

NRHA All-Industry

Convention Takes **VEGAS** by **Storm**

Social Media
Seminars, Awards
Programs Highlight
this Year's Event

This year, the North American Retail Hardware Association (NRHA) decided to chart a new course when it came to its annual All-Industry Convention. To provide even more value to the retailers in attendance, the NRHA All-Industry Convention was held concurrently with the National Hardware Show® and the International Hardware Association (IHA) Congress in Las Vegas so attendees had the luxury of spending their mornings listening in on informative seminars and roundtable discussions at the convention held at Bellagio hotel and spending their afternoons shopping the National Hardware Show floor. And with a seminar lineup that included topics like generational marketing and a whole day dedicated to social media and internet marketing, this year's convention was money and time well spent for all of the attendees. Check out some of the highlights from the convention below.

Generational Differences, Evolving Marketing Methods Discussed

Jim Welch, of The Growth Leader, Inc. kicked off the NRHA All-Industry Convention with a discussion on the secrets to marketing success during his seminar, "Winning through Generational Marketing." During his seminar, Welch touched on a variety of key generational factors that every retailer should keep in mind when target marketing to specific generations. For example, millennials are heavily influenced by their friends and family and are less loyal to one specific company or brand whereas Generation Xers are more honest and direct and are unimpressed by authority.

In "Differentiating Your Business in Today's Changing Retail Environment,"

Phil Mitchell of Discovery-Based Retail provided his audience with a number of ways retailers can develop a profitable marketing plan. One of the first steps in developing a successful marketing plan is by determining how your store is branded, explains Mitchell. Branding can come both from the way your company has branded itself and how its customers have branded the store (both positively and negatively). Mitchell also briefly discussed the ways retailers can use advertising to promote their brand, and while marketing is designed to stick, advertising is more difficult to make memorable. Advertising is also dependent on timing—essentially the product you are offering to your customers must be administered in a timely fashion and

there also needs to be return on investment for advertising efforts.

Social Media, Internet Marketing on Topic for Convention Workshop Series

Facebook, Twitter, email and web marketing represent the new face of advertising. These evolving media were the hot topics for discussion during the workshop series at this year's convention.

In the seminar, "How Facebook Can Grow Your Brand and Business," retailer panelists Karen Ruedisueli from Eymer Duchane Ace Hardware in Oscoda, Mich., and Chris Hughes of Hardware Plus in Osceola, Ind., provided their insights. During the panel discussion, members of the audience asked a variety of questions regarding



The Young Retailer of the Year awards ceremony was one of the most heavily attended events at this year's convention.



NRHA's Retail Innovators hailed from across the U.S. and Canada.

how retailers can use the social media to increase traffic. Ruedisueli and Hughes agreed that Facebook is a great way to provide a face and a name to their stores, thereby helping them stand out from the big boxes.

"Using Twitter to Develop New Friends and New Customers," focused on how retailers can use the site to build their brands and attract new customers to their stores. Retail panelists Patrick O'Neil from Bellevue Builder's Supply in Schenectady, N.Y., and Jill Tirone from Evans Ace Hardware in Grand Island, N.Y., both discussed their Twitter tactics and how they have paid off for their store.

Tirone said her secret to Twitter success is making her store's account more personal. "Striking a good balance is the key to success," she says. "If you are just putting out an automatic tweet, users are going to notice and they will stop following you."

To finish off the workshop series, attendees listened in on the "Internet and Email Marketing: How to Do it Successfully in Your Store." Retailer panelists Bridget Barnes from Ace Barnes Hardware in Ann Arbor, Mich., and Andrew Massey from R. Massey & Son in Swadincote, U.K., discussed how they have created functional and profitable websites for their stores.

Barnes explained the main focus for her website was to not only provide the critical information like location, hours, and phone number, but to also promote her store's Red Hot Buys and circulars

online. Also, to increase traffic and to track her ROI, Barnes hosts online specials and e-coupons available only to customers who have visited the website.

NRHA Honors its 2011 Retail Innovators

Also at the NRHA All-Industry Convention, NRHA honored its 2011 Retail Innovators. During the third Annual Retail Innovator Awards ceremony, sponsored by Vermont American, attendees listened in on how this year's innovators are changing the face of the home improvement industry.

This year's honorees included:

- **Rick Karp** of Cole Hardware in San Francisco.
- **Allison Kilby and Gary, Glen and Dean Thulin** of Pioneer Home Hardware in British Columbia, Canada.
- **Emily Walsh** of Walsh's Ace Hardware in Richland Center, Wis.

The 2011 Young Retailers of the Year

For the past 15 years, NRHA has been recognizing the next generation of retailers through the Young Retailer of the Year awards program. NRHA welcomed a new class of retailers during the Young Retailer of the Year Reception and Awards Ceremony. While NRHA typically only extends awards to retailers in the U.S. and Canada, this year's recipients included international retailers.

This year's class included retailers from around the world, including England, France and China:

Jeremy Haskins

Store manager of J&H Hardware
Bellow Falls, Vt.

Rob Ferraro

Manager of Jerry's Paint & Hardware
Narragansett, R.I.

Conrad LeBlanc

Owner of Tediche Home Hardware
Building Centre
Cap-Pele, New Brunswick, Canada

Suzanne Musto Carrara

Owner/partner of two
Ace Hardware stores
New Jersey

Jeffrey Peters

Owner of Jack's Home
Improvement Center
Wiggins, Miss.

Andrew Massey

R. Massey & Son Ltd.
United Kingdom

Vincent Gerard

Gerard et Peysson
France

Lu Yongjia

Huabei Area
Hardware Retail Market
Tianjin, China

For more coverage from this year's NRHA All-Industry Convention and IHA Congress, visit www.nrha.org. ➔