



## PaperCon Spotlights

### *Scott Rosencrance and Darren Swales*

*PaperCon, considered the world's largest technical conference for the paper and packaging industry, is developed by working professionals. These volunteer leaders rely on their industry knowledge and experience to create a program that actively addresses the critical issues attendees face on their jobs every day. TAPPI was able to catch up with Scott Rosencrance and Darren Swales of Kemira, to get their thoughts on industry trends and overcoming challenges.*

*Scott Rosencrance is Senior Manager, Kemira and Papermaking Additives Chair for 2019*

*Darren Swales is Director of Business Development and Applications Group, Kemira Pulp and Paper Americas, and TAPPI Paper and Board Division Chair*

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#### **TAPPI: Can you tell us something about the Paper Additives track?**

**SCOTT:** The responsibility of the Paper Additives committee is to oversee the content of the track for the upcoming PaperCon. As in previous years, there will be a lot of conventional technical content. These traditional subjects again will include sessions on dry strength new technologies – both natural and synthetic as well as wet strength technology which we've had in the past. Additionally, there will be new sessions in which we are focusing on some of the new filler composites and their interaction with other materials. We will also have a diverse session focused on films and coatings this year. All in all, it will be a diverse, full session.

**Some people are coming to PaperCon only to get the basics, whether they are Young Professionals or seasoned professionals that want a refresher. Others are coming to hear the latest trends. Is there anything you would deem more cutting-edge technology?**

**SCOTT:** One of the areas that is getting a lot of traction in the industry is the physics in chemistry around additive mixing and the efficiencies of the additives.

**DARREN:** One of the things that is exciting as PaperCon has progressed over the years is the format where a session will have a tutorial bench as the first intro to the session and then there will be a subsequent set of papers. This particular year we will have a little mix of everything. Also, for the first time this year paper physics will be joining us so there is a real blend of basic theory and fundamentals into the more cutting-edge application mixing technology and in the chemistries as well. It's a good blend and it's always developing that way. That's what's good about PaperCon.

#### **Can you tell us about your experience in the paper industry and what you do at your company?**

**DARREN:** I am the director of the Business Development and Applications Group for Kemira Pulp and Paper Americas. I've got 28 years of experience in the paper industry originating in England and moving to the United States in 1996.

**SCOTT:** I've been in the industry for 25 years. I work for Kemira as the head of the marketing and applications team for defoamer and pulping additives.

**Combined, both of you have quite a few years of experience. What are some different trends have you seen over the years and what do you feel are the most critical issues facing the paper industry today? What are some specific issues mills are facing? Are any of these issues going to be addressed at PaperCon?**

**DARREN:** I go back far enough that I still remember some alkaline conversions which should be familiar to the more seasoned members of TAPPI. That was a huge fundamental change but leaping forward, I think some exciting things these days are what we're seeing on the manufacturing side of repositioning assets. Unfortunately, newsprint and publication grades have taken a downturn but people have actually been repurposing those assets to get into the packaging segment. Great utilization but there are some challenges and that is where the engineering and chemistry can help, but it is good to see that that is progressing. Also exciting is in North America we're actually seeing some new machines being built these days. Again, in the growth segment, predominately packaging but also tissue and towel.

**SCOTT:** Along those lines I think there are a couple of dynamics. The industry as a whole has certainly seen a time of growth in tissue, towel and packaging grades. At the intersection of that growth I see three themes, if you will, coming into play. Namely, one element is the sustainability element that is both forward-looking and present-looking. Additionally, there is also the process efficiency and the functional efficiency of the various additives that are introduced in the paper process. When you put sustainability in the context of the efficiency and effectiveness of those various process and functional additives, it's an exciting time for our industry where we can see several new technologies as well as "re-optimized" existing technologies also emerging.

**Are any of these being addressed at Papercon?**

**SCOTT:** In our track, you will see elements of all those themes in almost every session.

**DARREN:** Volunteers were actually building the technical content in December. There are people new this year but several of us have worked together for a long time. Scott is the track manager and I've done that job in the past. We are familiar with what's needed. Obviously, it's a jigsaw puzzle and you don't know what's going to happen at the end of the day. We get a lot of pieces that come in through the abstract submissions and then the magic happens when that track is put together. There are negotiations on how things are moved around to try and make sure most everyone who attends PaperCon gets an answer to a question they brought. That's what usually happens.

**What have been some of the greatest challenges you have faced in your position and what resources did you use to overcome those challenges?**

**SCOTT:** There are several ways to comment on this but what comes to my mind first and most clearly is the tremendous value in relationships. There obviously is a tremendous amount of information available in today's world but ultimately knowing people that are experts and having extensive personal experience available and accessible to talk to, often in real-time, is critical. To discuss what they have done right and what they could have done better, is a very valuable tool. I find TAPPI, and TAPPI conferences a very good format and tool to pull together many of these real-life, tangible discussions and interactions that complement what we might read in the literature. The relationship side and the tangible part of discussing these topics is invaluable and a very common part of interactions at PaperCon.

**DARREN:** It is ultimately the network but before that network is built, it's the mentor that introduces you to the industry and the organization. I can still go back to my research professor, Michael Jaycock, who was the guy who got me involved in all this and I was still back in England at the time. It's that introduction and from there it literally is like the germination of the seed, you have to tend it and work at it and then that network just starts building and it goes year over year over year. I think the challenge for most of us who are in mid-to senior-parts of our career and lives is to relate to the younger professionals. I find it ironic that one of the resources I go to is my children. My eldest is eighteen so she's a good sounding board on what these young professionals who are in their 20's are wanting, expecting and how to interact.

### **What do you feel mills need to do today to remain competitive in the future?**

**SCOTT:** Interestingly enough, the answer I had earlier speaks many ways to that. It's the whole theme of sustainability and hitting the target grades and their growth. Finding innovative and new ways to not only apply those additives but also to get the most out of their efficiency, whether it be process or functional additives.

**DARREN:** One of the things that we've been doing more and more over the last few years for the mills is data and analytics. The computing power and the knowledge of individuals driving that technology has increased dramatically over the last few years. Making sense of out of that data and being able to predict the future better for the grade or the machine is paramount, tying in to the whole sustainability things that Scott highlighted. We've touched on that in the past and we're doing it now.

### **Your team has attended PaperCon in the past. How has PaperCon helped you and your company achieve goals?**

**SCOTT:** Relationships and the network we create year after year are critical. The content, of course, is new and interesting every year. So, every year you'll find multiple papers that are on new subjects that have just surfaced. This year we have the paper making fundamental track for the first time, really emerging in its own way. There is an enormous amount of new content this year that will speak on these fundamental topics. These fundamental efforts are a foundation upon which some of the practical applications and optimizations eventually come in to use in our industry. Sometimes these advances don't become evident for several years. However, history shows that if we look at the forefront of research we will see these fundamentals stimulating and contributing advances in technology. In this year's conference, you're going to see a strong dose of content centered on the fundamentals.

**DARREN:** What I find interesting is that in our industry, whether it be supplier or manufacturer, it's always safety first. What I would slightly change within TAPPI and PaperCon is that it's always safety and antitrust first. So even though you have manufacturers, suppliers and competitors in the same space, the anti-trust is so upfront that over the years of the networking, competitors become friends and there's often a lot of exchange within the career paths. PaperCon draws cutting edge technical content, and an impressive exhibitor space from global participants, making it the premier North American industry conference.

### **Why do you feel mills and other paper professionals need to attend PaperCon 2019?**

**SCOTT:** For those that have been there, the answer is clear. If attendance at PaperCon is at all possible, fits their schedule, and their corporate budgets support attendance, they'll be there. For those that haven't been there, it's difficult to put into words. What I would challenge them to do is to try it, do it once, make their own determination based on their experience. We're pretty confident that after having been there, they will come back the next year.

**DARREN:** When you have around 2000 industry professionals gathered in the same place, you can find people to answer your questions. You've got to do it one time if you've never been and you'll be back.

### **What is one word you would use to describe PaperCon?**

**SCOTT:** Refreshing.

**DARREN:** Awesome.

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