

Expo Final Report for Pittcon 2020 in Chicago

To say the least, this has been a challenging year from the very start. At Pittcon 2019, ThermoFisher announced they would not be exhibiting at Pittcon 2020. Revenue was reduced for 2019, so budgets for Pittcon 2020 were reduced. Cost savings were put in place as well as estimating loss in revenue. This was going to be a big challenge; but we were willing to try and meet this challenge.

Second challenge was the changes in the Pittcon Office. Tammy Yallum was made Office Manager with added duties to Expo. The assistant expo coordinator was terminated in the first quarter of the fiscal year. Stephanie Christman was transferred to Expo to assist Tammy. This was probably one of the best decisions made during Pittcon 2020. Stephanie was willing to learn and was able to pick up duties quickly. Without Stephanie's expertise, many things would not have been completed for Expo.

Third challenge faced was Marketing Staff was reorganized. Many marketing incentives were late or didn't get rolled out at all. Trying to come up with ideas for the Pittcon Park were not even discussed until January. Trying to fill the park with activities was discussed and some were eliminated (such as the Escape Room).

The major challenge was the Corona Virus (COVID-19). In January, exhibitors from China started canceling their booth due to the virus outbreak in China. In February, the U.S. government shut down travel from China. Plans were discussed and it was decided that anyone from China who had to cancel could apply their booth costs to Pittcon 2021. Most of the exhibitors from China were willing to do this. Then we started getting requests from Japan and other countries requesting cancellation of their booths. It was decided that these cancellations would be handled case by case. By the time we were setting up for Pittcon 2020, several exhibitors in the U.S. called to cancel. The show was set up; but with reduced numbers. Tammy and Stephanie reduced the footprint of the Expo floor so it didn't have major blank spaces. Signs were made for exhibitors who had to cancel to inform attendees that they had to cancel and would not be exhibiting.

The Expo floor opened on Tuesday morning at 9:00 a.m. with welcomes and thanks to all attendees and exhibitors. The crowds were ready to experience Pittcon 2020. The first day went well and the exhibitors seemed well pleased with the number of attendees.

Now for some statistics: Total Booths were 925; Total Companies represented were 509, Total Cancellations were 71.

There were two DemoZones in the Pittcon Park. There were 26 presentations in the Demo Zones during the three day Expo. There continue to be well received and should be continued. The number of attendee at each demo is being calculated by Stephanie Christman.

There were 14 Nexus Theater talks. They were held Tuesday and Wednesday only. Jonell Kerckhoff, chair-elect for Expo was put in charge of this very challenging area. It was decided at the beginning of the planning stages for Pittcon, we would only have one Nexus Theater due to lack of attendee interest.

Tuesday Nexus presentations were on the cannabis measurement topic with six speakers. These presentations were the most attended. The Wednesday Nexus presentations were on a variety of measurement topics with eight speakers. However, the presentations on both days were not well received by the attendees and my recommendation is that this area not be continued. The Expo Chair-

Elect spent significant time working to get Nexus speakers lined up to talk at the 2-day event. Additionally, it takes too much away from Program and Conferee Networking.

Lab Gauntlet was in the Pittcon park. There were two Lab Gauntlets and continue to be very popular. There were 6 exhibitors per gauntlet. Stephanie Christman handled the assigning of the exhibitors to each Gauntlet. On Thursday morning, we ran out of t-shirts. We had ordered the same number of shirts that were ordered in 2019.

The planetarium was also in the Pittcon Park. Attendees were charged 5 dollars to view the demo. The money collected will be used to help maintain the planetarium. The planetarium was not as popular as at Pittcon 2019. The Expo committee should re-evaluate whether this area be continued.

The Pittcon Park also housed a Head Shot area and an area where you could dress up and have your picture taken with different backgrounds. These areas were all part of the Marketing Area. Marketing also had areas set up with giveaways. There was also an area for New Orleans to advertise for Pittcon 2021.

The Tech Hub was also in the Pittcon Park. The area had computers and charging areas. There were places to sit and relax and catch up on the technical aspects of Pittcon. This area should be continued.

All in all, the Pittcon Park was filled most of the time with attendees. The 2021 Expo Committee should review what to eliminate and what to add to the park.

Floor Managers – There were four Floor Managers booths. They were two at the front of the hall and two at the back of the hall. These booths were manned with 4 individuals. This number works well so that individuals can have time away from the booth. During the first two days of setup, there were at least 2 floor managers per booth. This also worked well. One person from each Floor Manager booth also had tablets to go around during setup and during the show to take surveys of the attendees and exhibitors. Tammy and Stephanie also did surveys.

The Pittcon Office was moved from the back of the hall to the side of the hall when the floorplan was reduced. This led to a little confusion at first; but people got use to it. The Pittcon office should continue to be on the Expo floor so it is readily available to the exhibitors. Most of the questions concern GES; but at least the Exhibitor has a place to start their questions. Stephanie Absey and Carol Moore covered the office as well as Charlie and myself. Since Stephanie was trying to learn the workings of the Expo floor, she was not always available to be in the office. For Pittcon 2021, this should not be a problem. Stephanie Absey sometimes felt at a loss as to how handle some circumstances. Everything worked out okay though.

Students – I requested 8 students in the morning Tuesday thru Thursday and 8 students in the afternoon Tuesday thru Thursday. I received 39 different students during the three day period. Each morning Stephanie Absey and I had to train the new students of their duties. This did not always work out so well. I had one student that decided they wanted to go hear a presentation and left their station for an hour and a half. This same student was also put in charge of the Live Demos and during the demos left and roamed the Expo floor. All in all, the students worked out well. Several were confused as to where they were to work and went to International Visitors instead of coming to the Expo Office. This made for a very difficult time. All the students were given their instructions and where to report. They just got confused between the International Visitors and the Expo Offices. In the future, the same 16

students assigned to Expo should work the whole three days. The students worked the Lab Gauntlet and the Live Demo Areas. Except for these few problems, the students worked out well.

Expo Milestones:

April 21 – Began to lay out floorplan

May 21 – Spring Exhibitor's Webinar in the Pittcon Office

June 3 – On line ordering begins

July 8 – Begin working on service manual – request forms from vendors

July 29 – Site trip to Chicago for Signage walk thru

August 8 – Begin to assign space

September 3 – Open reservations for Demo/Lab Gauntlet

October 31 – Booth Assignments should have been completed

October 30 – Follow up of Signage requirements. Trip to Chicago to complete and make changes

February 3 – Meeting to decide to continue forward with Pittcon 2020 and Expo even though all of China had cancelled

February 26 – Begin set up of Expo by Large Exhibitors February 27 – Set up Floor Managers arrive at Pittcon

March 2 – Final walk thru of Floor before Opening on Tuesday

Final Budget Numbers:

The final budget numbers are still to be calculated and will be added to this report when finished.

I want to thank everyone involved in making Pittcon Expo 2020 a success. The following people helped to make the Expo a success: Tammy Yallum, Stephanie Christman, Tamma Merritt, Jonell Kerkhoff, Charlie Holifield, Jane Chan, all the floor managers and students and especially all the exhibitors. Challenging year; but we made it work!

Submitted by Janeth Pifer and Charlie Holifield