

Letter from the Editor

Tackling present and future challenges of the chemical industry

In times of globalized markets and rapid technological change, the chemical industry faces several challenges. Increasing pricing pressure, especially from Asia, forces chemical companies to elevate production efficiency to a maximum level and simultaneously develop innovative products and processes to open up new markets. At the same time, firms need to face the inescapable depletion of the earth's oil reserves and prepare for a change in the raw material as well as energy supply. This issue's articles address these challenges and point out possibilities to tackle them.

First, the article "Knowledge Management and Knowledge-based Marketing" stresses the importance of knowledge management for innovation. Using examples from the biotechnology and engineering industries, the article shows how knowledge management systems can be used to foster innovation.

This issue's second article "Engineering an Instrument to Evaluate Safety Critical Manning Arrangements in Chemical Industrial Areas" deals with the safety problems that can arise out of the pressure to reduce the size of operational teams in the chemical process industry. The authors present an instrument that allows for an evaluation of safety critical staffing levels required to meet performance specifications for safety critical activities.

Our last article "Technology to Clean Up Coal for the Post-oil Era" highlights the importance of coal as an energy source in the transition period to the solar age. Often thought of as a climate killer or not even considered at all when talking about energy options of the future, the author presents an interesting and intriguing point of view regarding the future of coal.

We would like to thank all authors and reviewers for their contribution to this selection of interesting themes. Now enjoy reading the second issue of the *Journal of Business Chemistry* in 2007. If you have any comments or suggestions, please send us an e-mail at contact@businesschemistry.org.

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