Innovative Innovation

By Gretchen Roufs

What better way to celebrate ISSA's 90th anniversary than by successfully bringing together the largest gathering of industry leaders in nearly a decade? That's exactly what took place at ISSA/INTERCLEAN® North America 2013 in November when more than 16,000 executives converged on Las Vegas, NV. Perhaps the event was best summed up by one first-time distributor attendee: "This was the busiest six days of my entire career!"

People came prepared to do business and went home with their minds overflowing from an abundance of valuable education and extensive networking opportunities—what one of this year's three keynoters, Tony Hsieh, CEO of Zappos.com, would call "collisionable moments."

Smart Stuff

Social media was heavily used and encouraged, from the smartphone app that more than 3,000 visitors downloaded to help them navigate their way through the show to the Twitter conversation that wove its way through the week at #ISSA2013. Many of ISSA's 15,300-plus LinkedIn group even came together for an in-person meetup during the Wednesday Happy Hour, proving that, in a virtual world, the face-to-face encounters of a trade show remain highly valued.

Not only did ISSA/INTERCLEAN attract the most registrants in nearly a decade, it also set a record for the most new exhibitors, with 143 out of the 690 participating for the first time. And many of those companies had positive things to say about their first experience.

"We participated in this year's ISSA/INTERCLEAN looking for distribution to help us expand into the jansan market," said Frances Breazele, who is in sales with Malt Industries, Inc. "Not only were we pleasantly surprised by the number of quality distributors we met, but we also had better results than we typically get at the traditional safety shows where we usually participate. We're expanding our booth at ISSA/INTERCLEAN next year as a result."

Other milestones this year: It was 15 years ago that end customers were first invited to attend the show, which had previously been open only to manufacturers and distributors. This year, thousands of end customers filled the aisles, including attendees from co-located events such as IEHA, which was celebrating its 15th year of hosting its event during ISSA/INTERCLEAN; the Association of Residential Cleaning Professionals (ARCSI); and the Building Service Contractors Association International (BSCAI).

This mix of decision-makers from all industry channels was not lost on Ryan Lynch, owner of Lynch Cleaning Contractors of Brockton, MS. "This is my first ISSA/INTERCLEAN show, and I'm

impressed with the mix of distributors, contractors, in-house people, and manufacturers," he said. "It really contributes to a cross-pollination of ideas."

Education, Education, Education

More than 45 educational sessions were held during the ISSA Convention Seminar Program. Among the 10 different tracks were the popular Advanced Distributor Program as well as new tracks focusing on young executives, workforce development, and social media. Many sessions were standing-room-only, and those sessions held on the show floor hosted the largest crowds ever at the ISSA Education Theater. Some seminars also featured simultaneous Spanish translation, and, in the spirit of keeping it green, session handouts were available online. In fact, new this year is post-show 24/7 access for attendees to the audio synced with PowerPoint seminars that were held Monday, November 18. This new service is available at www.issa.com/2013seminars for US$99.

"Education helps us be more relevant," said Randy Dilena, managing director of CDS Worldwide, San Francisco,CA. "ISSA is good at helping members be strategic about their businesses. Messages like, 'Competitors are no longer down the street—they could be on any continent,' are exactly what we need to hear."

Dustin Teske, environmental equipment consultant for Direct Supply of Milwaukee, WI, commented, "ISSA's focus on strategic and current topics helps us to become expert sin our marketplace without having to reinvent the wheel. Then, we can go back to our companies and implement what we learned."

Seminar topics included Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS) and CIMS Green Building (GB) workshops, a briefing on the new Globally Harmonized Systems—or GHS—requirements, preparing winning proposals, and how buyers can simplify the search for the most suitable products for a facility using Transpare (www.transpare.com), ISSA's new online product registry.

Also, for the first time, ISSA offered three keynote speakers: John Foley, former

Blue Angel; Tony Hsieh, Zappos CEO; and David Blaine, magician and endurance artist. Also new was the fact that the keynotes spoke from a stage located right on the show floor, centralizing the event and cutting down on "foot travel."

"I was impressed with the variety of speakers," said Jon Scoles, president of Scoles Floorshine of Farmingdale, NJ. "I got both a life lesson and a business lesson from each one."

Show Floor Highlights

The three, packed keynote addresses and the continuous seminars presented at the Education Theater aside, the show floor was abuzz with activity throughout the exhibition.

A popular sentiment among exhibitors was that convention attendees this year came prepared to talk about particular products and were more serious and focused than usual.

Howard Goldberg, president of Mastercraft of Newburgh, NY, a 50-year ISSA member, said, "The show exceeded my expectations. People seemed more interested and motivated this year."

Rick Mazzoli, president of Treleoni of Manning, SC, agreed: "Based on our location, we were concerned that we would have a slow start, but we were pleasantly surprised. We were busy with serious customers who were very interested in working with us. We expect to do significant business as a result of being here, and for a new company, that is really important."

The ISSA/INTERCLEAN mobile app featured tools that helped streamline the show-going experience, including a digital edition of the *Official Exhibit Directory*, an interactive map of the trade show floor, live video at www.issa.com/live, and a personal show agenda.

A scavenger hunt also inspired attendees to visit exhibitors' booths. The players used the show's mobile app to check in at each of the participating booths to be eligible to win one of three iPads.

The new ISSA Meeting Hub was another big hit with attendees. Selling out two of the three exhibition days, the area, right on the show floor, enabled visitors to secure centrally located and private meeting space. Its open lounge area also made for a great meeting point for people, enabling them to find one another during the event.

The new ISSA/INTERCLEAN Bistro offered a relaxed and healthier dining experience that attendees and exhibitors could reserve prior to the show to guarantee a spot for themselves and their business associates without having to leave the exhibit hall. Meanwhile, the ISSA Resource Center on the show floor did a brisk business in educational tools and

Former Blue Angel John Foley presents keynote address.

materials. Among its many attractions were the ability to "test drive" Transpare (visit www.issa.com for more information) ISSA's new online product registry; take the ISSA Member Benefit Challenge to learn about the many association resources they might be overlooking; and find out about the new ISSA Clean Standard: K-12 schools (visit www.issa.com/cleank12 for information on the standard).

Recognition and Awards

The ISSA Excellence Award Ceremony recognized 41 companies for their long-standing industry leadership as they celebrated membership milestones, including some of the original companies that first joined the association 90 years ago!

In a separate ceremony, 84 newly certified or recertified CIMS and CIMS-GB companies were recognized during the week and in related news, ISSA announced two new developments regarding the CIMS program: CIMS-GB now is included in the recently updated U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design for Existing Building Operations and Maintenance (LEED: EBOM) facility certification program as an option for achieving LEED: EBOM's green cleaning requirements. CIMS also will cross "the pond" this coming year as it is introduced in Great Britain through an agreement with ISSA, the American Institute of Cleaning Science and the British Institute of Cleaning Science (BICS).

The ISSA Innovation Award program honored the industry's most innovative products and services, as voted on by distributors, building service contractors, and in-house decision-makers. This year, there were 43 entries on display in the Innovation Showcase area for attendees to peruse. Customers had the opportunity to vote online before the show in five categories and during the show another set of Visitors' Choice Award winners were selected (*see page 20*).

The Best Customer Service Award was presented to the 10 companies voted by attendees via the show's mobile app as providing exceptional interaction and support at their booths during the show (*see page 18*).

International Connections

This year's show also featured an increase in international participation with 21 percent of visitors hailing from 78 countries while exhibitors drew from 29 countries.

Abbyserah Kiruri, sales and marketing manager for Metro Cleaners and Renovators Ltd. of Nairobi, Kenya, said her company picked up a lot of ideas. "We're learning as much as we can from ISSA", she said. I have enjoyed meeting like-minded people, and I hope to get more involved through social media, such as ISSA's LinkedIn group."

Peter Parker, global marketing manager for the Malish Corp. of Willoughby, OH, commented, "I am happy with the global reach of the show and the type of international leads

ABM Onsite Services presented its Distributor of the Year Award to Southeastern Paper Group at a reception held during ISSA/INTERCLEAN. From left: ABM Onsite Services' Henrik Slipsager, Jim McClure, and John Bierer present the award to Southeaster Paper Group's Jack Campbell and Dave Pence.

we generated. The people we met with did their homework in advance, and they made the most of their time here. The ISSA's 'global show' message rings true for us."

The ISSA also welcomed a record number of associations, including BICS, the Canadian Sanitary Supply Association (CSSA), National Contract Cleaners Association (NCCA) from South Africa, Board of Directors for the World Federation of Building Service Contractors (WFBSC), and for the first time, the Beijing Cleaning Association.

A Light Note

Even those standing in line for shuttles or registration had something fun to do as ISSA promoted its new mobile game for the cleaning industry, Angry Janitors, available to download at www.issa.com/angry.

In addition to the Angry Janitor game, the scavenger hunt and David Blaine's post-speech card tricks were other notably light moments. So, too, was the "It's My Show" song released earlier this year, the result of challenging members to produce videos of their teams lip syncing to the Bon Jovi tune "It's My Life." Companies featured in the fun video that played before each keynote address were Dial Professional; Kelsan; Midlab, Inc.; and Tennant Co.

The Show Floor Happy Hour featured birthday cupcakes commemorating ISSA's 90th anniversary. Keeping with the social media spirit of the event, the band, Vegas Limit, accepted real-time song requests via text and Twitter from the crowd heavily populated by ISSA's LinkedIn members.

What's Next?

Many attendees talked about their takeaways from the show. One distributor, KSS Enterprises of Kalamazoo, MI, a 50-year member, asks its show employees who attended the show to give a presentation at a company-wide meeting on something they learned. KSS sales consultant Derrick Zenker said Tony Hsieh was his favorite speaker so he's going to talk about that. "I liked what Hseih said about collisions and culture, and how they help people with a dream," Zenker said.

Finally, it's not too soon to mark your calendars for the 2014 ISSA/INTERCLEAN shows. Adding to the diversity of the exhibitors and attendees you'll find at the next North American edition, the Cleaning Equipment Trade Association (CETA) will begin the co-locating its annual convention as ISSA/INTERCLEAN converges on Orlando, FL, USA, November 4-7. For information on the Orlando show, visit www.issa.com/orlando.

ISSA also has announced a new international exhibition helping members network and do business with leaders in the Eurasia market. The show will be held September 15-17, 2014, in Istanbul, Turkey. For more information, visit www.issainterclean.com/Istanbul. And the 2014 ISSA/INTERCLEAN Amsterdam event also is shaping up to be quite a show as there currently is a waiting list to exhibit due to its sold-out status! That event takes place in Amsterdam, Netherlands, May 6-9.

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Former ISSA presidents got together during ISSA/INTERCLEAN. From left, standing: Bobby Cohen, Daycon Products Co., Inc.;David E. Holtzman, formerly with R3-TEC; Thomas Lane, formerly with National Sanitary Supply Co.; Kyle Ogden, Carroll Co.; Jim Chittom Sr., Athens Janitor Supply Co., Inc.; Randal A. Brame, Brame Specialty Co., Inc.; Scott Jarden, The Bullen Companies, Inc.; Stephen H. Swigart, Spartan Chemical Co., Inc.; Robert J. Stahurski Jr., Nyco Products Co.; Roger E. Parrott Jr., formerly with RoVic, Inc.; Donald H. Lees, Big D Industries, Inc.; Jon Scoles, Scoles Floorshine Industries; Gary Grudinger, Golden Star Inc.; John P. Garfinkel, ISSA. From left, seated: Mattie Chinks, Ammor Ltd.; Lydia M. Work, American Paper Converting; Linda Silverman, Maintex, Inc.; Jack Ramaley, formerly with ISSA.

Tony Hsieh presents keynote address.