Bcmc: Your Business Lifeline

Tire Kickers or Decision Makers?

by Carl Schoening

An exhibitor's case for the value of each group at BCMC.

Last month I talked about preparing for BCMC and product development. That is keenly important for any tradeshow, but even more so for BCMC. BCMC is what every trade show would want to be. I know, I know; a lot of shows are much bigger. They have more glitz and glamour. Many shows try to draw in attendees ranging from the actual target audience to passersby on the street. The value becomes diluted and the exhibitors have to do a lot more work at the booth. Exhibitors have to qualify every visitor that enters the booth. They ask internal questions about the visitor. Is this person serious about my product or are they just killing time until the cocktail hour? Are they buyers or are they actually a competitor trying gain useful information about my new product? Tradeshows are hectic for every exhibitor and having additional non-essential concerns makes the job that much harder. **BCMC is different.**

Title	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
President/ CEO/Owner	27%	24%	22%	21%	35%	26%	20%	31%
Senior Level/ Vice Pres.	25%	24%	24%	26%	25%	28%	32%	16%
Manager/ Supervisor	28%	33%	34%	37%	12%	32%	27%	42%
Tech/Mfg/ Admin Staff	20%	19%	20%	16%	28%	14%	21%	11%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Figure 1. BCMC component manufacturer attendance 2001-2008 by title.

BCMC attendees are there for simple yet serious reasons. They are there to learn about what is available to make them better and to build relationships with exhibitors and other attendees. BCMC has always focused on bringing serious component manufacturers into a casual setting where they can attend seminars and see, touch and feel the latest products available from exhibitors.

Seminars? I am an exhibitor. What do I care about seminars? Take a look at the breakout session topics. Component manufacturers are going to learn about production, management and how to survive the current economic conditions. As an exhibitor, I try to build my presentation of new products around the central topic of the seminars. "Oh, you just attended the productivity breakout?" Let me show you our latest product that will improve your productivity and reduce costs. See how that works? And, the best part of it is that I know I am speaking to someone that can either make buying decisions or is a key influencer in the decision.

The title says "Tire Kickers or Decision Makers." I bet you thought I would downplay the tire kickers and focus on decision makers. Well, I want both. At BCMC you will be surprised to learn that the "tire kickers" are in most cases the key influencers. With only a few days to view the show floor, many companies send a couple of people. Generally, one of them is the last word on purchasing the product and the others will be there to view BCMC through the eyes of an expert in their field. Sometime during the show, the second group will impart what they have learned to the decision makers and bring them back to the booth to see for themselves. Do not discount BCMC tire kickers. They are the tech or production staff that are charged with finding the next big thing that will help the company be more productive, reduce costs or make more money.

That chart above is really important. Take a close look at it. While other tradeshows become a company reward during a good year to give employees a chance to get away, have some fun and maybe walk the show floor, BCMC has continued to attract the right people. The economy has forced companies to cut back on travel and non-essential spending. BCMC is still an event that draws attendees from the highest level of companies across the country. Yes, attendance has been down a bit in 2007 and 2008

at a glance

- History shows that decision makers continue to attend BCMC; the opportunity to launch a new product or capture more market share is as strong as ever.
- BCMC 2009, as always, will bring in attendees that can make the call and make a difference.
- Decision makers and key influencers are precisely the people exhibitors want to target.

after several great years of growth, but the quality of attendees has remained consistent and is as high as ever. You will not see less than serious attendees walking the show floor. If they are there, an opportunity exists. As we have seen through the years, the decision makers continue to attend BCMC and the opportunity to grow sales, launch a new product or capture more market share is as strong as ever.

Of course it may take a bit more creativity to get them into your booth. If you want attendees in your booth you may have to do things others can't or won't. My first year as an exhibitor at BCMC was awesome! My company had a brand new product. I had to prove it was better and stronger than competitive products; but how? I installed the product and as attendees started visiting the booth they would be shown the new product and walk away not nearly as excited as me. The next time I explained the strength of the product I surprised everyone (including my boss) by doing chin ups on it. People started crowding around to see what craziness was going on. Soon people were coming by just to see if I would do it again. It got the attendees into the booth. We had a very successful product launch and it was fun. The point is, it is up to you to draw the decision makers and key influencers into your booth and get them excited about the products you offer.

BCMC, as always, will bring in attendees that can make the call and make a difference. Last year we had a great show. Our booth was filled with enthusiasm and ideas. We got people excited. The people we got excited were all the right ones; decision makers and key influencers. BCMC provided us with great actionable leads and the chance to tell our story. I look forward to seeing you at the show. Come tell your story—people will be listening! SBC

2009 BCMC booth rates have not increased from 2008 rates! Contact Jan Pauli (jpauli@qualtim.com) for a copy of the exhibitor promo or visit www.bcmcshow.com for more details.

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