

Takeaways from ECEF 2025 Sessions

From Ken Holsinger and Kimberly Hardcastle

“Keynote – Pivot or Die: How to Navigate in a Changing Environment”

Gary Shapiro

Ken

- “Change drives our business.” We build our whole model on launching NEW products, NEW Research, NEW Services and building NEW connections
- Serendipity, Discovery, the JOY of connecting and experiencing something NEW.
- Be bold, be courageous, take risks and think BIG.
- Continuously re-invent yourselves.
- Be paranoid all the time.
- Competition makes ALL of us better.

Kimberly

- Reminded us that our events are reflections of the changes happening in our space (can even be catalysts for change). So, if the events themselves don’t change, we’re missing opportunities, and we aren’t really showing up in the spirit of innovation.
- Emphasized that events should reflect industry change and innovation; if events don’t evolve, we miss opportunities to lead.

Will Rising Exhibitor Costs Backfire?

Jeannie Henson and Julie Kagy

Ken

- Cost issues lead to business model challenges – leads to innovation and/or disruption.
- Asking the question constantly “Why do we do that?”
- Communication and Collaboration are key as we evolve business models.

Kimberly

- Reiterated the importance of staying focused on the needs & wants of our audience – including exhibitors – and understanding their planning cycle & total cost of ownership.
- Stressed the importance of staying aligned with audience and exhibitor needs, including planning cycles and total cost of ownership.

Return on Value: The Evolution of Value-Based Selling

Indiya Okam

Ken

- Indiya shared a tremendous amount of strategy around the “Return on Value” ecosystem.
- She was transparent about measured RESULTS on customer satisfaction and REVENUE!
- She touched on an area not focused on enough in our space – LTV or Lifetime Value.
- Value is no longer a promise, it is deliverable.

Kimberly

- Underlined the importance of focusing on the needs of the audience, our exhibitors through value-based selling – and suggested having structured discovery processes to enhance value alignment and deepen relationships.
- She talked about collaboration across depts as did Julie & Jeannie in terms of collaborating w/ organizers & partners.
- Advocated value-based selling, structured discovery, and cross-departmental collaboration to deepen relationships and align on value.

Good News from Davos for Your Show

Dr. Charlotte Farmer

Ken

- How do we “dazzle and delight” people who have “seen it all”?
- Her 5 key insights were powerful reminders
 - Purposeful design

- Seamless Logistics
- Elevated Experiences
- Measurable Impact
- Sustainable and Scalable Event Design
- Measuring “Collaborative collisions”
- Push - Brand, Pull – Draw, optimize opportunities, Position – curation, location

Kimberly

- Asked us how we impress people who have seen it all. While most of our attendees aren’t the heads of state and captains of industry who attend DAVOS, innovators will lean into the challenge of giving our audience the same kind of memorable attendee experience that pays dividends.
- Challenged us to deliver memorable, high-value experiences that resonate even with the most experienced attendees.

Headwinds

Moderator: Hervé Sedky

Speakers: Kevin Hinton, Isabelle Icsó, and Rich Scarfo

Ken

- Uncertainty is now the state of “normal”.
- Stay on top of “current” data.
- Uncertainty is uncomfortable, but look for the areas of opportunity.
- We are resilient – lean in!

Kimberly

- What stood out to me was Rich speaking specifically about going to market with a different model, specifically with HLTH & VIBE and finding creative, cost-effective ways to help sponsors and exhibitors to engage, like the booth packages and meeting program. Also liked the bespoke dinners he spoke about.
- Rich highlighted the value of alternative go-to-market models and creative, cost-effective ways to drive sponsor and exhibitor engagement.

Common ECEF 2025 Themes

- Embrace and optimize Change
- Be the disruptors
- Lots of conversations about Data and “Measurement” and several RO___
- Ken’s reminder – Data and creativity without implementation, insight, and accountability, is malpractice.
- B2B-B2C-B2Me