



Annual meetings and tradeshow sponsored by professional societies offer Baker Atlas the opportunity to show off the latest technology.

Membership Has Its Privileges

By Elizabeth Naggar

Professional societies supply a forum for like-minded individuals in which an exchange of ideas and information can take place. Joining a professional society, such as the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) or the Society of Professional Well Log Analysts (SPWLA), is beneficial for engineers, geologists, and other professionals throughout their entire careers. Baker Atlas strongly encourages participation in professional societies on both the local and national level so that employees may continue their education and keep current with changing practices and technical advances. In fact, Baker Atlas has a policy that covers \$250 worth of membership

fees annually to make it easier for employees to become involved.

Besides keeping up with emerging technology, professional societies offer members the opportunity to establish contacts with other operating and service companies with whom they can share experiences and seek advice, not to mention building friendships with people who share common goals, concerns, and perspectives. Professional societies contain a veritable wealth of information available through conferences, meetings, online, publications, and presentations. Members may also publish papers to establish individual reputation and to stimulate discussion on topics of importance to the industry. Bottom line, professional societies allows members to excel in their performance and optimize profits for their employers and clients making membership a win-win situation for everyone.

Profile Building at the Local and National Level

To increase the visibility of Baker Atlas in the industry and to the public, the company is making a strong push on brand awareness in 2002. One initial action in this plan was to appoint Robert Truman as director of Industry Affairs. In this role, he is charged with raising awareness and improving the perception of Baker Atlas with key industry trade associations and technical societies. Truman encourages everyone, especially new engineers, to join one or more professional societies.

Truman states, "In terms of national technical societies, we've got four major ones—SPWLA, SEG (Society of Exploration Geophysicists), AAPG (American Association of Petroleum Geologists) and SPE. I recommend that interested Baker Atlas employees join SPWLA, which looks after the discipline of petrophysics—Baker Atlas' major business focus. After SPWLA, you should join professional societies for the various disciplines that relate to your actual specialty. I suggest joining SPE if you don't really specialize because they cover the broadest range of the industry. If you're a geologist, then you should look at AAPG. If you are more oriented towards geophysics, then join SEG. Below these societies, there are local societies and groups that fall under the main umbrella of these societies in certain areas. For example in London, the local SPWLA is called the LPS, the London Petrophysical Society."

Andy Shaw, Communications manager, says, "Participation in professional societies is important because of the profile that it creates for people. Publishing papers, participation at local society meetings, and making presentations help to reinforce and validate the quality of our employees, the capability of our people, and our company. It's a very human side of our business, particularly at the local society level. Publishing at the annual technical conferences and meetings is very important because of the peer review that occurs on the papers and the kudos that are received for technical advances. Equally important is the participation at the local society level, because you reinforce by association in a non-commercial setting of what you have to say as a company. That's probably the most important thing. You can go along and explain the business, economic, and scientific merits of our capability, technique, or process to a group of your industry peers, who include a larger user group of customers, without commercial pressure to get a sale or being perceived as making a sales pitch. It's a very important channel to demonstrate and validate what's going on within our company."

Dan Georgi, director of Science and currently running for president of the SPWLA, agrees, "It is just as important for us in service companies to belong to professional societies as it is for employees of oil companies. The societies provide a variety of forums that allow us to better understand our clients' concerns and technical problems. These assorted venues also provide us with insights into what our competitors are doing. It is beneficial to both the individual and the company if we belong to the societies and participate actively in society affairs. Generally, the societies choose presentations based on the input of a small number of active individuals in the society. If we do not actively participate in the societies, our competitors dominate these committees, and we may be denied the opportunity to inform the society members of our approach, whether conventional or novel, to their technical problems."

Jeremy Prosser, Asia Pacific Geoscience manager, says, "Society meetings are an important source of business intelligence. Not only will you learn about new technology and new analytical techniques, but the programs also give insight into current industry business drivers, where competitors have been investing their technology dollars, and where they have been applying their services. They also invariably provide feedback from the floor as to clients' perceptions of how successful the various approaches and technologies presented have been. Participation by academic institutions is normally pretty high, and this may provide a glimpse of the future in terms of current academic research, and generate some new ideas for your own business. The process is, of course, two-way. By actively participating as a Baker Atlas employee, you also help to promote and raise the profile of your own company."

Sharing Knowledge and Education

Another major benefit of participating in a professional society is the opportunity to connect with peers to discuss issues, ideas, resources, and experiences. Allen Gilchrist, Nuclear chief scientist and former SPWLA president and chairman of the SPE Well Logging Technical Committee, says, "A primary purpose of professional societies, such as the SPWLA or the SPE, is to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas among professionals in various aspects of formation evaluation, exploration, and production of hydrocarbons. As a professional, I am able to share recent developments with potential users of new technologies. I can also learn how clients are using existing services in new ways. This can be done through papers and

The Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE)

www.spe.org

The Society's main aim is to collect, disseminate, and exchange technical and professional information, which is achieved through electronic products and services, publications, and member service activity.

SPE's 53,000-plus members live and work in more than 100 countries, and rely on SPE as a source of technical and professional development. SPE members are involved in countless activities, including section leadership, program committees, peer process, and technical interest groups.

Admission requirements:

Member

Employment in the petroleum industry, AND a university degree equivalent to a four-year Bachelor's degree or higher in engineering or basic or applied sciences (if you do not meet the educational requirements, you may still be eligible for Member grade; contact service@spe.org for more information), AND at least six years of active practice in petroleum engineering or in the application of the sciences to the petroleum industry; your degree may be credited toward active practice as follows – Bachelor's degree, two years; Master's degree, three years; doctorate, four years, AND at least three years in a position in which the applicant either made or approved recommendations on the basis of analysis of technical data.

Associate Member

Must be recommended for member status by written statements from four SPE members. Employment in work related to the petroleum industry, AND a university degree equivalent to a four-year Bachelor's degree in engineering or basic or applied sciences; OR a two-year science or engineering degree or a four-year degree in a field other than science or engineering; OR six years of active practice in support of petroleum engineering or in the application of science to the petroleum industry.

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American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG)

www.aapg.org

Founded in 1917, the American Association of Petroleum Geologists is currently the world's largest professional geological society. AAPG is an international geological organization with members in over 116 countries around the world. Included among its members are geologists, geophysicists, CEOs, managers, consultants, students, and academicians. Currently the world's largest professional geological society with over 30,000 members, AAPG provides publications, conferences, and educational opportunities to geoscientists and disseminates the most current geological information available to the general public.

Admission requirements:

Applicants for Active membership must have a Bachelor's degree in the geological sciences and a minimum of three years of experience in the professional practice or teaching of geology. A Master's degree subtracts one year from the experience requirement, and a doctorate subtracts two years. The Executive Committee may waive degree or current professional activity requirements if in its judgment an applicant has adequate professional experience and has attained standing in the profession. While your application is being processed and reviewed you will be considered an Associate member of AAPG. Applicants are asked to secure three Active members who have known the applicant for at least one year and who are willing to sponsor the applicant's membership.

"One major benefit of joining a professional society is the access to support materials, such as paper search engines, copies of papers, membership directories, mnemonic dictionaries, training course schedules, industry calendars, shareware, local chapter notices, and so on."

presentations, or at the trade shows or exhibitions that usually accompany society meetings. Professional societies also enable me to interact with clients on a more personal basis at social events, or over lunch or dinner."

States Bruce Bernard, a consultant who was formerly a vice president for Shell International Ventures and the 2001 past president of the SPE, "Professional societies offer unique resources to you and your business. They offer global technology and best practice networks, online databases of technical papers, electronic discussion groups, fill training gaps, peer recognition of your work and commitment, low risk opportunities to practice and develop personal leadership capabilities, local/regional and global dimensions, and much more."

Says Richard Merkel, senior petrophysicist for System Technology Associates and current SPWLA president, "I firmly believe that the main purpose and function of a professional society is the continuing education of its members. These societies are the mechanism to bridge the academic knowledge gained in a university to the applied as well as academic aspects of science and engineering. For the scientist and engineer, universities develop the tools necessary for each career path. Professional societies are designed to maintain the skill level and also to develop the knowledge of how to apply these skills. For SPWLA and most other professional societies, this is done primarily in four ways—papers in the professional journal, presentations at annual meetings and topical conferences, informal interaction with colleagues and associates at meetings, and exhibitor contacts at annual symposia."

Notes Shaw, "Professional societies are key industry forums for the discussion and technical validation of what our core business is about. That is the techniques and technologies that are designed and engineered to improve formation evaluation, reservoir productivity, and minimize geological risk."

Dave Shorey, Baker Atlas open hole sales manager for Canada/Alaska and current vice president of the Canadian Well Logging Society, states, "There are a number of advantages associated with belonging to a professional society for both the individual and a company like Baker Atlas. The most important of which, at least in my opinion, is access to information. This is done through a number of society channels, like meetings, presentations, conventions, publications, and personal relationships. Another important benefit of professional societies is access to competitive intelligence. It is an opportunity to see what our competitors are doing or not doing, and helps to identify opportunities by exposure to our clients' issues and concerns."

Adam Olszewski, chief petrophysicist and former chairman of the Well Logging Technical Committee for SPE, says, "The different professional societies provide a means to keep abreast of the latest technologies in our rapidly changing industry. They provide a forum to discuss problems and solutions, which will ultimately affect the way we do business. As you branch out into new areas, both professionally and geographically, the societies provide a valuable database of history and knowledge gained through past experiences."

Societies publish a lot of reference material, like journals, reference guides, and books, that are important, especially for up and coming engineers as they try to learn their art and science. Mark Alberty, senior advisor, Petrophysics for BP and SPWLA president-elect, says, "One major benefit of joining a professional society is the access to support materials, such as paper search engines, copies of papers, membership directories, mnemonic dictionaries, training course schedules, industry calendars, shareware, local chapter notices, and so on."

States Truman, "One of the best books I read as a young engineer was a simple book on petroleum reservoir engineering that was published by SPE. It went through reservoir characterization, fluid properties, drive mechanisms, and performance. For me as a newcomer, it was great. In terms of personal development, the books and other learning aids that they put out are very important."

Prosser notes, "Societies provide an important 'up-to-date' learning experience for the individual participating. Many of the talks or papers presented at society meetings will not yet have been published in journals, given that some now have publication lead times in excess of 12 months."

Many societies have different discussion groups that allow an engineer to submit questions to peers. Says Truman, "As a member of SPE, you may sign up for different forums that are in essence discussion groups that allow you to submit questions to your peers who belong to the same group. Perhaps you want to get answers to issues and problems in formation evaluation



Raj Damodaran, geoscientist, walks potential clients through a demonstration of Geoscience software at a recent tradeshow.

or reservoir engineering. These groups are ideal for this type of activity. That's a plus of being a member of these types of societies."

An engineer who continually learns about trends and emerging technology is a more well-rounded employee. Continues Truman, "Many times, we pontificate on subjects that we think we understand correctly, but in fact we don't understand the subject as well as we think we do. To me, the main benefit to being a part of a professional society is looking outside the submarine. We get so busy internally with running our own business and meetings that we don't always look out into the broad ocean and the environment that everyone is working in. Membership in these societies, both at the local and national level, will allow you to get a broad view of what the industry is like, what's going on, and what the issues are outside your own little world. I think that is very important for anyone who is going to work in this business longer than three years."

Georgi concurs, "Depending on where you are in your career, professional societies provide us with different types of information. For young professionals just starting out, societies provide much of the technical information required to carry out their jobs, and most importantly, the insight into clients' concerns. For those of us who are further along in our careers, a society provides us with a means to stay current with the many, continuous new developments."

Networking, Personal Development and Credibility

With local chapters worldwide, professional societies offer a common ground for peers to interact. Membership is an excellent way to establish credibility for new and seasoned professionals alike. Says Stephen Holditch, Schlumberger Fellow and the current 2002 SPE president, "To be a professional and work as a professional, you have to belong to and be active in a professional society. The activity lets one grow technically, ethically, and socially. A good professional society provides the means for a member to advance in their profession. New engineers need to set targets and goals. If those goals include advancement up the technical or management ladder, then belonging to a professional society is a necessity."

Nigel Dodds, customer service manager and current president of the LPS, states, "I have always been involved in the SPWLA in all of my field locations, taking up positions on the committees where possible. The LPS events give me a very different perspective on petrophysical issues. I get to see the context of our services from the side of an operator, as well as hear about a wider range of petrophysical issues and solutions than I would otherwise experience. As I am involved in sales, the society provides a valuable range of contacts in our discipline both with customers and competitors. This also gives me credibility when dealing with many clients."

The Society of Professional Well Log Analysts (SPWLA):

www.spwla.org

The Society of Professional Well Log Analysts (SPWLA) is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to the advancement of the science of petrophysics, or formation evaluation, through well logging and other formation evaluation techniques and to the application of these techniques to the exploration of gas, oil and other minerals. Founded in 1959, SPWLA provides information services to scientists in the petroleum and mineral industries, and serves as a voice of shared interests in our profession. It also plays a major role in strengthening petrophysical education, and strives to increase the awareness of the role petrophysics has in the oil and gas industry and the scientific community.

Admission requirements:

Members must be actively engaged in formation evaluation through analysis of well logs and/or related data with nine years of active practice (including four years of college). Members require references from one SPWLA member. Junior members must be actively engaged in formation evaluation through analysis of well logs and/or related data for four year and have the reference of one SPWLA member. Associate members shall by profession, affiliation or abiding interest meet the purposes of the corporation and have the reference of one SPWLA member.

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The Society of Exploration Geophysicists (SEG)

www.seg.org

SEG is dedicated to advancing and promoting the science of geophysics, especially as it relates to exploration and development of petroleum and other minerals, as well as environmental concerns. The Society fosters the expert and ethical practice of geophysics in the exploration and development of natural resources, in characterizing the near-surface, and in mitigating earth hazards. SEG has more than 16,536 members working in 110 countries. Geophysicists search for oil, gas, and minerals using a wide variety of methods. SEG encourages its members to learn about the newest technologies by sponsoring speakers, publishing new theories in periodicals and other formats, and organizing continuing education classes around the world. Through SEG, members can network and learn from other professionals.

Admission requirements:

Active Membership Classification

QUALIFICATIONS

Those interested in Active Membership must meet the following criteria:

- Actively engaged in practicing or teaching geophysics or a related scientific field.
- Work must have been of a professional nature for not less than eight (8) years.
- Must have been of a responsible nature calling for the exercise of independent judgment and the application of geophysical or geologic principles during at least three (3) years of the eight (8) years
- Provide three (3) Active Member references who can confirm Applicant's training and experience. Note: In addition to the reference requirement, the name of each applicant must be published in the next regular issue of the Society's journal for approval by the membership-at-large. If no objection is received within 30 days after publication, the applicant shall be deemed approved for membership subject to approval by the Executive Committee at their next scheduled meeting. This process ordinarily takes two to four months.



Mitch Pavlovic, senior applications advisor, Martin Craighead, vice president of Marketing and Business Development, and Jan Willems, director of Product Line Management, discuss new innovations at the recent AAPG Annual meeting held in Houston on March 11-13.

Alberty concurs, "A professional society is a critical link between myself and my peers. It is the most important tool I have to assess my skills relative to my peers and to seek out new and improved methods to accomplish my job. Without this critical link, I cannot effectively improve my performance and value to my employer."

Says Shaw, "Whenever I had the time as a field engineer, I would go to talks at the local chapter. It's a great way of networking, in addition to being a wonderful way of establishing yourself as a credible figure in the industry. It's a way of sharing information and increasing your knowledge."

Gerry Kuecher, sedimentologist/image log analyst, agrees, "Professional societies provide workers with a sense of identity and community. The members of professional societies share workplace concerns and seek to address them through talks, papers, and conventions. We have a need to belong because we recognize we cannot do it alone. Networking is a modern survival skill."

Shorey states, "Active participation in a professional society is really a requirement for a person's professional development. It provides an opportunity to learn and grow professionally, as well as interact with those outside of your immediate working environment."

Truman notes, "I've found the relationships you develop and the friends you make in a professional society environment stay with you forever throughout your entire career. You develop those long-term relationships that allow you to get things done both personally and professionally."

Georgi continues, "The societies are an excellent way to meet other professionals involved in similar technical quests. I have made many good friends over the years that I look forward to seeing on an annual basis at society meetings."

Says Merkel, "Maintaining contacts and interacting with colleagues who are working on similar projects is just as important as understanding the theory behind the latest tool development. Not only have I learned the direction my profession is headed through society interaction, but also have had some influence, although likely minor, in the course that it will take by discussing problems and possible solutions with colleagues."

Understanding the importance of participating in professional societies, the only remaining issue is deciding which one to join. States Kuecher, "Deciding which professional society one should belong to is a bit like dating. First, there is the getting to know you phase. Next, there is the decision on whether or not to continue, and lastly, there is advice from people around you on whether or not you have made the right decision. When it is clear the fit is good, commitments are made. Relationships are strengthened if there is involvement. But if the relationship fails, people stop paying their dues. It's as simple as that!"

Join and Participate

Current participants of professional societies agree that individuals shouldn't just join a society. They encourage everyone to get involved and volunteer for committees. The more a person puts into their membership, the more he will get out of it. Notes Dodds, "I thoroughly enjoy the society, but it is important to get involved. Don't just join for the sake of being able to quote this on your CV or resumé. Attend the meetings and if possible, take an active role in managing the society. I find that the intellectual element is stimulating, and it definitely broadens your horizons in this industry."

Merkel concurs, "Anyone can join a professional society so long as they can pass the membership requirements. However, in order to capitalize on the membership, one needs to participate. Like so many other things we do in life, we get out no more that we put in. Accordingly, I encourage bright new scientists and engineers to not only join societies on a local and international level, but to participate in them by volunteering for committee duty to maintain and grow the society. This is a sure way to maximize the benefits offered by the organization."

David Barr, Baker Atlas president, states, "Everyone in our company is responsible for supporting and creating our brand image. One way to do that is to be involved in various technical societies. However, we don't want people to join just for the sake of joining because then you spend a lot of money and don't get anything out of it. What we want is for people to join and be involved. Any opportunity we have to show our capability, to publicize the fact that we have great people, and to allow our thinking process to be ingrained in others is important. Find a technical society that best fits your expertise, and join and be active."

Truman emphasizes, "If you want to develop yourself professionally and have fun while you're doing it, then this is the way to do it. As a manager, I encourage others to do exactly what my first manager did, which was hand me an application and tell me to apply. When you are a young engineer, you don't realize the importance of professional societies. Managers should encourage participation. That's where it should start."

Gilchrist continues, "Professional societies are especially important for those who are new to the industry. Various short courses, workshops, and topical conferences are offered by professional societies throughout the year. These can be a valuable addition to formal academic training or in-house training within Baker Atlas. Local chapter or section meetings provide opportunities to meet, share ideas, and develop relationships with clients in your area, and larger meetings provide a national or international experience."

Olszewski agrees, "The ability to take what we have learned at the university and turn that knowledge into useful business practices can either be accomplished through trial and error, or we can learn from others in the profession. Some companies provide this sort of training in-house, but this has become the exception rather than the rule. The professional societies give you access to the people who write the papers on leading edge technologies. If properly used, the societies will provide a continuing educational experience."

Holditch implores, "Once you are a member, become active. Do not go to meetings to sit and listen. Write papers and go to meetings to be a participant. If you write papers and make presentations, people begin to recognize you as a professional. It opens doors to new assignments and opportunities that you will never see by sitting on the sidelines."

Alberty says, "I have learned improved techniques to accomplish my job, my personal technical strengths and weaknesses, and where opportunities exist to introduce new solutions to old problems."

Notes Prosser, "Most society meetings that I have attended have a pretty well-developed social aspect, where you have the opportunity to meet peers from the industry, make friends, and in some cases, have a chance to give something back to the community via sponsorships, or participation in charitable functions. There are no excuses for not joining. It should be a part of everyone's career development. Go do it!"

Bernard sums it up best when he says, "This industry is first and foremost about people, not the assets and reserves which they convert to products. Professional societies like SPE have broadened my perspective and enabled me to meet so many people who I would have never encountered otherwise. This network, over 30 years, has turned out to be my most valuable one in so many business situations and has enabled me to practice and learn skills needed for career development and long-term personal fulfillment."

ACADEMIC CREDIT

An applicant having received a degree in a scientific field from a recognized college or university may count that time toward a portion of the required eight years' professional experience, not to exceed the following:

- Bachelor's degree equals four (4) years
- Master's degree equals five (5) years
- Doctor's degree equals seven (7) years
- Time spent solely as a full-time student, even in pursuit of a doctorate, cannot be counted toward the requirement of at least three years' professional experience of a responsible nature.

SPECIAL RIGHTS OF ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

- Eligible to hold office
- Voting Rights
- Petition the Council or Executive Committee
- Sponsor Applicants for Membership
- Publish Affiliation with the Society

Associate membership available for those with an interest in geophysics, but not the qualifications.

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