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# community of co-opetition

economic cause and effect in the industry

by Jan Shaw

One question that keeps being asked is “How has the “new” economy had an impact on the Entertainment and Leisure Industries?”

We are all keenly aware of the negative effect of the economy’s downturn. But have you noticed? As the “Great Recession” recovery process evolves, and in light of the revitalization of a “new” economy, a silver lining has emerged as a community spirit of “co-opetition” with companies teaming together. It feels very much like the early days of themed entertainment when TEA was formed, when companies pulled together their resources when faced with tough economic times.

In order to survive the challenges of the economy, new alliances have been formed. Companies are working together to provide support, to create diversity for design and build projects, forge a new way of thinking out

of the box to create more effective solutions for their clients, to develop new guest experiences that are affordable for the consumer that act as a draw to generate additional revenue, to provide better customer service to satisfy their clients’ needs, and to provide stronger, more efficient methods of packaging safe, quality products.

ASTM International personally attests. “In this type of economy, it’s reasonable to expect organizations to scale back and reprioritize the numerous activities...that are not directly associated to their core business of operations. However, nothing is worse for business than running unsafe rides. We are pleased to see that rather than reducing their emphasis on safety...

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**- John Robinett, Senior VP, Economics Practice at AECOM**

Companies are focusing more on safety, as Len Morressey Director, TCO Division of

companies have come to realize the value of uniform, globally accepted safety standards of practice which has resulted in raising the bar for safety to benefit their patrons.”

Emerging technology integrated with interactive, active, rather than passive immersive experiences, have played a key roll in project development across leisure and themed entertainment industries. “From our perspective, we’ve seen that the economy is breaking loose with more and more projects opening up and coming in the front door --- and that’s happening globally, with projects from around the world,” states Roberta Perry, VP Business Development, ETI Edwards Technologies, Inc. ([www.edwardstechnologies.com](http://www.edwardstechnologies.com))

The Industry has been challenged to rethink long term strategies with their capital investments and long range planning. People are spending their entertainment dollars closer to home in regional parks, while states are



Events that recognize accomplishment in the industry, such as the TEA’s annual Thea Awards, also provide valuable networking opportunities.



"Necessity is the mother of invention," the famous quote by George Bernard Shaw, continues to ring true today. Consider these ideas and start-ups that provided a need during a downturned economy: Microsoft and FedEx.

times or bad, and found great success teaming with our strategic allies, and other like-minded companies to service our clients and satisfy their needs. Their success is our success."

Pulling together with positive thinking – creating positive solutions and new ideas – to form a better world during tough economic times is key, not only for survival, but for companies to embrace challenges, and successfully emerge into a new landscape of opportunities.

"The down times are a perfect time to start planning and implementing reinvestment, and to look at ways of improving your product and the customer experience," explains John Robinett, Senior VP, Economics Practice at AECOM (formerly ERA) (www.econres.com)

"In difficult times, it forces companies to find inventive efficient solutions," said Jim King, CEO of Sans Gear NZ. "With both Sans Gear (www.sansgearNZ.com) and our design development production company, WyldBlue Entertainment (www.wyldblue.com), we have always focused on inventive solutions in good

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*Jan Shaw is Principal and President of Sans Gear NZ LLC www.sansgearNZ.com a USA/ International company, and WyldBlue Productions Entertainment LLC www.wyldblue.com Jan is a Creative Consultant with a diverse 20-year career as master planner, concept designer, project developer, marketing and brand executive in Themed Entertainment, producer, writer, director of television and film, and special effects producer of 3D/4D film /ride film.*



heavily promoting special discounted prices for larger park passes. Smaller operations have been struggling. Water parks have seen reduced gate attendance. Adding rain and heat to the crippled economy has resulted in a slower season. "Companies need to revisit their planning, and rethink long term planning into short term phases," comments Gene Weeks, former VP Six Flags. "Those that will survive with a positive outcome will be companies with diversity, by thinking out of the box with new innovative ideas to create new business opportunities."

