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TPMA and Trade Promotion Industry Leaders Converge on Second Life

TPMA Hosts Virtual Forum to Showcase Best Practices, Highlight Customer Centric Retail Strategies, and how to Position Trade Promotion Programs for the Recovery.

PARSIPPANY, NJ, February 3, 2009 – The Trade Promotion Management Associates (TPMA) (www.tpmaww.com) today hosted the industry's first Virtual Workshop on Second Life, with 160 registered attendees from manufacturing, retail, industry analyst firms, media and service provider companies. The event focused on ways that consumer goods manufacturers and retailers can collaborate in today's economy to ensure, as one speaker, Blake Watts of Plan4Demand, put it, "win-win situations for the retailer, manufacturer and consumer. "

"We were extremely pleased with the level of interaction, attendance and discussion during our Second Life conference today," said TPMA CEO Diane Berry. "It was a truly immersive experience and our attendees stayed for the entire three hour session – much longer than most traditional webinars. Our speakers stimulated important discussions about how both retailers and manufacturers can and should capture market share during the current economy, place the consumer at the center of their businesses, and collaborate for the best interest of both trading partners."

Workshop speakers included these trade promotion experts:

Peter Eschenburg of Hitachi Consulting discussed the importance of building trust between the retailer and manufacturer to facilitate collaboration, and that this can be done through issues and processes, advocacy (of your trading partner), disclosure (of information), and access (to the right individuals).

Harris Fogel of O4, a TPMA Advisory Board member, noted that it is just as important to collaborate internally as it is externally with trading partners. "Find the interdependencies within your organizations," he told manufacturers in the audience, "as well as with your trading partners. Where does your business intersect with that of your trading partner? Understand the goals and objectives that you both have – internally and externally."

Jim Nadler of afterBOT said that customer centricity, "must inform every decision that a retailer makes. They must all be in the interest of the consumer. If we do the right thing for the consumer, it will be the right thing for the retailer, and in the end, it will be the right thing for the supplier community."

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Tom Strubel of Oracle noted that, “demand driven customer centric strategies will provide the power to sell more with less—particularly in the extreme economic conditions we are facing today.”

Phil Conner of IAB Solutions said that manufacturers and retailers must be, “uncommon in their thinking. Don’t think in a transactional manner, but one that is systemic. Loyal customers are the greatest asset and the cost of replacing one is arguably 100 times the cost of replacing a great employee.”

Lauren Robinette of Cisco said that channel promotion spend in the downturn requires close examination of the types of products a company markets and the buyers they market to. She noted that “learn and earn” strategies for more complex products that require explanation at the point of sale can be a strategic way to spend trade dollars to ensure higher sell-through.

Armen Najarian of DemandTec exhorted manufacturers not to cut their trade spend-to-sales ratios, as cutting back would be a tough sell to retailers who have suffered from increases in commodity costs that they have been unable to pass on to the consumer. Rather, he recommended that trade promotion practitioners, “shift tactics, from volume incentives to performance-based promotions.”

Chris Wiesen of SAP said that tough times are when, “good companies separate themselves from the pack. Visibility into promotions and promotional effectiveness will help these companies eliminate programs that aren’t working, and focus their dollars on those that work well.”

“This was a great event,” said Bob Houk, Executive Director of TPMA and the moderator of the panel discussions. “Our panelists presented great content, and the content was delivered in an environment that was itself a learning experience for both the speakers and the attendees. And,” he added, “it was a lot of fun.”

TPMA (www.tpmaww.com) is the only organization dedicated specifically to the practice of trade promotion marketing in all its forms – co-op/MDF, in-store marketing, online promotion, rebates, pricing, slotting, and all the other practices of trade promotion. TPMA fosters, promotes and provides platforms for collaboration in the trading partner relationship. TPMA is a think-tank and educational resource for Consumer Goods Trading Partners, and publisher of the online magazine, *Journal of Trading Partner Practices* (www.tpjournal.com), and the weekly newsletter, *TPMA Outlook*. TPMA corporate members include Hormel, Dial, Del Monte, ConAgra Goods, Hewlett-Packard, Nintendo, Land O’Lakes and Johnson & Johnson and many more.

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