

Oftentimes, we look at commercials as unwanted breaks in wanted activities. Me, if I'm watching television, I want to see what Jack Bauer is about to do next, not a string of commercials for automobiles and big-box stores; if I'm listening to the radio, I want to hear Muse or U2, not a pitch for some lite beer; if I'm browsing the web, I don't want to be assaulted with Flash highjacks and pop-up windows for mortgage companies.

But, if I'm at a conference, I want to see the program *and* the sponsoring organizations. And, in many cases, I want to see the exhibition most of all. A conference exhibition is nothing like TV ads . . . it's like shopping at a specialty mall that exists at one place on earth for three days only and that is built just for you. For those of you reading this editorial while ensconced at the TMS 2010 Annual Meeting in Seattle, that mall is here, and those three days are now.

Exhibitions are a trove of potential delights: Will someone who I want to visit be hosting a booth? Will I see some neat stuff demonstrated? Will there be irresistible new widgets? Will there be food? Will there be gotta-have souvenirs? Most importantly, will I find something that is going to make my workplace more efficient, competitive, and (dare I hope?) fun?

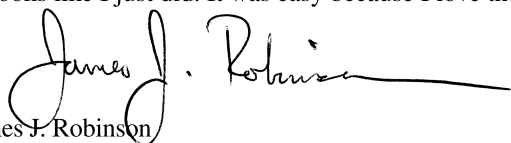
I'm ancient enough to recall the first TMS Annual Meeting Exhibition. It was held during 1987 in Denver and debuted in complement to festivities celebrating the centennial of the Hall-Héroult process. The exhibition was heavily light metals oriented back then and has tracked that way for two decades. In recent years, however, the profile has started to evolve, with aluminum still playing a prominent role, but with all points of the materials tetrahedron now taking on greater profile on the exhibit floor.

TMS's director of partner relations, Trudi Dunlap, leads our effort to make sure that there is something for everyone in the exhibition mall, err, hall. The effort includes input from the recently formed TMS Exhibitors Council—exhibitors who offer suggestions on how to improve and grow the event and provide a better experience for exhibitor and attendee alike. Trudi believes this effort important for many reasons, not the least of which is her astute observation that the exhibit hall is home to the suppliers that make the technologies presented in the session rooms and in journals like *JOM* possible. Exhibitors represent the infrastructural backbone of the community. She told me, for example, that . . .

- Software vendors Thermo-Calc (booth 100), CompuTherm (booth 428), and Sente (booth 414) produce and distribute tools used by computation materials science and engineering professionals as described in the October 2009 issue.
- Cutting-edge testing equipment manufacturers like Hysitron (booth 400), Agilent (booth 404), and CSM Instruments (booth 239) help scientists know how small volumes of materials deform and help everyone more easily understand the physical behavior of materials, which are common topics in any issue of the journal.
- Two of the top aluminum producers in the world, Rio Tinto Alcan (booth 309) and Hydro Aluminium Hycast (booth 608), participated in a special roundtable on Challenges for Sustainable Growth in the Aluminum Industry, as described in the November 2009 issue.

Good stuff and all true. . . . Just a minute. . . . I think that Trudi shared her thoughts in hopes that I might mention the exhibition in an upcoming editorial.

Looks like I just did. It was easy because I love the exhibition!



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