Packaging Smarts

Advice for better, smarter, more cost-effective packaging decisions

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Trade Shows – Live versus Virtual

The annual Sweets & Snacks Expo is returning as a live trade show in 2021. The Covid-19 pandemic caused this show and most others to cancel in 2020. Some shows took advantage of new technology to conduct "virtual" shows while the pandemic was at its peak. This begs the question: Which type of show is better – live or virtual?

For Exhibitors

Benefits of Virtual Shows

- Lower cost to exhibit. No travel costs, booth set-up, utilities, etc.
- Lower staffing costs.
- More quality time with each "visitor"
- Opportunity to take advantage of technology in demonstrating product.

Drawbacks

- Limited "traffic". In live shows, many "passers-by" become customers.
- Inability to look at competitors exhibits, new product offerings, etc.
- Inability to effectively sample products.
- No way to socially engage booth visitors.

For Attendees

Benefits of Virtual Shows

- More efficient use of time.
- No travel costs.
- Ability to have more in depth conversations with vendors.

Drawbacks

- No opportunity to "walk the show and window shop" for new ideas or suppliers.
- Must make appointment to talk to vendor.
- No ability to live sample consumable products.
- Limited ability to collect literature, product fact sheets, etc. from a wide variety of vendors.
- Inability to socialize/network with others in the industry at live expo events.

The Covid pandemic has taught all of us to function differently and to make the most of technology. Trade shows will continue to be important to many companies and industries.

We expect that live and virtual shows will continue to co-exist.