

The Gear Standards Challenge

David L. George

Who wants or needs technical details about gearing? Who cares about it? Three out of every four people who are reading this magazine make up at least 75% of those who have an interest in the subject. The members of AGMA, EUROTRANS, JGMA and JSIM have an interest. All the people attending Gear Expo in Detroit have an interest. Clearly, however, the people with the most pressing interest in our industry are our *customers*, the end users of gear products. The unfortunate reality, though, is that in many cases, these customers don't even know that's what they want.

What they do know is that they want products that will meet their needs and give them the greatest value available for their dollar, mark, yen, peso or whatever. And they want a way to tell whether the gears they're buying will meet those criteria. For us as sellers of gearing, the question becomes not whether we can design, manufacture or market a gear with 4, 5 or 20 years of life; but rather, "Is this the gear my customers want?" and "Can they look at what is being offered and identify what they will get?"

Our goal as engineers, manufacturers and marketers of gear technology is to make it as easy as possible for customers to answer those questions. One of the items that will make it easier for our customers and their customers is a common set of gear rating standards with global acceptance. These standards will allow customers to compare apples with apples, no matter where they are grown. They will lessen the confusion associated with the many different approaches to designing gear products today.

The gearing community has begun this difficult project through the International Standards Organization (ISO). Members of AGMA, EUROTRANS and JGMA have all had occasions to meet and begin development of universal standards. In 1993 the U.S. delegation represented by members of AGMA became the Secretariat and leader in the endeavor.

This is an effort open to input from anyone in the gear industry. In fact, AGMA would welcome participation by you and/or other engineers in your organization. Participation is a win/win proposition. The standards-making bodies benefit from your expertise, and you gain the experience derived from networking with other global players, which is invaluable as a training or learning tool. You also get the vital opportunity to have your say about what these standards should be.

Unfortunately, time and manpower are always in short supply, and direct participation is not always possible. There are, however, other ways to contribute. Corporations, such as General Motors, Caterpillar, Cincinnati Gear, Gleason Corp. and Falk, have contributed significant time and dollars to the AGMA Foundation to help foster this effort. The Foundation was established to fund research, education and this ISO initiative.

If your company's customers are global or are buying globally, then you should consider being a part of this task, which will in part shape your future. Having input into new common standards gives your company a say about the new global rules for tapping gear markets. A call to Joe Franklin or Bill Bradley at AGMA can put your organization at the forefront of this endeavor.

In the July/August issue of *Gear Technology*, Mr. Eliot Buckingham stated that he sometimes feels the need for an American Gear Users Association. I agree with his focus. In fact, the AGMA and ANSI rules for "balance" on technical committees require that the user community be represented. By working toward one universal set of gear standards, we are heading toward making it easier to define what users can expect from the technology available.

The road ahead is a long one, but these associations working together toward common standards will increase our value to the users of gears and simplify OEM and user decision making.

Wouldn't you like to be a part of the process? ☉

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David L. George
is 1997 Chairman of AGMA. He is also the Director of Sales for the Falk Corporation, a Sundstrand Company.