

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

VENTURE FAR AND WIDE



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I'm reminded again today about the small world we live in, and the value of connections in this industry. I'm writing this from my seat on a flight from Sydney to Singapore, where I'm seated next to a mechanical engineer and a builder—both retired, both immigrants.

For 8 hours I've listened to and appreciated their tales of business, war, economic and political history, and more war. As two German immigrants, they retold their experiences of pre-war East Prussia, of moves to Siberia, of post-war Prussia, and of their moves back across Germany...low and behold, to the town where my family resides today—Uslar, Germany. What a small world!

I must confess that normally on these long flights I put my headphones on and feign sleep so no one will talk to me (a dirty little secret I suspect more than one of you can relate to!)—but this time, I was completely taken and engaged by these two men. I asked them both the key to their success, long life, and happiness. I smiled at the advice, and thought immediately of my ICRI family. Their answers won't surprise you, either:

- “Be of value;
- “Know your customers—know them and know their families;
- “Find groups of people with similar interests and become a part of them (professional and hobbies); and
- Network.”

We reflected on their comments and they added that the answers above prepared them and provided a foundation to build their businesses and their lives, but living through the reality of life, the hardships and the successes that we all face: “Well,” they said, “it's more than that. Actually to make it through and have a ‘good life,’ you must:

- “Rise above;
- “Endure;
- “Persevere; and

“...a feel-good story that reminded me of the relationships we build here at ICRI—of the groups and networks we build and lean on and the opportunity this organization gives us to be a part of something great.”

- Find the opportunity. Venture ‘far and wide’ if you must.”

I was told, in their opinion, that human nature does not change but that the individual experience is in our own hands—both a fatalistic and encouraging statement. This was the second time in the past few weeks that the word “endure” came up in response to the secrets of success. My new friends put it into perspective well. “Endure it, rise above it, and lean on your friends and peers so in return they can lean on you—you can't go it alone.”

Both of these amazing gentlemen were “complaining” (as only endearing battle dogs can) that old acquaintances are still calling and “bugging them” to do work for them or help them on a home project. It was easily observed that they were torn between the want for peace in retirement and the need for being needed.

This was just a feel-good story that reminded me of the relationships we build here at ICRI—of the groups and networks we build and lean on and the opportunity this organization gives us to be a part of something great. I hope we will all be “bugging” each other to do work when we are 80+ years old!

In a future article, I'd like to share some personal stories of yours—our members. Please send me a personal e-mail at katherine.blatz@basf.com and tell me your story. How has being a member of ICRI impacted your career and/or personal life?

Until we see each other in Fort Worth, “Venture far and wide!”
Cheers, Mates!