

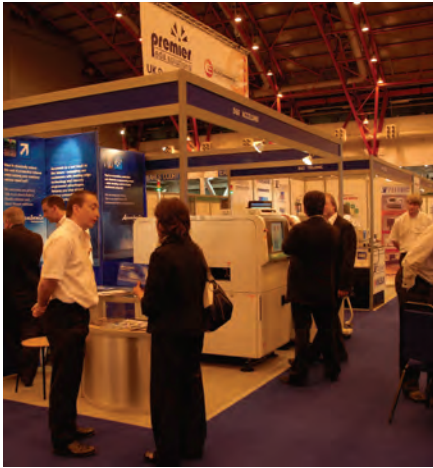
Social media helps electronics event negotiate industry's economic challenges

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Recently held at London's Earls Court, National Electronics Week (NEW) 2009 has been broadly hailed a success, triumphing against the odds of the current economic climate to generate plenty of interest and high quality leads. Supported by Protean Marketing, the show's high profile is being attributed in part to the integrated marketing specialist's expertise in new media as well as the continued growth and relevance of these communication tools.

Protean originally partnered with the NEW events team in 2007 to launch the 2008 show. The integrated marketing specialist took the start-up to a dominant market position in less than nine months, forcing a long-established rival show to withdraw from the sector completely and confirming NEW's position on the electronics industry's global event calendar. The launch campaign incorporated a number of integrated marketing disciplines; but proving particularly successful was a series of electronic marketing initiatives. Allowing Protean to precisely target prospects as visitors, as exhibitors or by market sector for example, a campaign of html email messages and e-newsletters generated an immediate and extremely positive response.

In 2009, NEW faced a different challenge; it was now an established show but needed to convince a more nervous electronics community of its relative importance to other competing budgetary demands in tough economic conditions. New media as an effective communications tool was more relevant than ever. Firstly, it is extremely cost-effective and allows for precision targeting of core messaging. Secondly, it complemented the rise of peer recommendation that economic conditions are rendering more important than ever. In addition to a comprehensive e-marketing campaign and conventional online presence, Protean also incorporated a social media strategy into the show's marketing activities. Contributing to a regular blog and establishing a presence on key social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, the team enabled direct interaction with prospects on a scale the show had never seen before.

By the time we got to the show, there was certainly a buzz surrounding it that was generated in part by the discussions taking place in social media forums," explains Protean Managing Director, Greg Robinson. "But in addition to building the profile of the show prior to its 2009 launch, forums such as Twitter enabled us to deliver instant updates during the event. For example, we could 're-tweet' exhibitor messages to followers - which included industry media and visitors - letting everyone know exactly what was happening on the stands, while posting photos direct from the show floor. The response from NEW followers was fantastic. Obviously, it's still early days for these technologies, but they are certainly useful examples of 'real world' business tools allowing for effective and useful interaction between individuals and brands. The opportunities presented are very exciting and we're looking forward to building on this for National Electronics Week in 2010.



Protean Marketing Communications Ltd is a comprehensive, business-to-business communications agency with offices in the UK, US and Asia. Founded in 1991, the company's integrated marketing and strategic branding expertise combines uniquely with its passion for communications and wealth of creative energy. Using advertising, PR, direct mail, electronic media and design, Protean effectively conveys the core business messages of its clients to target audiences worldwide. Underpinned by its proven Brands by Design philosophy, Protean's in-depth expertise has consistently developed positive and sustainable brand identities for a diverse client base.

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