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KEYNOTES

INFO,
INSIGHT,
&
IDEAS



ECEEF

TRADE SHOW INTELLIGENCE:

GET DEVIANT

GREG REID, CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

of YRC Worldwide, had an interesting message for the 170 people who gathered in June at the Washington (D.C.) Convention Center for the Exhibition and Convention Executives Forum: Get deviant. No, he wasn't telling them to channel their inner juvenile delinquent; he was, however, exhorting the crowd to depart from the trade show manager's usual habits if they want to reach the ever-more-elusive marketing executives like himself. →

Greg Reid, chief marketing officer of YRC Worldwide, delivers the ECEEF 2008 keynote speech.

MEETINGSNET.COM:

→ **The White House has proposed new rules** that will put more teeth into the Americans with Disabilities Act, the 1990 legislation that set requirements for accessibility in public areas such as hotels, theaters, and cruise ships.

→ **The Convention Industry Council**, an umbrella organization of 33 meeting associations, has named Talley Management Group Inc. its new association management company, replacing Management Options Inc.



From left: Glenn Hansen, Bob Liodice, Ray Pettit and Gordon Hughes share the latest marketing trends with the ECEF audience.

EXHIBITOR ISSUES

Thirty-five percent of attendees at the Exhibition and Convention Executives Forum, held in Washington, D.C., in June, said they were worried that exhibitors would reduce their spend at attendees' shows to start their own events, according to an on-site poll.

The most popular tactic to prevent the loss of important exhibitors to corporate events or "outboarding" (58 percent) was to create a more customer-centric culture to strengthen exhibitor relationships.

Here's Reid's six-point plan for deviance:

- 1. Create change.** "There are three things you can do with change," he said. "Resist it—don't. Embrace it—don't. You have to lead change."
- 2. Let go.** This one may be tough for those who wear their control-freak badge with pride, but Reid said, sometimes you have to let go of something—even something that historically has worked well for you—to be able to try something new.
- 3. Realize you're not in the exhibition business.** You're in whatever business your exhibitors are in, he said. You have to understand their business, partner with them in their business, not just sell booth space. "Selling is dead; partnership is alive and well."
- 4. Get me there without the need to go there.** Reid said that virtual attendance will be even more important to upcoming generations, and for all companies that now have increasingly global work forces. Virtual events are "not a threat, but an opportunity," he said. "The threat is what happens if you don't do this."
- 5. Stop selling booth space.** This is similar to his third point. He re-emphasized that the way to turn off a marketing executive is to try to sell him booth space: "Booth space is important to you—you have to lay out the floor. But it's making money that's important to me. Don't sell me anything! Partner with me so I can improve my business. The more you can

help me, the more relevant you are to me."

- 6. Educate, don't entertain.** Much as we all like big-name entertainers and flashy décor, "the reason we go is education, not entertainment," Reid said. "The most enjoyable thing is improving our bottom line."

Other highlights from the forum were a session on measuring engagement and gauging the effectiveness of marketing media; and presentations by Ruth Stevens, president, eMarketing Strategy and author of *Trade Show and Event Marketing*; and Helen Marano, director, U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Travel & Tourism Industries.

What many say was the best, however, was saved for last: At the end of the day, Galen Poss, president of Hanley Wood Expositions, provided a brutally honest case study of how his company recovered when its 2004 Surfaces show went from having its best event ever in terms of revenue, attendance, number of exhibitors, and square footage, to losing its top four exhibitors—along with their 90,000 net square feet of space—and another 15,000 net square feet of exhibitor-contracted space for a total loss of 20 percent of its show. In a riches-to-rags-to-riches story, he detailed the steps his staff took to stem the immediate damage, then build the show back over time to new record levels.

MEETINGSNET.COM:

→ Travelers avoided taking 41 million trips last year—including 12 million business trips—because of their frustration with air travel, according to a study by the Travel Industry Association. The defections cost airlines \$9.4 billion.

→ La Quinta Inns and Suites has partnered with Worktopia and now offers customers real-time meeting-space booking. Buyers can check availability and book simple meetings through La Quinta's and Worktopia's Web sites.