

Paper2010: The Future of Paper

A longstanding industry convention takes on a new identity with expanded appeal.

By John O'Brien, Managing Editor

The paper industry has evolved substantially over the past decade. Consolidation of the industry on a whole and within individual companies has taken place and continues to do so, developments in the papermaking process have made production more efficient, and an overall coming together of the industry seems to be taking hold, ironically and in part, due to the struggling global economy.

On a parallel course, two groups who together represent virtually the entire paper industry supply chain and had hosted separate annual industry conventions got together and hammered out a plan to combine the best elements of the legacy programs into one event that would provide greater value to a broader paper industry audience.

The result? Paper2010 — a combination of the American Forest & Paper Association's annual



NPTA's Chief Executive Officer, Newell Holt, prepares to deliver opening remarks at the Luncheon General Session.

Paper Week convention and NPTA Alliance's annual convention. The venue was the Waldorf=Astoria in New York City, with 2010 marking the 133rd year the hotel has played host to the ever-evolving paper industry business event, the former Paper Week.

Bill Koehn, Vice President, Printing Paper Sales for Domtar, who also serves as Co-Chairman of AF&PA's Printing and Writing Committee and is a member of NPTA's Board of Directors, was directly involved with the decision to combine the two conventions.

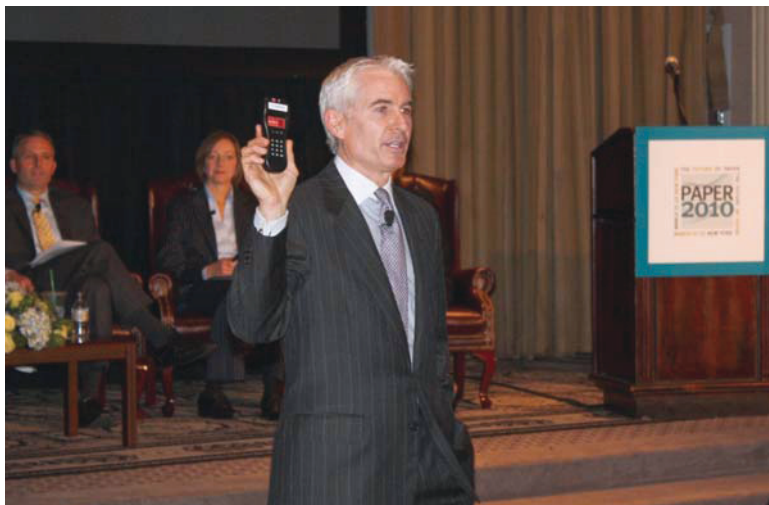
"We had talked about combining Paper Week and the NPTA Alliance Annual Convention for a couple of years," Koehn said. "The poor economic environment created a heightened sense of urgency and really pushed us to evaluate the value of holding both of these events.

"By combining the meetings into a once-a-year event, we felt that we could more cost effectively provide a business-generating, suite-meeting atmosphere. In addition, we could schedule extremely relevant programming that appealed to the mills, their customers and their channel partners," he explained.

Koehn pointed out that the tough economy has challenged everyone, and the way forward is to bring together all segments of the industry and gain a better understanding of the inner workings, needs, and expectations of the interconnected groups.

"We are in extremely challenging market conditions and we will continue to be for the foreseeable future. This environment makes it more critical than ever that distributors and manufacturers work closely together to reduce supply-chain costs, build value-based customer relationships and align advocacy efforts to build demand for our products," Koehn said.

In its first year, so to speak, the expanded convention performed as designed. From manufacturers to converters to merchants, distributors, traders, and warehousing and logistics firms, Paper2010 brought representatives from the entire supply chain together.



Session moderator Don Neal, President, Event Advisory Services for Leading Authorities, helps the audience get acquainted with a response device. Neal posed multiple choice questions to the audience who were able to select their responses via handheld wireless devices. Results were instantaneously compiled, projected to a screen on stage, analyzed by Neal, and then put to the panel for further discussion.



David Scheible, President and CEO, Graphic Packaging; Donna Harman, President and CEO, AF&PA; and Bill Koehn, Vice President, Printing Paper Sales for Domtar at Sunday evening's Welcome Reception.

The convention, which took place Sunday, March 21 through Tuesday, March 23, was underway Sunday morning with suite holders' meetings during the day and an official "hello" from the organizers Sunday evening via a Welcome Reception in the Starlight Roof on the 18th floor for registered attendees.

On Monday, March 22, the "Breakfast" General Session was underway at 8 a.m. with a half-hour continental breakfast, followed by the main event: *Innovating for a New Era*. During the first of this two-part series of sessions, an interactive panel discussed how the industry is working to meet the sustainability needs of customers and consumers, how innovations can move our industry forward to better serve consumers, and examined the macro political, economic, technological and social trends that will drive the future of paper.

The panelists included: James Hannan, CEO & President, Georgia-Pacific; Jim Rubright, Chairman & CEO, RockTenn; Mark Gardner, President & CEO, Sappi Fine Paper-North America; Mary Laschinger, President, xpedx; Peter Vogel,



(l-r) Pradeep Sudalayandi, Kyle Koziczkowski, Sunil Bagaria, Howard Schamach, and Mani Palani, from GDB International met in the South Lobby of the Waldorf before heading to a business meeting. Bagaria, GDB's president, noted that his company just opened an 11,000 sq. ft. warehouse in New Brunswick, NJ.

Executive Vice President, The Millcraft Group; and Donna Harman, President and CEO, AF&PA.

Don Neal, President, Event Advisory Services for Washington, DC-based Leading Authorities was the moderator/master of ceremonies, and he did a terrific job. Handheld wireless "voting" devices were available to every member of the audience to punch-in responses to multiple-choice questions. After a question appeared on the overhead screen on the stage, Neal would read the question aloud, add a little "color," and prompt the audience members to lock in their vote.

Responses were tabulated within seconds and displayed as numerical values on the overhead screen. To give the results clear meaning, the audience initially was shown a list of business segments and asked to select through the device the segment in which they worked. The results broke out the segments and their related responses.

A nice, yet very subtle touch to both sessions was, for lack of a better term, "name that tune." During the 10 seconds that elapsed during audience voting and the compilation of responses, a theme song from one of the old television shows such as the Andy Griffith Show, My Three Sons, Dick Van Dyke Show, Green Acres, etc. played in the background (sort of like they do at the end of the game show Jeopardy). To date myself, I knew most of them. In actuality, the old songs sparked thinking, as everyone in the audience would suddenly be racking their brains as to the name of the show the song was from. It wasn't enough to distract from the program and it brought lots of smiles to lots of faces.



John Maine, Vice President, World Graphic Paper for RISI, provided details and analysis on what is happening in the global Printing & Writing papers segment during a RISI-sponsored seminar. Ken Waghorne, Vice President, Packaging, RISI, followed with a look at the packaging sector.



Mark Richards, Chairman, President and CEO of Appleton and Chris Chamberlain, Vice President of Marketing, Athens Paper Company, arrived early to the Welcome Reception.



Simon Miller Sales was well represented during Paper2010. In the company's hospitality suite in the Waldorf (l-r): Paul Wolfe, Hilton Maze, Henri Levit, Dave Donde and Bill Meyers.



Rick Wright, East Coast Territory Manager, and Jeff Billhorn, President, Billhorn Converters, enjoyed the Welcome Reception.



In a gathering of the paper machine titans, Bob Gallo from Voith Paper and Michael Gray from Metso Paper made sure they didn't miss Paper2010.

Tuesday's luncheon session, *Achieving Customer and Market-Driven Success*, continued along the lines of the previous day's session except panelists were made up of leading paper industry customers who provided their perspectives on how the industry was doing its job and meeting their needs. Again, audience members added their input electronically and were also able to ask questions during the discussion.

Also on Tuesday, in a separate event that morning, RISI held a seminar led by John Maine, Vice President, World Graphic Paper and Ken Waghorne, Vice President, Packaging. Maine gave a comprehensive rundown on the global printing & writing papers markets, while Waghorne covered the packaging sector. Both guys did a great job delivering a clear view of what has taken place, the current market, and what to expect moving forward.

Although the sessions and seminar were the featured events, the amazing part of Paper2010 is the multitude of business deals taking place in the course of three days. Hospitality suites in the Waldorf and in a few of the surrounding hotels acted as temporary headquarters for many companies, and everyone this writer talked to had full appointment books. The mood was genuinely upbeat and the environment was productive.

Paper2010, as its predecessor Paper Week, is a unique experience. People from all walks of the paper industry and from all regions of the world converge on New York City for three days in March to meet prospective customers, become a new customer, renew old friendships and bolster their businesses. It's an extraordinary gathering and one not to be missed.

Preliminary planning is underway for Paper2011. Over the next few months, check AF&PA's website, www.afandpa.org or NPTA's website, www.gonpta.com for updates. PaperAge's website, www.paperage.com, will also carry announcements from the organizers. ■