

# Creating growth in mature events markets

**John Pringle, Director at AMR International Ltd, in conversation with CEO Denzil Rankine following his recent presentation at the AEO Event Directors'/Managers Forum.**

**When your underlying market is dynamic and growing, managing the show is straightforward. It is about selling stands and ensuring that the operation runs smoothly. But what happens when growth in the underlying market starts to slow? It is a predicament that every show organiser dreads. But Denzil Rankine, CEO of commercial due diligence firm AMR International, is upbeat.**



**Denzil Rankine**

“First of all, a mature market doesn’t necessarily mean that the events in that market have to be mature as well. The fundamental challenge in a mature market is to find the topic that is giving your visitors sleepless nights. Only when you know what is keeping your visitors up at night can you deliver content that is going to excite them enough to attend the event.”

The role expands from a sales and operational function to incorporate an ‘editorial’ understanding of the market dynamics: how can we maximise value to visitors and therefore to our exhibitors?

“You are no longer asking exhibitors how much space they want and then telling

them that the price has gone up. You have to start asking your exhibitors about their marketing budgets, and discuss the hot issues in the market. Then you have to respond. In other words, in a mature market you have to add value.”

“Above all, you need to look at your visitor base, find out what is of interest to visitors, and build that into your show. Take Offshore Europe, for example, the UK’s top oil and gas show. When we worked with Offshore Europe it was serving a mature industry - North Sea oil and gas extraction – but the show had continued to outperform its underlying

market. So how had the show organisers managed it?”

“First of all,” says Rankine, “by addressing the local need for getting oil out of the ground in difficult circumstances. Since the guys in Aberdeen were running out of work and beginning to position themselves as global leaders in hard-to-extract oil, the show managers decided to follow suit and position the show along the same lines. So it became the place where people can go to access exactly that knowledge and technology.”

“Instead of going to where the buyers were – at the big show in Houston – the organisers maximised the international interest in the event by following industry trends in an extremely clever way and exploiting an ever-increasing need in the oil industry. What’s more, they met the needs of both visitors and exhibitors, and kept the whole thing in Aberdeen.”

Management had spotted what was keeping visitors awake at night and worked with exhibitors to sell this local expertise internationally.

## Shows must reflect visitor needs which change as the market develops and the global industry matures

Show model analysis – example based on global manufacturing

	Conference	Focused	Horizontal	Innovation	One to one
Market stage	Emerging	Developing	Maturing	Maturing/mature	Maturing/Dature
Show Geography	National	National	Regional	Regional/national	Regional/national
Visitor needs	Supplier appraisal	Supplier selection	Build supplier relationships	Information	Peer relationships
Typical size (m2)	~ 1,000	2-15,000	10-150,000	5-50,000	2,000+
Show critical success factors	Information	Key accounts attract visitors	Key accounts attract visitors	Innovative solutions and information	Seniority of visitors

Source: AMR analysis