



The exception to the rule: Visitors literally came from all over the UK to visit the boat show at Excel

still able to get exhibitors in front of buyers, and this is essentially what an organiser's job is.

Thinking about the Royal Bath and West showground against the NEC. There is no comparison of the populations in terms of density. But that is not what we are looking for. What we want to know is, are there enough people who live in the gravitation zone of the Royal Bath and West showground to justify placing an event here, bearing in mind what we know about the average socio-demographic structure of a show audience? Centaur clearly believes so, and so do all of the other organisers who choose to locate their events there. The same applies to Harrogate, whether we are looking at the Great Yorkshire Showground, or the city centre venue

The one thing we can guarantee, is that without these regional shows the Centaur penetration of the Homebuilders and Renovation market would be significantly smaller, and there would be a potential audience that they would not be reaching.

If we look at Emap Active, they have motorcycle shows in London and at the SECC, and they also have weekend events held at Butlins. This creates revenue, keeps them in contact with their market and gives exhibitors more hits at the marketplace.

Looking at trade shows, we have recently conducted research in a market where we have investigated the reduced attendance at a show. In doing this, we found that many of the more senior members of the target audience have taken to

attending locally-based, niche events. This is because exhibitors travel to them, rather than exhibitors having travelled to them. Interestingly, the organiser of the smaller regional events has been able to occupy the space of knowledge and expertise, which the national event has failed to achieve.

"The London Boat Show is the only event we have ever worked with that has someone from every postcode in the United Kingdom, including the Outer Hebrides."

We have been able to identify what the organiser needs to do in terms of the shape and structure of the event, and how the brand must be developed to win back market share. However,

importantly we have also identified new routes to market through a regional product that can add value to the core product, and importantly to the core brand.

I have always thought that a successful show concept should be transferable from London to the NEC, to GMEX and to the SECC. Or indeed, vice versa. But, now I feel that organisers need to open up their thinking and explore not just venue, but format.

If a national show works, should a regional event or a regional road show work? The short answer is yes, the model can work, because smaller organisers are doing it right know.

The key here is the structure of the business and the business model the organiser works to, and a new way of thinking. It is probably unlikely that there will be a World Travel Market at the Royal Bath and West in the near future. But for the right event, a new world and incremental earning opportunity awaits. The only thing stopping you may be rigid adherence to a business model.

Remember this: most press barons have made more money from their local titles, than from their national flagship.