

THE MISSION IS RECOGNITION



OPINION PIECE BY JOHN CHADWICK, AIRWAYS FREIGHT CORPORATION

It was a privilege to represent IELA at the Exhibition & Convention Executive Forum 2008 and take part in a programme designed for the U.S. show organizer and producer. The keynote address was by Greg Reid the CMO of Yellow Roadway Corp. Worldwide. His main point was that either the organizer/producer start to look at the exhibitor in a different light or most large exhibitors will probably go their own way in reaching their customers. Reid did

not stop there; he even went on to say that those supplying the exhibitions and conventions had better pay more attention to the needs of the exhibitor. From there the program went into ways the organizer and producer could better improve the event, and bottom line.

Now for something that most of you are not going to be happy about and why IELA should continue to do events like this. While Sam Lippman (producer of the forum) knew who IELA was no one else in the room had a clue. IELA is not a household word or organization in the U.S. and if it ever wants to be recognized as a viable group with something to offer then it needs to start to promote itself.

Doing events like this is where it starts. IELA also needs to consider exhibiting at the Exhibitor Show and TS2. These are industry events and this is where IELA can get its story



John Harrison & John Chadwick at ECEF 2008

out to the industry. I don't mean put a graphic up in a member company's exhibit I MEAN exhibit in the show with its own exhibit. IELA needs to get involved with other associations in the industry to make a positive statement and garner respect in the U.S. IELA does that in Europe why not the U.S.? So much for the soap box.

On behalf of IELA, I have attended the Forum for the past three years and based on my conversations, the attendees who are involved with international exhibition business know who IELA is in large part because they are probably by choice or necessity, for the most part, working with IELA members. I agree that if one of the attendees produces a show or two only in the US, they would not necessarily know who IELA is because their focus is not international.

Obviously, the more exposure IELA presents to the industry the more recognition we establish. But, I also believe that the IELA Board, working on behalf of the IELA members, voices legitimate concerns about the costs of these efforts with respect to the "return" they provide.

As an example, please review Sam Lippman's comments on the Forum: "IELA has played an important role in the success of the Exhibition and Convention Executive Forum since becoming a sponsor in 2006. John Harrison and John Chadwick have promoted IELA's union of experienced exhibition freight forwards from around the world to the 170 executives that attend ECEF. These ECEF attendees are responsible for approximately 450 shows and \$4 billion dollars in total spend in the United States. And they are becoming more interested in growing their shows internationally. (In 2008 these executives revealed - 72% export their shows as follows: 35% to Asia and U.A.E.; 26% to Europe; 18% to Canada and Mexico; 14% to South America; and

5% to Australia and Oceania; and 5% to Africa). I look forward to the privilege of working with IELA for many years to come."

Sam Lippman, Producer, ECEF

Now I ask you, does this summarize sufficiently the kind of forum or event IELA will wish to sponsor and be a continual part of in the future? I would argue that, in part it does, but in the end we are committing the IELA members' money to these efforts. What is your opinion?

John Harrison – Chair IELA Organisers Committee
UniGroup Worldwide UTS Exhibitions & International Trade Fairs