

ABMA 2024 convention

Alessandro's speech 2024-03-20

[Opening]

Good morning, everyone! First off, let me extend my heartfelt gratitude to ABMA for their incredible hospitality and to all members here today for the warmth of your friendship...warmer than the Florida's sun in these days!

Despite being the probably one of the youngest presidents in FEIBP's history, standing here feels like being among lifelong friends. Maybe because I started attending these meetings over 15 years ago, so I am among old friends... and you won't get rid of me so easily...

Anyway, family or not, friends or not, my gratitude is sincere, and as a token of my appreciation, I've brought Chris a little something from Bologna, the host city of our next World Brush Expo. Chris, I hope you enjoy this fine selection, including a box of Fiat chocolates from the famed Majani chocolate factory in Bologna, a bottle of wine from the winery we'll all have the possibility to visit together, and a bottle of precious balsamic vinegar aged 25 years. Just a small taste of Bologna/Italy to sweeten our partnership – and to remind you to pace yourself with the balsamic vinegar. It's not a beverage, despite what the fine print might suggest!

[European Geopolitical Situation]

Turning to more serious matters... What is the situation in Europe??? Europe currently navigates a complex geopolitical landscape. From the ongoing Russia/Ukraine conflict to fluctuating shipping costs through the Suez Canal and the ever-vigilant eye on China, these external pressures undeniably influence our markets (+15% forecast increase on shipping costs). Amidst this, we observe a concerning trend of rising inflation (+2.6% in Eurozone vs +3.5% in other developed countries) across the continent (+2.6% in Eurozone), which, coupled with instability in the Middle East, continues to challenge our industry in unexpected ways.

The Suez Canal, a vital artery for our shipping needs, has been a focal point of concern. I don't know how many of us realize that 90% of global transportation is by sea and that 15% of this is going through Suez canal... forecasted shipping cost increase of +15%.

However, it's these challenges that also present us with unique opportunities for growth and resilience. +1% Eurozone GDP by the way and a lot of other opportunities...

[FEIBP Congress Theme: "No Man Is an Island"]

The FEIBP has embraced these challenges head-on, encapsulated in our congress theme "no man is an island," inspired by John Donne's poignant poem. In 2023, our congress in Belfast delved into the idea that no "leader" is an island. Looking ahead to 2024, we're excited to explore how no "company" is an island in the vibrant setting of Ibiza, Spain. And in 2025, we'll broaden our horizons to no "federation" is an island in the picturesque Ischia, Italy. Each congress builds on this theme of interconnectedness and mutual support.

[Next Congress in Ibiza]

[Video of Ibiza running in the background]... Diving into our next congress in Ibiza, we have the pleasure of hosting it at the beautiful Hotel Torre del Mar. This event is shaping up to be our most successful yet, offering unparalleled networking opportunities. We'll celebrate our collective spirit at a gala dinner, themed as a flower power party - so, get your hippie attire ready! Highlighting the event will be Araceli Segarra, The first Spanish woman to climb Mount Everest and author of the book "Not That High and Not That Difficult." She will deliver an inspiring speech on overcoming challenges that seem impossible... like climbing the highest mountain in the world or like facilitating the cooperation among some of our brush companies...[joke].

[Social Media Insights]

On the digital front, our industry is capturing the imagination of a wider audience. Last year, FEIBP members across all social platforms saw a fan base growth of +24%, mostly driven by LinkedIn. This surge in interest underlines a growing awareness and enthusiasm for the brush industry, contrasting sharply with the geopolitical uncertainties. It sets a solid foundation for the upcoming World Brush Expo, aiming to further spotlight our industry's vibrancy and innovation.

[Transition to World Brush Expo Presentation]

Now, to shift gears and dive into the exciting world of the World Brush Expo, I think it's time to call in the show expert. [Pause to wear WBE branded tshirt and hat]... Ladies and gentlemen, I'm thrilled to introduce you to... well, still me, but now officially as your World Brush Expo guide!

Chris, to ensure you're fully geared up for the expo, I'll be passing this hat to you as a symbol of our shared journey toward an exciting future in the brush industry. May it bring you all the luck and success as we continue to grow together.

As we pivot towards the presentation of the World Brush Expo, let's carry forward this spirit of unity and curiosity. Together, we can navigate the complexities of our industry, embrace new opportunities, and build a future marked by collaboration and innovation.

[World Brush Expo Presentation]

See slides...

[Closing]

I can't close a presentation without talking about politics... even our great friends, between one debate and the other, agreed on the importance of our industries... so much that they included a reference in the original versions of their mottos... "Let's Surface-finish the job" and "Let's make the brush industry great again".

Beside the jokes... this is an important moment of change in our industries and economies...

The world is fighting, and we find reasons to dance (eventually dressed like hippies in Ibiza)...

The world is pushing up costs and we are investing into a gathering like this one...

The world is promoting division and segregation and we are joining together, building bridges, and organizing the World Brush Expo...

I think that you all, as leaders in the brush industry, deserve an applause for this... thank you!

[Left with a final slide with the 5 Calls To Action]