

cMember Booth at SCAA 2004, Atlanta

The following is a proposal for a booth on the show floor at the SCAA show in Atlanta in 2004. The ideas are presented in a package with challenges and solutions presented. These are by no means the only challenges or the only solutions, and it is up to the committee to a) decide if a cMember booth at the show is a viable goal, and b) if the proposed plan below is agreeable to all committee members.

Booth Concept

The concept of a cMember booth at the SCAA Atlanta show has five main purposes:

- a) facilitating the information exchange about the cMember initiative, and signups of new members
- b) a meeting grounds right on the show floor for cMembers and consumers
- c) a place for informal "how to's" and demonstrations of how products work, about coffee social concepts, round table discussions, roasting information seminars, you name it.
- d) a place to showcase what cMembership offers - via the computers and the Internet connection to the SCAA site, but also to distribute materials, sign up packages, etc.

The Booth Conceptual Design

To serve these five purposes, the booth will need to have an informal meeting-style setting, a demonstration area, and a signup / information booth.

A café setting seems to be the most natural fix for the meeting area. To go with a café setting, you need a commercial espresso machine station, a drink prep area for brewed beverages, four or more tables, and chairs to match.

The café seating could also be used for the product demonstrations and how-to lessons, with a demo table / staging area set up opposite the commercial espresso booth.

The signup and information table could be at the front of the booth, either in the center front, or in front of the product demonstration area.

This style of booth will most likely require a double booth, or a large single.

Booth Requirements and Challenges

As mentioned in the previous section, ideally we would need a double booth to establish a comfortable, roomy, and inviting booth for cMembers using the above layout concepts.

There are four main costs and concerns for setting up this booth.

- a) power costs
- b) booth design and cost
- c) union and shipping fees
- d) staffing

In addition, I propose we have internet access set up at the booth if the SCAA has a website that serves the needs of members and cMembers by the time of the Atlanta show. Consider this optional, since the revamp of the SCAA online services is currently under discussion, and not implemented.

To tackle the first three points, power, booth design and cost, and union and shipping fees (setup etc), I propose we invite existing SCAA members to donate funds to making this booth a reality, with special emphasis on SCAA members who do retail sales.

I've already spoken to several SCAA members who are interested in becoming booth sponsors in return for recognition of their contributions in the booth. The idea is very popular, and I believe getting money should not be a problem. Where the problems arise is in the bureaucracy involved in requesting and receiving said funds. I'll leave this up to other committee members to tackle and deal with.

The SCAA may donate one booth spot to our committee for this booth. I suggest we make a formal request for a double booth. If the SCAA cannot donate this, I suggest we take the donated booth, and rent the adjoining booth to create a double booth.

The fourth point, staffing, is something easily solved. We need staff to do the following

- a) set up and break down the booth
- b) man the booth
- c) work the espresso machine.

I've spoken to several professional Baristi who plan to be at the USBC in 2004 in Atlanta, and they have expressed interest in working the booth for one or two

hour shifts during the floor-open hours. I believe it will be a real thrill for current and potential cMembers to be served by world-class Baristi.

For the other two staffing requirements, I suggest we draw on the "Content Corps" of cMembers, should this program ever develop and become formalized. It is a natural to have cMembers staffing the cMember Booth as volunteers.

For product demonstrations and informal lessons in coffee and espresso, several of the SCAA Members who have expressed interest in sponsoring the booth have also expressed interest in doing some of these informal training sessions. In addition, we could approach TransFair, CoffeeKids, and other organizations at the show (perhaps national pavilion organizers for various countries) to give short 10 or 15 minute presentations on their interests.

For the espresso bar, Espresso Specialists Inc. have expressed interest in loaning a complete setup for the show, including grinder and machine, and a tech to set everything up.

Conclusion

I believe this is an extremely feasible plan to promote cMembership at next year's Atlanta show, and should be a central focus of our committee. Proper promotion of this event, including months before the show, is paramount to its success, and should also be considered, planned out, and executed, including advertising in mainstream magazines, faxes, mailouts, and targeted instore promotions. If done right, this booth could become the centerpiece of the trade show as a whole, or at least the most vibrant and exciting booth on the trade show floor.

It would set the tone for the seriousness and commitment the SCAA has to the new cMembership initiative, it provides a great showcase for educating existing members on the benefits of the new cMembership, and provides a centralized meeting place and sign up center for consumer members.