

Claim 8 Communication

This section is covered in two parts: Participation in Industry functions and teaching courses.

As an active member of the industry, I have Chaired and participated in many conferences and committees. The two I will discuss today are the 2004 Advanced Technical Workshop [ATW Coalbed Methane] and the 2010 Asia Pacific Oil & Gas Conference & Exhibition [APOGCE] both held in Queensland. The 2004 AWT attracted over 100 participants from 14 countries. As Co-Chair I formed a committee and arranged the program for both the technical and social events. This is a significant task and being voluntary, I requested and received significant resources and support from my manager and employer. The success of the AWT was essentially due to the personal attention I gave each of the committee members and participants. The participants had to fill in a form which informed me of their intentions for attending and their expertise. This enabled me to tailor many of the sessions. A major part of the workshop was for the poster session. I communicated with each participant individually to encourage them to generate a poster in their speciality. This proved to be significantly successful. Instead of sending out sponsorship requests via pamphlets, I approached individual companies either in person or via the telephone. The AWT was fully sponsored. In 2004, I received the Southern Asia Pacific Regional Service Award.

For the 2010 APOGCE, I was the Technical Chairperson of a committee of 50 people from throughout the world. This committee was responsible for analysing over 600 papers and determining which paper will be presented at the conference.

As Chairperson for a major event, communication is fundamental and challenging when the committee members are volunteers. I found the most effective method of maintaining cordiality and getting the work done was through one to one communication outside the committee meetings. Personalising emails and making telephone calls is the most effective communicative method of getting tasks completed. Personalising the relationship prevents surprises such as promises unfulfilled.

Presenting at these conferences is highly regarded in the industry and participants endeavour to be listed on the program. Unfortunately, due to the cost of travel and often visa issues, some participants are unable to attend causing voids in the technical sessions. This problem was highlighted to me by the conference organisers. To prevent this occurring, I mobilised the committee members into telephoning each potential presenter. I also modified the rules prior to enlisting informing presenters that they must register before being listed on the programme. As an additional backup plan, I asked a few local members with unsuccessful papers to prepare a presentation. Over 700 people from 20 countries attended the conference and the technical sessions were very well attended.

Both these functions were a major success.

The best way to improve your communication skills and your technical knowledge is to develop and hold courses. Coal seam gas has been my speciality over the last 15 years. The course I have developed has been held in Australia and overseas more than twenty times. Often the requirement for a Chinese translator is necessary. The use of a translator when speaking in technical terms poses challenges. Care and attention in how you speak becomes very important as the subtleties of the

English language cannot be effectively translated. Often, relying on my gut feeling, I sense my message may have been misinterpreted and therefore patience and persistence is required to ensure the correct information is disseminated.

Communication is essential in engineering but will fail without personalisation. I often see documents sent to the field which later upset the authors because the project implementers missed or did not read some important information buried in the document. Effective communication relies on ensuring that the stakeholders have understood the document.