

editor's note



"THE PAST MAY BE A SHAKESPEAREAN PROLOGUE, BUT THE FUTURE IS DODGEBALL," STATED ANDY KESSLER IN A FASCINATING OPINION PIECE IN THE NOVEMBER 6 EDITION OF THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

It's a great, pithy quote, but what the heck is he really talking about? He's referring to the difference between success and failure. According to Kessler, a well-known venture capitalist who made his early mark at Morgan Stanley, the secret to success is to get in the middle of the action.

"You need to go to places where the future is discussed," Kessler asserts in the article. At first, nothing may make sense; balls will be flying at you from every direction—like a chaotic game of dodgeball. And when you embrace the game, when you start getting involved, only then will you be on the path to success.

"Every industry has these events," he urged. "Make the time to go. And not only to hear keynoters billow hot air, but for the panel discussions where people disagree. The conversation spills out into the hallways between talks. There will be all sorts. The smug ponytailed guy who talks about his Phish tribute band and insists he knows everything. The woman you see at every event but only in the hallways chatting and who never makes eye contact to let you into a conversation. Barge in anyway."

For the structural steel design and construction community, the leading event is, of course, NASCC: The Steel Conference. The event is purposely

designed to provide a mix of educational sessions and networking opportunities. AISC's booth is even designed not to promote our activities, but instead to give conference participants a place to stop, sit and lob a few verbal dodgeballs at each other.

This year's conference is in Baltimore from April 11-13. For AISC members who register during the first week registration is open, the cost is just \$360. But try and register early—the rate goes up \$10 every week. (Registration opens January 15 at www.aisc.org/nascc.)

The Steel Conference is designed to make you think. Make time to wander the 250-booth exhibit hall and grill the product and service manufacturers. But don't miss the thought-provoking sessions. From Dan Goods (visual strategist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory) to Ron Klemencic's (the K in MKA Associates) talk on a new core system that will revolutionize building design (for real), our nearly 200 sessions are designed to give you the information you need to make better decisions. And don't forget the conference dinner—a lively affair with more than 1,500 of your new closest friends. Finally, remember to share your thoughts with the other participants. It's time to get involved in the world of design and construction dodgeball.


SCOTT MELNICK
EDITOR

Modern STEEL CONSTRUCTION

Editorial Offices

130 E Randolph Street, Suite 2000
Chicago, IL 60601
312.670.2400

Editorial Contacts

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Scott Melnick
312.670.8314
melnick@modernsteel.com

SENIOR EDITOR

Geoff Weisenberger
312.670.8316
weisenberger@modernsteel.com

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Tasha O'Berski
312.670.5439
oberski@modernsteel.com

DIRECTOR OF PUBLICATIONS

Keith A. Grubb, SE, PE
312.670.8318
grubb@modernsteel.com

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

Erika Salisbury
312.670.5427
salisbury@modernsteel.com

GRAPHIC DESIGN MANAGER

Kristin Hall
312.670.8313
hall@modernsteel.com

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Advertising Contact

ACCOUNT MANAGER
Renaë Gurthet
231.995.0637
renaë@gurthetmedia.com

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312.670.2400
subscriptions@aisc.org

Reprints

Erika Salisbury
312.670.5427
salisbury@modernsteel.com