



## Kicking Off the Fiscal Year with the Extended Sales Team

**Industry:** Technology

**Headquarters:** Exeter, Rhode Island

### January 2013 Results:

- 409 Registrants
- 409 Attendees
- 100% Attendance Rate
- 40 Presentations
- 3,370 Presentation Views

### Situation:

Carousel Industries is a systems integrator and managed services provider that designs, implements and maintains powerful converged communication networks for enterprise customers nationwide. With headquarters in Exeter, Rhode Island, Carousel Industries has a sales team of 120 outside sales executives, 70 inside sales representatives and approximately 40 sales engineers.

For the past 12 years, Carousel Industries held an annual sales kick-off meeting at the start of the calendar year. The annual meeting brings together an extended sales team of nearly 300 people who meet and collaborate for 3 to 4 days.

Kelly Harman, VP Marketing at Carousel Industries, is tasked with planning and executing the sales kick-off meeting. In 2012, Harman was given a mandate to reduce expenses for the 2013 meeting, while maintaining the educational and collaborative aspects of the meeting.

Harman considered a number of options, including video conferencing and smaller, regional meetings. After weighing the pros and cons, Harman decided on an online sales conference, using the online events platform from INXPO.

With INXPO's online events solution, the extended sales team could attend from their office (or home office) and not have to miss a valuable week of selling time. In addition, Harman could deliver on the objective of reducing the meeting's cost without sacrificing the quality of the event.

### Solution:

The Carousel Industries Online Sales Conference took place over three days during January 2013. Each day was headlined by a keynote session and several subsequent presentations, all of which were broadcast live from Carousel's studio facility in Exeter, Rhode Island. Harman utilized a carefully crafted content strategy to keep sales attendees engaged and captivated during the daily series of live presentations.

The sales conference lasted for half a day each day, so that attendees would remain interested – and, to still allow for half a day of selling. Each day's schedule started in the afternoon (during East Coast hours), to allow West Coast team members to join in the morning.

# Carousel Industries Online Sales Conference 2013

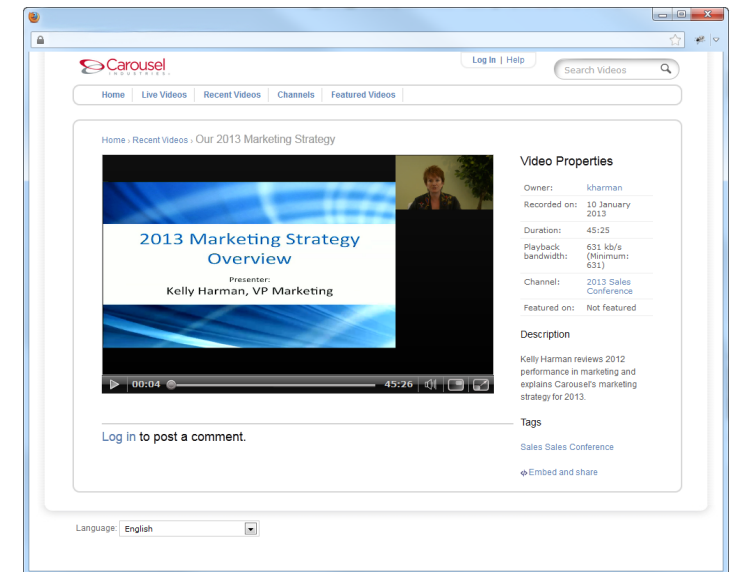
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## Breakout Sessions Provide Valuable Learning

Harman worked with sales leadership to design and pre-record 19 additional breakout sessions. These sessions provided key information to sales executives on topics specific to their area of focus. The breakout sessions, as well as the recordings of the three days of live sessions were all made available on the morning immediately after the sales conference concluded. Attendees were asked to select a minimum of six breakout sessions to watch on-demand over the next two weeks.

The metrics reporting within INXPO's online events platform enabled Harman and the sales leadership team to monitor and validate whether each team member attended the requisite number of sessions. "In a physical setting, we have time and space limitations," said Harman. "With an online event, we could theoretically have an unlimited number of breakout sessions, each with an unlimited number of participants," continued Harman.

On the final day of the conference, members of Carousel's executive team held an open Q&A session. Questions were emailed in advance and it was one of the best received sessions of the entire conference.



Breakout Sessions

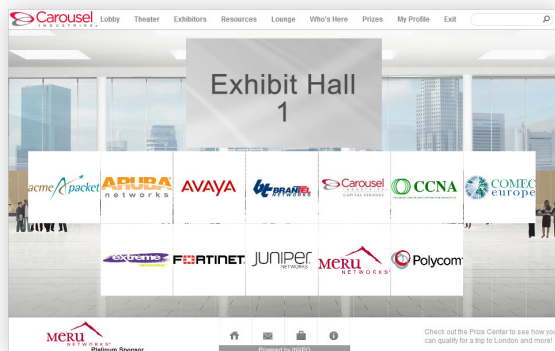


Exhibit Hall

## An Exhibit Hall for Partners

Harman continued the tradition of inviting Carousel Industries' partners to the annual sales kick-off. Since the 2013 conference was exclusively online, the partners benefited from cost savings as well. Each partner had a "sponsor space" in the Partner Exhibit Hall. Harman allocated a full two hours on the second day of the conference for Carousel sales reps to visit and interact with partners. After the conference, Harman received high praise from partners, who appreciated the valuable interactions they had with the extended sales team.

## Extended ROI: Benefits Span the Entire Organization

Harman leveraged the online conference investment to benefit teams beyond Sales and Marketing. After the conference, the entire company was given access to the virtual environment to watch any or all of the sessions. The environment will now be part of the onboarding experience for all new sales personnel that are hired over the next 12 months.

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## Results:

Carousel Industries received overwhelmingly positive feedback on the 2013 sales conference, both from sales team members and from partners. Many attendees liked the fact that they did not have to travel. Others appreciated the lack of “missed selling time” from being out of the office.

The online experience helped facilitate appointments between partners and sales reps. Because both parties were at their computers (and in front of their calendars), it was easy to make and confirm appointments on the spot.

And the cost savings? Harman over-delivered by achieving an 86% reduction in sales conference expenses.

## Next Step: Social Business TV

Due to the overwhelming success of the online sales conference, Harman and the Carousel executive team convened to discuss how to use an online platform for additional business needs. The decision? The creation of a Carousel Industries Social Business TV network to provide information to customers, partners and prospects in an interactive and continuously open environment.

Harman is busy planning the first channel, which will be called Carousel Live at Lunch. This channel will provide live, video-based lunch-time programs, featuring Carousel thought leaders and subject matter experts. The programs will initially be broadcast from the Exeter studio, but eventually extend to experts “in the field” via webcams.