

The Patti Engineering staff recently attended the 2013 20th annual Control Systems Integrators Association (CSIA) Conference in St. Pete Beach, FL. In 1989, Charlie Bergman started this organization with a monthly newsletter that targeted Control Systems Integration (CSI) companies. In 1994, Charlie, who retired from Bailey Controls, organized a conference with approximately a dozen companies in Wrightsville Beach, NC. The 2013 conference had more than 500 people in attendance representing the 400+ member companies. The Patti Engineering staff has attended 17 of these conferences, missing only one since 1996.

Some people are hesitant to go to the conference, feeling that perhaps they will lose a competitive advantage by talking to their competition, but we at Patti Engineering look at it as a helpful review with our peers. The conference features a dynamic group of speakers who focus on improving one's business; it is a great way to remove yourself from the day-to-day operations in order to step back and take a 30,000-foot view of your company.

During the 362 days you are not at the conference, the connected community, accessed via the web site www.controls.org, is a great way to collaborate with other companies and automation supplier partners. There were over 60 partner member automation suppliers that displayed at the CSIA conference. Our own president, Sam Hoff, who serves on the CSIA Board, is also head of the CSIA Partner Committee.



In 1997 the CSIA released the "Best Practices and Benchmarks" publication and then in 2001 the CSIA started auditing companies against this standard to verify that its certified member companies are implementing these high standard practices. Patti Engineering has been certified for over 10 years now and was one of the early adopters; passing the comprehensive audit in 2003 and passing the recertification audit every three years since.

The CSIA Certification has come to be known as the gold-seal mark of a professionally managed control system integration business. The comprehensive CSIA Certification provides assurance to integrator customers that the integrator they have chosen for their project has been qualified as having topnotch professional services, business management, financial management, human resources, project management capabilities and more.

CSIA has also been particularly helpful with our insurance and legal matters. The CSIA has pooled over 80 members to a common broker and carrier for our insurance needs, which has helped to safeguard that our member companies are properly insured. Attorney Mark Voigtman, of Faegre Baker Daniels, has given outstanding presentations at each annual conference, as well as offering many companies (including Patti Engineering) outstanding legal advice. His guidance with many legal terms, conditions, and contract issues has helped the membership extensively.

We strongly encourage all fellow CSI's to join the organization and attend next year's conference in San Diego, CA in order to network with your peers. You will be amazed at what you learn! If you are an automation control systems user, we encourage you to reduce your risk exposure by always looking for a CSIA Certified company to do business with.