

# EX AWARD



**CAMPAIGN: VIRTUAL EVENT CENTER**  
**CLIENT: IBM**  
**AGENCY: GEORGE P. JOHNSON**



so event sponsors can locate and populate their experiences with content based on a wide range of criteria, including asset type, language, IBM solution area, business unit or client focus.

From the attendee perspective, the VEC is like a large interactive campus environment with multiple buildings and classrooms—all under the IBM brand, but each specializing in its own area of thought leadership, issue focus or industry expertise. Creatively, the VEC looks and feels much like IBM physical events anywhere in the world, with a range of small, medium and large architectural environments, each dressed with its own signage and multimedia elements and populated by animated visitors and IBM representatives.

The VEC delivered results in a big way, starting with its ambition. According to platform provider Unifair, it was the single largest virtual event initiative ever undertaken. In 2010, 36 countries across all of the brand's global regions leveraged

Still worried about those pesky virtual events stealing your live event portfolio's mojo? What if we told you that not only could you generate millions of dollars in sales through virtual events, you could use them to enhance your live event portfolio, too?

That's the kind of power being realized by IBM's Virtual Event Center (VEC), one of the industry's best-in-class, always-open online event environments. The VEC was built with more than 60 interchangeable environment options, which offers planners with a ready-made foundation for customized IBM-branded experiences. Since the events often require global reach, the platform supports 16 languages for content and chat room translation into 50 languages so organizers and attendees can communicate cross-language in real time. Event owners can add in social media functionality, pairing the VEC with LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook accounts to help drive interest and dialogue. Plus, attendees and event representatives can add live video chatting via Skype.

For the benefit of IBM's marketing team, which builds many of its events, the VEC incorporates a self-service content repository



the platform for 83 individual virtual events, exceeding first-year projections by 66 percent. From those, 22 virtual event spaces were established to optimize content and location sharing. All told, about 22,500 people attended a virtual event on the platform last year and each spent an average of two hours in the environment. The real proof is in the \$93 million in validated lead revenue and \$14.4 million of win revenue generated by VEC engagements as of last November.

Now that's the way to draw live business out of virtual events.