

Up the Stage Ante for Vendors at Conferences

- Top-Tier Talent/People are what "MAKE" the Atlassian Summit and Enterprise 2.0 Conferences
- "Too Vendor-Centric at E2.0 Conference" - what to do about it
- Up the ante on those vendor presentations

Top-Tier Talent/People are what "MAKE" the Atlassian Summit and Enterprise 2.0 Conferences

Last week was a busy week -- much catch up from being away from my desk alot during the prior two weeks while attending [Atlassian Summit 2010 \(San Francisco\)](#) and [Enterprise 2.0 Conference \(Boston\)](#), and also AppFusions' release of the [Alfresco to Confluence connector](#) on the [Atlasian Plugin Exchange](#) .

Both conferences - exhilarating experiences in alot of ways, albeit really because of the people more than the events, for me.

This statement is not meant to be a criticism of the events -- actually quite to the contrary. Both events were very well planned, organized, and had large engaged attendance (in fact Atlassian Summit was [sold out](#) a month in advance; stopped counting the waiting list at 200+ over...).

It is the **people** though that each event drew in -- top talents of the Atlassian and Enterprise 2.0 industries, trekking in from all corners of the world -- that made the events so amazing. Having that much top-tier talent all in one city, let alone single venues, all at the same time, is just a **do not miss** experience on so many levels.

Endless exposure and share in conversation, stories, visions, designs, knowledge, tricks, insights, examples, networking, and simply inspirations over short periods of time is exhausting, seemingly unrepeatable, **and very cherry**.

And then comes the streams of blogs, write-ups, opinions, and tweets moving the experiences and knowledge even more. The After-Conferences are almost *more* intense actually. These are NOT passive conference attendee folks!

For the Enterprise 2.0 Conference, here's just a few notable recap/"archival"-like blogs, samplers -- of the tons out there:

- [Enterprise 2.0 Session Notes](#) - a complete chronology/detailed session accountings. Simply incredible! (by Bill Ives)
- [Enterprise 2.0 Prepares for Relevancy](#) - "The tide's about to rise" - a discussion about the movement of the industry (by Sameer Patel)
- [When Should Management Push Enterprise 2.0 Adoption](#) - Push-pull decision framework on E2.0 adoption (by Hutch Carpenter)
- [Getting to Enterprise Scale 2.0](#) - Nice perspective on reality vs. the hype of Enterprise 2.0 ways (by Oliver Marks)
- [A letter to Steve Wylie](#) - Open what worked well and what could be done better letter (by Mary Abraham)
- [Ten Tips from the Enterprise 2.0 Conference](#) - Sum-up tips on deploying E2.0 (by Nigel Fenwick)
- ["Social" Perspective on the Conference](#) - Nice recap on both the social demographics of Enterprise 2.0 Conference, and resulting content coming out of the conference - while emphasizing the value of BEING THERE too. (by Mark Eggleston)
- [Enterprise 2.0 Experience](#) - Overview and interesting statistics on #e2conf (by Ken Domen)
- [Running "wiki"-log of #e2conf writeups](#) - by Jim Worth
- and many many more !



For Atlassian Summit, here's some recaps on that:

- [Summit Starter Day Roundup](#) and videos
- [Summit 2010 - the Boxset](#) and session videos
- [Post-Summit Blog Roundup](#) and session highlights
- [Adaptavist LaunchPad Review](#)
- [Contegix - Atlassian Summit - a Recap](#)



I started this section with the title that "top tier talent/people "make" the conferences". *Come to think of it, top-tier talent/people are also what makes Enterprise 2.0 work in organizations too! Interesting coincidence!*

"Too Vendor-Centric at E2.0 Conference" - what to do about it

One of the loudest criticisms that I kept hearing about the E2.0 conference was:

Too vendor-centric...

I always find this criticism quite ironic - since it really is a cheapshot and also kinda short-sighted and lame. You **need** the vendors for conferences - they are critical; but indeed, with some thought, a balance in the planning and preparation can help.

If I recall a year ago, Atlassian Summit 2009 had the same criticism and I applaud Atlassian for really taking the bull by the horn on this issue for

this year.

For the 2010 event, [alot/most of the sessions](#) were by Atlassian employees/experts, or real-world customer case studies, sharing their knowledge, and really trying to change the conference flavor to be less vendor-centric, yet to keep the conference enticing for both vendors and customers at the same time. Not easy.

For the conference sessions that were dedicated to vendors, Atlassian did a good trick to up the ante (quality) on those sessions.

They played the Superbowl angle, as [@chrisyeh](#) commented to in [Megan Murray's blog about the #e2conf](#) .

Vendors need to follow the Gladiator Principle... "Are you not entertained?"

Just because you've delivered your talking points doesn't mean that you've made an impact. Buying a keynote is like buying a Superbowl commercial -- yeah, you've got a big audience, but they're as likely to mock you as support you. Money gets you in front of people, but it's up to you to tell a story worth hearing.

At the Atlassian Summit, the Keynote was presented by Mike Cannon-Brookes and Scott Farquhar - always good presenters (here's their [Starter Day presentation](#)). Directly following was a [LaunchPad event](#) that allowed the 13 or so vendor sponsors a chance to show off their stuff, on stage. Here was the [non-rules](#) to the competition.

Do their "SuperBowl spot", LIVE, if you will.

Following each spot, the audience was given a couple minutes to SMS/text their vote in on it, which was calibrated and calculated in real-time on the big-screen so everyone could also see.

Some of the presentations were standout, others were mediocre at best.

The winner - [Gliffy Design Software](#) - for their pirates themed presentation.

Gliffy excited and roused the audience. It was funny, charming, engaging, informative and simply - an Atlassian Summit "superbowl" standout. And to boot, they had a blast doing it - sometimes laughing harder than the audience.



That is good marketing! Having fun and sharing the fun, with a serious solution! *So, as one pirate said at the end: "There you go Jack!"*

Up the ante on those vendor presentations

Enterprise 2.0 Conference could rip a page off the Atlassian Summit conference playbook for their LaunchPad, and endless Keynote sessions too!

People like to be entertained at conferences, as well as informed - but engagement expectations are high.

- Up the ante on those vendor presentations.
- Provide real-time E2.0 friendly competition!
- Make the vendors earn their stage time, not just subject the audience to mediocre. I know I know - they paid for their stage time. But so did the attendees!
- Engage the audience to vote after each event and get into the fun!

As for next years' Atlassian Summit vendor events - I think the ante has already been up'd, and I'm sure next year will hold new surprises. In good Atlassian E2.0 way, continuous improvement - it always gets better and better.



NO ONE should take for granted their stage time though, at any conference event.