



Exhibit Designers +  
Producers Association

# Global Insights

News, insights and trends for exhibit & event designers and producers worldwide

Q2.09

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## With Challenge Comes Opportunity

By Dan Cantor, President, EDPA

It's no secret that our members are dealing with a perfect storm of challenging issues these days: New-build postponements and cancellations; trade show program reductions; event cancellations; margin pressure exacerbated by procurement initiatives; anti-competitive practices at some venues; customer payment problems; and, more stringent bank and credit-card lending requirements.

At the same time, we have a new administration in Washington that has been slow to understand the nuances of commerce, and particularly the importance of events. There is no faster stimulus than putting immediate cash in the pockets of venue personnel, but our government has managed to practically criminalize face-to-face marketing in recent months.

### Moving Forward

But as business operators, we now have the "economic cover" to remake our organizations. It's a good time to, literally, start over. We need to embrace our 'A' players, ignore their respective titles, and work together to rebuild. Every budget line needs to be rebuilt from zero, and every dollar has to be justified. Most of us have already been forced to make painful reductions in staffing levels and compensation, but we must now force ourselves to look forward. Even lenders are realizing that previously solid relationships are not disposable; we need to include them in internal discussions going forward, along with our clients and suppliers.

It's time to re-examine our org charts, and ask our teams how they think our companies should look if we were a new start-up. It's time to do some intense planning about capabilities that are now essential. Like it or not, designer-producers are being forced to adapt to more of an agency model, which means we have to be more self-respecting about our own intellectual contributions. Once and for all, we need to stop providing comprehensive solutions without compensation or some form of commitment of engagement. Now, more than ever, we need to be part of our client's inner circle of advisors, to assist them in optimizing their reduced budgets.

This world is too complicated to "go it alone." Even our closest competitors can become mentors, and should be regarded as colleagues with similar issues. Our supplier/partners are capable of providing unique solutions and opportunities that may not occur to our internal teams. Our members who have utilized EDPA to facilitate relationships over the years are better off in situations like these.

continued on page 2.

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# WELCOME

Dear EDPA Member  
(and Members-To-Be):

The last three months have been full of activity for our association.

It started in Las Vegas at Exhibitor '09 in March where, in addition to hosting five separate meetings on important issues from Portable-Modular to International, we officially launched our new "Power-of-3" membership campaign. This campaign has built some real momentum already, and dozens of new companies have already joined us.

As you may already know, everyone wins with the Power-of-3 promotion; New members who join via a Power of 3 introduction, as well as the member who recommended them, BOTH get 33% OFF the price of our upcoming ACCESS meeting, set for Palm Springs in December. You can read more about the Power-of-3 inside.

If you missed us in Las Vegas, be sure to come for a visit at booth #531 at TS2 in Chicago. We've created a new EDPA exhibit environment around the Power of 3, which lends itself nicely to conversation, so stop by for a chat and sample some of our latest research and tools.

Keep in mind that there are only a handful of face-to-face opportunities for us to connect during the year, and we want you to take advantage of all of them. TS2 in July will bring many of us together once again, and we're bracing for another busy week in The Windy City (more details inside).

There is strength in numbers, and despite the challenges in the economy and our industry, our association continues to grow. Thanks for being the very best part of that!

Sincerely,



Jeff Provost  
Executive Director, EDPA

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Tough times tend to soften even the most contentious relationships, since we're all in this together and we all want events to flourish again. When we're coping with economic challenges, it's easy to become too internally focused. We need to do just the opposite—pick up the phone or meet with our member contacts, and engage in conversations that are mutually beneficial. We have nothing to lose, and everything to gain.

## ED FA FIT Thesis Capstone Event 2009

The EDPA was well represented at the recent "Thesis Capstone Event" held at New York City's Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT). The annual presentation, held this year on May 11, highlights the work of FIT's graduate students seeking a career in the Exhibit Design field.

Nineteen students presented their thesis projects to volunteer experts in the field of exposition design. The student body came from all over the world to receive this unique training. Brenda Cowan, Chair of the Exhibit Design program at FIT, introduced the students to the judges and the criteria. Each student occupied a table with drawings to support their presentation and conclusions. Judges were asked to listen, offer opinions, and complete an evaluation form; each student was given 15-20 minutes, with each judge. The day concluded with words of thanks from Jeff Provost, EDPA Director, and a keynote address from Lee Skolnick, FAIA, President and owner of a prominent design and architecture firm in NYC.



Judges (l. to r.)  
Larry Kulchawik,  
3D Exhibits;  
Lee Skolnick, Lee  
Skolnick Architecture +  
Design; Brenda Cowan;  
Norman Bleckner, FIT  
Faculty; Chris Wendel.



Jeff Provost and FIT graduate student Yu Chen Hsu.



Adam Beckett and Brenda Cowan

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## Advice From the Field:

# Opportunity Awaits Those With a Plan

EDPA's Robert Campbell, Horst Tondasch Share a Global Viewpoint



Horst Tondasch

Depending on who you listen to, the current economic conundrum is either getting worse, leveling off, or showing signs of improving.

But no matter which school of thought you subscribe to, there is one area of agreement: The European marketplace still offers an area of opportunity for those who think smarter. That's the opinion of two veterans with experience in this strong and growing arena.

So, what's holding people back? "The U.S. tends to be more insular," said Robert Campbell, vice-president, international, at Uniplan Group. "Companies feel more comfortable at home," he said recently. "It takes courage to go overseas." And that's working against those looking to expand in a contracting economy.

Campbell recently spoke with Global Insights Quarterly about the benefits and rewards that await those who take the steps to expand.

"Designers and builders in the U.S. have a higher chance of asking customers for business overseas, because there is a much bigger share of larger corporations doing work there," he said. And he's not alone in that opinion.

"There is a world outside of the U.S. that has done business for a long time," said Horst Tondasch, president of Coral Enterprises, Inc. "There is a huge market that the U.S. has largely stayed out of. Look outside your box now, because the U.S. is in a recession; go to Europe. Get some share of that market, fill up your cup over there."

### Think Different

Tondasch knows what he's talking about, having worked in the international arena for more than 30 years. But he also warns that exhibit builders must move up from their traditional line, if they hope to survive this unprecedented upheaval.

"It's time to expand your business from being a 'Stand Builder' to become a Communications Concept Provider," he said. "Manufacturing a booth for an exhibitor is not enough. There is now demand for broader communications concepts beyond traditional services."

And Uniplan's Campbell agrees with that assessment.

"There's never been a better time to 'think out of the box,' he said. "Uniplan has great examples where we were able to

cut show costs by sometimes a third, by using our creative forces to build more effective shows at vastly reduced costs to the exhibitor. We call it 'Think different. Achieve more', which really has a great effect on the cost per lead."



Robert Campbell

Campbell cited a presentation his company did for French automaker Peugeot. "They asked us to pitch a big show in Europe. They said, 'This is our budget, etc.,' and with the type of money they were talking about, it was difficult to do a normal-type show. They started by not putting down a floor at the show, resulting in big savings. "The concept we came up with was a parking deck; We used

white tape on the floor, so it looked like a parking lot. It was the talk of the show; the savings were substantial," Campbell said.

Tondasch is of the same mind. "I believe that it is our obligation to provide a total communications concept, that educates clients about the value of pre-show-communications, show-communications, 'show-team' training, crowd-stopping activities, and post-show-communications," he said. "I believe that is something exhibit builders have to include in their offerings today. EDPA could prepare their members to start thinking in this direction and provide 'getting-started workshops'," he added.

### The Insights:

1. Look overseas.
2. Add more value and services.
3. Move out of your comfort zone.

Send your comments to [rthompson@edpa.com](mailto:rthompson@edpa.com), and we'll publish the best responses in an upcoming issue of the Association newsletter, EDPA Alert.



Photo by: Exposures Photography, LTD.

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#### THE POWER OF 3

All for one and one for all. For over fifty years EDPA has been recognized as the professional global community of senior executive leaders and advocates for recognition and excellence in the exhibition and event industry.

The Power of 3 starts with you. Let's join forces, support our industry, grow your business and our Association together to be the voice of the profession. For details on all the benefits of the Power of 3 Program contact Executive Director, Jeff Provost at 203.899.8434.



Exhibit Designers +  
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Join us

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# ECONOMY

## Hope on the Horizon

Yes, it's a tough time to be in the trade show industry. But as the following charts show, many companies still look to trade shows as a critical part of their marketing in the year ahead. Take a look at the percentages, and take heart; things will get better soon.

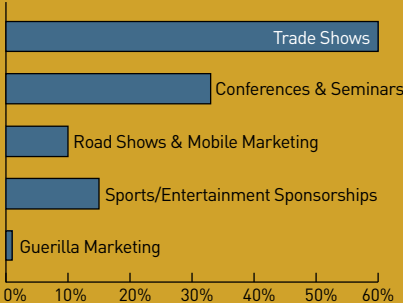
### Tradeshows Work by the Numbers

**\$550:** average cost to close a sale from a trade show lead

**\$997:** average cost to close a sale through personal sales call

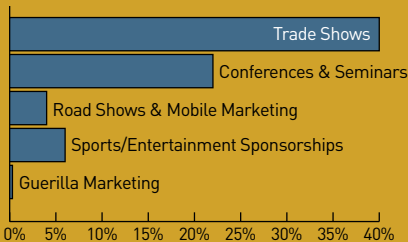
**\$1,032.40:** average economic impact of an attendee on local economy

### Which event types comprise the largest part of your event budget?



source: EventView 2009

### Which event types provide the greatest ROI?



source: EventView 2009

# ED PA Power of 3 and the Power of Persuasion

The EDPA's new "Power of 3" effort is growing EDPA, and it's no secret why.

"It offers good value for new members and veterans alike," said EDPA Executive Director Jeff Provost. "It's also a great way to expand our membership base by bringing in friends and colleagues who share a common goal."

Launched just a few months ago, The Power of 3 has already brought in dozens of new members, with more on the way.

The plan is simple but effective: EDPA members are encouraged to reach out to three friends or business colleagues in the exhibit or design business. If just one of those friends joins the EDPA based on the member's referral, both that new member and the current member will get a full 33% off the cost of their registration to the EDPA ACCESS conference, being held this year in Palm Springs.

"Through the Power of 3, we expand our membership, offer an attractive discount to our annual conference, and meet new colleagues in the business," said Provost.

The EDPA has created a new exhibit environment around the Power of 3, which will be on display at the TS2 Show in Chicago in July at Booth #531.

For more information, reach out to Jeff at [JProvost@edpa.com](mailto:JProvost@edpa.com).



**ED PA**  
The Power of 3  
Refer a friend to EDPA and you'll both get 33% off the cost of your registration to the EDPA ACCESS conference.

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Join us | Contact: Jeff Provost | 202.878.1111 | [www.edpa.com](http://www.edpa.com)



# Calendar of Events

## JULY

- 20: EDPA Board Meeting, McCormick Place, Chicago
- 20–23: TS2 McCormick Place, Chicago



## SEPTEMBER

- 24: Event Marketer Countdown, Intel Campus, Santa Clara
- 28: Event Marketer Countdown Renaissance Hollywood, LA
- 28–30: Event Design Summit, The Highlands Hollywood, Hollywood, CA
- 30: Best Events Expo L.A., Renaissance Hollywood Hotel, Hollywood, CA

## OCTOBER

- 1: Event Marketer Countdown, Radisson Hotel Central, Dallas
- 5: Event Marketer Countdown, Sheraton Boston
- 5: Best Events Expo Boston, Sheraton Boston
- 12: Randy Smith Memorial Golf Classic, Stone Mountain Golf Club, Stone Mountain, GA
- 19: Event Marketer Countdown, Marriott Chicago Downtown
- 22: Event Marketer Countdown, Best Buy Campus, Richfield, MN (Minneapolis)
- 26–28: GRAVITY FREE: 2009, Chicago History Museum



## NOVEMBER

- 11: Event Marketer Countdown, AMA Executive Conference Center, New York

## DECEMBER

- 2–4: ACCESS 2009 Annual Conference & Supplier Showcase, Renaissance Esmeralda Resort & Spa, Indian Wells, (Palm Springs) CA
- 8–10: Expo! Expo! IAEE's Annual Meeting & Exhibition, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta



# Pain and Possibilities: The EDPA Q1 2009 Economic Pulse Survey Has Some Surprises

It's no secret that for the past several months the recession has impacted the trade-show industry in numerous negative ways, with attendance numbers flat, exhibit and event companies going out of business and marketing budgets slashed across the board.

The Exhibit Designers and Producers Association (EDPA) and the Event Marketing Institute (EMI) polled nearly 200 EDPA members about their economic outlook during April 2009 to capture the current climate and what people are doing about it. While some results came in as expected, others were surprising.

## Costs Already Cut

For Q1 2009, close to 93 percent of the respondents anticipate a downward shift in sales of new exhibits, with 28 percent of them expecting a 20 to 30 percent decline. In light of that, most have already made efforts to cut costs, particularly in the areas of general and administrative expenses (79 percent), employee reduction (72 percent), and reduction of hours (59 percent.)

Thirty five percent of those polled expect expenses for replacement graphics and for exhibitor program maintenance to be even. And that same number of respondents anticipates no shift in expenses on transportation, museum and point-of-purchase displays and events.

When it comes to man-hours, close to half of the respondents forecast 30-40 hours per week in the areas of installation/dismantle, graphic design, fabrication, estimation and project management. Those same number of hours are seen for administrative (73 percent) and preparation/handling labor (65 percent.)

## Receivables

For 60% of respondents the average age of current receivables is 30-60 days, down from 70% a year ago. At the same time 60-90 day receivables have increased from 14% to 26% of respondents.

While the overwhelming majority of respondents are offering cost-saving ideas (88 percent) to their customers, as well as conducting more price comparisons (87 percent) among suppliers to also cut costs, there is some cause for optimism next year. Some 41 percent of EDPA respondents in this study expect to see a slight increase in sales, while just 19 percent anticipate further decline.

## Some good news:

A separate Event Marketer Magazine poll of brand marketers suggests that more than twice as many brands will spend in Q4 vs Q2 this year. These kinds of findings tend to enforce the notion that recessions can be a catalyst for progress for visionary companies. In the 2001 recession, while some 40 percent of market-leading companies fell out of the top quartile of their respective industries, another 15 percent moved into leading positions (McKinsey Study "Surviving Recessions," 2009).

## The Insights:

For the exhibit industry to translate the current challenges into opportunities, it will take a combination of courage (to try new things), innovation (find new services to deliver), flexibility (in operations and finance especially with existing customers and employees) and creativity (across the organization). But it's worth it to become part of the 15 percent that grow and thrive.

For a look at the complete report, or to find out more about becoming an EDPA member, contact Member Services Coordinator Kimberly Wilson at [KWilson@edpa.com](mailto:KWilson@edpa.com).