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CHAMPION EXPOSITION SERVICES RELEASES FINDINGS FROM SURVEY ON USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL TOOLS BY ASSOCIATIONS

Results indicate widespread adoption -- with tools being leveraged throughout the event cycle. Opportunity for exploiting these technologies to their full potential still exists.

San Francisco– October 29, 2009 –Champion Exposition Services today announced the findings of its survey on the use and adoption of digital tools by the association market. The research study reveals that associations are making significant inroads into integrating a variety of technologies and social media into their event strategies, with 83% of respondents currently using one or more digital tools, and 91% planning on using them in the next 12 months. Respondents disclosed that social networks Facebook (67%), Twitter (54%) and LinkedIn (48%) are the most commonly used new digital tools, and detailed why and how they're being used. The research indicates that while social media tools are being adopted, associations are still in the exploratory phase and are not yet exploiting these tools to their full potential.

“Through talking to our customers it became apparent that social media is increasingly important to them,” said Leslie Brand, Vice President of Marketing for Champion Exposition Services. “They want to know what tools are working and how to best leverage them. This survey is an opportunity for us to develop a benchmark for how these technologies are changing events, and provide this shared knowledge with our community. Immersa Marketing, Champion’s sister company and marketing arm has done extensive research on the digital landscape – defining what tools are out there – we leveraged that research in developing this survey.”

According to the survey, the pace of adoption will only increase in coming years, as a key finding reveals that two-thirds (66%) of respondents plan on incorporating more digital tools and experiences into future events. None planned on using fewer tools in future event cycles. A variety of factors are driving this rapid adoption, but the study revealed that the primary motivation is attendee demand. Sixty-nine percent of respondents stated that shifting attendee behavior was the driving force behind incorporating digital tools into their events.

“We will be using more digital tools in the next year,” said Frank Gainer, Conference & Conclave Program Director, American Occupational Therapy Association. “If you want to survive and thrive, you better. Social media is a must to get to the younger audience.”

Associations have incorporated social media’s use throughout the event cycle, but aren’t yet taking full advantage of these technologies. All respondents are using Facebook for pre-show attendee marketing (100%), but fewer are leveraging the platform’s video applications (33%) or discussion forum (48%) features. Similarly, with Twitter, those respondents using the service are tweeting to create buzz pre-event for attendee marketing (82%) or support PR efforts (68%). However, associations are missing an opportunity to leverage Twitter as a back channel at events by using session-specific hashtags to follow conversations, facilitate Q&A or communicate with staff and speakers. Only 36% are directing attendees to use direct messaging, and only 23% are using hashtags to aggregate tweets.

Signaling the growing importance of digital tools in the rise of a new position in the association market: One in five (18%) surveyed revealed that they had hired a digital direct/manager to lead

their social media/digital solutions efforts. Associations are also seeing an impact on their bottom-line as a result of leveraging digital tools. Eighteen percent are seeing cost-savings from using social networks like Facebook and Twitter to replace traditional marketing efforts and communication with attendees. Thirty-three percent have been able to reduce their use of direct mail thanks to including social media in their marketing mix.

Other findings in the study revealed that event-centric technologies such as digital event platforms are gaining traction, with one in four (28%) planning on using them in the coming year. Also, 7 in 10 respondents are actively producing, considering or interested in pursuing virtual events. It's interesting to note that the associations surveyed are not intending to replace their live events with virtual events, but are using virtual events to address a changing market by generating additional revenue streams and offsetting travel and attendance costs for exhibitors and attendees.

To learn more about the study's findings and how associations are implementing social media and digital tools, contact Leslie Brand at 415.655.2208 or leslie.brand@championexpo.com.

About Champion Exposition Services

Champion Exposition Services ("Champion") is a leading provider of event marketing services for tradeshows and corporate events. Champion has been a driving force in the industry for more than 20 years. Recognized as one of the top service providers in North America, Champion elevates the impact that an event has on the community that it serves while easing the planning and production process for show managers and exhibitors. Champion delivers on this with its CODE of Service—Creative solutions, Organizational tools, Dedicated account teams and Exhibitor solutions. Champion is a part of the WCP Exposition Services Holding Company, LLC "WCP Expo," which also includes Immersa Marketing and the George Fern Company. WCP Expo is one of the largest event marketing and service providers in North America with locations in over 25 cities and more than 600 expert employees producing over 1500 events annually. More information on Champion can be found at <http://www.championexpo.com/>.

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