



SLAM DUNK

5 Trade Shows Rebound For the Win

BY LISA GOELL SINICKI, SENIOR EDITOR

As industries evolve, so must their shows. Consolidation, changing customer needs, new distribution channels and revised category definitions dramatically affect exhibitors' and attendees' needs. Even the biggest and best shows can find their relevance and standing eroded.

Staging a comeback once a show has lost momentum is very difficult. "When a show starts going south, it's hard to turn the momentum around," says Joel Davis, CEO of JD Events. Davis says this is because so much of a show's reputation rests on word of mouth. Once you've had a bad show, you can't turn the word of mouth around until you've had a better show—usually one or two years later.

Making a comeback requires the show organizer to re-evaluate their philosophy, re-analyze the needs of their industry and change their approach. It entails taking calculated risks, reaching out to new audiences and reinventing their definition of a successful show.

Here are the stories of five shows which fought their way back from hard times and bounced back.

National Hardware Show



Show Organizer: Reed Exhibitions

Challenge: Industry consolidation, private shows held by major retailers and a falling out with the American Hardware Manufacturers Association had dealt a near-fatal blow to the show.

Strategy: Seek out new product categories to grow the show.

Solutions:

- The show team started by probing its customers to learn what new categories of products were being sold in their stores. "We asked, 'Is there something we should add?'" says Rob Cappiello, Industry Vice President at Reed Exhibitions. The result was the addition of new product categories such as paint and housewares.
- Next, the team looked at what types of stores were selling similar products. This revealed the opportunity to expand the show's attendees to include bed and bath stores, home stores and home centers.
- The show was moved to Las Vegas. Cappiello says this move provides exhibitors with cost savings on hotel and labor rates and a better variety of customer entertainment possibilities.
- To draw the consumer press, the show team visited key publications to issue personal invitations.
- Sponsorships were developed to entice the participation of manufacturers who did not want to exhibit. "Our job isn't to sell space, it's to put exhibitors and attendees together," says Cappiello.

Reach Rob Cappiello, Industry Vice President, National Hardware Show, Reed Exhibitions at (203) 840-5493 or rcappiello@reedexpo.com.

NHS	HIGH	LOW	CURRENT
Date:	August 1999	August 2003	May 2005
Location:	McCormick Place, Chicago	McCormick Place, Chicago	Sands Expo and Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas
Exhibit Space:	1.2 million sq. ft	458,330	681,891
Exhibiting Companies:	2,840	1,358	3,123
Total Attendance:	38,078	17,180	16,614
Professional Attendance:	67,634	27,989	33,973 <small>*third-party audited number</small>

AD:TECH



Show Organizer: JD Events.

Challenge: AD:TECH was launched in 1996 during the dot.com boom. When the dot.coms went bust, AD:TECH went south with the industry.

Strategy: "We believed that online marketing was here to stay, so we decided not to let the show die," says Joel Davis, CEO of JD Events, who acquired the show in January 2003 and then sold it to dmg world media in January 2005. At its inception, show attendees



What's New? Reed Exhibitions stimulated growth in the National Hardware Show® by adding new product categories, such as Paint and Housewares. Popular Mechanics magazine sponsored the New Product World pavilion, shown here.

were mainly the early adopters of online marketing. Davis' approach was to target a segment of attendees who were not attending—traditional brand marketers.

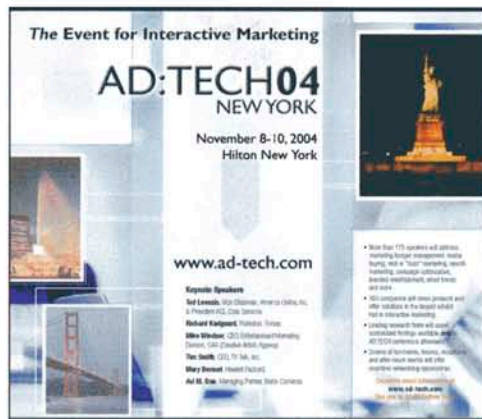
Solutions:

- JD Events developed new content and marketing materials to attract marketers from established consumer companies. "Online marketing was in its embryonic stages, so there was a great opportunity to teach traditional marketers how to use the medium," says Davis.
- In order to meet the needs of this audience, Davis' team created a more sophisticated program that featured real world business examples and case studies.
- AD:TECH implemented a barter marketing agreement with Forbes magazine in order to reach its corporate readers.
- AD:TECH also worked with the Association of National Advertisers (ANA) and the Association of American Advertising Agencies (AAAA). "We partnered with the people who could bring us the leading brand managers," says Davis.

Continued on page 32

AD:TECH	HIGH	LOW	CURRENT
Date:	2000	2002	2004
Location:	New York and San Francisco	New York and San Francisco	New York and San Francisco and Chicago
Exhibit Space:	400 booths (combined)	125 booths (combined)	380 booths
Exhibiting Companies:	300	100	325
Total Attendance:	5,500	3,500	11,000
Professional Attendance:	4,000	2,000	8,000

Targeted Promotion.
AD:TECH's promotional campaign was directed to marketing executives from established consumer companies.



Continued from page 31

In 2005, the shows are expected to reach 550 booth units and draw 15,000 attendees, according to Davis. JD Events was so successful in turning the events around, it sold the AD:TECH portfolio to dmg world media. Davis would not disclose the price.

Reach Joel Davis, CEO, JD Events at (203) 371-6322 or joel@jdevvents.com.

National Cable & Telecommunications Association—The National Show (NCTA)

Show Organizer: National Cable & Telecommunications Association



Challenge: The double whammy of 9/11 and cable telecom consolidation resulted in a dramatic downsizing of NCTA.

Strategy: The new approach was to make the show the face of the industry and where it was going. "We had to get past the thinking that the show is our show—and learn to look at it as the industry's show," says Barbara York, Senior Vice President of Industry Affairs and Chief Administrative Officer of the National Cable & Telecommunications Association.

Specifically, this meant selecting annual themes that dealt with "the next big thing" facing the industry. "We needed to identify what was happening in our industry and then bring energy and focus to it," says York.

NCTA	HIGH	LOW	CURRENT
Date:	May 7-10, 2000	June 8-11, 2003	April 3-5, 2005
Location:	Ernst M. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, LA	McCormick Place, Chicago, IL	Moscone Center, San Francisco, CA
Exhibit Space:	365,000 net sq. ft.	137,100 net sq. ft.	190,500 net sq. ft.
Exhibiting Companies:	367	235	340
Total Attendance:	31,210	16,700	17,000
Professional Attendance:	N/A	N/A	N/A

Solutions:

NCTA added pavilions on the show floor which illustrate that year's theme. These pavilions demonstrated how the various components and technologies featured in exhibitors' booths worked together to create an end product for the consumer. In 2003, the theme was High Definition. In 2004, it was the Broadband home. The 2005 theme was mobility and featured demonstrations of the coming marriage between telecommunications and PDAs, DVDs and other mobile electronics.

The team invites press and analysts to visit the pavilions. York says this is extremely effective at communicating NCTA's message to these important constituents.

NCTA initiated a program of asking attendees and exhibitors for input on a regular basis. This information is used to drive content and sessions, as well as to make sure the show is representing all industry sectors.

NCTA adopted a strategic approach to budgeting for the show. "We had to look at the expenditures which enhanced the features of the show as an investment, not a cost," says York.

Reach Mark Bell, Senior Director, Industry Affairs, National Cable & Telecommunications Association at (202) 775-3669 or mbell@ncta.com; Barbara York, Senior Vice President, Industry Affairs and Chief Administrative Officer, National Cable & Telecommunications Association at (202) 775-3669 or byork@ncta.com.

International Security Conference and Expo East (ISC East)

Show Organizer: Reed Exhibitions

Challenge: The ISC brand goes back 30 years. In the past, ISC West was held in California, and ISC East was held in New York. When



ISC West moved to Las Vegas in the mid-'90s, it took on a dominant position and became "the national show." ISC East lost momentum, professional attendance declined and exhibitors complained that they didn't need two shows.

Strategy: Show management repositioned ISC East as a regional show in a very important region. It combated declining attendance by targeting new groups of attendees. And it realigned its definition of success to focus on creating the right ratio of attendees to exhibitors. "In the repositioning of ISC East, it was more of a priority to create a healthy show utilizing the strategies that we did than to maximize exhibit space sales," says Dean Russo, Industry Vice President and Show Manager for Reed Exhibitions.

Solutions:

ISC East conducted extensive third party research to evaluate its market. The result was a decision to expand its marketing efforts to corporate buyers, not only dealer/distributors.

Qualitative and quantitative research was employed to define the needs and challenges facing the corporate end-user. The research findings drove the decision to create of a new conference track for these attendees.

ISC East then created a targeted marketing campaign to promote

Continued on page 34



Attendance Rebounds. Attendance jumped nearly 90% at ISC East 2004.

Continued from page 32

the new programming to corporate buyers.

■ Research revealed that ISC's core audience of dealer/installers feel a strong affinity to their state chapters of the National Burglar and Fire Alarm Association (NBFAA). Since the show is held in New York, ISC East approached the local chapters of NBFAA in New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Connecticut to get sponsorship commitments. These state associations promoted the show to their members and shared their databases. ISC East funded the chapters with attendance incentives, gave them exposure at the event and provided meeting space for committee and board meetings.

■ ISC East worked very closely with its list broker to update and cleanse its database.

■ The show created a manufacturer's training program to support the exhibitors. Exhibitors were assigned time slots where they could provide training sessions. Attendees loved the access to free training.

■ Since the show is positioned as a regional show, show management encourages exhibitors to "right size" their exhibit space. This ensures that their investment is in line with the ROI they can expect—even if it means reducing the size of their exhibit space.

Dean Russo, Industry Vice President and Show Manager, Reed Exhibitions at (203) 840-5679 or drusso@reedexpo.com.

ISC EAST	HIGH	LOW	CURRENT
Date:	August 2000	October 1-3, 2003	November 3-4, 2004
Location:	Jacob Javits Convention Center, New York, NY	Washington, D.C.	Jacob Javits Convention Center, New York, NY
Exhibit Space:	119,000 net sq. ft.	80,000 net sq. ft.	68,000 net sq. ft.
Exhibiting Companies:	484	402	335
Total Attendance:	N/A	3,600	6,700
Professional Attendance:	9,500	6,106	8,578

Aggressive Promotion Launched the Turnaround of TS²

Since purchasing TS² from the Trade Show Exhibitors Association (TSEA) in October, National Trade Productions (NTP) has worked hard to revitalize the show. Based on a 17% increase in total attendance and an increase of 82% in conference attendees, its efforts have paid off. In addition, NTP successfully increased exhibit space by 17%—from 32,000 net square feet in 2004 to 37,700 net square feet in 2005.

"Our first initiative was to boost attendance by reaching new audiences," says Tamara Christian, President of National Trade Productions. The strategy hinged on key partnerships—with other trade shows, associations and publications. Key elements included:

■ **Installation of a Preferred Partner Program.** This program was designed to reach exhibiting corporations not currently involved with TSEA. NTP partnered with 94 different trade shows, each of which shared its exhibitor list with NTP and promoted TS² to its exhibitors. "These shows believe in exhibitor education, so the partnership was a natural fit," says Christian.

In many cases, NTP created a special URL to be used by the exhibitors at these specific shows. This enabled NTP to track the source of registrants.

■ **Meeting Space for Exhibitor Meetings.** NTP offered free meeting space to organizations holding any sort of meeting which would encourage more exhibitors to attend TS². Participants in this program include Reed Exhibitions which held a session of its Reed University exhibitor education program at TS²; J. Spargo which held an exhibitor meeting during the show; and the International Consumer Electronics Show (CES) which held its exhibit advisory committee meeting.

■ **Partnership with Other Associations.** NTP invited the Washington DC chapter of the American Marketing Association (AMA) to hold its July meeting and lunch at TS². After the lunch, attendees were encouraged to walk the show floor. The Washington DC IAEM Chapter also held its July meeting and lunch at TS².

■ **Partnership with Publications.** NTP worked with Inc. magazine to reach its readers. The communications comprising this program included a series of e-mails and banner ads.

Reach Tamara Christian, President, National Trade Productions at (703) 683-8500 or tchristian@ntpshow.com.

TS²: Where Trade Shows and Corporate Events Begin

Sponsor: Trade Show Exhibitors Association

Show Owner: National Trade Productions

Show Management: National Trade Productions

Dates: July 12-14, 2005

Show site: Washington Convention Center

Exhibit Space: 37,700 net square feet

Exhibiting Companies: 174

Total Attendance: 2,423

Professional Attendance: 1,702