

## Case Study: Pacific Coast Builders Conference

# Built on ProShow's Firm Foundation



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New management can sometimes signal the end of a long client/vendor relationship. But nothing could have been further from the truth when Mike Sturdivant joined the Pacific Coast Builders conference (PCBC) as operations manager in 2004. ProShow had already been working with PCBC for 10 years, and was lined up to work on the show in 2004. Mike's first PCBC show revealed to him that ProShow was as important a part of the show's success as any other element.

PCBC, sponsored by the California Building Industry Association, is held every year in San Francisco at the Moscone Center. Last year, the show included 29,992 attendees and 625 exhibiting companies, requiring about 125 – 135 of ProShow's temporary staffers and five ProShow managers. Mike discovered that ProShow's magic ingredients were client service, stability, and pro-active process improvement.

"The same people come back year after year to work on PCBC because they enjoy it," Mike says. "I think that's because in an industry where there's a lot of shuffling around, ProShow is a stable, reliable presence. They know their stuff, and they're very fair and good to their staff. I get the impression that PCBC

is kind of the high point of the year for the staffers."

One of the things that Mike appreciates the most about ProShow is that the staff is pro-active about improving the process. He provides temporary offices on site for the ProShow managers, but says they use the offices only in the morning for checking in the staff. "The rest of the day, they're walking around, asking people how it's going, asking if the staff has any suggestions for improvements. They'll come looking for me at various times during the day to make suggestions. I can't be in the lobby the entire time, but I know these folks will make good decisions and represent me well when I can't be there."

Mike gives as an example a situation that arose at the 2005 show. In previous years, the registration area was always in the South Lobby of the Moscone Center. In 2005, Mike set up two registration centers to make the process faster, one in the South Lobby and one in the North Lobby. Knowing that 75% of the attendees were accustomed to registering in the South Lobby, he arranged for busses to drop people off at the North Lobby, hoping they would enter the facility and find the new registration center.

"They just walked across the street to the South Lobby and got in line," he says ruefully. "The South Lobby was swamped, and the North Lobby was dead."

But the ProShow staffers and managers had an idea. ProShow always has "Ask Me People" on site, dressed in distinctive uniforms with "Ask Me" on their bright yellow shirts and hats so that attendees can identify them easily. Six Ask Me People were stationed in North Lobby. Their suggestion was to go outside and let people know that they could register with no waiting in the North Lobby. Mike agreed, pleased with the suggestion, and the Ask Me People began re-directing attendees to the North Lobby registration area.

"It didn't totally alleviate the problem, but it sure made it a lot better," says Mike. "And that's the kind of thing that ProShow does — they're always looking for ways to make the show experience better for the people who attend."

In 2006, the PCBC is bigger than ever, using Moscone North, South and West exhibit halls. Mike says, "More than ever we will count on ProShow's experience and professionalism to help us ease into our growth."