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Exhibitors Go The Extra Mile

by Margot Douaihy

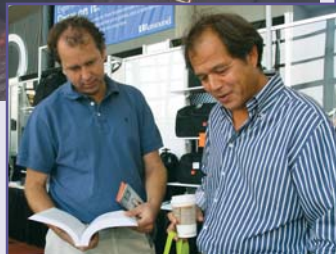
Much has been made of who would not be attending CEDIA EXPO this year, but there's much to see and learn from the companies who chose to be here in Atlanta. Many, in fact, are doing something a little extra this year to gain the attention of a smaller audience or to help their struggling dealer partners who made the trip to EXPO.

For instance, this year Niles Audio is taking a different approach. Instead of a product-driven show and booth, it is instead offering a series of workshops and interactive business management presentations, including a Business

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As the economy shows signs of recovery, AV integrators are eager for new sales opportunities. Luckily, CEDIA EXPO has something for everyone, from classic hi-fi to revolutionary IP control platforms. Learning Labs, certification programs, and networking events guarantee that attendees leave EXPO empowered and ready for business. Setting up for the main event yesterday, Dan Nicholson (above), event producer, corporate events and trade shows, Sony Electronics, lights up the Sony booth. Meanwhile, thumbing through recipes for business success in the CEDIA bookstore were distributors from Spark Custom Electronics, Bart Hoogwerff (left) and An Ho-dac.



Onward And Upward At CEDIA EXPO

by Jeremy J. Glowacki

Some economists believe that July marked the official end of the U.S. recession. That is good news, indeed, but it will take many months for the country to dig out of the economic hole that it has been in for more than a year.

It remains a tough time for anyone running a business, including those in the CEDIA channel. But, for those who have made the investment in time and money to come to Atlanta for the 20th Anniversary EXPO this week, there is much to learn about in terms of new products and business strategy from business peers.

Among attendees, David Berman, director of training and public relations for the Home Theater Specialists of America specialty AV buying group, says that while he expects this week's attendance to be down significantly, he's taking the "glass is half full" attitude rather than the contrary. "I am happy to see a reduction in the number of 'wannabe' custom installers and trunk slammers pretending to be integrators," he says of who he expects to find in attendance. "The field is narrowing, and the cream is rising to the top."

CEDIA's CEO Utz Baldwin acknowledges that there is "little doubt" that EXPO will see some contraction in attendance just as every other trade show has lately. But he points to

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Much More Than A Show

by Mary Bakija

CEDIA's commemoration of its 20th Anniversary this year marks an excellent occasion to recognize that the association is much more than just an annual trade show. CEDIA members enjoy numerous benefits, such as access to CEDIA's staff, knowledge of government legislative threats, and guidance in working with design and build professionals.

According to CEDIA chairman Ken

Erdmann, only 60 percent of last year's EXPO attendees in Denver were actually members of the association. So CEDIA leaders like Erdmann and CEO Utz Baldwin are proudly ringing their association's bell to encourage new membership.

CEDIA is very active in the legislative arena. This year alone, in addition to tracking hundreds of bills, CEDIA has worked in Texas, New York, Idaho, Iowa, California, and other states to ensure that legislation harmful

to the electronic systems contractor is modified or altered to remove the harmful language or changed so that it does not affect the ability of the ESC to earn a living. "CEDIA spends membership dues to support this effort, so if you are a member, you support the cause; if you are not a member, you are getting a free ride at the expense of others," Erdmann explains. "If CEDIA had a larger member base, more could be done here."

Another benefit that is only available to CEDIA members is a new online tool for collecting and sharing data, called Crosspoint. Members can check recent posts for infor-

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Runco Goes 'Lampless' With New Projectors

Runco (Booth 3069) is going "lampless" with its new Q-750i and Q-750d projectors, which utilize LED light sources.

Runco made the development of its Q-750i and Q-750d a primary focus for its engi-

neering and design teams and worked closely with Texas Instruments to evolve the technology. From there, Runco engineers maximized the benefits of lampless LED products to yield 70 percent less energy use, no color wheel to repair, replace, or discard, and incorporating other new technologies of its own to achieve what the company says is "superior performance" from its Q-750i and Q-750d projectors.

The Q-750i and Q-750d feature proprietary coding to deliver what the company says is the widest color gamut ever available in consumer front projection. This color gamut, which includes DCI (Digital Cinema Initiative), Adobe RGB, sRGB, REC 709, and REC 601, includes all the color standards that allow exact reproduction of HD movies, television, and games to achieve amazing color reproduction perfect for any

home theater projection application. Runco states that the Q-750i and Q-750d are also the first to offer Adobe RGB gamut to properly view digital photography (for professional graphic design, photography, printing, or home use).

In addition, Runco says it is the first and only manufacturer to allow independent color correction, with its Personal Color Equalizer (Runco PCE). Runco's PCE allows for oversampling and a more dynamic range as the settings are perfectly dialed in by a Runco installer to meet every client's preference. Once set, an internal color sensor adjusts the color to the applied settings every time it is turned on. In true Runco fashion, the Q-750i and Q-750d projectors offer multiple settings for each input to allow installers to create a truly custom projection experience for each user, for each source.

Panamax/Furman Offer Power Mgmt. Training Session

Panamax/Furman (Booth 1437) is offering power management CEDIA-accredited training sessions at CEDIA EXPO 2009. These sessions will provide a continuing education unit (CEU) with a value of .375 to attendees. Today's A/V installers face unprecedented challenges when it comes to AC power and its effect on sensitive home theater equipment.

By attending "Home Theater Power Management Solutions," presented by Panamax national trainer Marshall Currier, attendees will learn how to use, integrate, and configure power management solutions that include new feature-packed battery backup devices, the PM family of components, voltage regulation products, TCP/IP cards for remote diagnostics, and on-wall and in-wall products. All attendees are eligible to win a Panamax M4300-PM.

In "AC Power: The Foundation of Every Premium Home Theater System," Furman senior product designer Garth Powell will discuss common concerns regarding AC power quality when installing premium home theater systems. All attendees are eligible to win a Furman AC-215.

Onward And Upward

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overwhelmingly positive feedback from exhibitors and attendees from CEDIA UK, CEDIA Australia, InfoComm, and CES that say that a decline in numbers had little effect on the overall success of those shows. "This is largely due to the increased engagement of attendees," Baldwin says. "I am certain that CEDIA EXPO will experience the same positive culture this year."

Eric Grundelman's Cool AV president/CEO, Bill Skaer, notes that even in the down economy, he has witnessed a lot of innovation from industry manufacturers. "I know all of the big names have new products to show," he says. "A few that I have heard about that have some exciting things to talk about are SpeakerCraft with their new Nirv system, Audio Design

Associates, Savant, and Lutron all have new products to share at EXPO. It's EXPO, man! You know it's going to be exciting and filled with new stuff from everyone."

Richard Millson, president of Millson Multi-Media Inc., in Vancouver, BC, says that he's interested in what flat-panel display manufacturers are showing with regard to built-in widgets, services, and features. "This is going to impact us as an industry, and I want to understand as much as I can so we can plan accordingly," he says.

Millson's also curious about media server developments. "I want to see the latest from Kaleidescape and others in terms of centralized media servers and how each plans to compete with or possibly complement these new higher capability panels," he adds.

Berman agrees that, despite the legal decision against Kaleidescape, media

servers will be hot, and he also looks forward to learning more about 3D video and Crestron's Prodigy product.

Baldwin says that it's always fun to see the new gear and looks forward to seeing new control systems, 3D, and digital signage developments. "But," he says, "I am really looking forward to feedback. I want to hear from CEDIA members; that's why I took this job. All members need to be more engaged to move our association and this industry into the future."

And, as always, CEDIA is just as much about networking with business peers as it is about new products and trade association educational initiatives.

"I'm looking forward to seeing friends that I don't see but a couple of times per year," Skaer says. "The opportunity to spend time with others outside of our competitive area is invaluable to us."



Genelec (Room SR-3) presented awards to the many people who contribute to the ongoing success and growth of its acclaimed Custom Installation Systems product line. Shown L-R: Bart LoPiccolo, Genelec national sales manager and Genelec 2009 Rep of the Year, Mike Chafee, founder of Michael Chafee Enterprises.

Go The Extra Mile

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Dynamics Seminar with renowned economic analyst Alan Beaulieu. Beaulieu will provide insight into short- and long-term economic trends and explain how they will affect the custom installation industry. This seminar will take place Friday, from 9-11 a.m. at the Omni Hotel.

Colorado vNet, which is launching its 60-city "Ultimate Control Tour" road show at CEDIA EXPO, is hosting demos and drinks in the evening to build awareness among homeowners, builders, architects, and designers, with the goal of ultimately driving business to dealers. Admission is free for both sessions, but registration is required.

Projection screens manufacturer SI is hosting several in-booth discussions on private home theater design, along with Sam Cavitt of Media Environment Designs, on Friday, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. and Saturday, from 3 to 4 p.m.

ADI, which also sponsors CEDIA's Learning Labs again this year, invites dealers to visit Booth 1650 to learn, play, and win in the custom electronics market. Visitors can enter to win a new Chevy Corvette Coupe and attend a special customer appreciation event. Attendees also

will have a chance to participate in the ADI Player's Club program for their chance to win a new Hitachi UltraThin HD 32-inch flat-screen monitor.

SnapAV (Booth 5555) will be promoting its partnership with BidMagic in which SnapAV dealers can receive the BidMagic software program for free. SnapAV also has a money booth at the show that dealers can literally get in and start grabbing money.

Additional giveaways include: Draper will be giving away a free Fine Art for FlatScreens motorized tapestry at Booth 1125; Fusion Research is celebrating the release of its newest product, the Studio Movie Server, with a CEDIA giveaway of a free server; NuVo Technologies will give away one B.C. Rich Trace Warbeast guitar and one Warbeast replica controller for the Guitar Hero and Rock Band during each day of CEDIA 2009; OmniMount will be hosting a Power40-a-day giveaway. Attendees can enter in the drawing at the OmniMount booth (2337) during show hours Thursday through Sunday. Winners will be announced at the end of each day.

SMX Cinema Solutions, Cinepro, and Cineramax have partnered to create "The Temple of Home Theater," an exhibit in which the brands combine products to create a unique home theater experience.

More Than A Show

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information on emerging technology trends, or they can also share their own experiences with challenging projects, ask questions about a specific topic, and collect answers from multiple points of view. Some groups use Crosspoint to post announcements about future meetings, conference calls, or progress concerning a project. Many CEDIA members have been tapped to work with new clients as a result of their listing on the CEDIA Finder Service, as well. "One good project pays for many years of membership," Erdmann notes.

CEDIA, of course, produces world-class education for its members and publications to support that education. Members of CEDIA have access to these educational products at a discount and access to the free education offered during the year as webinars and e-Learning.

For the last 20 months, CEDIA has offered its members free access to Survival of the Fittest webinars, which target specific topics intended to help the participant deal with the economic downturn. CEDIA has also built a number of business-based courses. A very important part of CEDIA's strategy to help the members improve their business is the

Management Conference. The instructors and topics are chosen to help the participants learn how improve their companies and to offer recommended practices for the participants to follow in improving their companies.

Additionally, CEDIA's Registered Outreach Industry (ROI) program enables members to deliver home technology education to local design and build professionals. CEDIA has developed 11 courses for delivery by members and is an approved provider of continuing education for eight industry associations representing architects, building designers, builders, interior designers, and remodelers.

Beyond these benefits, though, are the behind-the-scenes initiatives that the association works on year-round. Baldwin calls these "the intangibles" of membership. "Our guiding principle is to be a core component of our members' prosperity," he says. "When you become a member, you gain an extended staff of more than 40—CEDIA's professional staff—dedicated to helping you become more informed, more connected, and more profitable.

Some of these benefits include battling legislation on members' behalf, communicating with industry organizations such as AIA, NAHB, ASID, NARI, and others about the value of using a qualified electronic systems contractor, and educating the media.