

# Leadership Skills Make the Most of Technical Know-how

By *Suzanne Golisz*

I first became active in standards setting when I assumed the voting responsibilities for ASTM International Subcommittee D02.H0 Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) on behalf of Chevron, my employer at the time. My first semester included two ballots for new test methods to determine the water content in LPG. For both methods, I identified technical issues that convinced me to cast negative votes.

I felt quite nervous when it came time to hit the submit button. And since I wasn't yet attending in person, I was left in suspense on the outcome.

I learned after the meeting that both technical contacts found my negative votes persuasive and stopped the ballots from moving forward. I felt validated—for the time being.

I soon moved from Chevron to Exxon-Mobil, where again I assumed the voting responsibilities for D02.H0. I also became the technical contact for one of the methods that I had stopped with my negative vote. (Oh, the irony.) Now I was responsible for getting a new method approved that I knew had technical issues, but with no idea how to solve them.

Because I had participated in the Emerging Professionals Program sponsored by ASTM International, which exposed me to the operations of a consensus-based standards organization, I had become familiar with the collaboration and problem-solving skills necessary to achieve progress. I had

also cultivated relationships with the officers and other subcommittee members of D02.H0. With this knowledge, I set out to ensure we could pass the ballot.

Because this ballot had stalled for some time, I reconvened the working group to review the current status and describe the reasons behind my negative vote. After multiple discussions with all stakeholders, we reached consensus that if we narrowed the scope of the method such that we eliminated LPG containing the class of molecules that interferes with the detection method, the test method would be technically sound. With this agreement in place, I reviewed the proposal with the subcommittee chair and received his endorsement.

I then updated the ballot for the subcommittee to review at the next ballot opportunity. Completing the ballot submission process was clear because of my training in the Emerging Professionals Program. After receiving the required affirmative votes (and no negatives!), the ballot passed at both the subcommittee and main committee levels. This ballot is now ASTM D8094-21 Standard Test Method for Determination of Water Content of Liquefied Petroleum Gases (LPG) Using an Online Electronic Moisture Analyzer.

I've continued to participate in ASTM International and now hold the D02.E0 and D02.07 votes for my current employer, Innospec Fuel Specialties. I learned that developing new

methods takes a combination of technical expertise and collaboration. As scientists who contribute to standards setting, it's important that we rely on technically correct information to draft new test methods. While knowing we're technically correct may be enough to draft a new method, getting it approved through the ballot process takes listening, understanding, and problem solving.

Sure, we could have started an extensive test program for ASTM D8094 to quantify the interaction of alcohols with the detector. But understanding the concerns of the stakeholders and the test method's most common user, as well as building consensus around adjusting the scope, allowed us to get the test method approved sooner.

Having this test method as an alternative to the valve freeze test method allows users to

reduce the amount of LPG released into the environment during the test. It was perhaps better to have a method that works for 90% of users available immediately versus waiting years to have a method that 100% of users could employ. Users of ASTM D8094 are realizing the environmental benefit today!

The leadership skills that I gained serving as the technical contact for a new standard test method have translated well to my current role at Innospec. I regularly build consensus both internally with peers and senior leaders and externally with customers. I listen to our customers' needs and develop fit-for-purpose solutions. I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in a consensus-based standards organization like ASTM International that helps me develop the skills I need to be successful in my career.



**Suzanne Golisz** is an organometallic chemist who has been working in liquid fuels for the majority of her career. Prior to joining Innospec as the technical director of cold flow improvers, Suzanne worked at both ExxonMobil and Chevron in fuel product quality. In her role at Innospec, Suzanne is responsible for the cold flow improver product line in the Americas, where she is focused on ensuring that their additive packages have the best-performing technology to properly support their customers' existing and future needs.