

Capturing the Past, Forecasting the Future

SAS forecasting conference draws nearly 300 attendees

In the business world, accurately forecasting the future helps companies allocate resources, decide what products to introduce to the market or discontinue, predict future earnings and expenses and make countless other critical business decisions.

To help organizations forecast better, SAS' Education Division hosted the third annual business forecasting conference, F2008. Chaired by SAS' Director of Higher Education Consulting, Jerry Oglesby, and Manager for Manufacturing and Supply Chain Global Practice, Charles Chase, the conference boasted more than 20 expert forecasting speakers from the worlds of business, government and academia.

F2008 was held June 2-3 at SAS world headquarters in Cary, NC. The conference attracted 290 attendees from 94 companies and 15 countries, making it the largest forecasting conference in the world. "There were so many opportunities for people to meet forecasting peers and take home knowledge they could apply to their jobs and academic pursuits," said Conference Manager Larry LaRusso. Planning for F2009 is underway now.

Along with a lineup of exceptionally knowledgeable speakers, SAS demonstrated its new SAS® Demand-Driven Forecasting product, which integrates customer and other upstream data into a demand plan that helps maximize profits, market share and customer satisfaction.

A service to the forecasting community

"We were very excited about the outstanding keynotes and session speakers we attracted to F2008," said LaRusso. "There was a lot of talk about new product forecasting and understanding the different approaches people use in forecasting."

The conference featured six keynote addresses and 18 session talks covering practical applications, methods, tools and successful case studies in business forecasting.

Keynote speakers:

- Charles Chase of SAS and Kenneth Kahn, Professor of Industrial Technology, Avrum and Joyce Gray Director of the Burton D. Morgan Center for Entrepreneurship, Purdue University, discussed "Forecasting Performance Measurement: Considerations and Issues."
- David Dickey, Professor, Department of Statistics, North Carolina State University, spoke on "Understanding Nonstationarity and Recognizing It When You See It."
- Paul Godwin, Professor of Management Science in the Management School at the University of Bath (UK) explained how to "Get the Best Value from Your Forecasting Software."
- Larry Lapide, Director of MIT's Center for Transportation and Logistics, spoke about "Improving Your Sales and Operations Planning (S&OP) Process."

- Nada Sanders, the James L. and Eunice West Chair in Supply Chain Management in the Neeley School of Business at Texas Christian University, discussed “Effectively Combining Managerial and Quantitative Forecasts.”