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Don't Fall Behind

A colleague told me awhile back that if Apple ran our country, everything would be just fine. I'm beginning to think she may be right.

I never claimed to be the most up-to-date person when it comes to technology. My version of GPS or Mapquest? I unfold my Rand McNally map whenever I make a road trip in my car. Of course, I have a cell phone. But it's almost six years old and pretty much only allows me to make and receive calls and instant messages. No music, no photos, no Internet surfing, no games. I've even heard laughter whenever I get the courage to use it when my friends are around.

But now, I'm thinking of doing something I wouldn't have considered just a few months ago: buying an iPhone. Why? Apple just dropped the price of its most basic model to just \$99. Sure, that would be a little more than a hundred bucks (including sales tax) I could spend on basics like food or gasoline. But if I keep the new phone for five years, it certainly would be worth \$20 a year to become a more organized and efficient person.

I think people in all industries are struggling with similar decisions on a greater scale as our economy struggles to regain its footing. Many are asking: Should I spend a few hundred dollars on that plane ticket and hotel room to get up to date on techniques and innovations at a conference or trade show? Or should I use that money back at the office for payroll or equipment?

"Business studies show that when budgets for education and marketing

are cut back, those who continue to learn, network, market, and become experts own their industry when recessions end," explains Michael Sawick, board member of the International Concrete Polishing & Staining Conference (ICPSC). "The others who are left behind *never* catch up. This is especially true for industries where the technology, techniques, chemistry, and equipment are quickly evolving.

"If finances are a concern, there is nowhere on the planet a person can network with, learn from, and speak with more experts and manufacturers for so little money than in Atlanta," he adds.

Those sound like good arguments to me. The second ICPSC will be held Oct. 1-4 near Atlanta, and CONCRETE SURFACES will again be the official publication of the event.

Concrete polishing has grown so fast and so quickly, many in the industry have become concerned about the lack of standards and education. This event, and the education and networking that go along with it, should go a long way toward easing those fears.

The goal of last year's inaugural event was to end the feelings many had that they work in an isolated business. In bringing together more than 250 professionals, that feeling was destroyed. Organizers say they have listened to suggestions from last year's attendees to help make this year's conference even more valuable. Read the news story below for more details.