

[EXECUTIVE PROFILE]

Tom Devlin

Senior Vice President for Energy and Transportation, ABS Consulting

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Editor

Aretha Franklin sang about it, everyone wants it and we often give it to others — it's respect, that seven-letter word that gets thrown around in countless circumstances. For Tom Devlin, it's a part of his upbringing that has woven its way into his professional philosophy.

"My parents raised me with the concept that I was neither better nor inferior to anyone, and that everyone was worthy of my respect," said Devlin, senior vice president for energy and transportation at Houston-based ABS Consulting.

And on the flip side, Devlin said he's learned to not blindly expect respect either.

"Never assume that with a position comes respect," he said. "Respect is earned, not demanded or favored by position."

This concept has given Devlin a true sense of self, he said, and enabled him to make decisions without fear of failure, accept challenges from those who work with and for him, have the ability to listen, surround himself with people who are much smarter and who are prepared to say it like it is and lead with an unwavering sense of

humor even under grave circumstances.

Having these "tools" in pocket allows Devlin to focus on what is important. While knowledge of customers' supply chains and what adds value to getting their products to market is a key element of the technical side of his job, the people are the crux of it all.

"Being able to recognize that our business is all about people, whether our own or our clients' people, and therefore the ability to communicate with a generosity of spirit is of the essence," he said.

Devlin is responsible for the implementation of the company's three-year business plan, which includes key performance indicators for elements of the business such as increase in market share and revenue growth.

"Making the plan work with its uncertainties, challenges, success and sometimes tearful failures — that is what makes the day-to-day facets of my job quite different," Devlin said.

A native of Edinburgh, Scotland, Devlin considers accepting this position with ABS Consulting as the most memorable moment in his career. He's had many "moments" along the way though, including his first

management position.

An assignment with the former Esso Production Malaysia Inc. that was through a manpower supply company called Spencer and Partners started Devlin's career path. In 1983, he was asked to join the company as general manager of Southeast Asia, redirecting his focus away from offshore and into management.

"I accepted with more than a modicum of trepidation," he said.

Something was "clicking" though, as Devlin has stayed in management positions, joining ABS Consulting three-and-a-half years ago as vice president for Asia Pacific, then taking on the role of vice president for Asia Pacific and Middle East before moving into his current position.

In his management experiences, Devlin has learned to never be afraid to do what is right, "even though it seems you are staring down the barrel of a gun." And his advice to up-and-coming executives is simple, yet profound.

"Maintain your solidity and sense of identity in a world that often seems to be rife with uncertainty, and at the end of the day, you will sleep well," he said.

Devlin has been on the receiving end of advice as well, not from a "hero" per se but from someone he has unequivocally admired and respected — his father.

"We were friends as well as father and son," Devlin said, "and he taught me that no matter how hard life seemed, there was always worse elsewhere."

Another person Devlin admires and respects is "a truly remarkable individual," Sir David Murray, whom he has known since his youth and whom, despite losing both his legs in a horrific car accident at 22, has built a massive business empire in the United Kingdom and overseas and was recently knighted in the Queen's New Year's Honours List.

Even with the insights gained from his father and friend, Devlin wasn't immune to learning a difficult lesson.

"I once took something for granted," he said. "The rude awakening that ensued now sees me never letting a day go by without thinking, 'There by the grace of God go I.'"

Devlin's wife Kim and two daughters, Cordelia, 24, and Siobahn, 18, are "the single most important part" of his life, so he spends all of his spare time with his family. □

[FEATURE]

Industry event shows 'the power of paint, coatings'

Paint and Coatings EXPO 2007

More than 3,000 professionals from the paint and coatings industry had the opportunity to network, attend training and educational classes, and view over 300 exhibits from some of the world's top companies during the Paint & Coatings EXPO (PACE) 2007, which was held Feb. 11-14 at the Dallas Convention Center.

Offering custom programming from two of the industry's leading organizations — the Painting and Decorating Contractors of America and SSPC: The Society for Protective Coatings — along with cutting-edge technology and training, PACE 2007 is considered by many to be the industry's "mega show."

This year's EXPO offered attendees more than 100 sessions dedicated to the practice, technology, standards and business of paint and coatings. Attendees also had the chance to attend educational programs, which were developed by a panel of experts from the associations' memberships who review and select papers submitted by their peers.

Additionally, each association held business meetings, training and network-

ing events that were open to all attendees. Highlights of this year's show included the PACE 2007 Golf Tournament, the PACE Welcome Reception, a party held by Sherwin-Williams, and the debut of the new SSPC Airless Spray Training Course, which featured the VirtualPaint simulator.

PACE 2008 will be held Jan. 27-30 at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

For more information on PACE 2008, please visit www.pace2008.com or call (412) 281-2331. □



Greg Peters, left, demonstrates CON-SPACE's products to Randy LeBoef of Tesco, Houma, La., during PACE 2007.



Chevron Richmond, Calif.'s Michael Melancon, far left, and Paul Hunter, far right, visit Mascoat's booth, manned by Michael Stelmach, second from left, and Chad Davis during the recent PACE 2007.



John Ruff, left, and Frank Frietsch man Layher's booth during PACE 2007.



Rick Schmid, left, welcomes David Jones of Westcoat Painting to Flow International's booth at PACE 2007.



BIC Alliance's Thomas Brinsko, left, networks with SSPC Executive Director William Shoup during PACE 2007.