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Buyers Heading to NAB With Cash in Pockets

By Daisy Whitney

The downbeat mood that characterized the past two National Association of Broadcasters conventions appears to be on an upswing for this year's meeting, set for April 17-22.

Most stations and groups are ready to start spending again, putting behind them for the moment the war in Iraq and the sour economy that cast long, dark shadows over the past two shows.

For many buyers, the previous years' spending slowdown means more equipment now needs to be replaced. In other cases, new tools are now available at attractive prices. The themes are convergence and integration, as technology companies aim to connect different processes to manage ads and news.

Here's a roundup of some product introductions and upgrades in key areas for broadcasters.

Traffic Competition

With several station groups slated to roll off their current traffic system contracts in the next year or two, the marketplace has been heating up as leading vendors compete for their business. The trend has been to extend the reach of traffic systems beyond simply managing commercials. Nowadays, traffic vendors are recognizing the need to offer enterprisewide business intelligence systems that allow a station or group to wrap its arms around the complete revenue picture behind its inventory.

Optimal Solutions, known as OSI, has added more sales management tools that enable stations to better use their inventory and to eyeball revenue trends.

"We're seeing a lot more serious buyers than we have before," said Ed Adams, president of OSI.

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