



## **Event Measurement: An Interview with Rick Borovoy**

**Rick Borovoy, CTO of nTAG, has pioneered real time event networking and technology. We recently had an insightful conversation with Rick about results-driven events and how technology is changing the event industry.**

**Rick, the event industry is more focused than ever on efficiency, measurement and event results. Lately we've heard about Event Data Management. Can you define that term for us and how it can help the industry bring more value to events?**

Event Data Management (EDM) solutions enable event organizers to collect, store and analyze event information to determine return on investment (ROI) and/or return on objectives (ROO). Event sponsor organizations are more focused on delivering results and getting the most out of their event budgets. They are no longer satisfied with simple attendance and attendee satisfaction reports. To show that their events are strategic to their organizations, they are looking for a broader and deeper set of metrics, such as: What activities ensure positive attendee experience and future attendance? Are there groups of attendees who are not finding value from the event, and how can we improve the event to reverse this? How many interactions are taking place between event sponsors and their target market, and how can we increase the number of interactions? Did attendees gain the level of knowledge that we expected?

In order to get this level of information, event organizers need a complete view of their event. Today's EDM systems are beginning to make this possible.

**What kind of data must be collected to get this expanded view into an event?**

I believe there are three critical types of data that must be collected and analyzed throughout the event: attendance, survey, and social networking.

Attendance data tracks where people spent their time during an event – which sessions they attended, which exhibit booths they visited, and how long they stayed. This data should be collected through an automated system that puts no burden on the attendee.

Survey data is collected from attendees on forms – ideally electronic ones that enable automatic, instant tabulation. Survey data can be used for everything from collecting feedback to educational testing to market research to lead qualification.

Social networking data shows who is connecting with whom. It can be used to build an anonymous picture of how many connections are occurring at what time and even which types of people are interacting. If I were hosting a user conference and one of my goals for the event was to get my financial services customers to interact with my product management team, the EDM system could show me whether or not those people were actually making those connections. An EDM system can collect that information based on a metric called “dwell time” -- how long people spend together-- and also based on electronic business card exchanges.

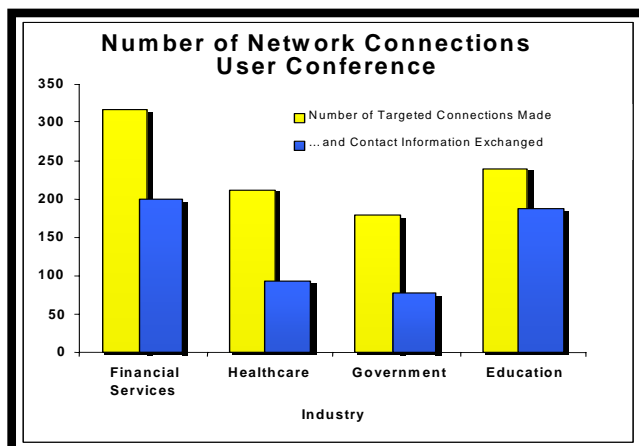


Figure 1 –Example of Social Networking Data



### How can an event organizer take full advantage of this information, to make important decisions about an event?

Unlike traditional approaches, a full-featured EDM system can combine the three data streams – social networking, attendance, and survey – with attendee profile information, to provide additional insights. For example, by combining network and survey data, the system can reveal what types of social connections drove attendees’ perception of event value (e.g. attendees who interacted with product engineers at a user conference rated the event more highly).

Crossing survey data with attendance and profile data can provide a clear picture of the performance of sessions. For instance, an event organizer can compare the demographic profile of the attendees at each session to determine which topics attract which types of attendees. Then the organizer can mix in the survey data to determine which groups found the most value in each session. By using the survey tool to ask which attendees would like follow-up from the speaker, the organizer can provide sponsors with highly qualified lead data. Combine attendance data with results from a questionnaire asking about intent to return next year and you can determine which sessions drive repeat visitors.

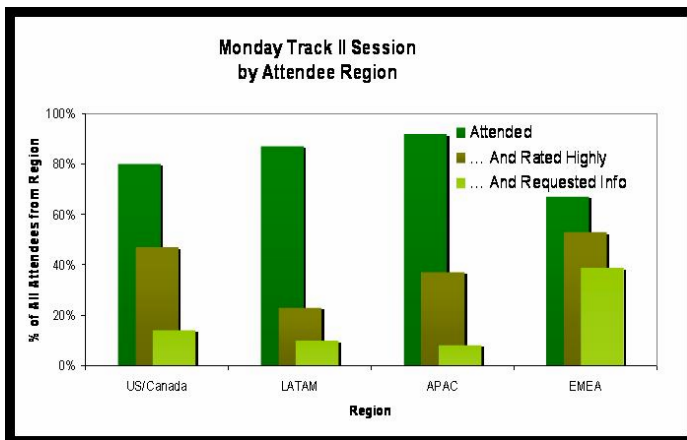


Figure 2 - Combined Attendance and Survey Data

### So the event organizer would also want to gather similar information for next year’s event?

Yes, absolutely. Another important EDM capability is cross-event data analysis. This analysis provides a summary of events that have taken place either year after year or month after month. For companies that host a multitude of events, the system can collect data from one event and use it to better the next event. With cross-event data, you are able to improve performance on-site at the event and from one event to another event. In addition, event data, including ROI, can be accumulated for all events within an industry. To be able to compare events across time and industry is extremely powerful.

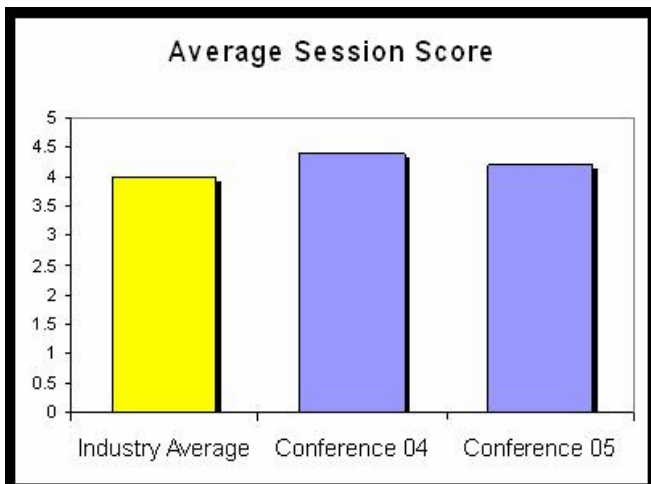


Figure 3 - Cross Event Data



**Rick, one last question: ROI (Return on Investment) reporting has become a top-level issue across the meetings business. Can EDM systems help?**

EDM is the key missing ingredient for meaningful ROI reporting. The “I” component has been solved for some time – most organizers have an excellent idea of what their events cost. But the “R” component has been much more difficult to pin down. Most organizers have a hard time quantifying what an event delivers beyond the usual satisfaction scores. That’s where EDM comes in. First, it’s important to clearly define your event objectives. Using reporting tools, an EDM system can then show you how well your objectives were met, how well you did compared to last year, and compared to other similar events in your industry. Finally, EDM can help you plan your next event to deliver even more value to your attendees and to your bottom line.