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## CRAFTING BRAND EXPERIENCES

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No. 5 • 2025

### The Power of Experiential Marketing

by Exhibitus



# THE POWER OF EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING

Marketing is evolving. Brands are paying attention. Experiential marketing is recognized as an important key to building customer relationships and success that follows.

But what gives these experiences their mighty impact? Creating the memories that connect to customers and building brand awareness. Experiential marketers understand the power behind human behavior that triggers emotional connections. Using these “super powers” can transform a simple product demonstration into a multi-sensory experience with the noise a brand needs to be seen, to be heard and to be felt.

## THE POWER OF HUMAN CONNECTION

Face-to-face human contact evolved as a precious commodity after living in the sterile world of the COVID pandemic. Humans crave connectivity, along with the emotional ties that interactions create. According to PQ Media<sup>1</sup> research, in 2022 - 2026 the experiential marketing spend will outpace overall U.S. advertising and marketing spend by 3-6 percentage points. Experiential marketing events provide in-depth engagement with customers, and offer more significant returns in terms of awareness, loyalty and financial success.



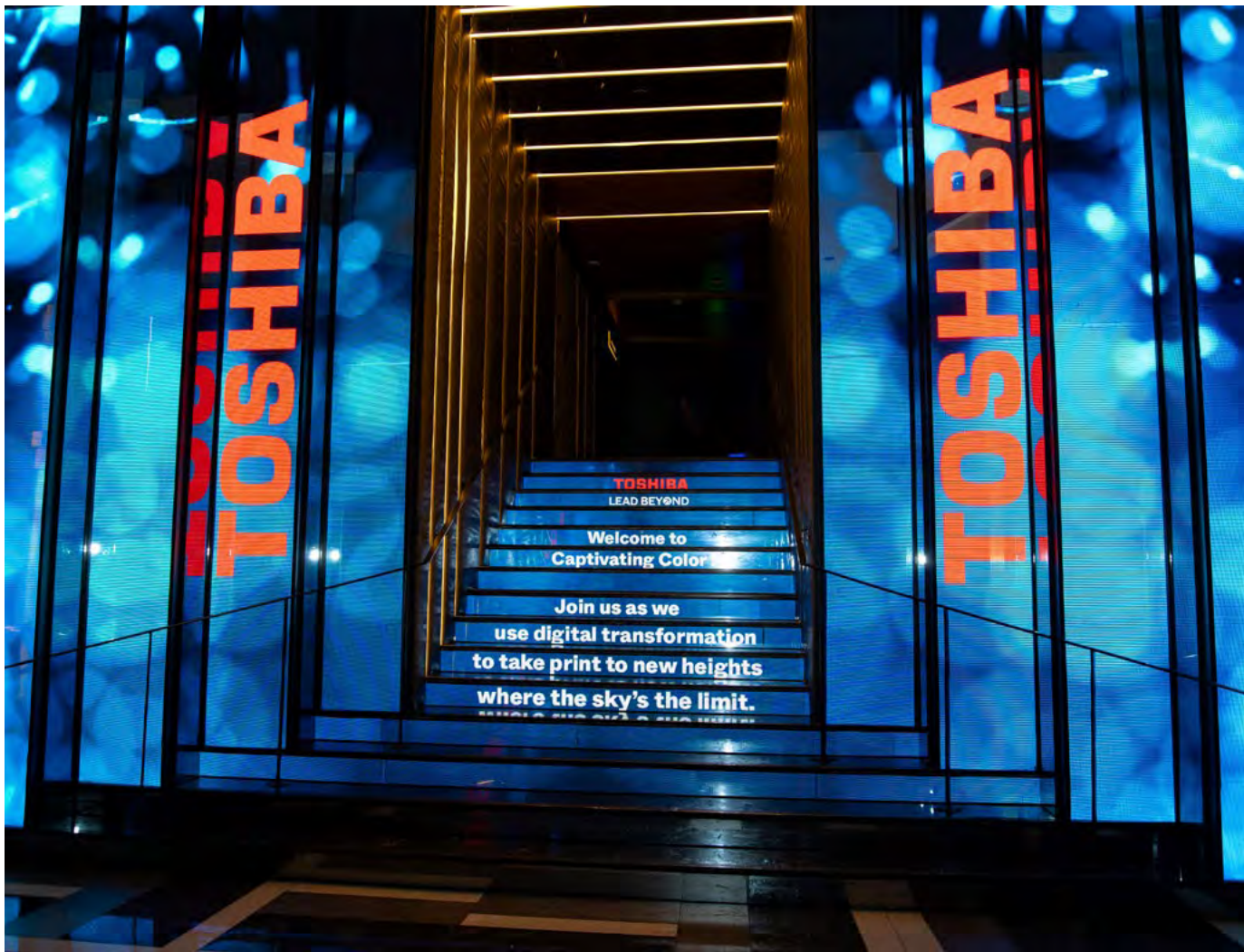
*click to watch on Vimeo*

<sup>1</sup> PD Media, “Global Experiential Marketing Forecast 2022-2026”

## Toshiba America Business Solutions, Inc. LEAD Beyond Conference and Exhibition

LEAD Beyond is Toshiba's award-winning dealer show. Dealers, partners, and customers experienced the latest technology and discussed future strategy in Las Vegas. Centered around an interactive product fair, featuring Toshiba products and solutions within vertical market spaces, the event was an opportunity to demonstrate how Toshiba is helping businesses overcome workplace challenges.

Multiple events rounded out this conference: breakout sessions, a thought-leadership breakfast discussing employee hiring & retention, motivational keynote address, press dinner and sneak-peek product fair tour, VIP up-close magic event, and sponsor/vendor dinner. All providing a conducive atmosphere for sharing best practices and connecting through shared experiences.





## THE POWER OF BRAND

Every brand has a voice. A voice that goes beyond a catchy slogan or a clever logo. A voice that in today's competitive world is the sound of a personality with a defined value. This is the noise that resonates, fosters an emotional connection and builds trust and loyalty with the right audience. A well-tuned brand voice can transform interactions into memorable experiences, driving engagement and long-term success.

The force of a brand is the collective trust, loyalty and respect customers have for that brand. It starts with curiosity, a willingness to try something new and discover its value. It shouts the foundational promise of "we understand, we've got your back."

The avenues to brand power are numerous and complex. The first step is to understand the unique value proposition, or brand identity, that sets the brand apart. Creating messages to promote that identity follows. But moving these messages into the world needs a strategy with a forward direction that transforms the curious into brand loyalists.



*click to watch on Vimeo*

### Snowflake

Snowflake's message to organizations using Data Cloud is "we've got your data covered." Bringing this sense of comfort to an event has always been the company's primary goal. Second to that, the company wants its playful, relationship-focused culture to entice attendees to join the fun in their beautiful winter-wonderland chalet.

A ski jump simulator did the trick. Participants could feel the jolt of jumping off of a ski jump and landing down the mountain. The length of the jump was controlled by ski poles that the guests used to create the jump on the video monitor. A leader board tracked the daily top scores of the competitive field. Winners received a “snowflake” branded stuffed snowman as their prize at the end of each day.



 A digital leaderboard for the snowflake ski jump simulator. The screen displays the following information:
 

snowflake LEADERBOARD		
1st	403.57 ft	M. Yamana
2nd	339.52 ft	N. Nguyen
3rd	335.48 ft	K. Matsumoto
4th	334.50 ft	F. Kolke
5th	333.78 ft	I. Pena
6th	332.50 ft	D. Walker
7th - 15th		
8th	325.00 ft	S. Galkawad
9th	312.15 ft	R. Khamar
10th	296.30 ft	A. Mont
11th	276.60 ft	J. Sousa
12th	206.16 ft	A. Gupta
13th	120.26 ft	J. Joshi
14th	099.01 ft	T. Lorenz
15th	086.80 ft	K. O'Sullivan



## THE POWER OF IMMERSION

Immersive technologies merge the physical world with a digital or simulated reality, creating distinct experiences that surprise and amaze long after an event.



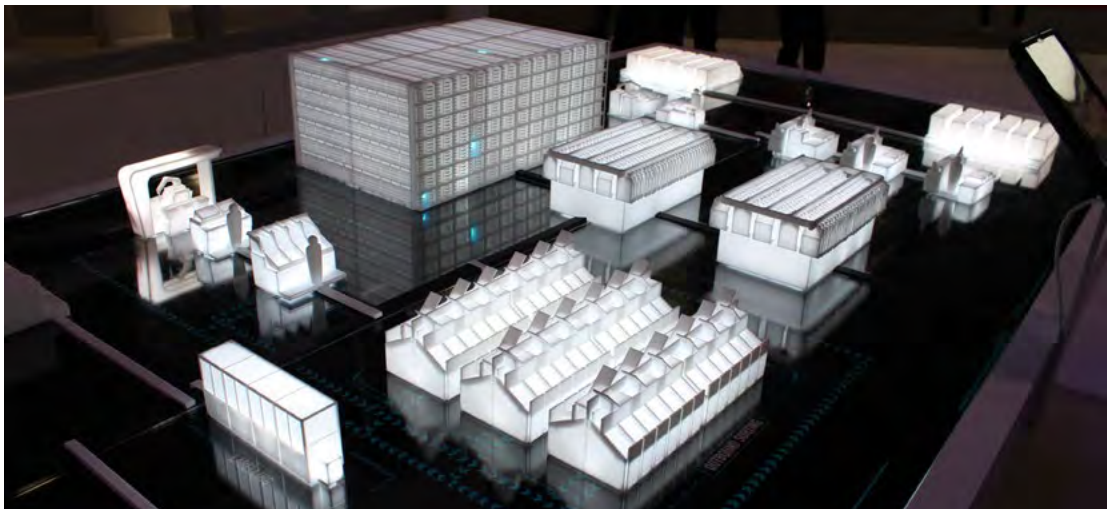
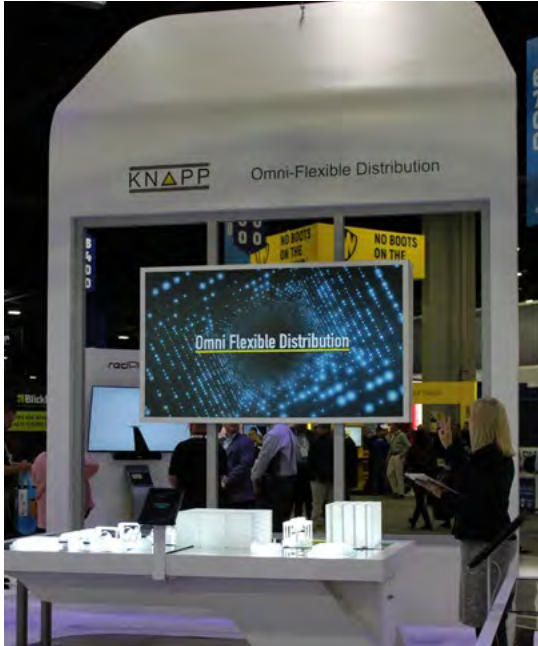
*click to watch on Vimeo*

**KNAPP created the perfect experience to set itself apart from the competition by demonstrating the urgent need for intelligent, software-driven value chains at Modex.**

Three brightly lit, 3D models of state-of-the-art fulfillment centers created an immersive gathering place in the center of the exhibit. Three types of engagement were supported:

- 1:ONE - self-driven individual experiences.
- 1:FEW - rep-led experiences for small groups.
- 1:MANY - a formal presentation to communicate the brand story to large crowds.

The miniature fulfillment centers were displayed on a media-clad tabletop. An iPad controlled each immersive experience. Compelling text narratives advanced the stories, supported by dynamic digital content on the tabletop, the iPads and the surrounding monitors. Automation components lit up in highly-choreographed, precisely-timed sequences that demonstrated intelligent, software-driven fulfillment in action.



## THE POWER OF CHANGE

Think about it. A little over a decade ago, social media was just coming onto the scene. Companies had a vague sense that outlets like Facebook and LinkedIn could have future value, but commitment of marketing dollars was scarce. In today's world, whole departments of digital experts now support the many social platforms critical to everyday operations.

This type of significant change is happening in most aspects of life. Customers feel the change and change is scary. Brands that tap into the positive power of change with experiences that break through the anxiety and chaos will reap the rewards of customers who embrace the brand into the future.



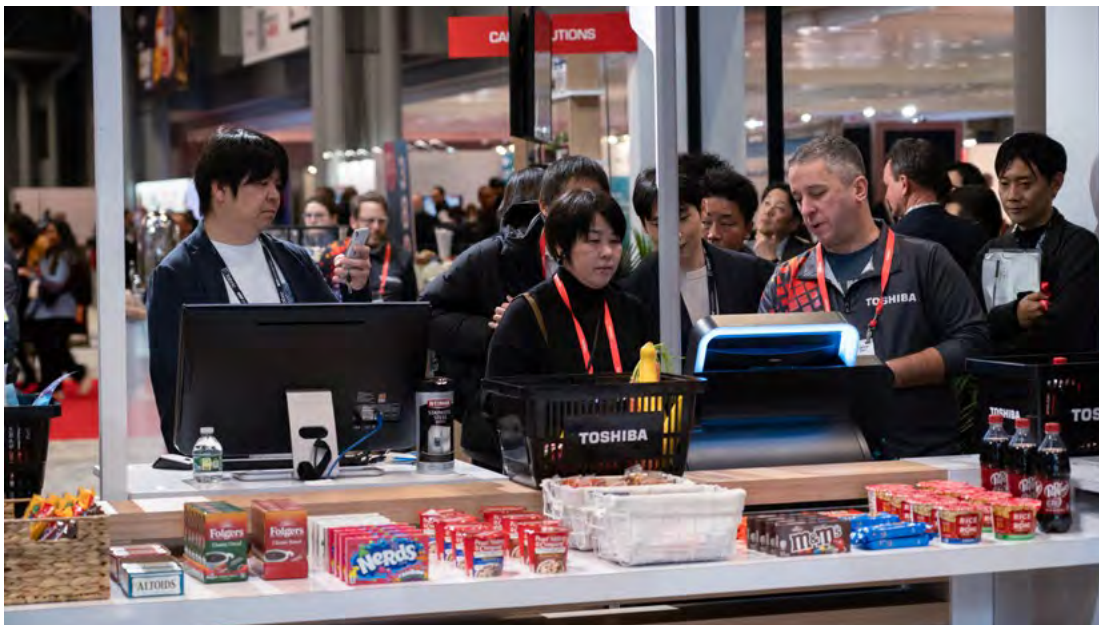
*[click to watch on Vimeo](#)*

### Toshiba Global Commerce Solutions

*With new innovations, YOU have the power to reimagine retail. YOU have the technology to combine physical and digital shopping into a single unified retail experience that delivers meaningful, personalized interactions with each shopper.*

Retailers dream of end-to-end solutions that include loss prevention and item recognition at every step. Toshiba's Global Commerce Solutions new frictionless systems does just that. Powered by artificial intelligence and computer vision, the ELERA® commerce platform is modular, composable, connected, and unifies touchpoints, devices, applications, data, and more to enable retailers to adapt quickly as retail expectations change.

At the National Retail Federation (NRF), attendees enrolled with a facial recognition application that allowed entrance to a pathway through a demo environment that demonstrated use cases including: shopper store entry, shopper crowd count, item and weight pickup-and-return tracking, dynamic pricing and much more. This story also was presented on both large-format graphics on the exterior of the booth, as well as on large monitor arrays inside the booth and on a 50-foot-wide LED display on the front of the booth with internally-developed, custom animated content that presented the story and brand in a big way to attendees.



## THE POWER OF NARRATIVE

Storytelling is a powerful tool for building brands. Humans are naturally drawn to narratives.

Effective brand storytelling connects with customers on an emotional level by conveying your brand's values, mission, and the impact you strive to make.

Here are some elements of effective brand storytelling:

- A relatable protagonist who faces a challenge.
- A clear goal or desire.
- A connection to your brand's values and how it helps the protagonist overcome the challenge.
- An emotional payoff that leaves the audience feeling inspired or hopeful.



*Integrating a well-known story into your own is a powerful short-cut to emotional ties to your brand. WIZ, a cybersecurity company, played off the Wizard of Oz to tell the story of the wizardry that runs behind the curtain to keep computer technology safe for businesses.*

## THE POWER OF PLAY

Infusing your exhibit with playful energy appeals to your audience's sense of fun and builds an emotional connection. Adding in a brand relevant prize reinforces your brand values and creates a lasting memory. For its US market debut, Hycor revamped its brand identity and exhibit strategy with "Angry Allergens," a gamified engagement and lead capture system that drove attendees through their dual exhibit spaces.



*click to watch on Vimeo*

HYCOR Biomedical is an American corporation specializing in the manufacture and supply of high-quality in vitro diagnostic products for blood testing.

At AACC 21, due to unusual circumstances, the company ended up with two trade show spaces, one 30'x30' and one 10'x10', with the smaller in a central location while the larger space was in a part of the exhibit hall that typically did not enjoy significant traffic.

The smaller booth was perfect for luring attendees to the larger booth. To accomplish this, Exhibitus designed and developed a game based on the popular computer game Angry Birds. The Hycor game was called Angry Allergens.

After completing the game, attendees had to go to the larger booth to find out where their score ranked on the leaderboard and pick up their prize. Once there, Hycor representatives could engage attendees and demonstrate product solutions.

The game was a fun way to draw crowds to the larger exhibit where the true business interactions could occur. This creative approach turned what could have been an unproductive event into a true trade show success.

According to Hycor’s marketing team, “The Angry Allergen game was unlike anything you saw on the exhibit floor, people kept coming back to beat the highest score.”

## THE PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND BRAND LOYALTY

*“My mother has used Tide® laundry detergent for 40 years.”*

*“I only wear Nike running shoes.”*

*“Apple devices are the apple of my eye.”*

Brand loyalty is easy to spot. But why with so many choices do we stick with what we know and profess to love? The answer lies in understanding the art of influence. The art of influence is based on a combination of factors, including principles of persuasion, leadership competencies, and emotional intelligence. For brand loyalty, four psychological factors are at play:

**Consistent Experiences** – Every interaction with a brand should be a positive experience, creating an expectation of high quality in the future.

**Emotional Connections** – Emotionally invested customers feel a sense of belonging to a brand and its values, creating a bond between them. This bond strengthens loyalty and increases the chances of repeat business.

**Trust** – This is the cornerstone of business. Quality, reliability and transparency are drivers of trust.

**Community** – Create a strong sense of belonging. A brand that focuses on building a community is more than just a means of generating sales; it’s a way of giving back and making a positive impact on people’s lives.

## GETTING TO THE NOISE

It’s showtime. You now understand the value of a memorable event and you are ready for your brand to speak loudly. You’ve created immersive, real-world experiences to engage your target audience. It didn’t happen overnight. A complex web of strategic thought and actions guided the planning and preparation.

### Define your goals

Clearly outline your objectives, such as increasing brand awareness, improving customer loyalty, or launching a new product.

### Integrate human emotions

Humans crave connectivity, along with the emotional ties that interactions create.

FEEL - Humans make decisions based on emotion first. We want to be moved by tapping into our hearts and souls.

THINK - How best to be in the minds of your audience. What do we want that thought to be? What's the most effective way for your brand to be and stay top-of-mind?

KNOW - What's the take-away? What are the two-to-three key aspects of your brand you want your audience to always remember?

DO - What's the action? What interaction will resonate and drive desired actionable behavior?

## Know Your Audience

Understanding your target audience is vital for crafting brand experiences that truly connect. Who are they? What are their needs, desires, pain points? What do they currently know about your brand?

There are several ways to develop profiles of targets for your brand.

- **Surveys:** An online survey is a cost-effective way to gather data from a large sample group.
- **Focus Groups:** Facilitate in-depth discussions with a smaller group to gain deeper understanding of customer motivations and perspectives.
- **Social Media Analysis:** Analyze online conversations to understand how your target audience talks about your industry and related topics.

These methods, along with creating buyer personas - detailed profiles of your ideal customers - will help you tailor the brand experience to resonate with specific audience segments.

## Find Your Place

Trade Shows, Exhibitions, Conferences - Businesses showcase their products and services to a large group of potential customers, partners, and industry professionals, often with educational opportunity.

### Brand-focused events

- **Product launch** - An introduction to new products or services to the market, often accompanied by demonstrations and presentations.
- **Brand activation** - Involves events, campaigns, or experiences that allow a brand to directly interact with its target audience.
- **VIP dinner** - Thank-you event for existing customers to build loyalty, often featuring exclusive perks and interactions.
- **Pop-up events** - Temporary, often short-term events designed to create a sense of urgency and exclusivity for a brand.
- **Roadshows** - A series of events held in different locations to reach a broader target audience, often involving product demonstrations and presentations.

Sponsorship and Partnership Events - Events where brand sponsors or partners with another organization to reach a defined audience, often tied to sports, arts, or community events.

Community Events - Local events, such as charity run, aimed at engaging with the community.

## **PROMOTE YOUR BRAND - BUILD COMMUNITY**

Successfully promoting your brand experience requires a thoughtful, multi-channel strategy, integrating various platforms to maximize your reach, and engage a broad audience:

- **Social Media:** Utilize platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn for real-time interaction. These are ideal for sharing brand stories, hosting live events, and encouraging immediate audience engagement.
- **Email Marketing:** This remains a powerful tool for delivering personalized content and maintaining continuous customer relationships. Regular, anticipated newsletters and exclusive offers help keep your brand top-of-mind.
- **Influencer Partnerships:** Collaborate with influencers who resonate with your brand's values. Their authentic content can make your brand more relatable and appealing to their dedicated followers.

Another vital component is encouraging User-Generated Content, which enhances authenticity and builds excitement. Customers sharing their positive experiences can influence others and strengthen community ties.

## **KNOW THE BENEFITS**

By now you realize that the benefits of experiential marketing are different depending on facts such as the brand's current place in the market, goals for customer interactions and the need for long-term brand loyalty. Here are five examples of how your brand can benefit from a defined and perfectly executed experiential marketing strategy:

### Build Brand Awareness

No matter what market you are in, your prospective and current customers are likely inundated with options. Help your brand stand out by developing a strategy that focuses on how to best build your brand's presence before, during, and after each event. Don't forget to gather data that confirms the engagement influence and reveals the next steps forward to greater loyalty.

### Escalate Engagement

No matter the type of event, interactions between company and customers are key. Engagement opportunities ensure company reps have a way to meet, greet and secure lasting relationships.

### Spread a Buzz

Do your research! Know what types of engagements appeal to this specific target audience. Then add the WOW factor to capture attention. Options are plentiful. Vibrant colors, intricate texture, free-flowing design, eye-catching lighting, and compelling

technology – all are ways to use a fusion of creativity to translate the essence of your brand. And remember, keep it fresh, relevant and memorable from event to event.

### *Be a Thought Leader*

The more customers interact with your brand, the more they come to trust what you have to offer. Capture your target's imagination through social media and informative, useful content. You want customers to think of your brand as a thought leader, boosting your expert quota and influence throughout the market.

### *Grow Sales and Leads*

Don't forget the ultimate goal: long-term financial success. Research demonstrates that brands who engage in innovative ways with their customers experience an increase in growth when they host more events. Measure the return with the metrics that show the value for investment at each event.

*What noise does your brand make? Do your targets hear its unique pitch, the special tone of its sound? Does brand value ring loudly across the marketplace? Through memorable experiences it can. Awareness and loyalty follow from experiences crafted around sight, smell, taste, and most importantly, emotions that inspire. Be seen. Be heard. Be felt. How? Partner with Exhibitus, an agency dedicated to delivering experiences that shout a story for your brand.*



**exhibitus®**

## **CRAFTING BRAND EXPERIENCES**

Exhibitus is an award-winning experiential marketing agency offering strategy, creative, digital, activation, exhibit design and fabrication. We partner with clients to produce innovative engagements and event measurement programs that are brand and audience centric. Driven by our philosophy that “Design Matters,” our marketing programs connect, engage, and inspire audiences to help drive your business forward.

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