



Catalog Managers Sharpen their Edge at NCMA

Vertical Development was one of the many companies involved in this year's NCMA Conference. It was one of the best conferences we've attended – packed with knowledge sessions, roundtable discussions, industry information and presentations from industry leaders such as AAIA President/CEO Kathleen Schmatz. Not only did Kathleen share AAIA's latest initiatives, but she also summarized the success of this \$294 billion industry.

It was interesting to see that 57% of the companies attending NCMA this year had catalog system partners like Vertical Development, who represented 31% of the companies attending, while another 11% of the companies implemented an internally developed system. Only 32% of those attending have not implemented a system at this time. That's a big difference from just five years ago, when 52% of the companies attending NCMA had no system at all. We credit this huge change to NCMA's educational efforts.

Kicking off the conference's general session was Robert Morris of AAIA who covered recent technology standards, ACES and PIES progress and future plans for these and other industry initiatives. It was followed by Jon Rubich's presentation demonstrating how category management ties into ACES, PIES and everyday business.

Among the very informative knowledge sessions were discussions on successful implementations of the latest industry standards; a demonstration by Activant, CSK and Dorman Products' eData manager on real-world examples of standards implementation and NPD's discussion of integrating standards with sales data to improve business. Other sessions covered standards implementation; how ACES and PIES can be tied into TecDoc, the European data format; an update on medium and heavy vehicles and integrating R.L. Polk Vehicle in Operation data with ACES to improve business.

One of the conference's highlights was the "Charting a Course Into the Future" presentation made by the "Receivers Group" – a team of industry powerhouses including Activant, Advance Auto, AutoZone, Carquest, CSK, NAPA, O'Reilly and WHI Solutions. NCMA participants heard first-hand about ACES and PIES implementation timetables, and ongoing initiatives to develop a single delivery format for AAIA Legacy application files and a PIES flat file delivery format for delivering interchange data. An announcement is expected soon that the ACES VCdb is complete and meets the Receivers Group's needs.

MORE

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This year's trade show allowed NCMA Members to visit with vendors providing catalog management systems, data management, fulfillment, mapping, printing, pricing, research, typesetting and more. Several e-Cat companies like Activant and WHI Solutions demonstrated how application information is displayed in their products.

The NCMA conference concluded with the annual presentation of NCMA President's Awards for Catalog Excellence. These awards recognize companies who have achieved excellence in electronic cataloging as well as traditional paper catalogs. Vertical Development would like to congratulate our clients including Wells Manufacturing (Airtex Engine Management) for winning the 2006-07 President's Award for Paper Catalog Excellence. We'd also like to congratulate our clients who won President's Awards for Electronic Data Excellence including ATP, Inc. (presented by ams Computer Group), KYB (presented by CARQUEST), Rayloc (presented by NAPA) and Autopart International (presented by WHI Solutions).

Award winning catalogs are just a few of the benefits of working with Vertical Development. For a FREE consultation on how to improve your catalog and product management processes with Vertical Development, please contact Ron Garand at 847-609-9540 or e-mail him at rgarand@verticaldev.com.

About NCMA

Founded in 1973, the National Catalog Managers Association provides practical information, professional contacts and priceless insight into the successful management of catalog marketing efforts. NCMA is the only organization dedicated exclusively to the interests of automotive aftermarket catalog managers. The association consists of catalog, product management and marketing professionals from manufacturers, distributors and retailers. For additional information visit www.ncmacat.org