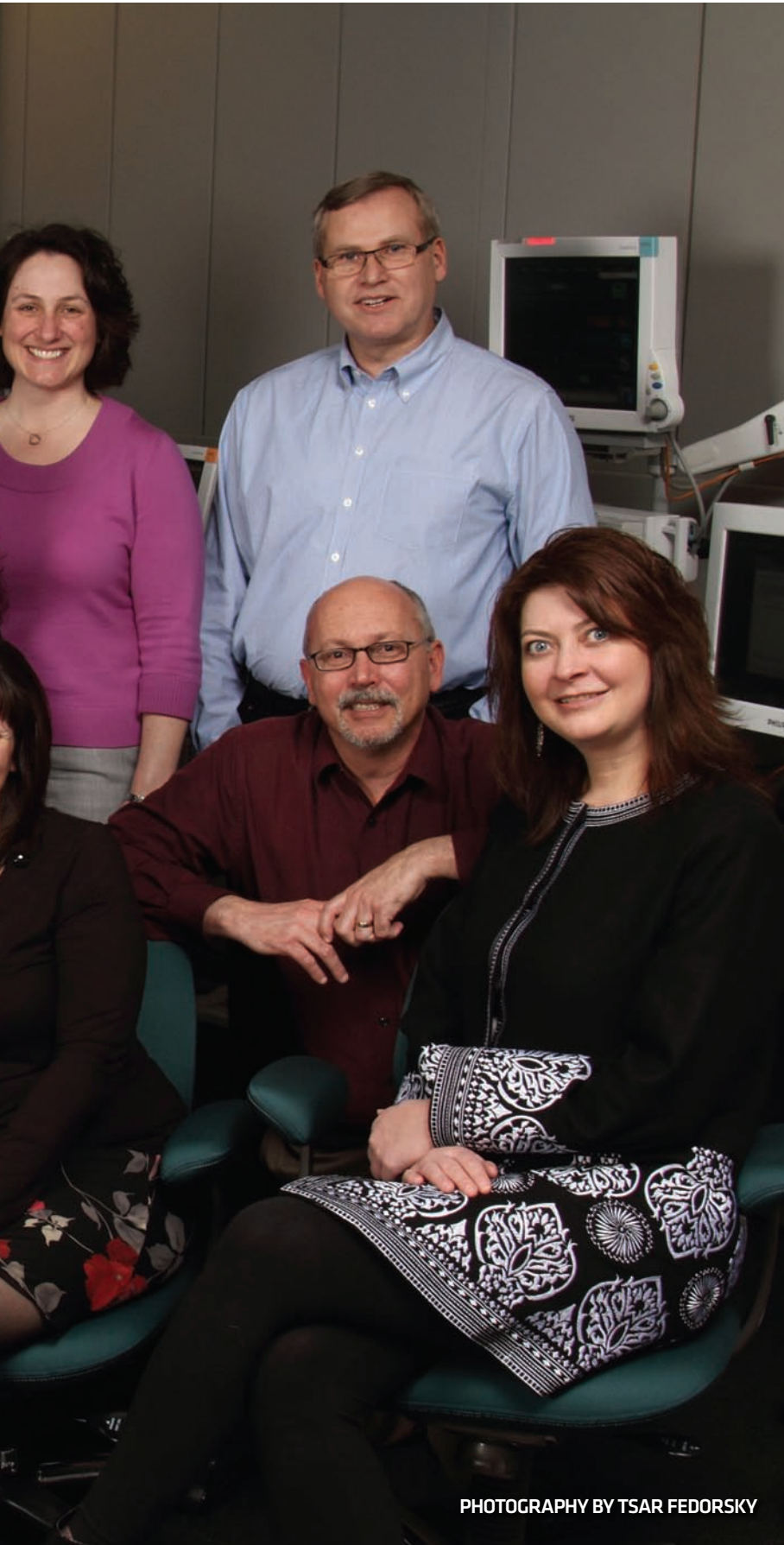




BACK: (LEFT TO RIGHT) Rich Keefe, Philips Healthcare Account Services, AVFX; Melissa Rowe, Partner, Egg Design Partners; Jonathan Jackson, Sr Partner, Egg Design Partners; Ed Douglass, General Manager-Philips North America, Czarnowski; Meredith Levin, VP Boston, Czarnowski; Steve Halling, President, AVFX FRONT: (LEFT TO RIGHT) Kimberly Foley, Director Global Healthcare Marcom, Philips Healthcare; Marcia Haskell, Healthcare Event Manager, Philips Healthcare; Dave Metzler, Healthcare Event Manager, Philips Healthcare; Larina Cipolla, Idea Shaper, Czarnowski; Jody Corriveau, Team Admin Support, Philips Healthcare; Doug Young, Partner, Hyperactive, Inc; Kimberly Miles, Sr Marcom Manager, Philips Healthcare



PHOTOGRAPHY BY TSAR FEDORSKY



Jeff Masters,  
Senior Manager-Global Events,  
Philips Healthcare

cover story

# BEYOND THE BOOTH

PHILIPS HEALTHCARE IS PUMPING NEW BLOOD INTO ITS TRADE SHOW PROGRAM, BUT IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT THE BOOTH. HOW A MULTI-PLATFORM, MULTI-VENUE STRATEGY IS TRANSFORMING ITS PORTFOLIO—AND THE INDUSTRY

**BY SANDRA O'LOUGHLIN**



# Yes, budgets are ticking back and trade show attendance is up.

But we're hardly where we need to be.

Trade show attendees have smaller T&E budgets than they did three years ago and have to be more selective about which shows they go to. And although marketing budgets are back in black, exhibitors are being faced with smaller turnouts, so they're looking for more effective ways to connect with fewer, more qualified customers—all the while with more conservative footprints and build budgets. And thanks to the rise of virtual events and microsites, marketers have to be even more savvy about creating value around their live experiences to help justify the time and expense of attending.

Indeed, the days of *build it and they will come* are long gone. But in its place is an emerging spirit of partnership—a more coordinated effort on the part of exhibitors and show producers to work together to create a live experience that busts out of neatly defined booth spaces and instead creates a cohesive show experience that brings like-minded brands together in new, relevant contexts. The result is a show model that's heavy on the hands-on and laser focused on providing the right experience at the right time in an effort to energize the entire show base. Because in this new era of trade show marketing, what's good for one is good for all.

Medical events, with their well-heeled physician and hospital personnel attendees, are among the most successful in the exhibition industry. The big draw for the doctors is the chance to earn the continuing education credits necessary to maintain their medical licenses. So, the meeting producers work hard to deliver quality content in terms of classes and research presentations. The exhibitors on the trade show floor, however, are there to hype their wares to this audience, who may not be open to their commercial messages. And therein lies the rub.

Philips Healthcare found a solution to this age-old problem in multi-platform marketing—or, more simply, going beyond the trade-show booth to sponsor and activate in a secondary venue throughout the show that fosters more meaningful interactions between attendees and exhibitors. A leading healthcare industry brand, Philips exhibits at 500 trade shows annually, from small to massive events like the American College of Cardiology's Annual Scientific Session and Expo, a medical meeting that draws an international audience in a sector important to Philips—cardiology. Other exhibitors may sponsor CME sessions, receptions or keynote speakers, or secure space in a new product pavilion



besides their main booth. But the Learning Destination—a multi-vendor educational experience the brand kicked off in 2010—was a unique opportunity that spelled success for Philips, the ACC and its attendees.

As senior manager-global event marketing at Philips Healthcare, Jeff Masters understands the value of multi-platform marketing at trade shows. "It's an approach that goes back to how we become a better partner with a producing organization," he says. Multi-platform marketing also establishes Philips as a thought leader among the physicians attending medical conferences, extends the compa-



ny's influence beyond its traditional selling space on the exhibit floor and, last year, reached an estimated 4,500 people in two-and-a-half days about a cutting-edge topic.

#### THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

Masters deals with 70 producing organizations worldwide, and while Philips isn't always the anchor exhibitor at those shows, he makes a point to meet with producers each year, a practice he began in 2007 when he joined the company. "I wanted to have a conversation about how we could be a better partner with them," Masters

says. "An exhibit is strictly a commercial deal. I'm there in the exhibit hall looking for leads. Producers are looking to energize their visitor base to go into the exhibit hall rather than just throw a coffee break in there."

In one such meeting with Susan Kryz, senior director-expositions at the ACC, Masters asked how Philips could help her organization aggregate audiences around its annual meeting and present meaningful content that would encourage people to attend a live event. "It seems to me that continuing education can happen online in 30 seconds flat if someone decides to do it," he says. "That leaves



the medical association without the funds to go forward, and it leaves nothing for me.”

His question was spot-on.

“We recognized over the last two years that we had to evolve our expo,” Kryz says. “Not doing so would essentially leave us with a diminishing expo floor, as exhibitors were facing the downturn in the economy. Added to that, our companies were dealing with the new PhRMA code and AdvaMed guidelines getting stricter and stricter, and fewer FDA approvals impacting medical shows.”

In addition, physician attendees are often turned off by the hard-sell on the expo floor. “They are interested to learn about our exhibiting companies’ technologies, but are resistant to being ‘sold to,’ which has historically made the expo an environment that they have felt ambivalent about,” she explains.

To address that, Kryz devised several concepts with more appeal to the physicians that provide a more meaningful interaction with the industry. “We wanted to partner with our industry players to come up with new formats to replace the old formula of a physician

become a paradigm for future exhibit-floor experiences.

### INSIDE THE LEARNING LAB

The Learning Destination concept was born of Kryz’s previous experience in the telecommunications industry where she worked for 10 years on a show called SuperComm that created multi-vendor exhibits around themes such as SuperHome, SuperSchool or SuperMed. “When I got to ACC, I thought we needed to do something like that concept—a multi-vendor, interactive, educational exhibit,” Kryz says, but she held the idea in her back pocket because of the organization’s lean staff.

As she learned more about the industry, Kryz discovered a timely topic that would be ideal for a Learning Destination—a hybrid cath lab/OR suite, or operating room that houses in one place the equipment needed to perform open and endovascular (that’s med-speak for catheterization) procedures. A hybrid OR suite, which is popular in Europe and rather unknown here, combines the sterility and instruments of a traditional operating room with the X-ray



walking in a booth, being handed a tchotchke, having their card swiped and not really being mentally engaged with what was going on in the exhibit booth,” she says.

In 2009, she tried an industry-expert theater, a turnkey experience in which a participating company came and plugged in a memory drive with its PowerPoint presentation. The ACC provided the structure, the seating and the food for attendees.

“We tried to offer a format that wasn’t so much a product theater, so instead we encouraged our exhibitors to approach and position their sessions as satellite events in which they could incorporate their product benefits but in the context of a disease state, for example,” Kryz says.

That was all well and good, until some of the imaging exhibitors and others requested a more high-touch interaction with attendees. That led in 2010 at ACC.10 held March 14 to 16 in Atlanta, to hands-on learning labs, another turnkey opportunity for exhibitors that combined a short didactic presentation by a physician about a piece of medical equipment followed by hands-on training at work stations or simulation equipment.

Kryz hit the jackpot last year with the Learning Destination, which Philips sponsored as primary imaging partner, and has since

and ultrasound imaging systems and radiation shields of a cath lab and eliminates the need to transport a patient who has just gone through the ordeal of cardiac catheterization into another operating room for open-heart surgery.

“We are the market leaders in building these in Europe, so we knew all about them,” Masters says. “So when the ACC put out a prospectus asking who of the imaging systems companies that attend ACC would like to sponsor and build out a hybrid OR, I think I responded maybe 15 minutes after the email came in. Early birds get the worms.”

And the bill, which in this case amounted to \$250,000 on top of Philips’ regular exhibit hall costs, which Masters insists was well worth the investment.

“The attendees got to see a full-blown surgical room with lights and robots and all the pieces of gear that normally live in an operating room environment,” Masters says. “They got a real learning destination where we talked about the rural equivalent of a hybrid OR, the university hospital and regional equivalents of it.”

Philips exhibit agency Czarnowski designed the 7,000 square-foot area with input from Masters, a former theater set designer in Chicago who handled his first trade show exhibit in 1971. The

space, which was located along the main aisle of the hall, incorporated equipment from second- and third-tier sponsors such as Intuitive Surgical's da Vinci Robotic surgical suite. A theater accommodated 75 to 100 people, often at standing room only, who came to hear presentations by physicians working in hybrid ORs.

"Day to day in the trade show industry, we try to recreate a catalog of our customers' products in a way that is different and new and exciting and will draw audiences into the space," says Ed Douglass, vp at Czarnowski and account executive on the project. "This experience was more than that. It was a collaboration of companies who normally wouldn't share a space on the show floor. It was a totally new experience for the attendees and a natural draw for them to visit."

ACC owned the microphone and maintained control over the content. "It was generic and not a sales pitch place," Masters says. "We got to take the road as thought leaders, as leaders in terms of market share for delivering hybrid ORs, but the ACC owned the overall experience so their attendees would know that the ACC had

Philips' regular 80-foot by 80-foot booth in the exhibit hall teemed with product specialists and sales people hawking everything from the defibrillators found on walls of schools and sports complexes to wireless gear for ambulances, EKG, ultrasound and cath lab systems and monitoring equipment for critical care environments. It moved its huge cath lab out of the booth to the hybrid OR. "That allowed us a more robust story around some of our other products that would normally be given smaller space, given the size of the cath lab," Masters says.

### THE YEAR-TWO CHALLENGE

Masters belongs to a global event team that is 12 people strong, with additional bodies as needed in more remote areas. He collaborates with key agencies and supply partners, including Czarnowski, Philips' lead agency, for exhibit build and outside services. "We were tasked with branding the space with the association identity, our client's identity and the other sponsors involved," Czarnowski's Douglass says. That involved coordinating equipment deliveries



enabled this to come to them. That was key."

Selling was restricted to Philips' regular exhibit booth. "From a producer's perspective, the ACC got basically two booths out of us," Masters says. "We're their biggest exhibitor. And they got another booth out of us that wasn't in the budget."

What Philips got was a lot of good will, the opportunity to work with additional sponsors of the Learning Destination and an evening reception, co-sponsored with the ACC, for interested parties such as big institutions and major hospitals.

Philips leveraged its Learning Destination sponsorship to get the ACC to implement RFID technology for metrics. "Measurement is something we do quite well and quite often," Masters says. "By having RFID at ACC for the first time, we were able to see the audience in detail in terms of our engagement with them. Typically a company might come away from a show having swiped a badge of maybe four or five out of 10. This gives us a view of 10 out of 10, of people who were in our space, looking at our products."

The association also used RFID to measure its education rooms to better understand whether attendees follow one track or jump between them, information that will come in handy in planning future meetings.

and working with other sponsors' vendors of choice. "It was a political challenge dealing with some of our competitors," he says. "Kind of like the U.N., if the U.N. actually worked."

Live Marketing (Chicago) provided live performers for the Philips booth and the "docents" dressed in scrubs and nice, comfy sneakers for the hybrid OR. Rounding out the roster are Hyperactive (Braintree, MA) for multi-media production; AVFX (Boston) for lighting, projection and flat panel display round poles; Alliance Tech (Austin) for RFID and lead tracking; and Egg Design (Waltham, MA) for graphic composition and layout.

This year, the ACC put out a call for ideas for a second Learning Destination at ACC.11 held April 2 to 5 in New Orleans. "We wanted to see what the industry was most interested in doing," Kryss says. "We took the lead the year before because we felt the hybrid OR was a really hot topic that we wanted to cover—one that would be of great interest to our attendees."

A committee of physicians and staff reviewed the proposals, one of which was for a hospital-to-home experience. "Interestingly enough, we have a hospital-to-home-initiative here in the College headed by a committee that was formed in recent years to focus on the importance of reducing hospital readmissions," Kryss says. "So it

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was a natural fit. When we received the proposal, we had an ‘aha’ moment.”

And, aha!... the proposal was Philips’ idea. “When we reviewed it, we looked at the whole picture, including financial and staff resources they were able to commit,” Kryz says. “We are similar to an association and don’t have an enormous staff. Those resources, along with the idea, and whether or not it will have play with our attendees, are very important. Hospital to Home has a huge impact on the way our physicians are going to be treating and counseling

At \$250,000, Philips’ investment in the Learning Centers is enormous, slightly more than the going rate of \$204,000 for a regular exhibit space. The ACC contributed as well, but not as much. “The idea was not to make a profit,” Kryz says. “The idea was to allow our attendees different formats for education, and to invest to create areas for quality interactions between our attendees and industry. It was a logical step.”

For its investment, Philips received prominent signage on the hybrid OR, bi-weekly emails promoting the suite, inclusion in all print collateral, an imprint on badge wallets, pages on the ACC meeting and expo websites, an insert in the meeting bag, a hotel door drop, directory and program inclusion, promotional slides in education rooms and coverage on CVNews, ACC’s TV network.

“They got something they just couldn’t get as a regular exhibitor,” Kryz says. “We can’t promote traditional exhibitors this dramatically through their regular booths. As a partnership with the College to provide a learning destination for our attendees, we were able to max-



patients in the future. It is vitally important to the future of patient health.”

While this year’s Learning Destination perhaps lacked the flashy equipment of the hybrid OR, it presented a lot of cool technology. Enclosed within Hospital-to-Home’s four walls was a pathway that followed three patients with different characteristics of heart disease in an interactive, educational exhibit that demonstrated best practices for reducing hospital readmissions, as well as improving the quality of life for cardiac patients and their caregivers. It began with a full-sized video wall of three patients telling their stories and their case cycles from being in the hospital through the journey back home. It featured simulated hospital and home environments with hands-on demos. An adjoining theater presented clinical discussions with physicians and healthcare providers.

This year, participating companies had a small commercial presence outside of the pavilion where sales discussions took place. Besides Philips, Microsoft and St. Jude, among others, signed on as sponsors.

“This year, Hospital to Home involves even more politics,” says Douglass, who is tasked with outdoing last year’s hybrid OR. He credits the association leadership, Jeff Master’s vision, Tony Aubrey, event manager at Philips Respironics, and a lot of conference calls for making it happen.

(Above): Philips partnered with show producers and exhibitors to create a hands-on training lab.

(Right): Simulated home and hospital environments were the centerpiece of the Hospital to Home Learning destination.



imize their visibility and create a far-reaching and highly impactful print and electronic campaign. This was really put in front of the attendees in every possible way we could.”

When it comes to numbers, Masters is mum, but will talk about ROO, or return on opportunity, instead of ROI. “I don’t believe that event people have any actual or much influence on whether a sale is actually made,” he says. “We do have an effect, and I like to be measured on how much opportunity we create. For every dollar we spend, I like to create 20 opportunities. That doesn’t mean we close that business, but we have an opportunity to close it.”

Masters won’t say if he achieved that ratio with last year’s hybrid OR, but he does say it enabled a “very healthy pipeline.”

That’s an image even a cardiologist can relate to. **EM**