

## Making lemonade

Alix Paultre



There's an old saying, "you can even get used to hanging, if you hang long enough". This industry has been on a rollercoaster for over a decade, between the Dot-Bomb, the Telecom collapse, the Internet, the housing bubble, the bank crisis, and disruptive technologies, we've been beaten about like a Pinata on Cinco de Mayo. However, the current environment does give those with vision and courage the opportunity to use this forced slowdown to their advantage. Recently I had the opportunity to discuss this aspect of the marketplace with some of my friends at the recent Embedded Systems Conference (check out the second part of our show coverage in this issue).

Almost everyone I spoke to was cautiously optimistic about the future. As mentioned, this situation has nothing in common with what happened at the beginning of the decade. Warehouses are relatively empty, supply chains are under control, and costs have been managed. This creates the opportunity for those with foresight to use the time given to develop new products, evaluate new technologies, train personnel, and in general get ready for when the marketplace gates open wide again.

David Stewart, CEO of Critical Blue, was very up on the future. "Multicore processoes are becoming a vital area of expertise to today's engineer, and we are getting a lot of attention for our embedded multicore development systems. Even though there aren't a lot of new products shipping, we are getting a lot of inquiries as companies prepare themselves for the next generation of products" David said. This sentiment was echoed by John Greenland Jr. of LDRA, who also felt that the need to stay on top of the technology behooved companies to take the time and evaluate the newest developments for implementation and have the latest product ready when the demand increases as the market recovers.

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On the hardware side, my buddy Bob Burckle of WinSystems told me his company was experiencing a lot of design activity as clients explored the latest I/O and form-factor developments. He also told me about the small form-factor special-interest group (SFF-SIG) and the new SUMIT and COMIT interface standards for next-gen single-board computers and other embedded devices. He and Paul Rosenfeld, the President of the SFF-SIG were very upbeat on the increased capabilities of the new approaches. Chris Persidok of Access I/O was also on the interface advancement bandwagon, pointing out that this is the best time to work on the next generation of product using the latest in I/O tech.

What are you doing with your forced downtime? Send us a short app note or essay on your latest design issues, and we'll run the best of them in our "Design Talk" section. Email me at [alix.paultre@advantagemedia.com](mailto:alix.paultre@advantagemedia.com) [1], and tell us what challenges you are facing due to the economic situation, and how you are addressing them.

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