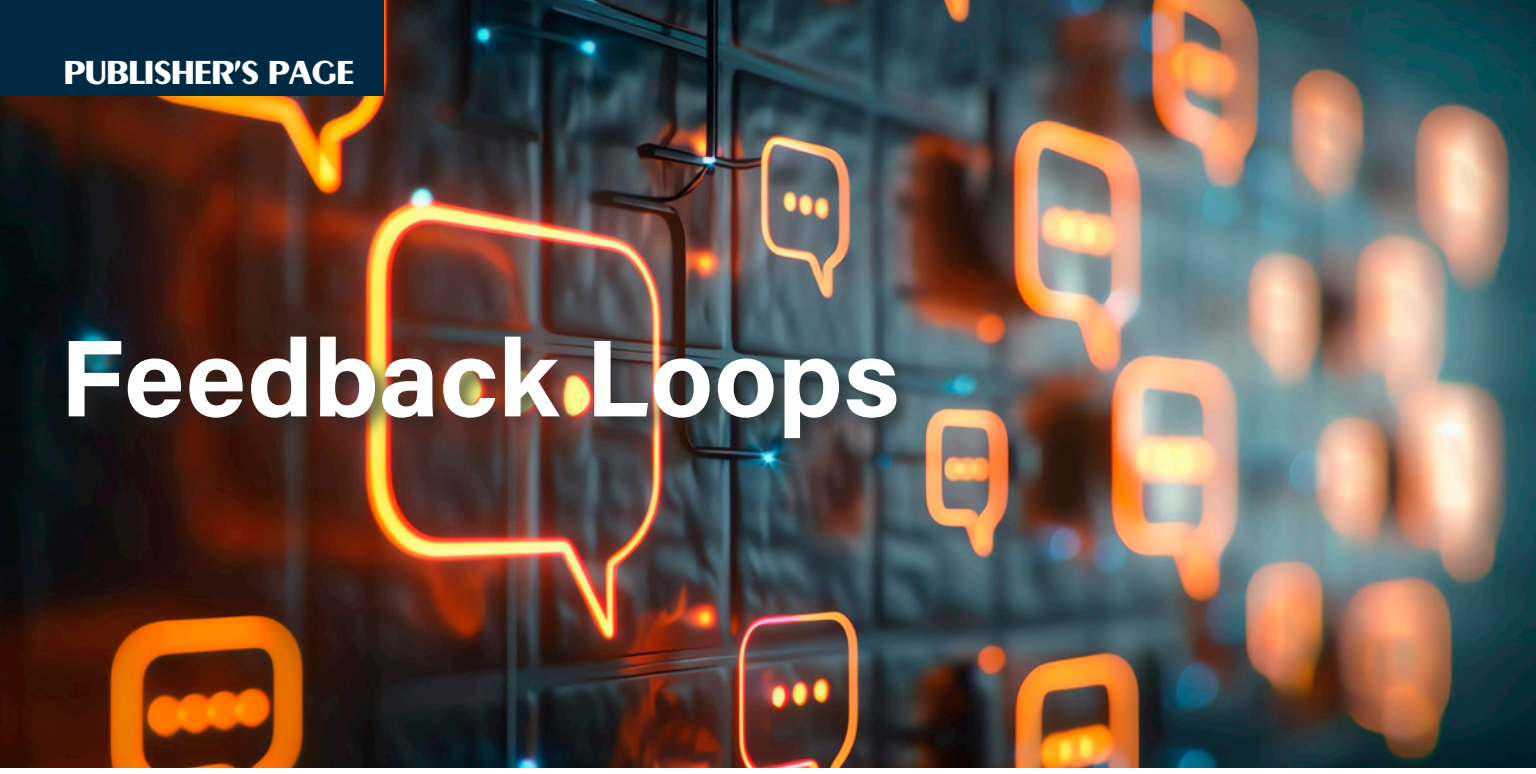

Feedback Loops

Recently I've had a number of people tell me how much they enjoy our work here at *PTE*. While it's always nice to receive "attaboys," these recent unsolicited compliments have been both thoughtful and specific, which is especially gratifying because they validate many of the choices we make as publishers.

For example, one reader, a process engineering manager, wrote to compliment us on our technical content. He noted in particular how we keep our technical articles separate from advertising. We do this quite deliberately to avoid any hint of commercialism or bias, knowing full well that not everybody notices. That same reader made it clear that he wasn't advertising averse. In fact, he specifically recognized its importance, which is a relief, since many of the technological innovations we present are, in fact, in the advertisements.

It's extremely rare for us to receive such feedback. Think about it. How many times have you been so moved by the content of a trade magazine that you're inspired to write to the editors and tell them? Trust me, it just doesn't happen that often. But when it does, it means a lot to me and my team.

Another example comes from a nice conversation I had with an engineer at IMTS. He told me how much he enjoys our publication, and he looks forward to every issue. He works in the bearings industry, and he especially values the articles in that area, specifically mentioning the articles from our longtime contributor Norm Parker. You can read Norm's latest insights on ball bearing efficiency in his article on page 48.

I don't have to tell you how important feedback is. For many of you, it's part of your job every day.

At IMTS, we saw many examples of closed-loop systems, where feedback from measurements (either of actual parts or process parameters) is being used to inform and improve manufacturing operations to reduce scrap and improve uptime. In fact, the closed-loop system is considered the Holy Grail of process improvement for machine tools. You don't have to stop the machine to take a part off, inspect it and figure out if your process is on track. You can measure and correct on the fly.

The same is true of modern condition monitoring, which we write about nearly every issue. For example, the importance of condition monitoring is highlighted in this issue's article on best practices for lubrication excellence in the food and beverage industry (p. 16). Constant feedback on the performance of your machinery is how you stay ahead of problems—before they become bigger problems. It's also reassuring to know that systems are running smoothly.

Unfortunately, we don't have the same kind of capability in publishing. You could say we're the ultimate in high-mix, low volume production, because everything we produce is original. So when we *do* get feedback, it's appreciated more than you can know.

We strive to be unique among trade publications, and our success is dependent on the hard work, intelligence and creativity of our two senior editors, Matt Jaster (p. 30) and Aaron Fagan (p. 24, p. 56). So please read their stuff and let them know how they're doing.

PTE

Randy Stott
Publisher & Editor-in-Chief