



ispypublication's monthly market intelligence, trend analysis and forecasts report for the MICE industry

## Survey finds global meetings industry in optimistic mood

Meetings professionals expect healthy attendance and budget increases in the coming year, along with an increased interest in webcasts and web-based tools, despite general pessimism over global economic performance, according to Futurewatch 2008, the market trends study for the global meetings and events planning industry.

The sixth-annual international study, conducted by Meeting Professionals International (MPI) and sponsored by American Express, surveyed 1,643 meeting and event professionals and suppliers from around the world, the largest response ever to a FutureWatch study.

Overall, meetings and events professionals expect a 19% rise in attendance in 2008. The finding was matched by a prediction that interest in webcasts and other web-based tools for live meetings will also rise, without displacing the strategic value of face-to-face meetings.

"FutureWatch 2008 is further evidence that there's no substitute for the power of human connections through live interaction," commented Bruce MacMillan, president and chief executive of MPI. "This year's study showed that while meetings and events professionals are embracing technology, its greater role is in enhancing events, not replacing them."

Among its major findings, FutureWatch 2008 also found the following:

### Rapid move towards globalisation was expected

FutureWatch respondents expect their industry to globalise rapidly in the coming year. Around 20% expect their organisations to extend their global reach in 2008, compared to less than 1% who see a decrease in globalisation.

What's more, at a time when MPI is extending its own presence in new regions of the world, 14% of respondents, including 16% in Canada and 31% in Europe, said they had seen increased interest in holding meetings in the Middle East.

### Budget growth predicted despite worldwide economic concerns

Among its economic findings, FutureWatch found all respondents expressed concern about an economic downturn in 2008. Despite this perception, corporate planners remain bullish on budget expectations, predicting a 27% rise in 2008. This may be an indication of a

growing recognition of the value of meetings and events in the private sector.

### Suppliers and independent planners may face talent shortages

This year's study found that talent shortages are roughly twice as important for suppliers and independent planners as they are for corporate and association planners, suggesting that concern over the ability to hire and retain qualified employees is gradually permeating the industry.

In a related issue, less than one-fifth of meetings business is expected to be outsourced in 2008, but that total will still represent a 14% increase in volume.

### The industry is going green

FutureWatch also found that interest in environmental sustainability has not bypassed the meeting planning industry. A growing number of professionals, 19% overall, list conservation and environmental concerns among the top three trends affecting their work.

## Just say 'no' to MICE

More than two years after Reed Travel Exhibitions (RTE) first denounced the use of the term 'MICE' in favour of 'the meetings industry', in line with international standards, professionals on both the buyer and supplier side of the industry in the Middle East continue to use the term.

One commentator said, "I have lost count of the number of business cards handed to me by 'MICE managers' or 'MICE directors', and the number of times I have heard industry professionals - even experienced meetings veterans - use the term in social and professionals scenarios".

The fact is, the United Nations, the International Association of Professional Congress Organizers (IAPCO) and the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) have all accepted 'the meetings industry' as the official term for the market in which we exist.

When this was brought up with one industry professional recently, the person in question mentioned that they continued to use the term MICE because that is "what the region knows", but is this the attitude required to take the meetings industry to the next level?

Education and professional development is crucial for event planners based in corporates throughout the region, as well as

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individuals who work for event management companies, convention bureaus and other event service providers. Sticking to what we know does not get us anywhere.

There is an argument that says that if the industry in the Middle East is moving towards the high levels of professionalism of other more mature markets like Europe and the US, then it needs to embrace certain aspects of that professionalism, and a unified approach is a good start.

On the other hand, just because Reed's say that MICE should be denounced doesn't mean that we should all jump on the bandwagon and follow their lead.

Those in the incentive and exhibitions industry surely don't want to be lumped in with the "meeting" industry?

## RANT

### The issue of staff and the retention of talent

**In an ever competitive market where salaries are increasing how do you manage a large migration of staff at one time from one company?**

**Recent activities in the UAE events industry has underlined that local talent needs to be developed and nurtured through mutual respect, performance management and, of course, results.**

**We are no longer a community whereby we can rely on the import of talent when so very much is on our doorstep and can be organically grown.**

**The balance of scales are shifting - it once was the case whereby all event companies would need to import talent now is the time where the talent is so good the region can actually expect to see this talent re exported out. ( it is not always the case that CEO's or MD's coming in are actually skilled or equipped enough to manage their teams or converse in a new market effectively).**

**This brings us back to the initial point - when there's a mass exodus - do we thank this company from running an apprenticeship school for other organisers or should we chastise them for failing to see that the region is no longer cut and run, take what you can while you can.**

**It's more to do with a community and growing the talent base rather than the attitude of what works elsewhere in the world can be applied here.**

**The UAE and the wider region is setting the trends and developing the markets and no longer following trends of our colleagues. The industry is a highly professional and focused one that is at the very top of its game - managing the perception of international trade missions and associations throughout the world - all events companies are ambassadors of a region that we are proud to work within and proud to champion at every opportunity.**

**A huge loss of staff can raise eyebrows and cause indecision and risk adversity. Beware corporate companies that do not respect or support that and as in the case above, fail to adapt, fail to listen to their people on their existing talent pool and prepare for the consequence.**

## How to get a raise

Are you getting a raw deal at work?

Is your paycheque barely covering the rising cost of Dubai life?

If the answer is yes then it's time to ask for a pay rise. We often think we are worth more than we are paid, and there is nothing wrong with asking for a raise, but if you are going to be successful, you have to do it in the right way.

Pay rises are notoriously difficult to achieve. Once you have agreed a salary package, your boss is unlikely to want to keep showering you with money. Employees generally have two strategies when it comes to negotiation - either receive a new job offer or prove to your boss you are going beyond the call of duty.

### Have a strategy:

Firstly, make a list of your current responsibilities, achievements, workload and all the positive aspects you have brought to the position. Make sure you know exactly what you want to say to your boss.

Eileen Wallis, Managing Director of The Portsmouth Group communications consultancy, says the strategy should have many elements. "You need to say what value you have brought to the organisation, whether it is something rare and unique. Loyalty is also critical. It's not enough for someone to say other companies want to hire them, I want to hear that they agree with the ethos of the company and want to grow with us," she says.

### Know how much you are worth:

You might have a figure in your head, but go on the internet or look in the job sections of local newspapers and find out what other companies are offering for similar positions.

Decide how much extra money you want - or if you would accept improved terms such as a better car, a grander title or shares in the company. Be prepared to haggle. If you can prove to your boss you are underpaid this might be the incentive he needs if he does not want to lose you.

If a raise will convince you to stay at your current company rather than accepting the job you have been offered at a competitor, do not say so straight away. If you are valued you will have a good chance of being offered a new contract anyway.

### Be confident:

Asking for a pay rise is a bold thing to do, so you have to show the same confidence when broaching the subject otherwise you will not get anywhere. If you are asking for more money based on performance, you have to explain exactly why you deserve it.

Success will come down to the way you approach your boss and the amount of money that is available. Come across as confident without being cocky. If they refuse to meet your demands try to arrange a time when your position can be reviewed again.

"Confidence is critical, but over-confidence is extremely unattractive because you need to be a team player and

arrogance annoys both colleagues and clients," says Wallis.

#### Choose your timing:

Picking the right time to approach your boss is key to getting what you want. Don't go in just before or after they have been on leave as they will probably be too busy to deal with it. Similarly, don't ask just before the end of the fiscal year, because again you will be dismissed over more important matters.

"We have an open door policy here but if someone has an issue about their pay, they need to come and talk to me and make time to marshal their argument because staff retention is critical," adds Wallis.

#### BACK TO SCHOOL

As the job market becomes more competitive it is worth going back to university. Having a professional qualification will not only put you a step ahead of others in your industry, but will also give you some scope to negotiate your salary. Most industries have courses and Knowledge Village is a good place to start.

Alternatively, go online and find professional institutions with outlets in the UAE. If they do not have a base here, a correspondence course could work. It is worth asking your employer to support you, if you can prove it will benefit the company.

## Free! Why \$0.00 Is the Future of Business

At the age of 40, King Gillette was a frustrated inventor, a bitter anticapitalist, and a salesman of cork-lined bottle caps. It was 1895, and despite ideas, energy, and wealthy parents, he had little to show for his work. He blamed the evils of market competition. Indeed, the previous year he had published a book, *The Human Drift*, which argued that all industry should be taken over by a single corporation owned by the public and that millions of Americans should live in a giant city called Metropolis powered by Niagara Falls. His boss at the bottle cap company, meanwhile, had just one piece of advice: Invent something people use and throw away.

One day, while he was shaving with a straight razor that was so worn it could no longer be sharpened, the idea came to him. What if the blade could be made of a thin metal strip?

Rather than spending time maintaining the blades, men could simply discard them when they became dull. A few years of metallurgy experimentation later, the disposable-blade safety razor was born. But it didn't take off immediately. In its first year, 1903, Gillette sold a total of 51 razors and 168 blades. Over the next two decades, he tried every marketing gimmick he could think of. He put his own face on the package, making him both legendary and, some people believed, fictional. He sold millions of razors to the Army at a steep discount, hoping the habits soldiers developed at war would carry over to peacetime. He sold razors in bulk to banks so they could give them away with

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But then there is the biggest challenge: How do we perform the market and competitive studies that are necessary to equip the team with the information it needs to make good decisions?

Few of those in management have ever had the task of a market research specialist. In spite of the ever-increasing access we have to information today, it is still a daunting challenge for the uninitiated to find the sources and quickly distill the information required for good planning.

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new deposits ("shave and save" campaigns). Razors were bundled with everything from Wrigley's gum to packets of coffee, tea, spices, and marshmallows. The freebies helped to sell those products, but the tactic helped Gillette even more. By giving away the razors, which were useless by themselves, he was creating demand for disposable blades. A few billion blades later, this business model is now the foundation of entire industries: Give away the cell phone, sell the monthly plan; make the videogame console cheap and sell expensive games; install fancy coffeemakers in offices at no charge so you can sell managers expensive coffee sachets.

Thanks to Gillette, the idea that you can make money by giving something away is no longer radical. But until recently, practically everything "free" was really just the result of what economists would call a cross-subsidy: You'd get one thing free if you bought another, or you'd get a product free only if you paid for a service. Over the past decade, however, a different sort of free has emerged. The new model is based not on cross-subsidies - the shifting of costs from one product to another - but on the fact that the cost of products themselves is falling fast. It's as if the price of steel had dropped so close to zero that King Gillette could give away both razor and blade, and make his money on something else entirely. (Shaving cream?)

You know this freaky land of free as the Web. A decade and a half into the great online experiment, the last debates over free versus pay online are ending. In 2007 The New York Times went free; this year, so will much of The Wall Street Journal. (The remaining fee-based parts, new owner Rupert Murdoch announced, will be "really special ... and, sorry to tell you, probably more expensive." This calls to mind one version of Stewart Brand's original aphorism from 1984: "Information wants to be free. Information also wants to be expensive ... That tension will not go away.")

**Scenario 1:** Low-cost digital distribution will make the summer blockbuster free. Theaters will make their money from concessions - and by selling the premium moviegoing experience at a high price.

Once a marketing gimmick, free has emerged as a full-fledged economy. Offering free music proved successful for Radiohead, Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails, and a swarm of other bands on MySpace that grasped the audience-building merits of zero. The fastest-growing parts of the gaming industry are ad-supported casual games online and free-to-try massively multiplayer online games. Virtually everything Google does is free to consumers, from Gmail to Picasa to GOOG-411.

The rise of "freeconomics" is being driven by the underlying technologies that power the Web. Just as Moore's law dictates that a unit of processing power halves in price every 18 months, the price of bandwidth and storage is dropping even faster. Which is to say, the trend lines that determine the cost of doing business online all point the same way: to zero.

But tell that to the poor CIO who just shelled out six figures to buy another rack of servers. Technology sure doesn't feel free when you're buying it by the gross. Yet if you look at it from the other side of the fat pipe, the economics change. That expensive bank of hard drives (fixed costs) can serve tens of thousands of users (marginal costs). The Web is all about scale, finding ways to attract the most users for centralized resources, spreading those costs over larger and larger audiences as the technology gets more and more capable. It's not about the cost of the equipment in the racks at the data center; it's about what that equipment can do. And every year, like some sort of magic clockwork, it does more and more for less and less, bringing the marginal costs of technology in the units that we individuals

consume closer to zero.

As much as we complain about how expensive things are getting, we're surrounded by forces that are making them cheaper. Forty years ago, the principal nutritional problem in America was hunger; now it's obesity, for which we have the Green Revolution to thank. Forty years ago, charity was dominated by clothing drives for the poor. Now you can get a T-shirt for less than the price of a cup of coffee, thanks to China and global sourcing. So too for toys, gadgets, and commodities of every sort. Even cocaine has pretty much never been cheaper (globalization works in mysterious ways).

Digital technology benefits from these dynamics and from something else even more powerful: the 20th-century shift from Newtonian to quantum machines. We're still just beginning to exploit atomic-scale effects in revolutionary new materials - semiconductors (processing power), ferromagnetic compounds (storage), and fiber optics (bandwidth). In the arc of history, all three substances are still new, and we have a lot to learn about them. We are just a few decades into the discovery of a new world.

What does this mean for the notion of free? Well, just take one example. Last year, Yahoo announced that Yahoo Mail, its free webmail service, would provide unlimited storage. Just in case that wasn't totally clear, that's "unlimited" as in "infinite." So the market price of online storage, at least for email, has now fallen to zero (see "Webmail Windfall"). And the stunning thing is that nobody was surprised; many had assumed infinite free storage was already the case.

For good reason: It's now clear that practically everything Web technology touches starts down the path to gratis, at least as far as we consumers are concerned. Storage now joins bandwidth (YouTube: free) and processing power (Google: free) in the race to the bottom. Basic economics tells us that in a competitive market, price falls to the marginal cost. There's never been a more competitive market than the Internet, and every day the marginal cost of digital information comes closer to nothing.

One of the old jokes from the late-'90s bubble was that there are only two numbers on the Internet: infinity and zero. The first, at least as it applied to stock market valuations, proved false. But the second is alive and well. The Web has become the land of the free.

The result is that we now have not one but two trends driving the spread of free business models across the economy. The first is the extension of King Gillette's cross-subsidy to more and more industries. Technology is giving companies greater flexibility in how broadly they can define their markets, allowing them more freedom to give away products or services to one set of customers while selling to another set. Ryanair, for instance, has disrupted its industry by defining itself more as a full-service travel agency than a seller of airline seats,

The second trend is simply that anything that touches digital networks quickly feels the effect of falling costs.

There's nothing new about technology's deflationary force, but what is new is the speed at which industries of all sorts are becoming digital businesses and thus able to exploit those economics. When Google turned advertising into a software application, a classic services business formerly based on human economics (things get more expensive each year) switched to software economics (things get cheaper). So, too, for everything from banking to gambling. The moment a company's primary expenses become things based in silicon, free becomes not just an option but the inevitable destination.

## WASTE AND WASTE AGAIN

Forty years ago, Caltech professor Carver Mead identified the corollary to Moore's law of ever-increasing computing power. Every 18 months, Mead observed, the price of a transistor would halve. And so it did, going from tens of dollars in the 1960s to approximately 0.000001 cent today for each of the transistors in Intel's latest quad-core. This, Mead realized, meant that we should start to "waste" transistors.

**Scenario 2:** Ads on the subway? That's so 20th century. By sponsoring the whole line and making trips free, the local merchants association brings grateful commuters to neighborhood shops.

Waste is a dirty word, and that was especially true in the IT world of the 1970s. An entire generation of computer professionals had been taught that their job was to dole out expensive computer resources sparingly. In the glass-walled facilities of the mainframe era, these systems operators exercised their power by choosing whose programs should be allowed to run on the costly computing machines. Their role was to conserve transistors, and they not only decided what was worthy but also encouraged programmers to make the most economical use of their computer time. As a result, early developers devoted as much code as possible to running their core algorithms efficiently and gave little thought to user interface. This was the era of the command line, and the only conceivable reason someone might have wanted to use a computer at home was to organize recipe files. In fact, the world's first personal computer, a stylish kitchen appliance offered by Honeywell in 1969, came with integrated counter space.

And here was Mead, telling programmers to embrace waste. They scratched their heads - how do you waste computer power? It took Alan Kay, an engineer working at Xerox's Palo Alto Research Center, to show them. Rather than conserve transistors for core processing functions, he developed a computer concept - the Dynabook - that would frivolously deploy silicon to do silly things: draw icons, windows, pointers, and even animations on the screen. The purpose of this profligate eye candy? Ease of use for regular folks, including children. Kay's work on the graphical user interface became the inspiration for the Xerox Alto, and then the Apple Macintosh, which changed the world by opening computing to the rest of us. (We, in turn, found no shortage of things to do with it; tellingly, organizing recipes was not high on the list.)

Of course, computers were not free then, and they are not free today. But what Mead and Kay understood was that the transistors in them - the atomic units of computation - would become so numerous that on an individual basis, they'd be close enough to costless that they might as well be free. That meant software writers, liberated from worrying about scarce computational resources like memory and CPU cycles, could become more and more ambitious, focusing on higher-order functions such as user interfaces and new markets such as entertainment. And that meant software of broader appeal, which brought in more users, who in turn found even more uses for computers. Thanks to that wasteful throwing of transistors against the wall, the world was changed.

What's interesting is that transistors (or storage, or bandwidth) don't have to be completely free to invoke this effect. At a certain point, they're cheap enough to be safely disregarded. The Greek philosopher Zeno wrestled with this concept in a slightly different context. In Zeno's dichotomy paradox, you run toward a wall. As you run, you halve the distance to the wall, then halve it again, and so on. But if you continue to subdivide space forever, how can you ever actually reach the wall? (The answer is that you

can't: Once you're within a few nanometers, atomic repulsion forces become too strong for you to get any closer.)

In economics, the parallel is this: If the unitary cost of technology ("per megabyte" or "per megabit per second" or "per thousand floating-point operations per second") is halving every 18 months, when does it come close enough to zero to say that you've arrived and can safely round down to nothing? The answer: almost always sooner than you think.

What Mead understood is that a psychological switch should flip as things head toward zero. Even though they may never become entirely free, as the price drops there is great advantage to be had in treating them as if they were free. Not too cheap to meter, as Atomic Energy Commission chief Lewis Strauss said in a different context, but too cheap to matter. Indeed, the history of technological innovation has been marked by people spotting such price and performance trends and getting ahead of them. From the consumer's perspective, though, there is a huge difference between cheap and free. Give a product away and it can go viral. Charge a single cent for it and you're in an entirely different business, one of clawing and scratching for every customer. The psychology of "free" is powerful indeed, as any marketer will tell you.

This difference between cheap and free is what venture capitalist Josh Kopelman calls the "penny gap." People think demand is elastic and that volume falls in a straight line as price rises, but the truth is that zero is one market and any other price is another. In many cases, that's the difference between a great market and none at all.

The huge psychological gap between "almost zero" and "zero" is why micropayments failed. It's why Google doesn't show up on your credit card. It's why modern Web companies don't charge their users anything. And it's why Yahoo gives away disk drive space. The question of infinite storage was not if but when. The winners made their stuff free first.

Traditionalists wring their hands about the "vaporization of value" and "demonetization" of entire industries. The success of craigslist's free listings, for instance, has hurt the newspaper classified ad business. But that lost newspaper revenue is certainly not ending up in the craigslist coffers. In 2006, the site earned an estimated \$40 million from the few things it charges for. That's about 12 percent of the \$326 million by which classified ad revenue declined that year.

But free is not quite as simple - or as stupid - as it sounds. Just because products are free doesn't mean that someone, somewhere, isn't making huge gobs of money. Google is the prime example of this. The monetary benefits of craigslist are enormous as well, but they're distributed among its tens of thousands of users rather than funneled straight to Craig Newmark Inc. To follow the money, you have to shift from a basic view of a market as a matching of two parties - buyers and sellers - to a broader sense of an ecosystem with many parties, only some of which exchange cash.

The most common of the economies built around free is the three-party system. Here a third party pays to participate in a market created by a free exchange between the first two parties. Sound complicated? You're probably experiencing it right now. It's the basis of virtually all media.

In the traditional media model, a publisher provides a product free (or nearly free) to consumers, and advertisers pay to ride along. Radio is "free to air," and so is much of television. Likewise, newspaper and magazine publishers don't charge readers anything close to the actual cost of creating, printing,

and distributing their products. They're not selling papers and magazines to readers, they're selling readers to advertisers. It's a three-way market.

In a sense, what the Web represents is the extension of the media business model to industries of all sorts. This is not simply the notion that advertising will pay for everything. There are dozens of ways that media companies make money around free content, from selling information about consumers to brand licensing, "value-added" subscriptions, and direct ecommerce (see How-To Wiki for a complete list). Now an entire ecosystem of Web companies is growing up around the same set of models.

### FREE CHANGES EVERYTHING

Between digital economics and the wholesale embrace of King's Gillette's experiment in price shifting, we are entering an era when free will be seen as the norm, not an anomaly. How big a deal is that? Well, consider this analogy: In 1954, at the dawn of nuclear power, Lewis Strauss, head of the Atomic Energy Commission, promised that we were entering an age when electricity would be "too cheap to meter." Needless to say, that didn't happen, mostly because the risks of nuclear energy hugely increased its costs. But what if he'd been right? What if electricity had in fact become virtually free? The answer is that everything electricity touched - which is to say just about everything - would have been transformed. Rather than balance electricity against other energy sources, we'd use electricity for as many things as we could - we'd waste it, in fact, because it would be too cheap to worry about.

All buildings would be electrically heated, never mind the thermal conversion rate. We'd all be driving electric cars (free electricity would be incentive enough to develop the efficient battery technology to store it). Massive desalination plants would turn seawater into all the freshwater anyone could want, irrigating vast inland swaths and turning deserts into fertile acres, many of them making biofuels as a cheaper store of energy than batteries. Relative to free electrons, fossil fuels would be seen as ludicrously expensive and dirty, and so carbon emissions would plummet. The phrase "global warming" would have never entered the language.

Today it's digital technologies, not electricity, that have become too cheap to meter. It took decades to shake off the assumption that computing was supposed to be rationed for the few, and we're only now starting to liberate bandwidth and storage from the same poverty of imagination. But a generation raised on the free Web is coming of age, and they will find entirely new ways to embrace waste, transforming the world in the process. Because free is what you want - and free, increasingly, is what you're going to get.

## Lessons from 2007

What can we take away from 2007, and how might the lessons be best applied in 2008?

For most segments of the industry - shows, contractors, hotels, convention centers, exhibitors and suppliers - 2007 was a record-breaking year. The M&A market for exhibitions was hot - especially for sellers. Contractors posted record gains for trade, consumer and corporate business. And the business travel industry - including hotels and airlines - posted record profits, driven by strong demand for leisure and business.

As the beginning of 2008, show organisers and suppliers are

split on their expectations. Exhibitor spending and net square meterage for many shows is tracking above previous levels.

Several key issues dominated the industry in 2007 - and will likely continue to reverberate in 2008.

**Lesson 1: Sell when the selling is good** (and it still is, despite the credit crunch).

The M&A market for the exhibition industry was red hot for most of 2007. The number and value of exhibition and conference M&As rose last year. However, 2007 lacked the megadeals seen in previous years, according to the Jordan Edmiston Group Inc. (JEGI).

"The deals over the last six months have been almost exclusively small market transactions," says Nick Curci, President, Corporate Solutions. "This activity will surely continue for the better part of 2008." Why? Because financing mid- to large-size deals in today's credit market is very difficult because of the lack of supply and the unwillingness of banks and private equity to back sizable deals.

Curci predicts small deals will continue to be popular as larger trade show producers take advantage of opportunities to acquire smaller competitors and finance deals with internal cash flow. A key point, according to Curci: If you look at all the transactions closed in 2007, very few were acquisitions outside of the buyers' current markets. "In other words, buyers aren't expanding their reach into new markets, but instead expanding on markets they currently serve," he says.

**The bottom line:** Multiples continue to be strong for good businesses, and most experts predict the sellers' market to continue into 2008. "There's a certain amount of wishful thinking on the part of buyers that multiples are soft because of their perception of the current banking situation," says Richard Mead, Managing Director, JEGI.

Kathleen Thomas, Managing Director, Berkery, Noyes & Co. LLC, agrees. "Mega deals are not happening or are happening slowly," she says. "In the mid to lower market size, deals will continue to happen. People will have to go back to accepting some of the covenants and leverage levels of 2005 and 2006. But multiples were very strong then. This credit crunch is not driven by the fundamentals of the companies borrowing. This is a marked difference from the M&A recession our market saw in the early 2000s."

**Lesson 2: International markets continue to post healthy growth and present new opportunities.**

While the U.S. economy slowed in the later half of 2007, a number of international markets, including Brazil, Russia, India and China (collectively known as BRIC), continued to grow and develop. China's exhibition industry expanded at a rapid pace, hosting more than 3,800 exhibitions in 2006, up from 3,000 events in 2004, according to a 2007 report by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT).

The infrastructure to support exhibitions in China is maturing, and Macao is poised to become the Las Vegas of Asia. Last August, exhibition industry pioneer Sheldon Adelson and the Sands Corp. opened the Venetian Macao Resort Hotel, an integrated resort and convention facility similar to its anchor property in Las Vegas.

India is also emerging as a major global economy, as the result of its a growing economy (8.5 percent of GDP) and a large

middle class (300 million), but the country's exhibition infrastructure must be increased and modernized, according to a review of the exhibition industry in India conducted by UFI, the Paris-based Global Association of the Exhibition Industry.

The exhibition industry in the Persian Gulf region is also expanding and offering more opportunities for international partnerships, according to UFI. Dubai has established a stronghold in the Middle East, and many show organizers are flocking to the city. Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, is emerging as a regional player as well, and a number of convention centers and hotels have recently opened or are currently under construction.

Several major U.S. show organizers expanded their international operations in 2007. Reed Exhibitions acquired a majority interest in 26 trade shows with its joint venture partner in Brazil, and expanded its business in India and the Middle East through launches and acquisitions. In addition, Bethesda, MD-based E.J. Krause & Associates (EJK) entered the Indian marketplace by partnering with Gurgaon, Indiabased INTER ADS Exhibitions Pvt Ltd.

**The bottom line:** Some markets are reaching the saturation point, but there are still opportunities in specific industries.

### Lesson 3: Become a part of the green movement.

Being environmentally friendly isn't just a nice gesture. It's becoming standard practice in just about every business.

Companies are developing green strategies for running their businesses and producing their products. Local and national governments around the globe are establishing environmentally friendly regulations and policies. Attendees, especially younger ones, are beginning to demand that exhibitions address the issue, as well. What's now done on a voluntary basis will likely become a requirement in the future.

And many industry suppliers are leading the way. Contractors are recycling carpet. Caterers are offering more locally grown food. Convention centers are becoming more energy efficient.

A host of companies cropped up overnight to address the varying needs of this rapidly growing new industry. Green impacts every industry today, and many show organizers are capitalizing on the trend.

**The bottom line:** Develop a green strategy for your organization and exhibition. While you may not be ready to incur additional costs associated with some options, identifying the potential expenses will help you be prepared if and when it's necessary. In addition, determine the green potential for your industry. Is there an opportunity for a new event for this market niche? At the very least, consider a green product section, pavilion and/or educational sessions.

**Lesson 4: No longer just a buzz word for consumer-driven business, Web 2.0 tools offer numerous applications for b-to-b organizations.**

The lines between consumer and business applications continue to blur. Business professionals are beginning to demand the online tools and applications they use in their personal lives. And show organizers are learning to harness the appeal of popular Web sites like YouTube, MySpace and Facebook and apply them to the b-to-b world.

While only a handful of show organizers dabbled with Web 2.0 features in 2006, more and more adopted the online tools for exhibitors and attendees in 2007. Social networking, vertical and

personal portals, content sharing, blogging, user-generated content and podcasting are all being used to extend show brands and value 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year.

**The bottom line:** Carefully examine which Web 2.0 tools will work for your market before you dedicate time and resources. Not every tool will work for every audience. Beyond the cool factor, evaluate whether it will really help you strengthen relationships within your community of exhibitors and attendees.

### Lesson 5: What goes up must come down, and what goes down usually goes back up.

After the dot-com bust and the fall of COMDEX and others, many observers - inside and outside of the exhibition industry - questioned the long-term prospects for tech shows. It appears the naysayers have been proven wrong. As the industry itself rebounded, so too did the tech shows. While many are succeeding by serving niche markets, there are still a number of large, horizontal tech shows, like CES, that are posting record-breaking numbers of exhibitors and attendees.

Many exhibitions that serve the technology industry posted solid growth last year.

Unfortunately, 2007 was not a great year for many medical shows, depending on the specialty served. The once red-hot industry slowed its pace last year. But the news isn't all bad. With square meterage number of exhibitors, attendance and revenue up from 2005 to 2006, medical shows continue to grow, but at a slower pace than the overall exhibition industry. Medical association show organizers are facing increased competition from for-profit show organizers, as well as local, regional and online providers of continuing medical education (CME).

In addition, marketing dollars from large pharmaceutical companies were lower in many healthcare fields in 2007 because of a lack of new product introductions and increased competition for marketing dollars from other events (internal and external) and direct-to-consumer advertising.

Consumer spending on healthcare is expected to grow as the Boomer population continues to age, therefore shows serving the healthcare industry should rebound - depending on how they address the unique challenges they face.

**The bottom line:** As the industry goes, so goes your show - usually. But show organizers do have some control over their fate. For example, many tech show organizers found success by retooling and reformatting their shows to serve more vertical audiences, while others focused on growing their shows by adapting to the changing needs of their industry as it matures and evolves.

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## 7 Deadly Sins of News Releases

A news release is often your only chance to make a great first impression.

Newspapers, magazines and trade publications receive them by the truckload. That means sloppy, inaccurate, pointless releases are the first to hit the newsroom wastebasket. To make sure yours isn't one of them, avoid these 7 Deadly Sins:

1. Providing insufficient or wrong information on your

news releases, particularly telephone numbers. Releases must be complete, accurate and specific. (Note: A news release is the same as a press release.)

2. Writing too long. They should be no longer than a page.

3. Sending it too late. Mail or fax it to local media at least two weeks before an event, preferably three or four. Major magazines work four to six months ahead of time.

4. Sending a release with no news value. News is what happens that is different. If it isn't different, it isn't news.

5. Blatant commercialism. Avoid hackneyed words and phrases such as spectacular, incredible, the only one of its kind, breakthrough, cutting-edge, unique and state-of-the-art.

6. Omitting a contact name and phone number. At the top of the first page in the left corner, let editors know who they can call if they have questions. Include day, evening and cell phone numbers.

7. Calling after you send a release. Questions like "Did you get my news release?" or "Do you know when it will be printed?" will brand you as a pest. Don't follow up with a phone call to see if the media got your release, unless you are absolutely sure that someone will check for you. Most reporters and editors don't have time. If you do follow up, make sure you have a reason to call. Suggest a particular angle to your story, or ask the media people if they need any other information.

## 8 Consumer Show Trends to Watch

Consumer show producers are looking to the next season with frank optimism. The last season was strong. Overall, according to results released by the National Association of Consumer Shows (NACS, [www.publicshows.com](http://www.publicshows.com)), stand sales were up a whopping 64 percent, ticket sales were up 23 percent.

Organisers have identified eight major trends that are influencing their operating and marketing decisions for 2008.

### Online Everything

The hottest trends are being generated by the Internet, as the consumer show industry tries to catch up with an ever-growing demand for all online services. The Internet is dramatically changing how we communicate with attendees and exhibitors. Clearly this is an area show producers must command".

**1. Online ticket sales boom:** Electronic ticketing is one of hottest areas in the industry now, Although online ticketing, at least in simple forms, has been around for nearly a decade, it has taken off in the past few years. Online ticketing appeals to attendees because it allows them to bypass lines at the box office and pay lower prices.

For the producer, online ticketing builds revenue weeks or even months before the show, says Howisey. Programs that capture and track data give producers measurements to help them budget more effectively. Some programs even use a formula that cross references ticket sales with hotel occupancy to determine how much the show is contributing to the city.

**2. More interactive features on show Web sites:** Consumer show organizers are adding more and more features to their

Web sites. Interactive sites are critical now.

3. Better online resources for exhibitors: Online exhibitor manuals, exhibitor training and a host of other resources are going online.

### Show Presentation: More Touch Points

The growth and change in types of show-floor events and displays is as big a trend as online development. Producers have been devoting more space and money to entertainment with educational value for several years, but the pace has picked up momentum.

**4. More hands-on, more value for attendees:** It's a new mindset: The more hands-on, the more value to the event. And the more interaction with products, the better attendees like it.

**5. Consumers want education:** Attendees want education and information when they come to our shows. Events are rapidly adding seminars for attendees avidly interested in being educated.

**6. Making shows more attendee-friendly:** Producers are redesigning their shows to be more attendee friendly and interactive.

**Marketing: Bite-Size Media Snack.** Marketing is a different ballgame than it was five years ago. There is a fundamental shift in how organisers approach marketing. It used to be linear, predictable. To attract consumers, there has to be a certain amount of newspaper, television, radio. Now consumers are info snacking, tasting a lot of media in small bites. Getting the right mix to find consumers where're they're 'snacking' is more complex.

**7. Continuing shift from traditional to new media.** As producers strive for the right mix, the focus is shifting from traditional media, where prices are increasing even as outlets multiply, to electronic, specialty and affinity outlets. These outlets offer a wide array of targeted marketing contact points. At the same time, more publications catering to specialty and enthusiast markets are attracting a bigger part of the advertising budget.

**8. Spending more to mine segments:** Organizers are spending more to reach and cultivate potential attendees with specific interests. Organisers are digging deeper into enthusiast segments looking at manufacturers, retailers, clubs and associations.

## 10 Deadly BrainStorming Ruts That Kill Innovation

Are you stuck in a "brainstorming" rut? Most people think they know how to brainstorm. Yet, few realize there is more to brainstorming than the one traditional method that Alex Osborn created in the 1950's (yes, LAST century). A multitude of new methods, tools, and techniques have been developed in recent years. Here are 10 of the most deadly brainstorming ruts that kill innovation.

**1. "KIA" -** It's the military acronym for "Killed In Action". Yet, KIA is also my term for the surest way to "kill" innovation... Know It Alls. These are the folks that act as if there's no room to grow or learn. Arrogance in all forms (a lack of openness to new ideas, current reality, or outside input) is a "killer". Being a

lifelong learner is essential to staying innovative. Don't get KIA by being a Know It All.

**2. "Been There, Done That"** - Almost everyone puts brainstorming in a "box". They don't realize there are over 25 different brainstorming tools and techniques. Some work better with certain groups, projects or topics. Often the best tools are the ones YOU create for your needs. S-T-R-E-T-C-H!

**3. "MIA"** - Most people have participated in brainstorming sessions where a TON of ideas were generated. Then, everybody got up, walked out and... NOTHING HAPPENED! This is what I call "Missing In Action". It's critical to quickly move to key Evaluation and Implementation techniques that capitalize on team ownership, yet assign individual action steps. Don't forget the Action!

**4. "Failure Freeze"** - Much of the traditional management and educational environment is geared toward the 'one right answer' philosophy. People are scared to make a mistake, yet the ability to "engage" risk that includes the possibility of failure is a vital component to innovation. Failure is an essential element of success! If you want more success, increase your failure rate!

**5. "Blabbermouths Rule!"** - Without a trained facilitator, brainstorming sessions tend to be dominated by the loudest or most outgoing participants. Quieter team members can get run over, thus stifling some really great ideas. Due to social inhibitions, it's usually not the best idea to let the boss facilitate. This is why new methods of brainstorming can be more effective.

**6. "We Got Lost!"** - A clear direction, purpose, or goal for the session is ESSENTIAL! Tangents are the norm and it takes critical pre-session planning and a skilled facilitator to guide the discussion back to the goal without squelching genuinely useful ideas. Knowing what's a rabbit trail and when to chase it is an important skill.

**7. "Rear-View Living"** - Spending too much time focusing on the past in "Woulda, Coulda, Shoulda- Thinking" is dangerous. Hindsight can offer great insight into problems, failure, crisis, and disasters. Yet, "rear view living", especially if it turns into a blame game, is unproductive. Focus on the Future!

**8. "Meeting Nausea"** - 'We're SICK of meetings' is often the unspoken attitude... and justifiably so. A GREAT brainstorming session is totally different than a normal 'meeting'. Make it an "experience" with amazing results by thorough preparation including: a clear purpose, strategic pre-planning, a spirit of experimentation, a 'grace-filled' environment, and yes, even a good bit of fun and laughter.

**9. "Bad Experience"** - If you've ever had food poisoning, you usually avoid the culprit food for quite some time. Yet, you don't give up on food altogether! If you've experienced a toxic brainstorming session in the past (perhaps led by an untrained facilitator or inhibiting boss), take some mental Pepto, get over it and try a new approach.

**10. "The Fear Factor"** - "I'm scared... What if we can't solve the problem? What if someone else comes up with a better idea than mine? What if someone suggests an idea that means I might have to change?" Fear is still a driving force in stifling innovation, whether it means personal or organizational growth. Acknowledge your fear and then face it with renewed confidence.

Brainstorming, in multiple forms, is one of the quickest ways to help you create an Environment of Innovation in your organization. Differently Think!

## 18 Web-Marketing Concepts That Make a Difference

If you've been looking high and low for the secret to Web success, today is your lucky day. These "18 Web-Marketing Concepts That Make a Difference" may just give you an edge on your competition-or an edge, period.

So if the same old left-brain thinking that everybody else is using just doesn't get you where you want to be, try these creative concepts on for size.

### 1. Think audiences not markets

What's your market? Hire a consultant to help you with your Web-business problems, and one of the first questions he or she will ask is, What's your market? How about 18-34-year-old, single male college graduates with a dog named Spot; or maybe 45-59-year-old married women who hate their husbands and can't get their adult children to move out of the house. Maybe, just maybe, they're asking the wrong question.

The Web isn't about markets, it's about audiences. Audiences need to be entertained, enlightened, and engaged; and if your Web site doesn't, you're never going to achieve what you want. Time to rethink how you're delivering your marketing message. Start treating Web visitors like an audience, not a market, and you might just find what it takes to be successful on the Web.

### 2. Think people not customers

You know all those visitors you attract to your Web site with your brilliant search engine optimization schemes? How many actually purchase anything? Stop treating visitors as if they are already customers and start treating them like what they are-people. That's right, people. You know, the two-legged funny creatures with wants, needs, desires, and maybe even a few bucks to spend.

Customers are always looking for a deal and they're leery of Web sites that only want to take their hard-earned cash. Treat your Web visitors like people who can satisfy their wants, needs, and desires with your assistance... and guess what? Maybe it will make a difference: one small step for Web credibility, one giant leap for Web success.

### 3. Think experiences not features

Bought any good features lately? Didn't think so. You would think the way business pushes them that features are exactly what people are looking for; but nobody buys features, they don't even buy solutions (doesn't that whole solution provider nonsense really get to you after a while?).

What people really buy are experiences: hopefully, positives ones. Whether it's soft ice cream or a new accounting program, what people are paying for is the experience your product or service provides.

Does your Web site offer an experience? Does it explain the experience your product or service delivers? If it doesn't, then you really haven't got anything anybody wants.

### 4. Think emotion not logic

Think you're a logical person, always making rational decisions based on practical criteria, and bottom-line results? So tell me what was the functional thinking that went into the purchase of

those leather pants you bought last year, or that 60-inch plasma television you bought just to watch the big game?

Let's get real. You make purchasing decisions based on what you want, and then justify them with seemingly sensible rationalizations, just like everybody else. So stop trying to appeal only to the practical, logical aspects of bean-counter sales, and start pushing the feel-good aspects of emotional marketing. If you're trying to appeal to an audience that gets its only satisfaction out of acquiring the most features for the least cost, then you're marketing to the wrong audience.

### 5. Think memories not promotions

Most animals live in the moment, whereas human beings live in the past. Our here and now and our plans for the future are based on our experiences, our histories, and our memories. We take pictures of our kids, holidays, and special events; we commemorate birthdays, anniversaries, promotions, and milestones of all kinds. Even the significance of our prized possessions is centered on the fact that those mere objects represent memories of the people, places, and events that shaped our lives.

Real marketing, the kind that creates long-term clients and customer relationships, is not about coupons, sale promotions, or deep discounts; it's about delivering memories.

### 6. Think marketing not SEO

Okay, here's one you've heard from us before: Think marketing-not search engine optimization. Sure you've got to drive as many people to your Web site as possible, but if your marketing message is so confused, unfocused, and hard to comprehend because of all the keyword density and SEO tricks, then what have you really accomplished other than wasting people's time? And people get really upset when you waste their time.

### 7. Think stickiness not hits

It's not about how many hits you get on your Web site, it's about how long people stay. If visitors remain on your site long enough to get your marketing message, then you must have said something worth listening to; and if visitors get the message, your site has done its job.

If your Web site delivers the message, then you can expect the email inquiries and phone calls to start flowing, but it's still up to you and your sales staff to close the sale: People close sales, not Web sites.

### 8. Think stories not pitches

Did you hear the one about the farmer's daughter and the search engine optimizer? Stories, everyone loves stories. In fact, before the invention of the Gutenberg press, oral storytelling was the way knowledge got passed down from one generation to the next, and how news was sent from one region to another.

Now that we have this multimedia Web environment, we can continue the tradition of real people who deliver creative audio and video presentations that capture the imagination and drive home the marketing message so your audience won't forget who you are.

Nothing informs, engages, and entertains like a good story: Sounds to me like one heck of a way to sell to an audience desperate for meaningful communication.

### 9. Think focus not confusion

There you go again, telling everyone who will listen all the wonderful things you and your company can do. Trouble is, telling them all those things just confuses them.

What is the product or service that is most important to your company, the one you are determined to sell to your audience? That's the one you want to talk about. That's the one you want to devote your marketing effort to promoting. That's the one you want people to think about when they hear your name or see your logo.

Focus your communication, else your message will just be a forgettable, incomprehensible blur.

### 10. Think campaigns not ads

Isolated one-time advertisements are like one-night-stands: exciting for a while, but ultimately unfulfilling and devoid of meaning. Your audience is looking for marriage, not a short-term fling.

Your marketing has to woo your visitors with long-term campaigns that tell your story and deliver your focused message; audiences expect to be courted and counseled with meaningful communication. And that takes time and commitment.

If you're spending money on just ads, you might as well be throwing that money down the drain. There is a better way. So if you're looking for a long-term relationship with your audience, think campaigns-not ads.

### 11. Think message not hype

What message are you delivering to your online visitors? Are you telling them you've got the best product, at the best price, with the best staff, and world-class customer service? Is that what you saying? Guess what? Nobody cares, because nobody believes you.

There is only one way to show people you're the best and that is to prove it; but here's the catch, you can't prove it until they become customers. Whoops.

OK, so what's the solution? How about a real marketing message that speaks to what your audience really wants. It's not about you, it's about them.

### 12. Think personality not banality

Does your Web site just lie there like a lox: you know, that cold, dead fish that often comes with a bagel? No personality, just more of the same tedious, dull, dreary, mind-numbing, tiresome, lackluster, monotonous stuff everybody else has. Boring! This is the new Web, so if you can't get with it you'd better get out, because you're wasting your time and everybody else's.

You're so worried about downloading times that you forgot to put anything on your site worth seeing or hearing. Check your logs. If people are jumping ship faster than rats on a burning ship, it's time to try something new-like some compelling content.

### 13. Think branding not copyrights

Hey, I love the Beatles. I grew up with them, and I have all their records-yea, records, like vinyl, not CDs. And guess what, I've also got a Mac, in fact I've got a bunch of them, not to mention iPods and other assorted Apple gizmos and gadgets. And you

know something? I've never once got John, Paul, George, or Ringo confused with Steve Jobs. Amazing!

Worry just a little less about all that small-print stuff and more on building a memorable brand that people will remember, and that nobody will mistake for some johnny-come-lately imposter.

#### 14. Think positioning not slogan

It's funny how people have a position on almost everything: You name the issue and people will have a definite opinion on what they think, except when it comes to their businesses. Just because you have a cute slogan that you print under your logo doesn't mean you own a position in your audience's minds. It seems businesses can't stand to make a definitive statement about who they are and what they do. Why is that? Afraid they'll lose a customer, I guess; but if people don't understand exactly what you do, and why they should be doing business with you, then they're never going to be customers anyway.

No company can be all things to all people, and companies that try... never go anywhere. Tell people who you are and what you do, and forget about all the other stuff; it just gets in the way.

#### 15. Think sensory appeal not cents appeal

Do you want people to sit up and take notice of what you have to say? Do you want people to actually remember what you're telling them? If so, you'd better appeal to their senses, and we're talking about sights and sounds.

Deliver all your juicy, got-to-have content in an audio and video presentation that will stick in people's heads. If all you're doing is appealing to their desire to spend less, then maybe they aren't the customers you're looking for anyway. Nobody can afford to sell for less all the time, every time.

#### 16. Think identity not logos

Is your company the equivalent of the invisible man? You're on the Web, but nobody cares because you're not saying anything worth listening to; and if they do see you, you are instantly forgettable.

You've got to have an identity, a personality, an image-and there is no better way to create that identity than with a video of a real person delivering your marketing message in an entertaining, memorable manner.

#### 17. Think entertainment not biz-speak

Speaking of entertaining... you cannot engage, enlighten, or entertain if everything you present sounds and looks like it came from some b-school textbook or one of those self-help courses on direct marketing guaranteed to make you a millionaire in only three weeks.

Every business has a story to tell, and it can be presented in a compelling way with a little imagination and creativity. And yes, even B2B businesses can rise above the mundane and deadly boring if they take the time and make the effort.

#### 18. Think communication not copy

Last but not least, let's all remember that Web sites are about communication. If you've got nothing to say, nothing to offer, or are afraid to say what you can do for your audience, then how do you expect to be successful?

Filling your Web pages with keyword-dense prose and instantly forgettable sales copy is not going to win the day. Whether you

are presenting your case in text, audio, or video, it had better be interesting and enlightening-even text can be entertaining if written with style and attitude. When Web sites fail, they fail because they do not communicate a realistic, believable, convincing marketing message.

## When the Cat's Away...

When the cat's away, the mouse will play. It's an old saying, with more than a little modern truth to it. Any time the boss is out of the office, for example, employees tend to slack off a little bit. It's a good time to chat and surf the web.

What happens when it's not the boss who's away, but the employees? If you've packed up your sales team and shipped them across the country to a tradeshow, how do you know they're performing up to your standards?

We all like to hope that professionalism and responsibility will carry the day. Employees who do a good job all the rest of the year will probably continue to do well in the tradeshow environment. It might be a safe bet -- but do you want to take chances with your company's reputation?

If the answer to that question is no, you have a few options.

The first is to go to the show yourself, and keep an eye on things. If you can't go, you could delegate this duty to a trusted supervisor.

If that doesn't work, or you want a wholly objective opinion, you can hire a mystery shopper. Mystery shoppers walk the show floor. Without identifying themselves, they assess your team's performance. Were they greeted promptly? Did your team ask qualifying questions? Was the level of professionalism and product knowledge displayed in keeping with your company's expectations?

The mystery shopper will let you know. These professionals are not only objective, the best ones are well versed in what makes an effective tradeshow exhibit. Simply knowing that a mystery shopper will be stopping by can act as a de facto 'cat' for your staff. When they don't know who the important attendee they have to impress is, all attendees become important. That's good news for your company!

## The 3 Rs to Easily Turn Unhappy Visitors into Advocates

Smiling faces, laughing attendees, hugs as old friends reunite on the tradeshow floor. The tradeshow can be a happy place. Yet every party has the curmudgeon -- the one who comes to the show with a bee in her bonnet, a bone to pick, or an axe to grind.

Sometimes that's not your problem. Your company is not the target of the attendee's rage or frustration. However, sometimes you are.

This could happen for dozens of reasons, none of which have to do with your booth staff. Perhaps an important order was screwed up. Perhaps much needed repairs weren't done in a timely fashion, costing the customer lots of money. Perhaps the sales man was rude to the receptionist.

The cause of the upset isn't immediately important. What is important is that the attendee sees your display as the 'face' of

your company, and they plan to let the 'face' know what the rest of the organization is doing wrong.

There are two ways to handle this. Pick the wrong one, and you'll be the talk of the tradeshow circuit for years to come. The wrong way: Let the customer rant and rave, getting all of their pent-up frustration out while your staffers stare wide-eyed and open-mouthed, blindsided by this unexpected turn of events. Loud voices, waving arms, angry, red faces: sure to attract attention and create negative buzz surrounding your display.

The right way: Prepare your staffers ahead of time to deal with upset attendees. It's knowledge they may never need, but this is one case where it's far better to be safe than sorry.

They'll need the Three R's: Remain, Relocate, and Reschedule.

**Remain** calm and focused on the attendee. You want to remain in control of the conversation.

**Relocate** the attendee out of the main area of your exhibit. It's better to have these conversations away from the mass of prying eyes and ears, either in a secluded corner of your exhibit, off to the side, or preferably, out of your booth entirely.

**Reschedule.** Once the attendee has vented their anger, it's time for your staffer to say something like, "I hear your concerns. These are obviously important issues, and need to be resolved. Thank you for sharing them with me. There's a limit to what I can do to resolve these issues here. So let's set up a time, after the show, where we can talk and correct the problem."

This way, you've minimized the impact of the upset attendee, listened to their concerns, offered a plan of action, and taken positive steps to repair a damaged relationship.

## The Two Most Powerful Words on the Tradeshow Floor

**Chances are you learned the two most powerful words in the world before you were three years old. It's one of the first things parents teach their children -- yet these two powerful words are among the most underutilized tools on the tradeshow floor.**

**What are these powerhouse words?**

**It's simple. The phrase that can do more to change your tradeshow performance than any other two word combination is...**

**No. It's not "It's free!" Free is nice, we all like free, and it's true that you can build a crowd, five rows deep, with attractive giveaway items.**

**No, the phrase you're looking for is "Thank You."**

**Everyone wants to be appreciated. Everyone wants to be valued. Everyone wants to be recognized as an individual, and hear that, as often as possible.**

**How often do we thank our visitors?**

**The most powerful "thank yous" are delivered in person. That's that direct touch: the exhibitor and attendee communicating, and the exhibitor clearly expressing gratitude for the visitor's presence. However, that's not the only word of thanks you should be delivering. Make sure that "Thank You" is a critical part of your follow up strategy.**

**A message of thanks should go to every single person who stops by your exhibit, whether they're the hottest of hot prospects, or someone who's not quite in your market yet, but might be someday. You can accomplish this via email, direct mail, or during follow up calls or visits. Just make sure you do it.**

**You'll be thankful that you did!**

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 Fax: +971 84 480493  
 Mob: +971 50 6984478

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