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This particular International Issues column serves to continue the tradition that was started last year by inviting the DSI presidential candidates to address a subject of concern to Institute members before the election this winter. The question for this year is, "What must DSI do to build and sustain a stronger international presence and acceptance?" The answers to this question follow. Enjoy!

How to Build and Sustain a Stronger International Presence and Acceptance

by Thomas E. Callarman, Arizona State University



IN CONCEPT, THE ANSWER to this question is very simple. "THINK globally, ACT globally!" Unfortunately, the application of this concept is not so simple, especially if the Decision Sciences Institute continues to try to answer it "from within."

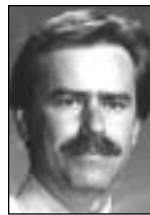
The Institute is an international organization. One only needs to look at the demographics of the membership to see that there is a number of people who reside in countries other than the United States, that many of the U.S. members are currently or formerly citizens of other countries, and that there have been attempts to try to integrate the non-U.S. members into the heart of DSI. This includes the creation of an Asia-Pacific Region, a proposal to develop an organization in Mexico, occasional international meetings, and a Strategic Planning for International Affairs Committee. Having said that, there is still a long way to go to create a truly global organization. In my response to this question, I will first give a brief background, mention the process we have used in Western DSI to become more "internationalized," and make a couple of suggestions for the future. As a disclaimer, my remarks are not intended to be a criticism of the manner in which DSI has conducted its business in the past, nor do I pretend to have all of the answers. Also, if I misquote anyone or leave anyone out of my discussion, it is unintentional, and probably a result of the aging process.

Having grown up in Texas, my early encounters in international affairs were the occasional trip to a Mexican border town. Clearly, this was a very limited view, and certainly not worthy of a professional discussion. In the 1980s, I had the privilege to attend several professional meetings in Europe, the first two sponsored by the Operations Management Association of the United Kingdom, and the third a Research Symposium: Issues in International Manufacturing, sponsored by INSEAD in Fontainebleau, France, in 1987. It was at this meet-

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Meeting the Global Challenge

by Mike Parent, Utah State University



WE HAVE BEEN ASKED to share our perspectives on what DSI must do to build and sustain a stronger international presence and acceptance. Many of you may recall the challenge of drafting the Institute's mission statement. The "wordsmith" process had to capture the importance of a global perspective for the current and future membership. In part the mission

statement insures that the Institute will continue to enhance member value by creating opportunities for intellectual growth and an organization through which we can contribute to our profession. Much has been written on the role an international presence plays in the future of the Institute and its ability to achieve these goals. For an excellent summary, one should read the articles on international issues authored by Vickie Smith-Daniels and Gary Ragartz published in *Decision Line* at this time last year. To address what DSI must do to advance its international presence and acceptance, four, not necessarily independent, initiatives warrant our attention:

- Membership—Our Most Important Asset
- Extending Our Multidisciplinary Focus
- Organize to Facilitate Relationships
- Strategic Alliances/Co-Branding.

Our Most Important Asset

Universities invest in buildings, grounds, technology, lab equipment, and even football teams, but the most important investment is in human capital. It follows that the Institute membership is our most important asset. DSI already embraces international participation and diversity in many dimensions among our membership. This becomes obvious as one reviews the participation at the Institute's annual meetings. A few years ago, our records indicate presenters represented 750 universities from 70 countries. Nevertheless, DSI recognized the need to better understand membership issues and several years ago the Institute's Board of Directors began a strategic planning initiative that anticipated the implementation of a marketing plan

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ing where I became more sensitive to issues in internationalization. Two specific comments stick out in my memory, and, I believe, along with something my father used to say, have helped to form my beliefs. First, at one of the plenary sessions at the Research Symposium, one of the keynote speakers said that he was having difficulty understanding what the problem was with teaching issues in international manufacturing because at INSEAD both the faculty and students were from many different countries and were, therefore, by definition, teaching international manufacturing. Second, in the same session, Professor Linda Sprague, who was at the University of New Hampshire at the time, said that she now knew how to counsel students who were Operations Management (OM) majors and were looking for one more elective in OM. She said that she would advise them to take French literature. Finally, my father, who for over 20 years was the dean of a school of business in Texas, used to say that he was smart enough to know what the problems were, but not smart enough to know the answers.

What has contributed to shaping my thinking from these three statements is that, first, just because we are represented by many different countries, it does not mean that we act globally. Second, to become more global in our perspective, we have to not only learn what that means, but we have to integrate what we learn into our behavior. We have to understand the different cultures, the expectations of the people in those cultures, and how we, as an international organization, can help to fulfill those expectations. Finally, I believe that I am smart enough to know what some of the questions are, but also smart enough to know that to answer the questions, I have to consult those who do know the answers. This leads me to a brief discussion of what we have tried to do in WDSI to “act international.”

Several years ago, Professors Joe Biggs and Eldon Li of Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, saw an opportunity for WDSI to expand its view of the world. Professor Miles Nicholls, from Swinburne Institute of Technology in Melbourne, Australia, was visiting at Cal Poly and wanted to work more closely with

faculty in the U.S. Eldon Li had a network of contacts in Taiwan. Among them, they somehow decided that it would be good to create an Asia-Pacific track at the WDSI meetings to try to expand the international relationship, and Miles and Eldon were named as Asia-Pacific coordinators for the annual meeting. About this same time, Professor Norma Harrison, currently at Macquarie University in Sydney, was also becoming very active in DSI. You may recall also that Norma and Miles were the co-directors of the international DSI meeting held in Sydney. (I was fortunate to work with them as the North American coordinator, and consequently learned first-hand some of the logistical problems faced by our international participants.) In the past few years, WDSI has added a European coordinator, although this relationship is not yet as successful.

Early in the development of the Asia-Pacific track at WDSI, there were a handful of papers submitted by participants, primarily from Australia and Taiwan. We made the mistake, although it seemed appropriate at the time, to have a separate track where our Asia-Pacific attendees presented to and talked with each other. It took only a couple of years to realize that these papers needed to be integrated with all of the other papers submitted and presented by our non-U.S. colleagues. After asking what WDSI could do to make the participants from Asia-Pacific and Europe feel as if they were a more integral part of the organization, we decided to integrate all papers in the same functional area into one track. One reason why we hold our annual meetings once every three years in Hawaii (there are other obvious reasons), and in cities such as San Francisco and Vancouver, is because it is easier for Asia-Pacific colleagues to fly into these places. In addition, we changed the submission process several years ago, again as a result of asking, so that it would be easier for people from around the world to submit papers. Finally, rather than have a representative from the Asia-Pacific region on the WDSI Board of Directors, or simply having an international committee, we have fully-integrated membership, such that our president-elect is from Australia (Miles). One of the many benefits of this integration of international

colleagues into the organization is that a large number of participants at the annual meetings are from other parts of the world. In fact, there are usually more international registrations at WDSI than there are at the national meeting of DSI!

Probably the most important thing that WDSI has done to date (and there is much more we can do), is to ask our membership what we can do to make participation easier and more meaningful. Many useful suggestions have come from this process. Rather than try to guess what are the best solutions, or to establish a committee to reflect on what is best, we asked those who were most affected by our decisions, and we involved them in the decision-making process. I suppose one could say that all participants are part of the solution. Many of our solutions were tactical, but I believe that some of the changes we have made were also strategic. Perhaps there is a way for DSI to follow similar models, and improve relationships even further.

Specific Suggestions for the Decision Sciences Institute

The first suggestion that I would have for DSI is to charge the Marketing Committee, under the direction of Terry Williams, to survey the membership, to solicit individual views of what should be done. I would also include people who are no longer members, but who have attended previous international, national, and regional meetings. I would expect this survey to be designed and carried out by the Marketing Committee in collaboration with the Strategic Planning for International Affairs Committee. (This also suggests an expanded role for the Strategic Planning for International Affairs Committee.) One possible outcome would be the revision of processes and procedures that impact the ability of DSI to offer appropriate services to our international constituencies. As a part of this effort, I would suggest that the survey be approached from the perspective of what can DSI do to be a more open, friendly, responsive, and welcoming organization. I would also suggest that the Marketing Committee membership be

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under the leadership of Terry Williams. Now entering its second phase, this plan will help the Institute to connect with its membership and empower the membership to build our international presence. Beyond these substantial efforts, our members may have valuable insight on building and sustaining a stronger international presence and acceptance. Among our members are those who serve and have served as presidents, provosts, deans, and department chairs at their respective universities. These individuals have an important perspective on how a professional association like DSI can build a stronger international (and domestic) reputation. A focus group or perhaps a series of such involving these individuals at our annual conference would explore many more ideas and experiences than any one individual may possess.

Extending Our Multidisciplinary Focus

The multidisciplinary focus of the Institute differentiates us from other professional organizations. As Rohit Verma reminded us in his article in the July 2003 *Decision Line*, "Business problems are not defined by functional boundaries." This aspect of DSI should help us build our international reputation in two ways. First, the members of DSI, just like the global economy, are not constrained in their thinking by boundaries, whether they are disciplinary or geographic. It should be just as natural for a DSI member to think internationally as it is (as Rohit suggests) for us to view issues like customer relationships or supply chain management in a multidisciplinary context. Second, when one combines a multidisciplinary focus with a global perspective, it creates a matrix-like organization that is quite unique. Building this organizational strength is a work-in-process. However, there are recent accomplishments and initiatives that enhance value for the DSI membership and contribute to the strategic positioning of the Institute among other professional associations. We must carefully communicate these achievements to our membership so that prospective members, both international and domestic, will discover that the

Institute has a growing international presence.

Organize to Facilitate Relationships

It should come as no surprise that the recent DSI member survey found that one of the top reasons we belong to the Institute is to take advantage of interacting with colleagues and networking. In this respect, conferences and meetings play an important role beyond the dissemination of information in delivering value to our members. The growth and importance of our international meetings should be noted. The recently announced intention of adding a Mexico region and investigating the possibility of a Europe region will build and sustain a stronger international presence. And, beyond facilitating relationships, extending our organizational model creates more opportunities for members to share discovery, to be involved as officers and program chairs, to develop their leadership skills and experience, all of which will assist their careers while insuring the future of the Institute. Further, one could argue that the development of international regions will also create opportunities and add value for the entire DSI membership.

Strategic Alliances/Co-Branding

It took several years and a sustained effort to first decide that DSI needed a publishing partner then to negotiate a relationship with Blackwell Publishing. The Blackwell alliance extends the intellectual reach of the membership through citation indices, library subscriptions, and access to electronic dissemination. The alliance also frees staff from the technical aspects of publishing to focus more on membership development. The Institute will need to nurture this relationship and take full advantage of the opportunities it creates, particularly internationally. There are other opportunities as yet undiscovered that have the potential for advancing the Institute. I am very excited about the newly created position, director of development and corporate relations, and Tim Smunt's willingness to serve in this role. Seeking appropriate international relationships, such as a conference co-sponsorship partner, will quickly

add to the Institute's global presence and acceptance.

In summary, there are quite a few initiatives underway and several more under consideration all focusing on globalization of the Institute. For an organization of scholars, each one at the leading edge of a functional specialty as well as an appreciation of the linkages to other fields, it is only natural that many new ideas will surface concerning the international growth and acceptance of DSI. And, at this point, it may be important to interject a note of caution. Recent initiatives need to be nurtured. Others need a commitment of time and incremental investment to begin to pay dividends. While our membership is our most important asset, you have many demands on your time and DSI operates with a very lean staff. Over the next five years, the DSI Board will need your help in setting priorities for all the irons in the fire, making room for a few more, and finding the resources to support each. ■

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is currently a professor of business administration at Utah State University. Before recently returning to his faculty position, Mike served in several administrative capacities including MBA program director, associate dean for graduate studies, athletic director, and assistant vice president for special projects. His MBA program responsibilities took him to Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, where he established graduate program relationships with industry and educational institutions. Mike also served on the cabinet governing NCAA championships and competition and chaired the NCAA's Bowl Certification Subcommittee. During his 30-year association with the Institute, Mike has been elected to the DSI Board as a regional VP and as an at-large VP and has been twice elected to the Board's Executive Committee. He has served as the Institute's program chair and as a member of numerous committees. Mike was president and a former program chair for WDSI and has received the Jimmy D. Barnes Distinguished Service Award. He earned an MBA at Michigan State and a PhD at the University of Oregon.

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ing rooms, track and session chairs, scheduling, generation of preliminary and final programs).

The new CIS is currently in the requirements gathering and design phase.

Service to members: Once completed, the CIS would serve as a portal to the annual meeting—a consistent Web address, a system to create personalized conference schedules, and more!

How Does DSI Measure up?

DSI has advanced immensely technologically over the last two years. DSI members now enjoy the same level of technology-assisted services as many other technically advanced communities such as ACM and AIS. Services such as online membership directory, online secure conference registration, online paper submission and re-

view has placed DSI technically at par with these other organizations. In fact, some of the services that DSI members enjoy are highly innovative and not available in many other organizations. These services include online placement services and the ability to provide preferences to help schedule the conference sessions. Once the new CIS is completed, DSI should be one of the premier technically advanced organizations.

Summary

The projects mentioned here are only some of the advances in information technology in DSI. Recent developments in the Decision Sciences Institute have shown the commitment of the Institute to keep up with the challenges of the growing IT community, and certainly newer projects will be undertaken in the immediate future to strengthen the IT infrastructure of DSI. ■

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expanded to include more representation from outside the U.S.

Second, I would ask the Institute to consider expanding its objectives to not only disseminating new knowledge through its journals and conferences, but also to sponsor the discovery of new knowledge through large, global research initiatives. For example, many in the U.S. are discussing the continued “hollowing” of U.S. manufacturing, especially as companies continue to move or develop new manufacturing in China and software development in India, for example. Perhaps, if we took a global view of this phenomenon, we might see more advantages than disadvantages. (Again, I am asking the question, not suggesting the answer.) Possibly, DSI could take a leading role by sponsoring research activities in areas such as this. At the very least, it could consider sponsoring such activities and/or providing linkages between interested faculty and businesses who might be interested in such a pursuit. I am certain that the membership, if surveyed and listened to, could come up with many more ways that DSI could “Build and Sustain a Stronger International Presence and Acceptance.” ■

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is director of the Institute for Manufacturing Enterprise Systems and an associate professor of operations in the College of Business at Arizona State University. Previously he was associate dean for student support services in the Graduate College. His disciplinary research interests are in process analysis and improvement in manufacturing, particularly in the electronics industry. He has published in a number of the top journals in his field. Dr. Callarman is certified by the Institute for Supply Management as a certified purchasing manager and by the American Production and Inventory Control Society as a certified production and inventory manager at the Fellow level. His research interests in the areas of faculty review, reward and post-tenure review stem from his term as president of the Faculty Assembly and Senate at Arizona State. During this time, he worked with representatives from the faculty and administrations of the other three major universities in Arizona, as well as the Board of Regents, to develop the statewide post-tenure review plan for Arizona. Dr. Callarman's Ph.D. is from the Krannert Graduate School of Management at Purdue University.

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tained by writing the code in C or Fortran and compiling it with “optimization” turned on. Attached as extra files with this article on the Web site are codes Russ wrote for Perl and C.

Conclusion

The whole purpose of this Excel simulation exercise is to show students how much variation exists with even a simple simulation, and that it takes a long time for the Law of Averages to be effective. This spreadsheet can be changed to expand the number of runs and also the number of replications to demonstrate the error in even a large number of trials and the variation inherent in Monte Carlo simulation. Crystal Ball or @Risk could also be used with the spreadsheet to show how many trials are needed to make the estimate of pi more accurate. ■

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