



## Captains of industry panel debate

The "Captains of Industry" Debate proved to be the true highlight of the Working Programme. A panel consisting of Mike Ayres (CEO, Advance Tapes), Laurent Derolez (CEO, Chargeurs/Novacel S.A. and incoming Afera President), Aric Getty (European IATD Business Director, 3M), Eric Pass (Director - Member of Board, Nitto Europe NV) and Matthias von Schwerdtner (Corporate Vice President Industrial Products & Markets, tesa) discussed loaded questions posed by moderator Mike Punter (Managing Director, Parafix Tapes & Conversions and Afera Marketing Committee Chairman). Along the Conference theme "Moving from Survival to Growth in the Post-Crisis Tape Market," the experienced top managers shared their reality and views on planning for growth, staying competitive, innovation, the Generation Y workforce and much more. Some interesting conclusions about where European tape businesses are currently headed were drawn from this interesting 40-minute conversation.

## Committee Meetings

Combined with the customary Conference Programme of two days of lectures and activities were the biyearly meetings of the Technical, Marketing and Steering Committees. Most significantly, Afera Member Company delegates discussed and decided upon developing Afera's cutting edge content marketing strategy, collaborating with MKVS, heading a new working group on PSAs within the European Committee for Standardisation TC 193, continuing Afera's reciprocal membership with FEICA, linking a local mechanical engineering university to the Tape College 2014, and developing harmonised SAFT and Loop Tack Test Methods.

## Networking

Last but certainly not least, the Annual Conference's Social Programme provided a much-appreciated outlet for networking, which was determined via official survey to be the most valued aspect of the event. Trips to visit Mount Etna and Siracusa, in addition to elegant oceanfront dining, allowed company and industry colleagues alike to unwind and connect on issues that might not have been broached in the boardroom. Tape industry professionals who might never have met, found themselves crammed together in an excursion jeep or partners at the dining table. During the extra day tour of Siracusa, one attendee remarked during lunch, "This is the only time during the year that we are able to sit down with our partners along the value chain and have those conversations that you simply cannot schedule into a business meeting." He went on to say that "this event is invaluable to us because it removes us from our daily environment and allows us to focus on tape industry players and issues from a different angle."

Afera's Sicily Conference re-established the Afera event as the get-together where the challenging issues, partners and deals are granted new opportunities. Be sure not to miss next year's Annual Conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Hosted by Afera's "Eastern Europe" region of Membership, the event will be held during Week 40 (30 September – 3 October 2014) at the Dubrovnik Palace Hotel.

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