

Red River Valley Local Section American Chemical Society

Next Meeting

Friday, 15 October 2010

Speaker : **Brian Strohmeier**, R.J. Lee Group, Inc.

Location: Abbot Hall Room 138, UND, Grand Forks.

▲ 16:30 Presentation:
4:30 PM
▲ 18:00 Dinner :
6:00 PM

Speaker's presentation:

The Chemistry of Leadership

In order for R&D organizations to grow and prosper in today's competitive business environment, leaders must exist at all levels - from the technician ranks on up. Unfortunately, the important subject of leadership is rarely studied in detail, or even casually discussed, during the education and training of young scientists pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree in chemistry. This problem is due in part to the simple fact that the study of leadership isn't nearly as exact as the study of chemistry. For one thing, the social world of leadership isn't nearly as orderly as the scientific world of chemistry, nor is it as susceptible to laws, rules, and theories. For another, people, unlike solids, liquids, and gases, are anything but uniform and anything but predictable. In other words, a thorough knowledge of leadership, like that of chemistry, does not just happen by chance. Both subjects must be extensively studied and practiced in order for someone to become proficient. The first step to becoming a leader is to eliminate your own self-imposed internal limitations and fears about your ability to lead others. All too often people incorrectly assume that they can't be leaders because they aren't at the top of the company or that leaders are only found at the peaks of organizational charts or in big corner offices. In addition, many people mistakenly think of themselves as "leaders" if they can "manage" people, plan a budget, make quick decisions, or solve day-to-day problems. However, there are many key differences between just managing people and truly leading others to be their best. While it is usually true that people higher up in an organization typically have more authority and responsibility, that doesn't necessarily mean they are going to be effective leaders or inspire people to accomplish extraordinary things. Many managers are simply authoritative bureaucrats who are skilled at getting things done by exerting their positional power over others. In contrast, true leaders are those who can influence and motivate people to willingly perform at a high level on a consistent basis. Contrary to many old and outdated business concepts, modern leadership theories indicate that great leaders are made not born. Leadership is an observable, understandable, and learnable set of skills and practices available to everyone. One simple step to being a more effective leader is to be a more consistent and committed follower! This presentation will review effective leadership and "followership" skills and practices that are available to essentially everyone whatever their formal title and whether they lead two or two hundred people.

● **Biographical Sketch.**



Brian R. Strohmeier is employed as the Corporate Laboratory Operations Manager at R.J. Lee Group, Inc. in Monroeville, PA. Prior to assuming his current position, he was the Assistant Chairman of the Department of Chemistry at the University of Pittsburgh from 2003-2005 and before that he was employed in various scientific research and managerial leadership positions at the PPG Glass Technology Center and the Alcoa Technical Center, both in Pittsburgh, PA. He holds a Ph.D. degree in Analytical Chemistry from the University of Pittsburgh (1984) and an M.A. degree in Business Leadership from Duquesne University (1999). His scientific research interests involve applications of surface analytical techniques, such as X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS or ESCA), Auger electron spectroscopy (AES), secondary ion mass spectrometry (SIMS), and scanning electron microscopy (SEM), for the characterization of complex materials. Dr. Strohmeier holds one patent and has more than 45 publications and 35 presentations (17 invited) dealing with the surface characterization of various materials and scientific leadership. His leadership interests involve promoting the study and application of modern leadership principles in R&D organizations as well as in undergraduate and graduate level chemistry curricula. He teaches a one-day short course at ACS National meetings on leadership principles for R&D managers and scientists. Dr. Strohmeier has been a member of the ACS since 1977 and is a former Chairman (2000) and former Councilor of the Pittsburgh Section ACS. He is also an active member of the American Vacuum Society (AVS), the Geological Society of America (GAS), the Society for Analytical Chemists of Pittsburgh (SACP), and the Spectroscopy Society of Pittsburgh (SSP).