

Competing for Time, and Winning

Craig Hanna, TEA President



Dear Members & Friends:

Worldwide, 2007 promises to be another amazing year, filled with new and exciting projects and attractions opening their doors to hundreds of millions of people. From the Middle East to the Far East, from Mid-America to the heart of Europe, to Africa and South America and beyond, owners and developers are seeking to build projects that provide compelling, quality experiences. Those museums, aquariums, zoos, casinos, retail venues, visitor centers and parks will all compete for the public's time, attention and money. Their developers need to locate the kind of professional expertise, vision and experience that lead to success. And that is where TEA can be of great value.

As a volunteer within our global, nonprofit alliance, I'm pleased to have been elected TEA president for a second term. There's so much to do and so much going on in the Association (and, as always, so little time to do it!) Our efforts continue to be focused on finding new and better ways to help owners, developers and clients connect with the creative talent they need.

This edition of the TEA Annual & Directory (the publication you are now reading) focuses, in part, on the museum and science center industries, those informal learning environments so important to our societies. Certainly everyone is aware of the book, *The Experience Economy* and the importance of adding immersive, compelling and value-added experiences to everything from coffee (Starbucks) to sports (radar built into baseball to clock pitch speeds). Museums are facing new challenges every year: funding challenges, demographic changes, focus challenges.

Museums are no longer competing with other museums or with traditional entertainment offerings – they're competing for guests' and visitors' time along with retailers, broadcasters, advertisers, entertainers, and everyone and everything else out there. We've never seen so much competitive information through so many streams.

As a result, everyone is time lacking. Individuals, families and even retirees and empty-nesters today are pulled in a million directions. The needs of family and friends pile onto business needs, soccer, piano lessons, travel, the gym, email, an oil change. It goes on and on. Museums and science centers – in fact, attractions of every kind – are competing for hours – for minutes. "Is it a picnic or the museum?" "Is it a little downtime or the science center?" This is what we face every day now. Creating compelling experiences, new offerings, interesting exhibits, engaging topics, motivating and enriching experiences – that's the challenge in helping to gain an advantage in the competition of time.

The questions are numerous and complicated: Does the new exhibit or attraction truly impart the chosen material or message in the most effective manner possible? Further, will it be interesting enough to drive a decision to come to the facility? Will it be more interesting than that Flash animation site on the Internet?

This is where TEA members can help. We are storytellers. We understand the tools of the trade (and occasionally, the tricks) – techniques gleaned from the location-based entertainment industry – that can generate interest, impart information seamlessly (and hopefully with a sense of fun), make it accessible and above all else, make it a great experience. TEA members have contributed to the design, planning, fabrication, production and opening of many of the most exciting, memorable, compelling public and private spaces anywhere in the world – recently, a great many of these have been museums.

This experience design approach is symbiotic. What we learn from theme parks we apply to new experiences in casinos, retail destinations and resorts. What we learn there we apply to museums, corporate marketing experiences and science centers. Good, compelling experiences – whatever and wherever they may be – are universal. Enriching and compelling experiences win in the battle for time. As TEA continues to grow, rely on us as your resource for the people and companies that can help you achieve those things.

A handwritten signature of Craig Hanna in black ink. The signature is stylized, with a large, flowing 'C' and 'H'.

Craig Hanna is a filmmaker, writer and storyteller with nearly 20 years' expertise in the creation of compelling experiences and environments. As Chief Creative Officer for Thinkwell Design & Production, with offices in Burbank and Barcelona, Craig's experience in master planning and attraction development spans a variety of world-class projects on multiple continents, including efforts for The Tussauds Group, Universal Studios, Harrah's, Sesame Workshop and more. He is the holder of three attraction patents and is an honored member of the Wired magazine "Brain Trust." Craig is now serving his second term as President of the TEA International Board.