

The AFSMI *Connection*



Spotlight NewsLine

Communication is essential to making any organization work effectively and successfully. AFSM International's mission this year is focused on improving our communications between the headquarters in Fort Myers, Florida, and our members across the globe. However, communication is a two-way endeavor, and our goal is to provide you not only the latest industry information and trends, but also observations and news received from the global membership.

Our *Sbusiness* journal is an excellent venue for communicating the most up-to-date s-business insight and knowledge, chapter updates, and AFSMI news. However, there are times when the Association must disseminate certain news and items of interest instantaneously throughout the membership in order to be of most value. Therefore, we have launched the AFSM International *Spotlight NewsLine*, our newly developed e-newsletter that will keep you "in the know," in real time, regarding matters of importance and interest to you as an s-business professional and a valued AFSMI member. Here you will find the news that you, as members, need to be aware of and messages that we want to share with you in the short term. Watch for the AFSMI *Spotlight NewsLine* in your e-mail inbox. Should you have any news or other industry items that you feel would be an important addition to the *Spotlight*, we invite you to send these items to Michele Joyal at mjoyal@afsmi.org for consideration.

AFSM International is dedicated to keeping you informed and in touch with what is happening in s-business, and the AFSMI *Spotlight NewsLine* is one more way to *gain through membership*. ▼

INSIDE:



Your Association

Information about the Association for Services Management International.

Local Action

Covering AFSMI chapter activities around the globe.

The Business Insider

Essential info for business professionals.

Take 5 With...

Your connection to information on education, membership, certification, research and studies, and more.



Peer Networking on *Your* Time

AFSMI has established a peer network that delivers added value to members through multiple forums for exchange of industry insights and emerging practices and interaction with fellow services professionals and members with similar interests and concerns. Two methods for gaining access online from the convenience of your home or office are AFSMI's **Members' Forum** and *MemberConnect* service.

The Members' Forum delivers added value to AFSMI members by providing an online forum for exchanging best practices and interacting with fellow s-business professionals for mutual assistance and support. This peer channel brings together like-minded technology professionals for networking, education, and career enrichment. If you are struggling with organizational issues or have questions or concerns involving any aspect of services and support, you can turn to the Members' Forum for answers. Post your questions, and those members who have been there and done that, those who have overcome the very same barriers, can lend their expertise and lessons learned...a valuable tool for all of our membership to learn, share, and advance their business situations.

MemberConnect is a peer networking service provided exclusively to AFSMI members. You can connect with other members to discuss issues, seek solutions, develop partnerships, and exchange best practices. The robust searching and matching capability will allow you to communicate—privately and securely—with those individuals who share your interests or fit your target information profile. *MemberConnect* is a unique resource for finding people and companies that:

- Are closely connected to your target interests.
- Seek lasting win-win s-business fellowship.
- Are actively looking for peer experts.

AFSMI's *MemberConnect* service is an excellent way to increase your professional network. *MemberConnect* helps you to:

- Increase your productivity.
- Enhance your company's bottom line.
- Build your peer expert database.
- Shorten your problem resolution cycle.
- Reduce your time in finding solutions to critical issues.
- Establish lasting s-business relationships.

Put the Members' Forum and *MemberConnect Service* to work for you today! To join your fellow members and s-business peers in either of these unique networking channels, visit the AFSMI home page at www.afsmi.org and select **Peer Networking** under the **Sharing** tab. ▼





AFSMI...Soaring to New Heights

Soar with us as we convene for AFSMI's 36th World Conference—the **S-Business Solutions Summit and Expo**—in sunny Orlando, Florida, September 17-20, 2006.

This is the largest global gathering of s-business professionals and the one educational and networking event this year that you will not want to miss!

The 2006 keynote speakers lined up so far for our main event are some of the foremost authorities in s-business today. Attendees will have the opportunity to garner the latest industry knowledge offered by world-class experts from these leading organizations in services and support:

- **IBM Global Services** (Mike Wiley, General Manager, Service Transformation).
- **Cisco Systems, Inc.** (Gary Bridge, Senior Vice President, Internet Business Solutions).
- **Xerox Corporation** (William Steenburgh, Senior Vice President, North America Solutions Group).

In addition, 35 track sessions (AFSMI's "**Business Solutions Sessions**") will be offered under the categories of **Field Service Operations, Sales and Marketing, Customer Support Center, Management Development, and Professional Services**. To further enhance the learning you will experience at the Summit, AFSMI is continuing to hold symposia events within these five Paths of Excellence throughout the year. The Summit will provide you with an expanded program for learning within the Path(s) of Excellence of *your* choice.

In addition to these first-rate educational opportunities, the S-Business Solutions Summit and Expo will be *the* place for networking with your s-business colleagues, peers, and other executives and experts in the industry. It all kicks off with the much-anticipated annual AFSMI Golf Tournament on Sunday, September 17. Tee-off time is 8 a.m. at the pristine Shingle Creek Golf Course. This spectacular par-72 championship course, designed by David Harman, will offer a scenic Summit welcome for you and your colleagues and a fun morning of catching up, conversation, and team play.

The following evening, all are invited to our AFSMI Night Pool Party. Join us at the South Beach Pool area for drinks, dancing, and entertainment from CoCo Loco. Slip into your casual Florida attire and meet us poolside for a "Jimmy Buffet" style evening of great food, great fun...and a few surprises!

In honor of AFSMI's 2006 awardees, the S-Business Awards Reception and Dinner will be held on Tuesday evening in the ballroom. Last year's awards evening was sold out, so be sure to make your reservations early for this year's event. Following a champagne reception, guests will enjoy a sumptuous dinner and the much-anticipated awards ceremony.

Please note: **Conference registration fees will increase on June 1. Register now and save!** Check out our members-only money-saving packages at the Summit pages of the AFSMI Web site. ▼

S-Business Executive Summit for Services Leaders Saddlebrook Golf Resort and Spa

AFSM International is holding the S-Business Executive Summit for Services Leaders on June 6-8, 2006, in Saddlebrook, Florida. This is a by-invitation-only event at the world-famous Saddlebrook Golf Resort and Spa, near Tampa. This event allows AFSMI member leadership to network with fellow corporate leaders and share real-time information and expertise in the s-business industry. AFSMI created this platform for senior executive career connections in order to support and enhance the professional development of executives involved in services and support.

For more information or to register to receive your invitation to join this elite group of senior executives and become a part of the leading force of AFSMI, please contact AFSMI vice president of marketing and education Sue Fern at sfern@afsmi.org or 239-275-7887, ext. 19.

Join the leadership of today who will provide the vision for tomorrow. ▼



Corporate Member Announcements

We are pleased to announce that the following companies have joined our family of AFSM International Corporate Members:

- **Eaton Electrical, Inc.**, Morrisville, North Carolina.
- **Fujifilm Medical Systems USA, Inc.**, New Fairfield, Connecticut.
- **Trans-Lux Corporation**, Norwalk, Connecticut.

Please also join us in congratulating the following companies that have renewed their Corporate Memberships with AFSMI:

- **Agfa, Inc.**, Ontario, Canada.
- **Datacard Group**, Minnetonka, Minnesota.
- **DecisionOne**, Rancho Santa Margarita, California.
- **Presstek** (formerly ABDick International, Inc.), Hudson, New Hampshire.

Vendor Partner Announcements

Please join us in welcoming the following companies that have become new AFSM International Vendor Partners:

- **UCN**, Bluffdale, Utah.
- **MainStream Management**, Middletown, Ohio.

In addition, please join us in congratulating the following organizations that have renewed their memberships as AFSMI Vendor Partners:

- **Astea International, Inc.**, Horsham, Pennsylvania.
- **Acclivus**, Dallas, Texas.
- **BlackBerry/RIM**, Waterloo, Ontario.
- **Encover**, Maintain View, California.
- **Indus**, Atlanta, Georgia.
- **Panasonic**, Katy, Texas.
- **SAP**, Atlanta, Georgia.
- **Single Source Systems**, Fishers, Indiana. ▼

Take 5 With... Sue Fern



Growing AFSMI's S-Business Community

AFSM International has committed to delivering education and support to our members in order to assist both individuals and organizations in gaining knowledge through membership. We organize our World Conference—the S-Business Solutions Summit and Expo—each year, which allows members, industry leaders, vendors, and visionaries to gather together with long-time fellow services colleagues and friends and make new connections. This gathering extends everyone's support network further and further each year, and AFSM International is the facilitator of that network growth.

We bring together industry leaders as keynote speakers for general sessions and experts in many fields for the educational tracks. We now have redesigned the educational programs and World Conference following our recently created and announced Paths of Excellence within the Centers of Excellence. We are looking to the membership for input, adding value through sharing their expertise and spreading the word about all of these events.

Just like so many successful organizations in the corporate world, we will thrive because our members tell others how valuable it is to be part of our Association. The viral economy is important to the health and success of AFSM International, and we need our individual members and chapters to get the message out to the market. Sending out weekly postcards and e-mails reminds everyone about educational events, but members calling and e-mailing colleagues and others in their network and personally inviting them to participate sends a much stronger message.

AFSM International and our members must become aware and act as a true community. In a traditional community, businesses flourish based on reputation. The Association and our members have a strong reputation and community of industry leaders with great vision.

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If You Ask Me...Insight from Today's S-Business Professionals

Sbusiness poses questions for our readership to answer. If your answer is selected for publication in a subsequent issue, you will receive an AFSMI-branded kind token of our appreciation.

This issue's question: **"In what ways have your services sales and marketing directives influenced the bottom line of your organization thus far for 2006?"**

"At Philips Medical, we have a strong sales delivery and revenue growth trend coming out of last year. Our services marketing team has driven contract growth and point-of-sale capture through promotions, market research, competitive analysis, and a relentless focus on doing what is right for the customer. This has resulted in great sales execution and making deals happen.

"For 2006, the momentum continues. Our Service Sales and Marketing groups work together very closely. We focus on customers' needs and do considerable analysis in order to understand the competitive landscape. We have an internal market research team, and we also use the services of several outside companies, including Al Hahn (Hahn Consulting), ITSMA, AFSMI, and ServiceTrak (for customer satisfaction benchmarking). At Philips Medical, the key to influencing the bottom line is to understand and delight our customers."

*Shawn Miller, Vice President of Service Marketing
Philips Medical Systems*

"During a recent reorganization, we added a position to focus on services business. We have passed our goals for services revenue because of this and are responsible for about 30 percent of the company's bottom line."

*George German, N.A. Field Service Manager
American Science & Engineering, Inc.*

"What we hear from our global clients and what we've found in conducting our own research efforts is that services sales contribution to the overall business was around 25 percent and that top performers hit numbers as high as 36 percent. The problem, however, is that services marketing efforts often are not aligned to the overall plan of

the services organization, and the financial budget for services marketing is still quite low compared to product marketing and the number of resource people dedicated to this function—and spending dollars to make it all work."

*Mark Hordes, Partner
Alexander Consulting, LLP*

"We are well ahead of plan YTD. Objectives are within reach, and customer satisfaction stats continue to improve."

*Kyle Gibson, Service Program Manager
General Binding Corporation*

"We are a mid-size company that in the past had provided service contracts only when requested by customers. We have created new offerings and expanded contract sales to the sales force. As a result, services revenues for 2006 are on track to double 2005 revenues and quadruple those from 2004."

*Richard Grau, Manager, Instrumentation Services
Stratagene*

"As a startup, the services we deliver is the glue that makes the product stick. Our product may not be as technically advanced yet as those of our competitors, or we may not have the years of field experience with the product, but if we deliver top-class services and overdeliver with passion and commitment (and not with freebies that hurt our bottom line), our customers will see the difference in our company compared to our competitors."

*David McCroskey, Vice President,
Global Customer Service
Pillar Data Systems*

"We have a dedicated sales service team that sells our services, which has allowed us to continue to grow that segment of our business. Our marketing group sits down with us each year after our strategic planning session to discuss ways in which to continue promoting our services. We also set up a yearly service promotions calendar so that we can drive new business. As an organization, we do a pretty good job of integrating marketing and sales, and we will continue



to improve in both areas.”

*Phillip Pease, Vice President, Service
Ryzex Repair*

“Our services sales and marketing efforts have influenced our bottom line very positively! With the turn in the economy, it once again is becoming an employee’s market. For staffing, this means that the recruiting is harder, but the payoff is greater.”

*Todd Mauser, Director, Technical Staffing
CBS Personnel*

“Through our Effectiveness and Efficiency Programs, we have been able to directly improve the customer’s experience after the sale when using our services. This has been a huge driver in the increased sales of our products and services.”

*James Geier, Manager, Regional Service
Respironics*

“Our services sales and marketing efforts have enabled us to increase revenues by 22 percent.”

*Jeffrey Brooks, Director, Support Services NASA
FormScape, Inc.*

“Our services marketing and sales efforts have afforded us higher margins due to our pricing strategy, increased high-margin sales of services program contracts, and productivity enhancements and cost controls.”

*Michael DeCrescenzo, Support Operations Manager
Thermo Electron Corp.*

“Traditional maintenance services are being augmented by selling value-added professional services—people-based services such as training and connectivity support contracts. All aspects of the marketing mix are being applied to these value-creating services.”

*Mike Ward, Head of Service Business Performance
Canon*

“Our services sales and marketing directives have protected

our annuity stream. In many businesses, sales tends to give discounts on service instead of the product. Service is what pays the bills when sales is not selling. Our directives have helped to slow down the discounting, increasing top-line performance and protecting our annuity stream.”

*Michelle Griffin, Vice President, Customer Experience
Océ North America, Inc.*

“Due to a downturn in new equipment sales, the focus now has shifted to the customer support organization to increase contributions. This renewed focus has resulted in a more aggressive approach to proactively market and sell aftermarket goods and services. As a result, business has increased 25 percent, and this increase is expected to continue throughout the fiscal year.”

*Bob Mlinarchik, Customer Services Manager, Americas
BOC Edwards Pharmaceutical Systems*

“We slowly are attacking some new services business on equipment that we did not sell but are trained on. Customers are starving for an alternative source, but the key to our success has been not taking on the business until we were ready for it. Now we are taking on contracts that are 500 percent higher in revenue than our previous average contract.”

*Rachel Bierma
Presstek*

For our Summer II issue, our question is: **“What are the top three pieces of advice that you would offer to anyone wanting to initiate or reengineer a customer support center?”**

Submit your answers to Suzanne Kaminski at skaminski@afsmi.org with “If You Ask Me” in the subject header. ▼

Roll Call

AFSMI welcomes new members who recently have joined the Association. These services professionals are employed by companies throughout the world and in a variety of services organizations. One of the key aspects of every professional association, including AFSMI, is the benefit of partnering with other services professionals. We provide this information to encourage our current members to contact these new members to exchange ideas, establish networking opportunities, and build business opportunities.

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Take 5 With... Robin Rusch



AFSMI Membership Committee: A Direct Link for Feedback

The AFSMI Membership Committee met in Fort Myers, Florida, in January for their first meeting of 2006. The mission of the Membership Committee is to be a representation of the whole membership and to recommend benefits in response to the needs of our members.

Our Membership Committee is very dedicated to working hard for our members, and we held a very productive meeting. It was so productive, in fact, that all agreed to hold an additional meeting during the year. The committee will assemble again prior to AFSMI's Executive Summit for Services Leaders at Saddlebrook Resort near Tampa, Florida, on June 5.

A strategic goal determined by the committee is to recruit one member from each AFSMI chapter to serve as the membership chair for their chapter. This membership chair in each chapter will communicate the needs and successes of the local membership to the Membership Committee. Utilizing the committee as a direct link for feedback is a step forward in gaining through membership. Because AFSMI is a global association, we have the advantage of drawing from all markets, and our Membership Committee participants span the global industry spectrum.

The members are as follows: Eric Berlin, Thermo Electron; John Casto, Stiles Machinery; Doug Emery, Siemens Building Technologies, Landis Division; Keith Evans, Fujitsu Network Communications; Simon



AFSMI's Membership Committee assembles in Fort Myers, Florida, at headquarters for a successful planning meeting. Pictured (L to R): Keith Evans, Robin Rusch, Mike Olmsted, Doug Emery, Eric Berlin. Not pictured: John Casto and Simon Morris.

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DENMARK CHAPTER

John Hansen, President

Annual Meeting

The Denmark Chapter held its Annual Meeting in late January at the HP facilities in Copenhagen. Chapter president John Hansen presented a summary for the year passed. The chapter arranged six meetings, and member participation has been very good. John also promoted the upcoming AFSMI World Conference—the S-Business Solutions Summit and Expo—being held in Orlando, Florida, this September.

The services business in Denmark is developing well, and so is the chapter. The difficulties that the chapter was experiencing are in the past, which has been clearly demonstrated at the meetings. Today the chapter is solid, and the board has held a lot of discussion regarding how to improve and strengthen the chapter further, increase awareness, and spread the message of AFSMI in Denmark. The membership is seeing a 78 percent return in member fees in the form of quality speakers and valuable educational venues. The chapter has achieved its target of having 75 percent of the leading services companies as members. During 2005, its INET profile was updated, with a new, much more flexible system installed.

After the Annual Meeting, participants listened to a presentation on strategic communication offered by the former manager of the Danish TV2 news Jens Gaardbo. Jens presented many interesting aspects and ideas, and a good dia-

log was established.

Stay tuned to *Sbusiness* and the AFSMI Web site for more details on the chapter and its events. ▼



NATCAP CHAPTER

Bill Puso, President

February Meeting

The NatCap Chapter had a good turnout for the meeting on February 24 held at the Electronics Systems Services (ESS) headquarters in Clarksburg, Maryland. Host Bill Kisse, CEO, gave a brief introduction on his company, and participants toured his facility. ESS provides services to the “point of sale” industry, primarily the fast-food chains. All in attendance seemed impressed with the operations they viewed.

Larry Arrington, vice president of service operations for IBM’s Eastern Region, shared a view of IBM’s “Managed Services” offering, with a focus on the role of strategic partnerships. As expected, IBM has a number of high-value services to offer, and partnerships play a key role in their delivery.

AFSMI’s director of member services Robin Rusch joined the chapter from the Association’s headquarters in Fort Myers, Florida, leading a discussion on how the international association can offer valuable assistance to the chap-



Denmark: Chapter president John Hansen presents a membership award for John Bruun at the Annual Meeting.



Australia: Andy Kyiet presents Steve Phelps of HP with the 2005 Australia Chapter President's Award.

ter on a local level, promoting chapter activities and providing lists of possible speakers for events. AFSMI is setting up a process to share chapter “best practices” in efforts to help all chapters offer the information and activities that will provide the most value to the members.

Robin also presented Howard Cunningham with his 20-year membership pin. Howard has been an AFSMI member for 22 years and has served the chapter in a number of capacities over that time. The chapter thanks Howard for his dedication and looks forward to his assistance as it moves toward making NatCap even more productive and active. Robin delivered pins for all in the geography, which will be presented at the next meeting.

Next on the agenda was chapter president William (Bill) Puso, managing partner with The INSIGHT Group, who introduced a new program that is a joint offering between The INSIGHT Group and AFSMI. The Professional Services Institute is part of AFSMI’s Professional Services Paths of Excellence under its Centers of Excellence. The institute will offer a number of courses in professional services management, practice certification, and professional certification. Stay tuned to the AFSMI Web site at www.afsmi.org for upcoming program events.

The day ended with an open discussion on the value of a local chapter. Unanimously, all in attendance felt that the meeting brought value in the education and networking offered. The chapter plans to hold four meetings each year. Many thanks go to meeting host Bill Kisse, his team, and all who attended.

The chapter officers are narrowing down the list of new

chapter names in efforts to more accurately describe the geography represented. Stay tuned to the next issue of *Sbusiness* for the announcement on the new name of the chapter. ▼



AUSTRALIA CHAPTER

Andy Kyiet, President

A New Chapter in the Life of Australia

2006 has seen the much-awaited relaunch of the AFSMI Victoria branch. The first meeting was held in February at Box Hill in Melbourne and attracted a healthy turnout of 25 people. The topic of discussion was “Skills Shortages in Australia,” presented by Henry Wiebell of the Box Hill Institute. The overarching message was that the skills shortages are set to deteriorate for the next five years and are unlikely to recover unless some key initiatives are taken on now. The chapter extends many thanks to the Box Hill Institute for the provision of the venue and to the newly formed Victorian subcommittee for their efforts in making it happen!

February NSW Chapter Meeting

The inaugural 2006 NSW meeting focused on the provision of some introductory education on a range of methodologies, their differences, and how they can be deployed within s-business. The chapter thanks Pauline Angelico of *itilics*



Australia: Pauline Angelico of *itilics* offers an informative presentation on ITIL/ITSM.



Australia: Max Cardew of Tyco demystifies Six Sigma.

The AFSMI connection

LOCAL ACTION—COVERING AFSMI CHAPTER ACTIVITIES AROUND THE GLOBE

for a very informative presentation on ITIL/ITSM, Max Cardew for a pragmatic look at Six Sigma deployment, and Glenn Bracegirdle for a drill-down on the range of certifications on offer from SSC. Also, please join us in congratulating Steve Phelps of HP, recipient of the 2005 Australia Chapter President's Award.

New Sponsor

The chapter extends a warm welcome to its new sponsor, SSA Global, one of Australia's top three software providers, including a comprehensive offering for services departments.

March Customer Management World Convention

This event proved as popular as ever, attracting over 120 delegates. A host of top-notch speakers covered almost every aspect of customer service, with perhaps the most insightful comment coming from David McCaughan of McCann Erickson, who observed: "Customers don't want to be treated like customers; they just want to be treated like people!"

Sponsors Showcase

With the June 11 event, the chapter is breaking more new ground with a Sponsors Showcase to be held at the ATP in Redfern, NSW. Alongside the Showcase will be two presentations from high-profile speakers on topics directly relevant to s-business. Join the chapter and lend your support to this exciting new initiative.

For more information on these and other chapter events, visit www.afsmi.org.au. ▼



Australia: Gavin Grant introduces SSA Global, new chapter sponsor.



TORONTO CHAPTER

Carl DeCoste, President

Members Meeting

The Toronto Chapter held a members meeting on January 26 at the Toronto Board of Trade. Members and guests were treated to a terrific presentation on "Service Recovery" offered by Stephen Meier of Field Service Mentor based in Michigan. In addition to a great presentation, dinner, and a door prize, the members enjoyed an excellent networking opportunity. Information on the chapter's upcoming meetings can be found on the chapter's Web site at www.afsmi.ca. ▼



ATLANTA CHAPTER

Debbie Phillips, President

New Board Members Announced

The Atlanta Chapter recently announced its new board. We thank these members for their dedication and expenditure of time and resources in growing and further promoting AFSMI's message and benefits where it is especially important, on the local level. Please join us in expressing our appreciation for their dedication to taking on these volunteer positions:



Australia: Chapter president Andy Kyiet receives AFSMI's 2005 Innovative Chapter Award on behalf of the chapter.

- **President:** Debbie Phillips, 404-213-2370, dphillips@northhighland.com.
- **Vice president:** Jason Shannon, jason.shannon@radiantsystems.com.
- **Membership director:** Jeff Brooks, jeff.brooks@formscape.com.
- **Communications director:** Pam Bryan, pamelabryan@indus.com.
- **Treasurer:** Mike Olszewski, mikeo@blueirisconsulting.com.

If you would like information on the chapter and its events, please contact the chapter board or visit www.afsmiatlanta.org. ▼



OHIO CHAPTER

Gary Ross, President

Executive Roundtable

The Ohio Chapter along with the Fisher College of Business at The Ohio State University hosted the AFSMI Services Leadership Council (SLC) Executive Roundtable on February 23 in Columbus, Ohio. Special speaker was Ohio State professor and services industry expert Neeli Bendapudi. The SLC offers customer service and support executives a unique opportunity to network with their peers to discuss challenges, exchange ideas,



Toronto: Stephen Meier explains the cost of a bad service recovery experience.

and build relationships that elevate the customer service and support profession worldwide.

For more details on the chapter and its events, visit www.afsmiohio.org. ▼

FRANCE CHAPTER

Bruno Adeline, President

Chapter Activities

In March of 2005, the France Chapter launched a survey posing the questions: What are your expectations from AFSMI, and what subjects do you want to see developed? Based on the survey results, themes for the 2005-2006 year were defined, as follows:

- Evolution of services.
- Customer analysis and performance measurement (business intelligence, data mining).
- Organization and IT: nomadism and mobility.

Based on the survey results, a new format for meetings was developed. Each subject will be presented twice, through a conference and a workshop. A fourth theme has been added, thanks to Al Hahn's presentation at AFSMI's S-Business Europe Services Leadership Conference held in Prague, Czech Republic, in April of 2006: right pricing for services.

Following the interests in these subject matters, chapter events include a Nomadism and Mobility Workshop held on



Toronto: Chapter members are hard at work networking with their peers.

the AFSMI connection

LOCAL ACTION—COVERING AFSMI CHAPTER ACTIVITIES AROUND THE GLOBE

May 18, 2006, and a networking and champagne function to be held on June 22, 2006, with the location to be decided, possibly on a boat along the Seine through Paris, France.

A new survey was finalized and sent to members this March. The objective was the same, asking: What are the key benefits that you are expecting to realize from your membership in AFSMI? Specific questions will be issued regarding the interest in gaining more knowledge on the offerings of AFSMI in Europe and internationally.

Regarding the format for meetings, it has been suggested to organize longer sessions (and to begin earlier in the day) as training sessions with appropriate company budgets. (Legally in France, a company must dedicate a budget for employee training; we assume that part of this budget could be captured by AFSMI through these sessions.)

For more information on the chapter and its events, visit www.afsm.fr. ▼

BELGIUM CHAPTER

Alex Curias, President

Chapter Relaunch

AFSMI is pleased to announce the relaunch of the Belgium Chapter. The formal kickoff meeting took place on February 7, 2006. Please join us in congratulating the chapter in its journey to strengthen AFSMI locally and globally. Four



France: The chapter held its first conference on the topic of evolution of services.

participants volunteered for the following functions:

- **President:** Alex Curias, alex.curias@siemens.com.
- **Vice president:** Daniel Naedenoen, dna@apem.be.
- **Treasurer:** Paul Berghmans, nysna@nysna.be.
- **Secretary:** Tom Van de Vyver, tom.vandevyver@agfa.com.

If you are interested in finding out more about the chapter and how to become involved, contact the chapter board or AFSMI. Stay tuned to *Sbusiness* and the AFSMI Web site for details regarding the chapter's plans for the future and its upcoming events. ▼

Tell Us What's Happening in Your Chapter...

Let your fellow members know what you're up to. Send your Local Action submissions to Angela Smith, assistant editor, at asmith@afsmi.org.

Take 5 with Sue Fern

Continued from page 17.

AFSMI supports large and small organizations. We help level the playing field for everyone, and even give members a head start. Support your community. This will allow our network to grow stronger and help you to deliver outstanding services to your clients and grow financially, gaining from this mutual development. We are a global community, and we encourage participation and want to involve even more members around the world.

Recommend someone to become part of this s-business community. Do you know anyone who could enhance the educational tracks at our events and who you would like to have become part of the community? Communication within this network is important—we want to hear from you. It is always an opportune time to offer ideas and suggest names of those you know of who would fit in with and enhance our community. Make calls within your network, and encourage your peers and services colleagues to support your community events. Help the AFSMI community grow through membership. ▼

Sue Fern

Vice President of Marketing and Education

AFSM International

sfern@afsmi.org

Take 5 With... Greg Coleman



Reaping the Rewards of Services Excellence

Services organizations today are forever striving to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty by improving operational effectiveness, and management generally believes that the rewards of their efforts are the end goal. While improving effectiveness is important, these organizations also should work to leverage services excellence as a hallmark of their corporate brand. When you market services excellence effectively to internal and external stakeholders or prospects, your company can differentiate itself from competitors and strengthen its credibility, as well as improve the perceived value of its products and services.

Regardless of market segment, your company's brand perception is critical to its ongoing success. You can identify market leaders easily by their brands, which represent quality. Brands can have a profound impact on employees, prospects, customers, and shareholders alike and can have a strong influence on perceptions of the products and services offered by a business. Most important, strong brands bestow value far beyond the performance of the products themselves. Effective brands are worthy of customer loyalty: the more inspiring the brand, the more intense the commitment.

Services excellence is a core component of a successful brand. Companies that value this core attribute are among the most successful in the marketplace. Service is an area where the core qualities of a brand are experienced by customers directly. Companies that employ best practices within their services organizations tend to be far more effective in delivering a superior customer experience. This fact is well recognized, and its importance is underscored by the popular pursuit of third-party acknowledgement and certification of services excellence.

Standards programs such as the Support Center Practices (SCP), Field Service Practices (FSP), and Professional Service Practices (PSP) Certifications endorsed by AFSMI offer an excellent example of third-party recognition for meeting industry standards of services excellence. Participating in industry standards programs like these can

help your organization enhance service quality through adoption of proven best practices. By focusing on meeting the requirements defined by such standards programs, which place an emphasis on areas such as service delivery processes, performance measures, staff development, and others, services excellence can be achieved, and customer loyalty can be developed and protected.

While many brand elements are intangible, quality services and support are experienced on an immediate personal level and leave a lasting impression. The perception of services excellence contributes to increased customer satisfaction, increased new business, repeat business, and long-term profitability. Standards programs provide the additional and very important benefit of a *marketable* brand credential. If you currently do not participate in an industry standards or certification program, ask yourself if your company is taking advantage of its most valuable asset—its brand. Are your employees aligned to the brand promise of delivering services excellence? Can you leverage your credentials to strengthen your brand and increase loyalty?

In summary, marketing your services excellence will enable you to stand out from the competition and demonstrate an ongoing commitment to quality. Investing in best practices and leveraging standards and certification programs will go a long way toward ensuring substantial brand credentials that will pay ongoing dividends in brand loyalty in the future. Building your brand with services excellence at its core will result in the creation of one of your company's principal assets. ▼

Regardless of market segment, your company's brand perception is critical to its ongoing success...strong brands bestow value far beyond the performance of the products themselves.

*Greg Coleman
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Sharpening Your Focus: Seven Ways to Keep the Customer Front and Center

Customers today have infinite choices. Any product or service they could ever desire is just within their reach, usually only a mouse-click away. In our global economy, hundreds of competitors may rise and fall practically overnight. What's more, today's customer is smart, savvy, and well educated. With so many brands and organizations waiting to serve, consumers could choose any company to do business with. You have to give them a good reason to choose *yours*.

Quality expert Craig Cochran reminds us that the key to keeping your business running in high gear is to focus all of your attention and efforts on—you guessed it—the consumer.

“The customer is the sole reason that organizations of any kind exist,” Cochran points out. “The moment an organization stops focusing on the customer, it will start to fall apart. A successful organization always puts the customer's best interests first.”

Cochran offers the following suggestions on ways in which the organization's leadership can keep the customer focus front and center:

- **Play “follow the leader”:** good leadership drives customer focus. Cochran believes that an organization's leaders set the tone for everything, good or bad, that takes place within the company. It is important that the leaders keep their focus always on the customer, rather than internal politics, ego gratification, and other typical distractions within an organization.
- **Remind employees of their mission within the organization.** A quick daily meeting can establish the tone of the workweek and can be a source of inspiration in an organization of any size. Employees have many distractions in the workplace...a constant conversational reminder will ground them in their primary cause within the company.
- **Shine a spotlight on employees.** One of the best ways

to improve all-around customer service is to give employees the attention they deserve. After all, they are the ones who actually interact with customers.

- **Recognize outstanding service.** One of leadership's most important jobs is to honor individuals who go beyond their job descriptions and truly delight their customers. By identifying exceptional workers in a dignified manner, leadership sets the pace for other peers to follow.
- **Realize that smart organizations learn from their mistakes.** If an organization fails in delivering excellent customer service, leadership must be honest and open with both customers and employees about the mistakes that were made. Mistakes are important because they lead to innovation.
- **Consider using a focus group.** A focus group brings together a small, carefully selected group of people to explore perceptions about a certain idea, service, policy, or product.
- **Keep customers informed of improvements.** When an organization makes a much-needed innovation to their services, it must be communicated to the customers. After all, they are the ones who demand the evolution.

Overall, a successful organization is one that offers the best services possible to their targeted clientele and does all it can to ensure that customers' needs are met with promptness, gratitude, and courtesy. Any problem issues that arise with customers should be documented and addressed immediately. Meanwhile, management should research all possible modes of innovation to continue bringing the customer superior-quality service.

Cochran sums it up well: “When an organization strives to bring the customer the very best, the customer time and time again will repay the organization with years of loyal patronage and thus keep the organization alive.”

Craig Cochran is the North Metro regional manager with Georgia Tech's Economic Development Institute. Cochran is a Certified Quality Manager, Certified Quality Engineer, and Certified Quality Auditor through the American Society for Quality. He's certified as a QMS Lead Auditor through the RABQSA.

Improved Network Performance, Reliability, Risk Reduction Drive Managed-Services Growth Cost Not the Main Motivation for Global Adoption



According to a recent InfoTech Managed Services Study, U.S. and global primary motivators for adopting managed services across business-size segments rarely are led by a drive to decrease operations costs. Improved network performance, increased network reliability, and reduced business risk are the top reasons given for purchasing managed services.

The market for managed services is expected to experience double-digit growth for the next five years, according to the company. Buyers in all regions and across all business segments indicate high levels of interest in considering managed services in 2006, representing a vast opportunity for services providers.

“Across the board, vendor selection is influenced by flexibility of offer, skills on staff, accountability (service level agreements and single point of contact), and online access to reports,” says Warren Williams, vice president and director of the InfoTrack for Enterprise Services program at InfoTech. “U.S. managed-services buyers want their vendors to provide offers that are flexible to their specific needs and to stay engaged, providing proactive recommendations over the course of the contract.”

Among the key findings of the study:

- Reported actual U.S. and global buyer savings achieved through managed services vary by individual service, level of sophistication, and business size (between five and 35 percent).
- EMEA buyers indicate strong near-term demand for managed security services, while CALA buyers indicate a preference for managed network services.
- U.S. and APAC buyers indicate strong near-term demand for managed network services and managed security. Canadian buyers strongly consider managed security services as their top priority.
- The U.S. market, particularly enterprise businesses, reflects a planned consideration of advanced network management and managed security services, as does much of Europe and Canada. The rest of the world is adopting more basic managed services.
- The “hot” managed services globally are managed security services, though buyer interest continues in network

management services.

The study also notes the importance of qualifying the customer. “Depending on the size of the business segment, offers may need to be tailored to that segment, or sales efforts should be diminished or abandoned,” according to Williams. “Managed service providers must align their marketing messages to customer-segment adoption motivations, and they must better align their proposals to reflect buyer needs in order to maximize opportunity.” ▼

Contributed by InfoTech.

Take 5 with Robin Rusch

Continued from page 21.

Morris, ClickSoftware; and Mike Olmsted, Eclipse, Inc. Dennis Gershowitz of D.G. Associates and Ludger Boeckmann are the AFSMI international board member liaisons for the Membership Committee.

Through the Membership Committee, each chapter and individual member has at their disposal a resource so vital that to take advantage of it means success for each member on both a professional and personal level. All who grow in their professional endeavors will win.

We encourage you to participate in the events and educational offerings of AFSM International—reap the advantages of our local chapter networking, regional events, certification, and additional benefits offered by AFSMI that you feel are of greatest value for you. Remember that AFSMI is *your* professional association.

AFSMI means professional success, success comes from opportunity, and opportunity comes from involvement. Get involved! ▼

*Robin Rusch
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