

**EXHIBITOR BOOTH STRATEGY:**

# From Informational to **Transformational**

The year before CONEXPO-CON/AGG, AEM hosts a live exhibitor education event designed to help exhibitors set the stage for success. From logistics and communications to booth and lead generation strategies, these face-to-face education sessions have been well received over the years.

In preparation for the 2020 show, AEM hosted a series of exhibitor workshops in Chicago. Previous workshops had been held in Las Vegas, but Chicago proved to be a great location, as they had record attendance with 535 exhibitors participating in these sessions.

Another new dynamic for the 2019 exhibitor workshops: Introducing exhibitors to experience design.

AEM partnered with the Maritz Design Studio™ to orchestrate a series of interactive sessions, where exhibitors could learn more about how design thinking principles could be leveraged to unleash richer booth conversations with qualified buyers. Collectively, the Design Studio team crafted a customized exhibitor training program, deeply rooted in exposing them to the principles and frameworks impacting experience design.

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Historically, these exhibitor education sessions have been more informational, but this year, we wanted it to be transformational, helping exhibitors to apply design thinking principles to increase booth traffic and improve the experiences attendees would have at their booth. We put a lot of attention on delivering a great experience for all of our guests and we see the exhibitors as a critical element in shaping these experiences.”

**MARY BUKOVIC**

DIRECTOR, EXHIBITOR ENGAGEMENT  
AEM



# The team delivered this training with an intense focus on design, as viewed through three lenses:

## 1 People

At trade shows, there are countless opportunities for attendees to capture, curate, and share experiences, both personal and professional. Experience has become the new status symbol and these experiences play out across all Eight Phases of a Successful Event. Through empathetic perspective taking and experience journey mapping, exhibitors now have the power to deliver unmatched experiences that are treasured, remembered and shared, long after the event ends.



Fantastic speaker—  
so many applicable ideas.”

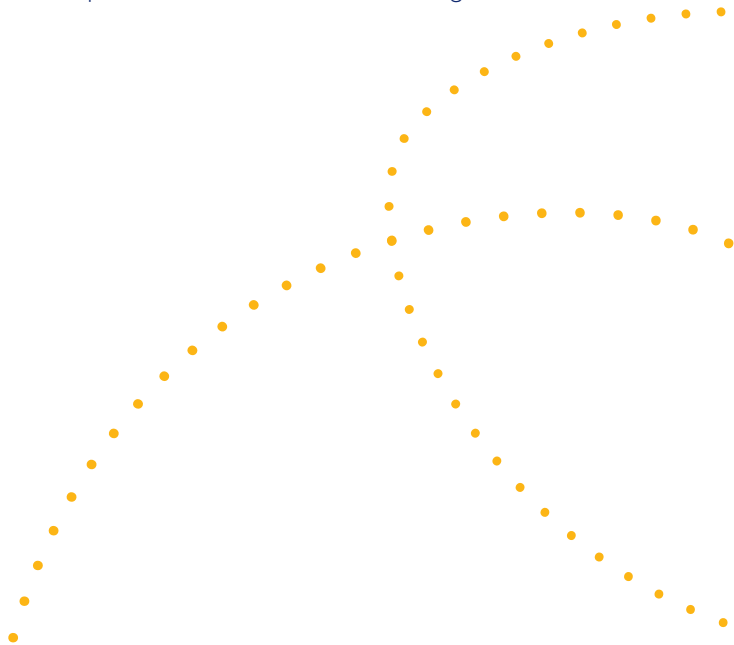
“High energy and engaging—able  
to break down complex concepts  
into simple examples and stories.”

“I learned more in 60 minutes  
than in years of workshops!”

**AEM EXHIBITORS**

## 2 Place

The big focus here is on every inch of the exhibit booth footprint. Greg Bogue, Chief Experience Architect for Maritz, encouraged exhibitors to once again, step into the shoes of their customers and look at their booth through their eyes. Storytelling is key, but exhibitors must first explore specific customer pain points and challenges. Then connect these with stories that showcase how they helped others solve similar challenges.



### 3 Performance

Staffing at the booth can be a huge catalyst (or detractor) for attendee experiences, but it's sometimes overlooked amid the logistics frenzy. Helping booth staff to better connect with visitors, ask smart questions, and share stories that link back to the problems these customers are striving to solve can make a world of difference.

As exhibitors explored each of these three dynamics, they were also exposed to tangible tools and design principles they could use to revitalize or elevate booth experiences.

Beyond the education sessions, the Design Studio team was also available for one-on-one consultations with exhibitors to explore ideas for enhancing specific elements in their booth.

“They did a lot of customization, applying their design principles to our unique and massive environment,” added Bukovic. “With ‘Exhibit Your Story’ as a central thread running through these sessions, Design Studio aligned beautifully with our vision for these exhibitor education sessions.”

The Maritz Design Studio team also earned rave reviews from exhibitors who participated in the half-day workshop.

The beauty of this strategy and framework, created by Design Studio —it’s a powerful springboard that can easily be expanded and refined to address nearly any event challenge or objective.



#### INTRIGUED?

Would you like to learn more about how to enrich guest experiences and increase ROI for your events? Contact your Maritz rep for more information.