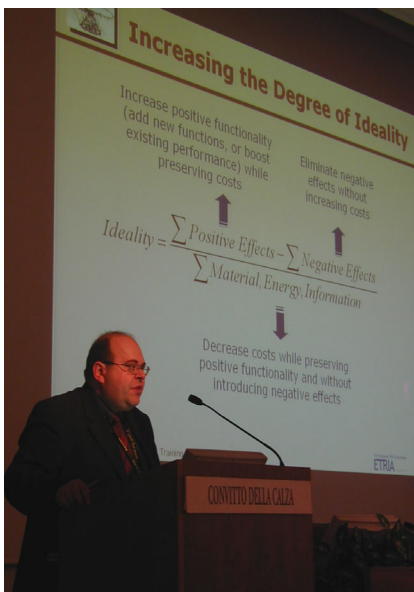


TRIZ Future Conference 2004 – November 3-5, Florence (Italy) Survey

The 4th edition of the annual ETRIA meeting (this year held in Florence, Italy) has gone and now it's time for weigh up successes and limits.

First some numbers, as the effective proof that the community is growing: 125 is the overall number of contributing people, authors, participants (University of Florence organizing team included).

A contribution to such a success is certainly due to the new layout of the conference, with an “introductory day” appreciated both from experts and newcomers thanks to the remarkable tutorials by Valeri Souchkov and a long list of interesting and variegated study cases. The support of the Italian TRIZ association Apeiron has lead to the involvement of big and small Italian companies at their first TRIZ experience, therefore reaching one of the main objectives of ETRIA.



Since the first edition in Bath, the TRIZ Future conference has been characterized by the co-participation of universities, enterprises and consultants: such a unique tradition has been confirmed with 67 academicians and 58 people from the industrial world.

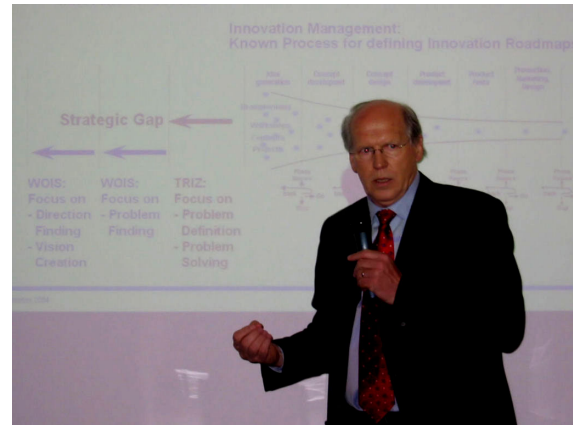
22 countries from all over the world were represented with several welcome novelties; from west to east: Portugal, Hungary, Romania, China!

Austria	5
Belgium	3
China	2
Croatia	1
Czech Republic	2
France	8
Germany	5
Hungary	4
Ireland	1
Israel	2
Italy	56
Japan	2
Korea	6
Mexico	2
Netherlands	6
Poland	1
Portugal	1
Romania	1
Russia	3
Swiss	1
UK	4
USA	9
Total	125

According to the feedback of several participants and actors most of the speeches were interesting, sometimes dense of really novel contributions and the conference has given the opportunity of fruitful experience exchanges.



A special mention goes to the invited lectures by Victor Fey and Hans Jurgen Linde (who animated his speech with the help of Günter Herr): two different approaches and visions about systematic innovation related to two different successful practices in US and Europe... at least they will be remembered by TFC participants for the rich discussions they have stimulated !!!



Nevertheless, it must be mentioned that not all the presentations were free of commercialisms: a major challenge for Jürgen Jantschgi and his Austrian team in charge with the organization of the 2005 meeting will be “taming” the low discipline of the TRIZ community (starting from respecting the deadlines!).

The proceedings of the conference are available on the Firenze University Press web site (<http://epress.unifi.it/>) since December 1st: reading the electronic version is free of charge and a print on demand version can be purchased directly online.

Positive feedbacks have been given also about the “social moments”: a crucial role was certainly played by Italian food and wine (!), but breaks, lunches and the wonderful dinner in Vinci offered a precious opportunity to exchange ideas and develop new relationships.

Somehow the breaks supplied the lack of time for discussions during the technical sessions. The growth of accepted contributions has a drawback: in order to avoid parallel sessions, each presentation was limited to about 20 minutes, really too short... Again a challenge for the Austrian team: how to face the contradiction “increasing the number of contributions avoiding a reduction of the time available for presentations” (and without following the segmentation principle!).



At the end of the conference, even if late in the Friday afternoon, a fruitful discussion was shared during the annual ETRIA members meeting.

According to the goals of the association and on the base of the work made so far, the following initiatives have been launched:

- a task force with the aim of collecting and structurizing all the contributions sent to ETRIA from the first meeting in Bath to the last in Florence; such a knowledge will be available for ETRIA members on a web portal and/or on special issues;
- overview of the scientific communities involved in TRIZ related research and teaching activities with the goal of establishing new relationships and for a deeper acknowledgement of TRIZ in the academic world;
- a more intense relationship with the Altshuller Institute and MATRIZ, starting from a common newsletter, towards a shared TRIZ expertise "certification";
- search for "authoritative" referees to be involved in the board of a scientific journal on TRIZ related topics.



In conclusion, the annual ETRIA meeting is flying; several opportunities arise for let it soar, but further challenges must be approached. The biggest resource is certainly the growing community of enthusiastic people who (with the words of Denis CAVALLUCCI, president) are joining year after year with the basic aim of learning from each other.

Florence, November 15th 2004

Gaetano Cascini
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