

THIS MONTH: IMPACT OF CORROSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

FEBRUARY 2026
VOL. 65, NO. 2

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Q&A with Ed Kruff, CEO of American Innovations

Materials Performance sat down with Ed Kruff, president and CEO of American Innovations, during the AI World Users Group in Austin, Texas, USA last November.

American Innovations positions itself as the trusted compliance technology partner for the oil and gas industry. As a leading provider of field data collection, digital pipeline asset management, remote monitoring, and pipeline compliance, the company delivers a complete solution. This includes hardware and software that allows corrosion professionals to collect and analyze data, save time, reduce operational risk, and make better decisions.

Kruff became CEO in 2019 and has been with the company since 2010.

Materials Performance (MP): *This year's user group seems to have drawn a big crowd. How has attendance been?*

Ed Kruff: Yes, we had record attendance this year. It's a great mix of people who've been attending for 20-plus years and a lot of new folks who recently adopted our products. It's truly a users' group. Most attendees are active users of our tools, though we do have a few partners and prospective users as well.

MP: *What are some of the major themes or initiatives American Innovations is focused on right now?*

Kruff: I'd say there are three big ones.

First, we're working to push more intelligence to the field. We're adding machine learning capabilities so that when technicians capture waveform data, the system can help them determine if the data looks correct—for example, flagging when something might be wrong with a connection or a wire. The goal is to give field technicians better access to their data, richer visualization tools, and the ability to analyze information whether they're online or completely disconnected. Ultimately, we want them to accomplish everything they

need in one field visit.

Second, we're focused on integrating corrosion data with other enterprise systems—things like GIS [geographic information system], work management, and integrity management platforms. There's always been a need for that, but it's growing. Customers want seamless data sharing across their operational systems.

And third, we're committed to getting closer to our customers. We've significantly increased our investment in R&D to tackle customer feedback directly and improve product usability. The response so far has been great—especially to our roadmap sessions where we've shared what's coming next.

MP: *Who are your typical users?*

Kruff: Our core users are pipeline operators and the contractors who serve them. Lately, we've seen strong growth in the gas distribution sector. That space historically relied on homegrown systems or spreadsheets, and many are now moving to automated tools to manage their corrosion control systems.

MP: *You mentioned AI earlier. How is American Innovations using it internally?*

Kruff: We're using AI increasingly across the company. It's already playing a big role in R&D and quality systems, and we're expanding its use into areas like customer support. AI—or as we sometimes joke, “American Innovations”—is helping us work smarter throughout the organization.

MP: *How are you addressing the growing regulatory and safety pressures in the industry?*

Kruff: It's a key focus for us. We have team members dedicated to tracking regulatory developments, and our leadership stays closely engaged. We've also made a deliberate effort to hire people who've worked directly within the industry—at operators, distribution companies, or service firms—so they understand these regulations firsthand. Compliance is really woven into everything we do.

MP: *Where do you see the strongest growth opportunities in the next few years?*

Kruff: Gas distribution remains the biggest growth area. Right now, adoption is



American Innovations employees gather during the company's AI World Users Group meeting.



Ed Kruff, CEO of American Innovations.

strongest among the large distribution companies, but there's a lot of opportunity among medium and smaller operators. Some of our existing solutions are more robust than they need, so we're exploring ways to scale for that segment.

Internationally, we're seeing increased traction in Western Europe, Australia, and South America. Those successes will likely guide future expansion.

MP: *Many operators still have legacy systems. How do you help them transition?*

Kruff: We always start by respecting the value of their historical data. Even if they're moving from spreadsheets or older tools, we import that data into our system so that when they start using automation,

they still have access to years of past measurements and field history. That continuity is crucial for them.

MP: *The corrosion management software space is getting crowded. How do you differentiate?*

Kruff: We've been building compliance and field survey tools for a long time, so we have deep regulatory and workflow knowledge built into our products.

Recently, we rewrote our mobile tools from the ground up for iOS, Android, and Windows—incorporating years of customer feedback, even down to small workflow details like making the software usable one-handed in the field.

On the enterprise side, our PCS platform has been in continuous development for many years and remains the most robust system for managing cathodic protection. We're now modernizing it with Survey Manager, a web-based tool that lets users visualize data and wirelessly sync surveys. It's about maintaining our depth while modernizing for flexibility and faster updates.

MP: *How do you see regulation evolving as scrutiny on pipeline integrity increases?*

Kruff: I don't think the industry gets enough credit—pipelines are becoming safer over time, and incidents continue to

decline. That said, I expect more regulation, not less, particularly as infrastructure ages.

On the distribution side, we may see renewed focus on rules like track-and-trace. And beyond pipelines, similar regulatory activity is happening in the water sector, such as new requirements to identify and replace lead service lines. So, the trend is toward greater accountability across all utilities.

MP: *Finally, how can asset owners and operators get the most from their inspection and monitoring systems?*

Kruff: Embrace technology and stay engaged with your solution providers. The industry workforce is changing—we've got a more diverse mix of experience and expectations now, including people coming in from GIS and integrity departments who expect modern, intuitive tools.

Work closely with your technology partners, learn their systems, and give feedback. That's how the tools get better. Meetings like our user group are a great example—150 people sharing ideas, challenges, and solutions. That collaboration helps everyone become more efficient.

At the end of the day, software should do more than help you check a regulatory box—it should make your team more effective and efficient. **MP**