Shepard: 120 Years of Legacy & Innovation

Since its founding in 1905, Shepard has been a driving force in the trade show and live event industry. From its modest beginnings to its current status as a full-service event production powerhouse, Shepard's journey exemplifies innovation, adaptability, and an unwavering commitment to customer success.

Building a Foundation (1905 - Present)
Shepard emerged to fill a gap in the event services market. As the landscape of trade shows and exhibitions evolved in complexity and popularity, so did Shepard's expertise and offerings. The company quickly established itself as a reliable partner, known for its attention to detail and customer-first approach.

A pivotal moment came in 1982 when Carl Mitchell took ownership of Shepard. Under his leadership, the company began its transformation from a logistics provider to a full-service event production partner. This shift wasn't just about expanding services; it was about reimagining what an event company could be by building a reputation for reliability, service excellence, and innovation. Shepard's commitment to evolving with their customers' needs has been the cornerstone of their success.

Employee-Driven Ownership: The ESOP Advantage
In 2011, Shepard reached another milestone with the establishment of their Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). This bold move went beyond restructuring finances; it fundamentally aligned the interests of every employee with those of their customers.

The ESOP reflects Shepard’s core values of accountability, service, and pride in their work. Kevin Bird, Shepard’s CEO, explains the impact: “Our team’s personal investment in the company translates to a commitment to excellence and a deeper understanding of our customers’ needs. Every interaction and project reflects our collective ownership—which leads to a customer experience that’s second to none.”

This unique ownership model—Shepard is the only general service contractor in the industry with an ESOP—has strengthened Shepard’s ability to deliver customer-focused service, making their people integral to their success.

Expanding Strategic Services: A Decade of Transformation
The past decade has witnessed Shepard's remarkable evolution. Recognizing the changing needs of event organizers and attendees, the company expanded beyond traditional event support to offer strategic and creative services.

Today, Shepard collaborates closely with show organizers to understand their unique goals and deliver solutions that drive meaningful results and enhance every aspect of the attendee experience. This comprehensive approach has positioned Shepard as not just a service provider, but a true partner in event success.

Innovations for a Modern Events Industry: Enhancing the Exhibitor Experience
In an industry often steeped in tradition, Shepard has been quietly revolutionizing the status quo, placing the exhibitor experience at the forefront of their priorities. Recognizing this long-underserved area, they've invested heavily in market research, analyzed evolving consumer trends, and explored best practices across industries. Their mission: to infuse the events industry with modern efficiencies and customer experience advancements.

Through their research, Shepard has uncovered key opportunities to streamline and enhance every exhibitor touchpoint. From simplifying ordering processes to offering intuitive tools and creating a user-friendly journey from planning to execution, Shepard is committed to empowering exhibitors to achieve more with less friction.

The culmination of these efforts is a groundbreaking exhibitor experience platform launching later this year. Designed to modernize and streamline the process, this platform is set to transform how exhibitors engage with their events. It will bring exhibitors real-time data, clearer insights, and more intuitive ways to manage their participation, from booth setup to lead generation—and this is only the beginning.

As Shepard charts the course ahead, their innovations will continue to push boundaries. With further enhancements on the horizon, they're setting a new industry standard built on ease, efficiency, and engagement, meeting the evolving demands of their customers head-on.

Looking Ahead: A Future of Innovation and Growth
As Shepard approaches its 120th anniversary, the company remains focused on the future. With a legacy built on service excellence and a vision driven by innovation, Shepard continues to shape the evolution of the event industry. The next chapter of their journey is one of growth and innovation, with a deep commitment to evolving alongside the needs of their customers. With their ESOP-driven culture, strategic services, and innovative solutions, they are positioned to lead the events industry into an exciting future.