

THE Readers have Spoken



Nine Win Big in Trade Show Executive's Readers' Choice Innovation Awards

Oceanside, CA – The pace of innovation is increasing not only in the trade show industry but also in every facet of our life, from smart appliances that do everything but fold the laundry, to social media that keeps us connected with family, friends and colleagues.

Today's innovators can draw inspiration from almost anywhere: from technology or systems used in other industries that are tweaked to make trade show processes more efficient or robust, or from insight gained from customers faced with vexing challenges. And as the winners of this year's TSE Readers' Choice Innovation Awards proves, innovative organizations come in all shapes and sizes — they are not always the giants.

“There are a few things you can always count on in our business: markets evolve, requirements change, and service providers seek ways to leverage these developments to their advantage,” said Darlene Gudea, president of Trade Show Executive Media Group. “The organizations that are the most innovative, year after year, are always reinventing themselves, essentially ‘eating their own lunch’ before someone else does,” she said. Given the pace of technological change and the whims of the customer, they invest profits in next-generation products before current processes become obsolete. Innovation is constantly changing the rules of engagement.

Trade Show Executive also changed the rules of engagement this year for its annual Innovation Awards launched in 2003. The desire for an imprimatur for tech initiatives from show managers led us to rework, rename and relaunch the contest as a Readers' Choice awards program. “TSE's Readers' Choice Awards are the highest accolade an innovator can receive because the ‘seal of approval’ comes from peers and customers rather than tech experts who may be biased or lack experience as a show organizer,” Gudea said.

There were a total of 44 nominees in nine main categories culled from the entries. Detailed descriptions, photos and contact information were published in the July issue of Trade Show Executive magazine as well as online, along with a ballot for voting. A total of 1,683 votes were cast. [TSE had systems in place to reject multiples votes from the same email address or those that used artifice to vote multiple times.]

For the first time, a company was a finalist in four categories, and placed in two!

That company is ViridiSTOR.

ViridiSTOR received second place in the “Most Innovative Green Initiatives by a Service Contractor.” ViridiSTOR’s solution addresses the sustainability ecosystem from the event producer to create a paperless event, to the exhibitors who go paperless, while reducing costs and delivering information in any format for a fraction of the cost, to the attendee who receives information in the most user friendly means possible, avoiding the pain of carrying around tens of pounds of paper, only to discard (80% on average) or have to pay for shipping home (which carries its own environmental impact), to last, but not least, the environment. Through the use of the ViridiSTOR solution, unquestionable environmental savings can not only be realized, but measured and information infinitely more useable!



Most Innovative Organization in the Trade Show Industry

First Place: The Consumer Electronics Association is a shining example of innovation at its finest. From market research to technical training; from surveys to forecasts; and from innovative features in and around the show floor, CEA is a source of inspiration and an organization to watch.

Second Place: Sherpa Solutions has justifiably won many awards for its innovations through the years but doesn't rest on its laurels. One of the company's finest offerings is a heat mapping system which can track attendee traffic on the show floor, yield insight into attendee behavior, and create new revenue opportunities such as zone pricing.

Third Place: ViridiStor LLC has emerged as an innovator with its digital brochures, digital brochure racks and digital tote bags, greatly reducing the environmental impact and financial costs of paper-based materials at trade shows. **TSE**

Most Innovative Green Initiatives by a Service Contractor

First Place: Global Experience Specialists (GES) wowed readers with its all-around efforts in working with show management, facilities, exhibitors and business partners to achieve the goal of zero waste.

Second Place: ViridiStor LLC, for its comprehensive Green Box™ Solution which allows attendees to collect and organize a wealth of information from exhibitors on a free USB thumb drive. This cost-effective and efficient solution replaces paper-based materials with electronic versions, in virtually any format including audio and video.

ViridiSTOR received third place in the “Most Innovative Organization in the Trade Show Industry.” With literally thousands of companies in the \$106 billion exhibitions and events industry, to be ranked in the top three for innovation is a tremendous honor. Being in the top three with the Consumer Electronics Association, who hosts the annual CES trade show, one of the largest events annually in the world, to Sherpa Solutions, who is pioneering traffic pattern technology, ViridiSTOR “rounds out” the category.

ViridiSTOR innovated the world's first and only fiscally sound sustainable solution for information delivery. No other system exists that can provide immediate payback for every stakeholder in the event industry. Their business approach is simple and direct, and ViridiSTOR has created a patented, proven, award winning solution.

ViridiSTOR's approach has been characterized as a “perfect example” of “keeping a broad sense of vision. They looked beyond just the high-technology thing because there is a lot of low-hanging fruit. They took a very simple idea – to reduce the amount of paper at a trade show. And it has really profound economic impact. I think this is a good example of a broad sense of vision where you are not necessarily looking for the most high-technology solution, but looking for a very practical solution.” (From CleanTech OC conference, comments by OCTANe President & CEO Matthew Jenusaitis).