

San Juan, PR show worth adding to your 2010 calendar

After reporting from the **San Juan Beauty Show** for several years, **Beauty Industry Report (BIR)** is pleased to have **Roberto Paniagua**, owner and producer of the show, provide an update on his successful and growing annual event. As the largest professional event in the Caribbean region, this show offers unique opportunities to marketers of professional beauty products and provides a direct link to salon professionals in this area. Read on to learn how it can help your company increase your reach and tap into a new audience.

BIR: Tell me about the San Juan Beauty Show.

Roberto Paniagua (RP): Our 13th annual show was definitely a lucky number. It was our most successful event in terms of attendance, number of exhibitors and sales generated. Nevertheless, we will continue with new developments and improvements, securing and building on our standing as the No. 1 salon industry trade show in the region.

BIR: What were the reasons for its success?

RP: We took advantage of the expansion of the salon industry in the Latin American region and culture by refocusing our advertising to attract more beauty professionals from Central and South America and the Caribbean. With Puerto Rico as the proven bridge between the Latin American culture and the United States, we offered our exhibitors a new perspective on this market and a way for them to tap into this growing market. The result was outstanding.

BIR: How did that translate into numbers?

RP: On Sunday, we had 25,000 attendees, and on Monday, there were 42,000, for a two-day total of 67,000. That's a 7%+ increase over our 2008 show attendance of 62,000.

BIR: What did you learn from 2009 Show that will be of value for the show in 2010?

RP: We will continue to invest in more education, continue to offer big name Main Stage performers and move our Main Stage to the third floor. Last year, we successfully introduced a new area called the "Expression Zone" on the second floor of the convention center. This interactive area complemented the main exhibition area with games, fashion shows and other activities related to beauty.

BIR: What were some of last year's show highlights?

RP: The Miss Puerto Rico representative in Miss World Beauty Pageant attended our show. We invested in major platform performers, including **Martin Parsons**, **Mike Karg**, the **Joe Blasco/MUA TV Makeup Team** and the **Miss Universe 2007 Image Designer**, Mexican **Alejandro L'Occoco**.

BIR: Tell me about your Red Carpet event.

RP: The Red Carpet is the lead up to the **Latin American Awards Gala**. The Latin American Awards were established to recognize the talent and dedication of those who commit their lives to enhance the levels of the beauty industry in Puerto Rico and Latin America and the education, economy and quality of life in their own countries, as well.

There are two special awards: **The San Juan Beauty Show Lifetime Achievement Award**, which was given to **Conair's Lee Rizzuto, Jr.** for his contribution to the beauty industry, and **The Antonio Petruccelli Award**, which was given to **José Almonte** from **Laboratorios Noruel** in the Dominican Republic, for enhancing the Latin American beauty industry. The Latin American awards were also the farewell for Miss Puerto Rico World before she departed for the International Pageant in South Africa. It also featured the fashion show of the Puerto Rican Designer **Carlos Alberto**. He is the official designer for the Miss Universe Pageant sponsored by Donald Trump.

BIR: I understand that the \$200 million Sheraton Puerto Rico Convention Center Hotel & Casino, directly opposite your show venue, is now open. For next year's show, will you be working closely with the hotel to develop some package deals?

RP: We are working with the Sheraton Convention Center Hotel to provide excellent room rates for our guests.

BIR: I understand you get a great deal of coverage from both local television and newspapers. Please tell me more.

RP: Puerto Rico is a small island in the Caribbean, heavily influenced by marketing trends from the United States. Our show business relations and contacts have provided

the opportunity to cater to TV producers' interest in having beauty related segments in their shows. As one of the biggest beauty shows in Latin America, our show created the opportunity for local newspapers and magazines to partner with us as sponsors, providing excellent exposure for the show and an interesting story for their readers.

BIR: Recently, Beauty Systems Group (BSG) acquired Belleza, a local salon products distributor. What effect will that have on the San Juan Beauty Show and in general, the Puerto Rican market?

RP: When a large corporation, such as BSG, decides to do business aggressively in the Puerto Rican beauty market, it is because it recognizes the potential growth. For our show, it brings a new flavor and introduces an additional marketing tool and attraction for attendees.

BIR: You have mentioned that one of the key success factors for the San Juan Beauty Show is that you listen to the needs and desires of a wide cross section of participants of the Puerto Rican salon industry and constantly strive to address and provide value to all. Give me some examples of what you have done recently to address some of those needs.

RP: That's one of the primary reasons we have focused on increasing our educational offerings and showcasing the talents of many international artists. We're providing artists and educators, like **Martin Parsons**, **Mike Karg**, the **Joe Blasco Makeup Artists team**; **Millie Banch** and **Willie Negrón** from San Juan, as well as the **Vernucci Brothers** from Argentina and **Alejandro L'Occoco** from Mexico among others. All stage shows and classes are free for attendees. This year, we also invited the **Professional Beauty Association (PBA)** to exhibit to inform companies and salon professionals about the benefits of becoming a PBA member.

BIR: As your show has grown and evolved, it has achieved lots of recognition from within the salon industry, from the media, from the local government and educational institutions. Can you elaborate?

RP: The San Juan Beauty Show was chosen by the government of Puerto Rico to inaugurate

the Puerto Rico Convention Center and District four years ago, and still stands as the biggest convention celebrated in Puerto Rico, in both expo area size and attendance.

In addition, we are developing a partnership with various media outlets, both electronic and print, in order to provide unique content that will be oriented directly to beauty industry professionals.

BIR: Roberto, we have discussed your goal of creating a presence for the San Juan Beauty Show within the U.S. Hispanic market. What initiatives do you have planned?

RP: This year, we will be hosting the Latin American Pavilion in the International Beauty Show in New York City on March 7-9.

BIR: In addition to expansion plans for the United States, I understand that you have similar goals for the emerging Latin American market. Tell BIR readers about your plans and what you have accomplished.

RP: In 1999 we produced the **Santo Domingo Beauty Show**, but the beauty market was not ready for that type of venture. Now 10 years later, thanks to globalization, it's the right moment to have joint ventures with associates in countries, like Costa Rica, Panama and the Dominican Republic.

BIR: What are you doing to increase your database to provide additional tools for show attendees and exhibitors regarding products and services?

RP: Since I am a graduate of Turabo University and sponsor the Scholarship Fund of the Alumni Association, we have been working with the University Computer Data Program to create a database that will give our attendees and exhibitors helpful information. We are also working with the university to provide a degree in beauty careers.

BIR: What is your organization's greatest accomplishment in the last five years?

RP: Establishing the San Juan Beauty Show as *the* place for manufacturers to introduce their new products and services to salon professionals in the Caribbean and as the must-attend event in the region for all beauty professionals and students.

BIR: Who are the key members of your management team?

RP: I have been very grateful to have a unique management team. As we are a family

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based business, family members are part of my team, including my two right hands, my sister **Zaida**, office manager, and my brother, **Alberto**. They are responsible for direct promotion of our shows and of the floor assembly of the San Juan Beauty Show and the **Professional Barber Beauty Show**. **Noraida Incle**, our office assistant, is responsible for exhibitor relations. **Xiomara Rodriguez** is the public relations assistant, and **Richy Miranda-Cortese** is our senior executive advisor.

BIR: Tell me about plans for the Main Stage and other special educational events that are on the drawing board for 2010.

RP: **John Paul DeJoria** plans to provide a Main Stage performer from the **John Paul Mitchell Systems'** major platform artist group. Top educators from other major beauty care companies will also will be present.

BIR: Tell me about your organization's online

marketing initiatives.

RP: We are continuously updating our website with the new activities that will be in our show and sending email blasts with developments for the show so attendees are always informed about the coming attractions.

BIR: Have you had any mentors in the professional business?

RP: I will always be grateful to the **Petrucelli family—Damiano, Tony and their sons**. From the beginning, they made me feel like family and offered continuous support to our shows. **John Barrios** from **World Publications** and **Estetica Magazine** is not only our U.S. representative for the San Juan Beauty Show, but is also my friend, and he has provided great support and advice. Other mentors include **Howard Britt**, **Paul Dykstra** and **Joseph LaManna**, my colleagues in the beauty show production business, and **Lee Rizzuto, Jr.**, who has given me ongoing sponsorship and support.

BIR: What is the best business advice you ever received, and who was it from?

RP: **David Schloss**, president of **All Step Sales**, told me, "If you are going to start in this business, never quit and always be available for all of your customers and clients."

BIR: What advice would you offer to younger beauty business professionals who might hope to rise to the top of their company some day?

RP: Be focused on the philosophy of the market. Work honestly and be respectful of your job and your customers—always give your best efforts to satisfy their needs.

BIR: What inspires you?

RP: People who overcome obstacles and challenges.

BIR: How have you managed to find balance between work and your personal life?

RP: Being respectful of other people provides the space for understanding their needs, including my family.

BIR: Any final thoughts you'd like to share?

RP: Our organization's commitment, objectives, goals and achievements are all focused on the stability and long term growth of the professional beauty industry on an international level.

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