



Temporary structures contractors had mixed fortunes in 2010 but fared better than the wider events industry, and the sector is gearing up for further growth over the next year, according to a recent survey of MUTA members.

The survey indicates that the temporary structures industry bucked the trend in the wider events sector, which experienced an overall contraction of 13% over 2010 according to the UK Events Market Trends Survey 2011.

Fortunes across the temporary structures industry varied; while two fifths of MUTA hirers (40%) saw little change in their turnover between 2009 and 2010, one in four (26%) were hit by falling revenues in 2010. But only 13% of manufacturers experienced a fall in sales in the same period, suggesting that companies opted to invest in upgrading their kit as a sluggish economy struggled out of recession.

Encouragingly, more than one third (36%) of the MUTA fabric structures hire sector saw significant growth in sales as the wider economy recovered during 2010, and more than two thirds (71%) of hirers and more than half (59%) of manufacturers intend to maintain or increase their capital spend over 2011.

The sustainability in events standard BS 8901 could be the key to a hirer's ongoing success and there is already a high take-up – among those who are aware of it. Over half of hirers expressed commitment to sustainability, with 13% already compliant and a further 40% planning on becoming compliant this year. Only one in ten is not planning to pursue compliance so far, though the message has not yet got through to many, with 37% not aware of the new standard.

Tony Marsh, MUTA President, commented: “These figures show that MUTA members have generally fared better than the wider events sector, which in turn suggests that the outdoor event industry had a better 2010 than the rest of the sector.

“Though our survey points to inspiring green shoots of recovery in places, conditions are still tough for fabric structure hire companies, due in large part to the continuing lack of credit available to small businesses. It is great to see that despite this many MUTA members are investing in their kit and their workforce’s skills this year, in anticipation of what promises to be a bumper year for the events industry in 2012 as we support the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, the London Olympics and the vast array of regional supporting events.

“I am also happy to see so many fellow MUTA members taking sustainability in the event supply chain seriously. Compliance with BS8901 is the natural next step for MUTA members who already meet best industry practice with their MUTAmarq accreditation. Formalising good working practices and developing a sustainability conscious culture at work in order to support clients’ overall event sustainability goals makes good business sense.”

Simon Bell, Technical Director of Custom Covers and a member of the MUTA Executive Committee, said: “2010 was a strong year for the UK’s manufacturing sector and it is excellent news to see that the textile products industry has shared in that success. We are not out of the woods yet, so it is essential that events organisers ensure that the temporary structures they use are designed to UK standards and are erected by competent MUTAmarq accredited contractors.”