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New Frontiers in Exhibitor Marketing by Barry Dixon, BCMC 2003 Chair

This year's BCMC theme, *New Frontiers*, holds many meanings for the structural building components industry. It suggests leading the industry to the next oasis, a frontier never before explored, calls us to be the pioneers for the future of our industry and encourages newcomers to join us in our effort to advance and strengthen the industry. As exhibitors, you can begin your adventure toward this new frontier by creating a marketing plan for your business that is centered on the events and theme of BCMC. Just like the pioneers of the old west, plant your "seed" at BCMC and see where it takes you!

As mentioned in the [January/February issue of Structural Building Components Magazine](#), using BCMC as the focal point of your marketing and advertising strategy can be highly effective. Create a theme, slogan or mantra to drive your marketing campaign for the tradeshow and then carry it through the year. Bring out a memorable quality in your product and incorporate that into your theme.

You should also consider the tradeshow an opportunity to conduct market research. BCMC staff asked a few regular exhibitors what types of market research they were doing at the show and how they use those results to direct their business plan for the year. One exhibitor outlines a multi-step marketing plan that combines elements of marketing, advertising and research that they've found to be largely successful. They first create a theme for their entire year that ties closely with the BCMC theme. The next step is to send a pre-show mailing to existing and potential customers that advertises a give-away. Finally, an in-booth survey is created and administered at the show. A perk for completing the survey could be a free t-shirt, pen or Frisbee. The information gathered through the one or two-minute surveys can then be analyzed and converted into data to be used for future product development or marketing campaign. What they have found is that often what they think they should be working on in the new product development area is not what their customers think they should be working on. This feedback causes instant changes to their strategy and greater customer satisfaction and sales.

At your booth you can hold a series of short brainstorming sessions and collect ideas on which to build a marketing campaign. These focus group type sessions can provide you with key bits of information that can refine your marketing strategy and take you on to even greater levels of success.

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