getting old? I can't do that! Its at times like these that I find the nearest valve, so that all I need to do is just turn a wheel to know I've done something useful," he laughs.

Most importantly, Phillip made a clear point that one needs to transform one's style of management into one of leadership in order to keep different generations within the industry and to retain their skills.

LOOKING TO 2010

The Berg Conference also provided an opportunity for TAPPSA members to meet Lynne Askew, the new Executive Director of TAPPSA, and vice versa. Having never attended a Berg Conference before, Lynne certainly did a great job in canvassing the industry in order to find pertinent and interesting speakers for the weekend.

"Having to organise the 2009 Berg Conference and never having attended one in the past was a very daunting task at first," says Lynne. "But since the conference has ended, I have received many emails with very positive remarks. With this in mind, I hope to see everyone back for 2010! I hope all the delegates enjoyed themselves and had a chance to share family time, as I did."

The weekend was indeed a mixing of business with pleasure, with the troops marching speedily onto the Champagne Sports Resort golf course once the conference had ended after Saturday lunch. Although some were defeated by the spectacular 18 hole course, one team emerged as triumphant winners of the Four Ball competition. These were Casper Nice, Anne-Marie Nice, Martin Zellerer and Shane Capazorio.

Recognition and many thanks must be given to our generous sponsors of the weekend:

- Richard Smith for the Audio-Visual
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