



# TO CUT OR NOT TO CUT?

Trade Shows Look for Ways to Trim the Fat, But Not the Value

By Kenya McCullum

As trade show managers budget for their upcoming events, they are bracing themselves for the worst that the economy may have to offer and deciding how to make their operations as lean as possible while still offering value to attendees and exhibitors. Many organizations, like the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), are currently wrestling with their budgets in order to allocate dollars that may start dwindling as the economy continues its downward spiral.

"We are taking what we would consider prudent measures to tighten up the expense side of the equation and that means that any new activities, events, or other things that we may have wanted to put on the plate we have essentially put on hold," said the NAB's Executive Vice President of

Conventions and Business Operations Chris Brown. "We have looked at tightening the operational expenses – everything from how many phones would be at the convention all the way to how many staff we would send to the show."

But while the organization is airing on the side of prudence, Brown said that it is not planning on cutting the items related to good customer service. For example, the organization has fine tuned its onsite registration process so that the wait time for attendees to check in lasts 15 minutes or less. Brown says these are the types of services that attendees have come to count on and should not be cut. In fact, the NAB is exploring areas where it can increase services – such as the number of hotels that the shuttle will pick up and drop off attendees.