Technical education builds our brand and your skills

STLE’s Webinar program tops 1,000 participants.

ALTHOUGH ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES like me spend most of their time looking forward at the profession and the needs of members, sometimes a look at the past can be just as useful and informative. In some instances, it leads to a discovery worth sharing in a magazine column.

An excellent example is an STLE branding-strategy study that was conducted for our organization in February 2011 by McKinley Marketing, Inc. The purpose of the study was to better define the essence of STLE’s brand, as viewed by a representative group of interviewees.

The study asked people about both the tangible and intangible or emotional benefits associated with the STLE brand. In taking a second look at the report the other day while working on another project, one of the responses jumped off the page.

When asked about tangible aspects of STLE’s brand, the person being interviewed said, “Educational programming improves my knowledge on fundamental lubrication topics and cutting-edge research techniques.” Many others shared the same sentiments.

In terms of overall advice to STLE, the McKinley report stated, “STLE members across all segments see tremendous value in the education programs that the society provides. As a recognized leader in this area, STLE should continue to expand and build its library of offerings.”

The point of revisiting this report is to highlight the fact that STLE’s educational offerings have expanded and reached out to a much wider audience during the past two years. Traditional education vehicles, such as local section lube schools and annual meeting courses, remain very much a core part of STLE’s education program. But added to the mix is our Webinar education program offered online through the STLE University.

The audience numbers tell the story about the new program’s impact. Since January 2011, STLE has presented 40 Webinars to a combined audience of at least 1,036 attendees. In many cases, individual sites are hosting multiple individuals, so the number of actual participants could be significantly larger. It is also interesting to note that more than 25% of the audience (272 people) are non-members.

Credit for creating this excellent new addition to the STLE professional development program goes to our Education Committee and to Kara Sniegowski, our education manager. They’ve teamed with more than 30 expert presenters who have volunteered their time and shared their knowledge and insights through this convenient and affordable educational medium.

If you have not yet attended a Webinar but like what you are hearing about the benefits, here are three simple ways to experience this new source of education content.

Idea No. 1 is to visit www.stle.org to review the selection of archived Webinars. The list is searchable by topic, so it’s easy to find the ones with a direct application to your interests and needs or to those of a co-worker. Pricing for the archived Webinars is very affordable at $39 to members and $59 for non-members, the same price structure used for the live events.

A second opportunity is to watch for announcements of the Webinar program that’s underway once again in 2013 at a two-per-month frequency. A wide range of topics are on the schedule, including sessions on synthetic lubricants, filters and filtration and reliability-centered lubrication techniques.

The third way is by reading condensed versions of the Webinars in TLT each month. This issue’s Webinar article, “Analyzing Bearing Damage,” is from a March 2011 presentation by Dr. Paul Shiller, an STLE member and research scientist in the University of Akron’s Civil Engineering Department, which appears on page XX.

The Webinar series has been a success in terms of STLE’s ability as an organization to implement the McKinley Report suggestions. But the real achievement rests in the contributions we make to the professional development of individuals involved in the tribology and lubricants communities.

This outcome was summed up well by another individual quoted in the 2011 branding report: “By joining STLE, I enhance my professional reputation, gain credibility among my peers and become a go-to individual in the eyes of my supervisors.”

Put a Webinar on your calendar soon and discover the power of STLE education.

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