



Chairman's Address, Keynoter Highlight 2014 Summit

2014 AWMA Chairman Mark Davenport opened the AWMA Summit in Orlando yesterday, outlining some of the association's achievements over the past year and introducing 2015 Chairman Rob Sincavich of Team Sledd, who was presented the gavel and the traditional green jacket worn by all AWMA chairmen.

"I promise to do what I can to carry forward the standards and traditions of this organization," said Sincavich in accepting his jacket.

Following Davenport's address at the Summit opening breakfast sponsored by Kraft Foods, AWMA's Hall of Fame Award was presented to long-time industry and AWMA supporter Tom Joyce, vice president of global customer and industry affairs at The Hershey Co.



Then, the Summit's keynote address was presented by Juliet Funt, owner and founder of Whitespace at Work, who encouraged attendees to pause, take time to think—to create "whitespace" in their lives, both business and personal. The Hershey Co. was the sponsor of the Tuesday Summit program.

"This is our way of supporting AWMA at the highest level because we believe that speakers like Ms. Funt help us go back to our businesses with new ideas and tools that can be very useful and helpful," said Brent Cotten, director, customer and industry affairs at Hershey.

AWMA Initiatives

Among 2014 AWMA achievements highlighted by Davenport was the creation of STEPS 2.0—Driving Sales and Profits at Retail, the updated version of the popular STEPS sales training program that was originated under Joyce's leadership and sponsored by Hershey. The new STEPS is sponsored by Altria Group Distribution Co.



He also noted that the AWMA Women’s Leadership Initiative, the “brainchild” of Debbie Robins, Century Distributors, Rockville, MD, was launched at the AWMA Marketplace & Solutions Expo in Las Vegas in February and provided invaluable information for attendees.

“I took home information that helped me not only in my business life but just as much in my personal life,” said Davenport.

The many changes made at the Expo were outlined by Davenport, including the new Expo Theater in the convention hall, the Knowledge Bar, where experts met one-on-one with attendees, and other activities to make the show more exciting and

useful. Additional fine-tuning will take place at the 2015 Expo, to be held Feb. 24-26 at The Paris Hotel in Las Vegas.

He pointed out that AWMA has redesigned its website, making it more functional and user friendly, and that the association is working to use every tool available to make it easy and convenient for distributors and others in the industry to obtain information and learn about AWMA programs and activities.

Davenport also introduced a new InfoMetrics video produced by AWMA, which outlines the many benefits of the association’s exclusive data program for the industry. His company was one of many that participated in the development of the 16-minute production. [CLICK HERE](#) to view the video.

Hall of Fame Award Presentation

Chad Gummer, president of Gummer Wholesale Inc., Heath, OH, presented the Hall of Fame award to Joyce, lauding the 40-year industry veteran as “the best supplier partner a wholesale distributor could want.”

“Building personal relationships based on honesty, trust and transparency is his stock in trade,” said Gummer. “Tom truly cares. He cares about you, your family, your business and your customers. He understands that doing what’s best for you and your customers is good business for Hershey as well. And Tom has a lot of fun helping us to do well.”



Gummer added, “Tom has endless appreciation for the U.S. distribution system which allows Hershey to get its products on store shelves everywhere. He’s a true champion for our industry.”

In the best line of the day, Joyce accepted the award by saying “I feel like a mosquito in a nudist colony. Where do I begin?”

Joyce said he started in the industry in Kentucky in 1975 and he recognized many distributors and other industry stalwarts who helped him throughout his career, and his company for supporting his industry efforts. “It’s hard to climb a mountain by yourself,” he said.



Juliet Funt Keynote

Continuing with the AWMA Women’s Leadership Initiative, Juliet Funt opened with the keynote address. Funt, the daughter of the late Alan Funt, creator of the popular Candid Camera TV show from the 1960s, consults with businesses to help them gain productivity. “I’m concerned about the lack of silence in our



minds,” she said, noting that today’s frenetic multitasking pace by many businesspeople has placed “our time under attack.”

“Expectations have replaced thought,” she said, contending that many businesspeople worship the “false god of constant busyness,” a trend that is costing American business an estimated \$300 billion per year

“When talented people don’t have time to think, business suffers,” she said. “Most companies place no value on thinking.”

So Funt advocates creating “whitespace” in your lives, pausing to allow time for thinking and reflection. “If you open up 12 minutes a day, that’s 500 hours a year in found productivity,” she said, “just from the release of mindless busyness.”

The same goes for activities at home, where there

is also “no whitespace,” because of the pace of our lives and the lives of our kids. “Whatever we have, we will adapt and will want more,” she asserted.

“I don’t care what your job is, thoughtfulness will go farther. And if you have young children, bring whitespace to them. If you have purview over them, go home and cancel about half of their after school activities. Put them in the back yard and let them figure out how to play.”

“What if every single person in your company had time to think, to reflect, what would your company look like?” she asked in closing. “You can opt out of the trance of relative busyness.”

“I thought her message was right on spot as to how we all approach our day,” said past AWMA Chairman Hugh Raetzsch, Lyons Specialty Co., Port Allen, LA. “You think you are alone, juggling family life and work life, but you’re not. We all have this problem. Everything needs to slow down enough so you don’t miss those little things. We need to slow down just a little bit and take a step back. If we did that, we would be amazed at what we would see.”

Annual Business Exchange (ABX) Meetings: 'A Home Run'

“The ABX is really all about communication,” said Davenport in his Summit address. “We can have open dialogue to review the past year’s performance, identify opportunities, solve any outstanding issues, and learn about new programs and product lines. This meeting allows us to exchange ideas that will encourage cooperation and collaboration, so that it becomes profitable for all segments of the industry.”



Beginning yesterday following the Summit program, some 60 convenience distribution companies began face-to-face ABX meetings with 52 suppliers in 63 private meeting rooms throughout the Ritz-Carlton. Once again, distributors and suppliers alike raved about their meetings and their ability to connect as trading partners.

“We put a lot of work up front and a lot of work since we’ve been here,” commented Frank Davoli, Richmond-Master Distributors Inc., South Bend, IN. “No pain, no gain. But this is the best industry meeting of the year, bar none.”

Said Dennis Ballard, GSC Enterprises Inc., Sulphur Springs, TX, “It’s nice to be able to talk to top (supplier) executives so we can work together to improve sales and profits. It’s a lot of working together, and that benefits everybody.”

Added Jim Hachtel, Eby-Brown Co., Naperville, IL, “It is great to see all of the new items and trends for 2015 and to see the business from the wholesaler’s point of view and see if what I’m doing every day with category management fits with manufacturers’ plans for the coming year.”



“Our meetings were outstanding,” said Rob Hackett, Burklund Distributors Inc., East Peoria, IL. “We met with vendors whom we had not met with before, so we got a different perspective. It was great seeing some vendors that are branching out with new services.”

Rick Bahlinger, Standard Distributing Co., Sapulpa, OK, said, frankly, that wholesalers who do not attend the Summit “are not very smart” because they are missing out on a tremendous opportunity to work with suppliers and build the business. “We now bring four people, including two buyers,” he said. “This is the best meeting you all do. Where else can you meet with 30 suppliers in two-and-one-half days without having to move across the country?”

Suppliers raved about the first day of the ABX as well.

“Our ABX meetings were outstanding,” said Doug Hynek, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., sponsor of last evening’s Summit & ABX reception. “This is the best show for one-on-one discussions with our customers. You could not ask for a better opportunity to see the right people and to discuss ways that we can do a better job for our customers.”

Kellogg’s Bill Henry said flatly that “the ABX is the best function that I attend all year long, and it has been since the beginning. It is the only event that I know of where you can get face-to-face with the owners and the CEOs of the distribution companies, and the system established enables us to make our meetings effective and impactful.”

Jack Link’s Beef Jerky’s Nate Springer was delighted that already on the initial ABX initial day his team was able to discuss opportunities to be category captain for distributors. “There is a lot of excitement building for follow-up meetings, and that is great,” he said.

Mac McClintic at Land Mark Products Inc. said distributors his group met with were excited about new products that will be rolling out because they believe they will help to build sales. “We had great meetings today,” he commented.

Finally, Steve Stomel, Procat Distribution Technologies, was pleased with results of his meetings. “We saw several current customers and were able to present new products that we will be introducing into the market. The ABX is always a home run for us,” he said.

Reminder: Support the Summit & ABX Silent Auction

There is still time to check out the many valuable items available at the Silent Auction table in the Conference Rotunda near the Summit & ABX registration desk. Proceeds will be devoted to supporting AWMA’s government affairs program.

Bidding began Monday and continued yesterday. Bidding will take place today until 6:15 p.m., with winners posted at 6:30 during the ABX Reception sponsored by Lorillard Tobacco Co.

AWMA wishes to thank all those who contributed the items available at the Silent Auction.

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