

# RIA Convention Provides Education & Opportunities

By Patricia L. Harman



Despite the economic uneasiness worldwide, the RIA Convention and Exhibition proved to be another success, delivering cutting-edge education, valuable networking opportunities and the opportunity for attendees to test drive equipment and products before purchasing. While the cleaning and restoration industry is by no means recession-proof, companies with diverse business models seem to be faring better than those concentrating on just one or two specific areas.

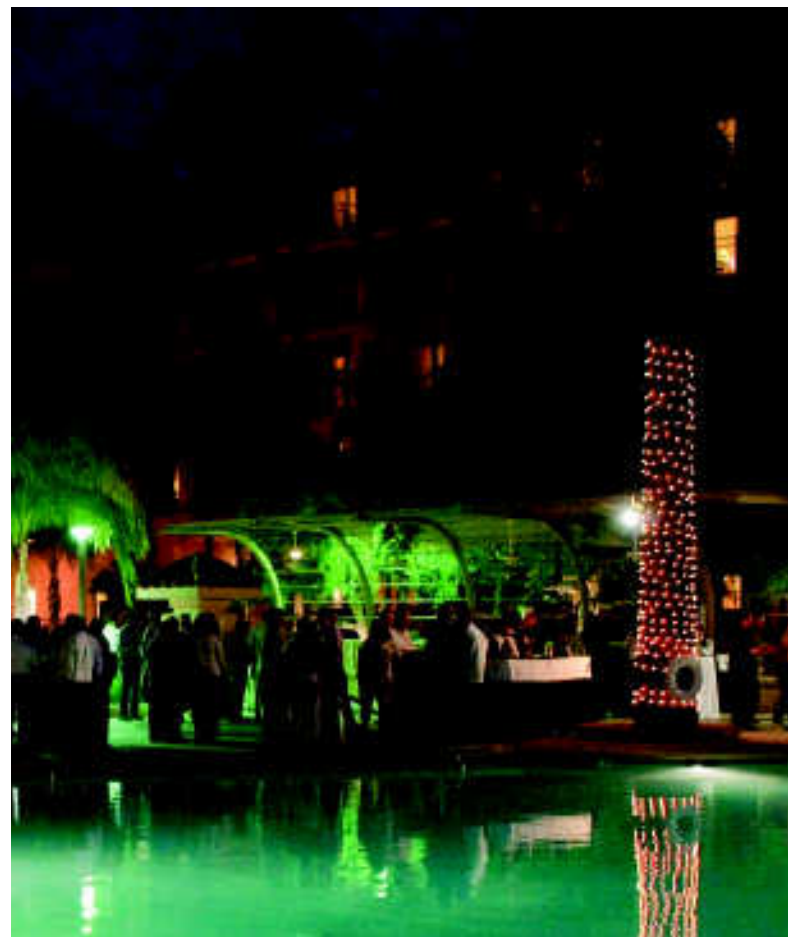
Palm Springs, Calif., provided a tranquil backdrop to the networking and education taking place at the Wyndham Palm Springs. Attendance numbers were actually up six percent from 2008, and many attendees came specifically to purchase equipment and services from the more than 90 exhibitors participating in the exhibition.

In his opening address, RIA President Rusty Amarante, CR, highlighted some of the association's successes over the past year. These included the redesign of the RIA website; the launch of RIA Advantage, a member purchasing site for collateral marketing materials and supplies; the introduction of the Brown Bag Lunch Webinar series; the creation of the industry's first glossary of restoration terms; and the collaboration of RIA and the International Environmental Standards Organization (IESO) on the industry's first fire damage restoration standard.



Renowned AD/HD specialist, Edward Hallowell, M.D., delivered the first of two keynote addresses. He explained the traits of Attention Deficit/Hyper-Activity Disorder, addressed some of the misconceptions concerning it and provided suggestions on how to work effectively with those who have the disorder.

"They are original, imaginative thinkers," said Hallowell. "They are big hearted and tend to be persistent — getting up when knocked down, and they tend to think outside of the box."



He illustrated the condition as having a “Ferrari brain with bicycle brakes,” where the individual’s mind works at lighting speed, but he or she is unable to slow it down to concentrate, which is why people with AD/HD sometimes have trouble with the details associated with a project. They also tend to get bored with a task before it is completed or when it becomes routine.

Being aware of these issues enables the employee and employer to be proactive in managing them. He recommended partnering these individuals with someone who can

***RIA’s Welcome Reception started the convention off on a high note and provided a great networking opportunity for members and guests from around the world. Then it was down to serious business during the next two days of education sessions.***

handle the details that the employee with AD/HD might have trouble managing or completing.

Hallowell also discussed the importance of leading a “connected” life in today’s fast-paced, wired environment. “People who stay in touch with friends are healthier than