



President's Message 2025-2026



Dear Members of The Chicago Society for Coatings Technology,

If you work in coatings R&D or raw materials, you already live in a world where answers are faster than ever.

Between online databases, webinars, and the inbox that never sleeps, you can get a TDS, a white paper, or even a rough formulation idea in seconds. Information is not the problem anymore.

What's harder to find—and harder to replace—is *judgment*.

The quiet, hard-won insight that comes from years in the lab, watching what actually happens when the resin hits the pigment, when the customer changes the line, or when that “equivalent” raw material behaves just differently enough to cause trouble. That kind of judgment doesn't live in a search bar. It lives in people.

Over the past few years, many of us have slipped into a pattern of working in smaller circles: our immediate team, our biggest customers, a few trusted contacts on email or Teams. Walking into a room full of peers can feel less natural than it used to. And when you can attend a webinar in sweatpants, a local dinner meeting can feel like a big ask.

That's exactly why CSCT still matters.

Our society isn't trying to compete with Google or with global conferences. We're here to do what those things can't:

- Put you at a table with other chemists and technical salespeople who speak your language without translation.
- Give you access to people who have made the same mistakes you're trying not to make.
- Help you build a small, reliable network in this very specialized, very small coatings community in and around Chicago.

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The song “Find Your People” by Drew Holcomb & The Neighbors captures something many of us feel: in a world that can seem full of strangers and noise, it’s hard to know who to trust and easy to feel like you’ve lost something along the way. For coatings professionals, “your people” are often the ones who understand why a 1% tweak in dispersant level can make or break a launch, or why a small change in raw material supply can keep you up at night. CSCT is one of the places you can still find those people in real life.

I want to be honest: membership and in-person participation are not where they used to be. Some of that is convenience—online resources are easier. Some of it is fatigue—many of us feel socially “out of shape.” We hear that, and we’re not asking you to go back to 2019.

What we *are* committed to doing is this:

- Focus on meetings that are worth leaving the lab or the home office for—strong technical talks, relevant topics, and time to actually talk shop.
- Create an environment where it’s easy to have one or two meaningful conversations, not just collect name badges.
- Make it simple for busy chemists and technical salespeople to plug in—whether that’s through occasional in-person events, targeted networking, or chances to contribute your expertise.

If you’ve been away for a while, consider this an invitation—not a guilt trip. Come to one event. Bring a colleague who’s new to the industry. Reconnect with someone you used to see across the table at a dinner meeting. My hope is that you’ll be reminded that, for all the speed and convenience of our digital world, there’s still real value in being in the same room with people who get what you do.

Thank you for the work you do in labs, in plants, and with customers across our region, and for being part of The Chicago Society for Coatings Technology. I’m looking forward to seeing you—not just in my inbox, but across the table.

Sincerely,

Jeralyn Camp, President,
The Chicago Society for Coatings Technology 2025-2026

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