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How America's
Print Show is
tapping into the
meaning of gathering

WHY

By Michael J. Pallerino

During a recent webinar, “How to Succeed in the Era of Human-to-Human,” a panel of marketing professionals spearheaded by platform firm Sendoso, discussed the need for B2B customer-facing teams to create personalized, consumer-like experiences. Still reeling from nearly two years of virtual and digital fatigue brought on by an unprecedented global pandemic, the panelists shared the importance of human-to-human engagements.

The webinar was inspired by Sendoso's "2021 State of Sending" survey of B2B marketers, salespeople and customer experience decision-makers. One of the survey's more interesting revelations showed that 92% of respondents said virtual meetings, events, webinars and conferences needed to be more personalized and interactive to be effective over the next 12 months. In addition, 90% agreed that building a personal or human connection with their buyers and customers has become even more important to closing sales since March 2020—the beginning of the pandemic-inspired lockdowns.

"AFTER TWO YEARS OF TENUOUS INDUSTRY EVENTS, AMERICA'S PRINT SHOW OFFERS AN ONRAMP BACK TO THE SHOW FLOOR THAT WAS TAILOR-MADE FOR ATTENDEES."

— Deborah Corn, Intergalactic Ambassador
to the Printerverse at Print Media Centr

Adam Silk could not agree more. As President of Digital Print Solutions, like everyone else, his company was forced to change everything about how they conducted business. Living in a non-contact world, everything went virtual—trade shows, seminars, conferences and networking events. It was more than Silk and his industry colleagues could take, initially not knowing when, and if, things would ever get back to some sense of normalcy.

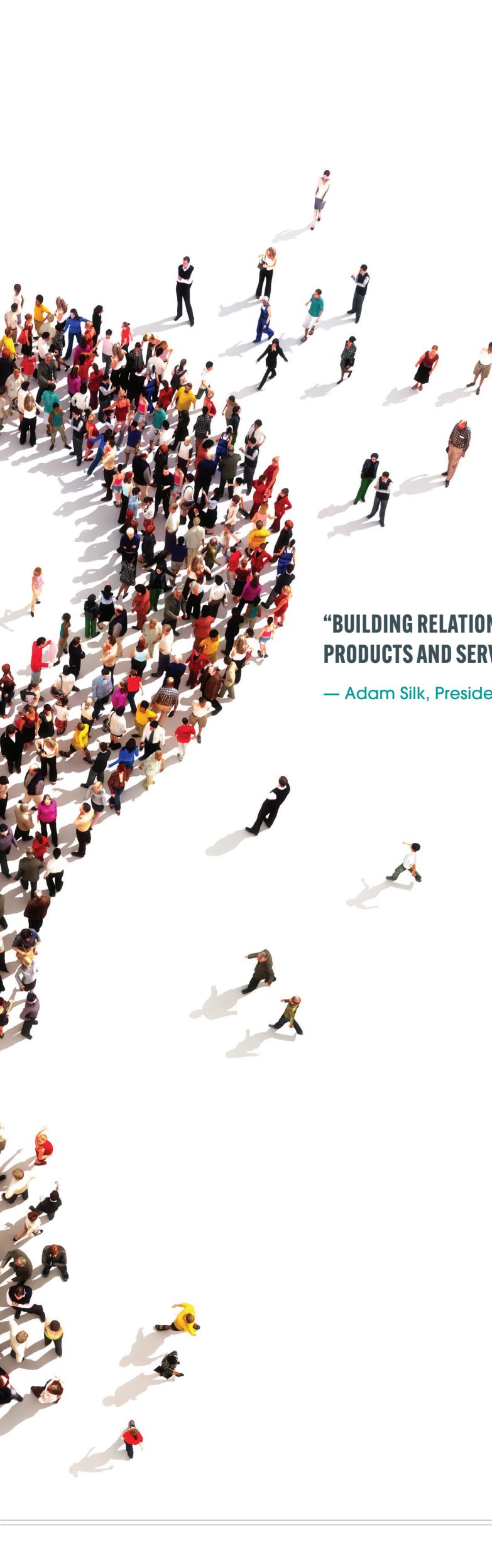
As a long-time industry supporter—serving on several industry association boards over the years—Silk knew that something, somewhere along the way would have to turn, especially on the trade show side. The once vaunted epicenter where thousands of people could seamlessly wade through exhibit halls and conference rooms, perhaps no segment took a bigger hit than the trade show market. A once much relied upon source of lead generation, new business opportunities and overall industry merriment, trade shows came to a screaming halt. According to consumer data firm Statista, the B2B trade show market in the United States was worth \$15.58 billion (US) in 2019. In 2020, the segment declined abruptly to \$5.6 billion.

Ask Silk and he will tell you that more than anything else, people in the print industry love to talk shop. More than that, they love to talk shop in person. They love being on a trade show floor, learning in a seminar setting or relishing in the one-on-one engagements of a networking related event. From a human perspective, people love being face to face with colleagues who share the same interests and desires. "Building relationships, being around people and seeing the products and services they have to offer up close, is a human need. When you are not able to be a part of a group outing or event, you really get a sense of what you are missing. It is energizing to have that human contact."

Silk is hoping that America's PRINT Show (APS22)—scheduled for Aug. 17-19 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Columbus, Ohio—will help restore all that the print industry is missing—and more. As a board member (including Past Chair) of the Graphic Media Alliance, and a sponsor of APS22, Silk believes the show will be a step toward normalcy in a time when the concept of normalcy still seems a bit far-fetched. The three-day event will be focused on building connections and growth by bringing together regional and national associations representing 5,000-plus companies, including commercial printers, screen and garment producers, large format and sign printers, binderies and graphic finishers, along with industry suppliers.

"The trade show is so critical," Silk says. "It enables us to meet with and sell to a much broader scope of people. It allows us to





engage in the kind of relationship building our industry needs, especially today. This type of gathering is what we have all really missed dramatically over the last two years. APS22 is all about the people and the complex issues they face every day in our industry. The show gives them the opportunity to gather and engage in thoughtful and solutions-focused conversations on a broad array of topics.”

CREATE. CONNECT. REPEAT.

There is another advantage to America’s PRINT Show that organizers believe will pique the interest of industry professionals. Hosting the show in Columbus, only a five-hour drive from the majority of the population of the country and a 90-minute flight from pretty much anywhere in the Midwest and South, was a strategic play for its organizers. Industry thought leader Deborah Corn believes the show’s size, location and ability for attendees to efficiently and effectively do what they need to do will be an appealing draw.

“Two-thousand twenty two is going to be a turning point for print businesses,” Corn says. “Triage is over, we are emerging into a new post-covid world and those who can automate and innovate will have longevity, and prosperity. America’s Print Show aims to help print businesses navigate their future by delivering a show that is equally focused on topical technology and topical education.”

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— Adam Silk, President, Digital Print Solutions

Corn says she is honored to contribute to developing the sessions for the inaugural event and bringing new voices and perspectives to the podium. “After two years of basically no industry events, America’s Print Show offers an onramp back to the show floor that was tailor-made for attendees. The event is centrally located for a significant portion of the industry, drivable for most, you can walk it in a day and get back to work... or stay longer and deep dive with exhibitors who have literally invested in a booth to help you succeed.”

One of the foundations America’s Print Show was built on was to cater to the human side of the print industry. In an industry where 80% of printers have 20 employees or less, the show’s dynamic is centered on what attendees need and how they can get it. As President of the Graphic Arts Association (GAA), Melissa Jones understands the importance of the show’s dynamic. As the only regional trade association for the printing industry serving Pennsylvania, Central and Southern New Jersey, and Delaware, GAA’s mission is to provide business relationships, expertise and education that ensure the strength and profitability of its members.

Jones believes that once again making connections face to face will further inspire the industry’s return to normalcy. “We’re going to be able to have those interpersonal connections that people need. And these connections, more than ever before, are going to become more poignant. You’re going to have more of that bonding, which is so critical for any type of sales and marketing efforts. Human interaction—that experience—is necessary.”

After nearly two years of virtual appointments, making those interpersonal connections matters. “To be able to be involved in the exchange of ideas in a face-to-face setting means everything,” Jones says. “That’s very, very important on so many levels. The show gives them that and so much more.” ■