

Frank builds on
BuilConn 2003

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Email interview with Ken Sinclair
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Sinclair: We saw a lot happen at BuilConn last week, what was your impression of the event?

Capuano: I feel that BuilConn generated a lot of enthusiasm and excitement that has been lacking at other "standard" industry trade shows.

Sinclair: I saw some of that myself. What do you attribute this level of excitement to?

Capuano: Two things, the session format and networking. The panel format of each session collected experts from competing technologies and companies in one location. The typical trade show has experts with answers walking around, and it is up to the individual system integrator to go find them all - BuilConn put them at center stage for the system integrator. During the Q&A portion of each session the panelists were pounded by a barrage of questions. And after the sessions the system integrator continued talking - with each other and with panel members. Very quickly everyone began building connections through cross-discipline networking.

Sinclair: What connections did you see being built?

Capuano: There were several. There were your typical integrator-to-supplier connections being built and a lot more. I saw HVAC integrators talking solution specifics with Security suppliers and security experts. I saw almost every discipline making connections with suppliers of TCP/IP products and implementers of XML web services. I saw integrators and suppliers clearing the air on several existing LonWorks and BACnet issues. This became a real participation event, which went beyond just giving a presentation to addressing industry issues and establishing the groundwork to form alliances to expand business.

Sinclair: Did you see much discussion on the Council of Advance Building Systems?

Capuano: I think people realize that some form of continuing dialog would be useful between the annual BuilConn events. The idea of the Council was to facilitate that. Unfortunately because people were busy making connection in Dallas, not much planning occurred on the Council front. A call to action is needed to get individuals to move ahead on the evolution of the Council.

Sinclair: The XML sessions seemed to generate a lot of interest. Would you agree?

Capuano: Yes. XML was definitely the hot topic. I believe that most attendees entered BuilConn feeling that XML was a buzzword with no real substance. Everyone left with the understanding that XML and web services are not buzzwords, but are in use today. These sessions really illustrated to people that building automation is a much bigger world than previously thought.

Sinclair: The term "integration" took on new meaning at BuilConn. What are your thoughts on that?

Capuano: The term "integration" has been kicked-around for decades in this industry, even to the point where it was basically replaced by interoperability. Now at BuilConn the term "integration" was widely used in discussions of total building integration. Using the products and technologies discussed at BuilConn (XML, Web Services, TAC/IP, LonWorks, BACnet) an alliance of system integrators (established through building connections at BuilConn) can perform total building integration.

Sinclair: Any final thoughts on building connections and BuilConn?

Capuano: BuilConn provided two things - 1) a forum for the broadening scope of building automation and 2) a location to build the connections necessary for the system integrator to expand their business. This is a very exciting time for the industry, with the best yet to come.

Sinclair: What are your comments to people that did not come to BuilConn?

Capuano: I understand people being skeptical - BuilConn promised a lot. In the end BuilConn delivered and those that missed it really missed something important. The good news is that BuilConn will be back in April 2004 and no one should miss it this time.