

## FOCUS: MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS

# Small firms emphasize trade-show marketing

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SPECIAL TO CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS

An online survey of local businesspeople suggests that more small companies take advantage of trade shows than their larger competitors, but neither seem to be looking for ways to increase their return on investment.

The survey of 141 respondents, conducted by **HR Gems Inc.** of Stanwood and co-sponsored by **Crain's Detroit Business** and public-relations firm **Eiler Communications** of Ann Arbor, showed 61 percent of the respondents have fewer than 100 employees and 46 percent have an annual budget of less than \$5 million.

When analyzing the survey data, Jennifer Cornell, vice president of Eiler Communications, found that respondents were looking to get the most from their trade-show spending, but did not seem to be adding to their trade-show budgets.

"A lot of companies understand the key trade shows of where they need to be, but while they are

## ON THE SHOW

More results from the survey:

- 62 percent of companies responding exhibited at or visited one to five trade shows in 2004.
- 63 percent have a trade-show budget of less than \$250,000.
- 65 percent have seen returns from participating in trade shows.
- 73 percent follow up trade-show leads with a phone call before passing them onto their sales team.
- 47 percent cut trade-show spending because of the economy.
- 87 percent plan to attend the same number of trade shows or more than previous years.

there, they need to be doing things that they haven't been doing in previous years," Cornell said.

The majority of survey respondents said they go to trade shows to generate sales leads, increase the visibility of their company and executives, network with potential customers and to see what their competition is doing.