

Banking Automation **BULLETIN**



Prepaid cards market continues dynamic growth

Brazilian banks aim to improve customer service via ATMs

Latin American ATM market forecast to slow down

Smart card shipments to reach 5.4 billion in 2009

London to host Europe's largest ATM conference

Country profile: Latvia



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Conferences in an economic downturn

Conventional wisdom says that industry seminars, conferences and expos suffer in a downturn, with delegates struggling to find budgets for travel expenses, let alone entry fees, and other sources

of funding such as sponsorship increasingly hard to come by. If correct, then one might think that in the current economic environment banking conferences would be particularly badly hit, but is this actually the case?

The question is pertinent, not just to our readers who are regular supporters of such events, but also to RBR, which organises, together with the ATM Industry Association (ATMIA), several conferences every year.

The picture that is emerging contains both positives and negatives – key industry events are holding up reasonably well, while non-core offerings are suffering.

Industry expos such as BAI's Retail Delivery (see *Bulletin* issue 259) and Wincor World (reviewed in this issue) are reporting similar numbers of organisations attending, with senior staff still participating, but also a drop in the number of delegates per company. The next major test for this type of event is CeBIT, in Hannover, Germany in March.

When it comes to conferences, rather than expos, there are a plethora of small events that are feeling the pinch. The larger, higher-profile events – such as those organised by EFMA on the cards and payments side, and ATMIA on the automation side, are performing much better. Delegates still see value in the networking and knowledge sharing opportunities that these conferences bring, while industry suppliers view these events as a cost-effective way of meeting new customers.

The next major European ATM conference is European ATMs 2009, which is held in London on 11th and 12th May 2009 – the event is previewed on page 14. Based on the high quality speaker programme and early interest from banks and suppliers, the organisers say they are expecting a well attended and valuable event.

Dominic Hirsch, Editor

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