

## Leading Holistic Expo Company Creates Virtual Exhibit and Conference with Wowza Media Server™ Pro



**Overview** New in 2007 will be BMSE's newest venture, the Body Mind Spirit virtual expo, called "Expos2.com". The entire experience will take place online, allowing visitors to enjoy the richness of a BMSE expo from the comfort of their own home. Making the virtual trade show possible is Wowza Media Systems' Wowza Media Server Pro, a powerful and extensible pure Java alternative to Adobe® Flash® Media Server that delivers a dramatic improvement of Flash streaming economics.

**Challenge** Body Mind Spirit Expos needed a cost-effective streaming media server for its corporate website and an upcoming virtual exposition that's in the works. The solution had to run on Mac OS X and offer support for unlimited bandwidth and users, and could reach more users than the QuickTime solution the company was using previously.

**Solution** BMSE chose Flash streaming with Wowza Media Server Pro Unlimited over Adobe Flash Media Server (FMS2) due to its cost-effectiveness, scalability, reliability, and ability to run on a Mac server in addition to Windows and Linux.

### Benefits

- Wowza Media Server Pro makes it possible for BMSE to create a new revenue stream in virtual expositions; business couldn't cost-effectively exist without Wowza Media Server.
- Solution costs 75-80% less than Adobe FMS2, saving tens of thousands of dollars for Body Mind Spirit.
- Wowza Media Server's multi-platform support allows Body Mind Spirit to run it on Mac OS X servers and deliver Flash to all of its users regardless of the operating system they're using.
- Body Mind Spirit is not limited to a maximum amount of users—license is unlimited.

Body Mind Spirit Expos (BMSE) creates some of the finest and friendliest expos in the country, facilitating the open exchange of holistic ideas. The company brings to communities around the world the newest information in three major areas of focus: Natural Health, Personal Growth, and Metaphysics. BMSE works to help develop local exhibitors and sponsors so that they may enliven and enrich their local communities during and after each expo. BMSE has been creating expos for over 21 years, managing 35 shows a year in the U.S., with international shows planned for the near future.

### In the Market for Economical Flash Streaming

Prior to 2007, BMSE was using QuickTime for streaming media on its own site ([www.bmse.net](http://www.bmse.net)). But because QuickTime is present on a minority of users' desktops, the expo company needed a Flash solution that would allow them to reach much broader audiences. The company also had plans to launch a series of virtual expos, which would rely heavily on Flash streaming. It was inevitable that the company would research Adobe Flash Media Server, but at the time, Steve Strickland, BMSE's founder and CEO, also heard about Wowza Media Server, a reliable, scalable and cost-effective Flash server solution to stream Flash content, record it instantly, and interact with audiences.

### Considering All the Options

Strickland issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to both Adobe and Wowza Media Systems. From day one, Strickland had the most positive experience with Wowza Media Systems as a company.

"I didn't like how I had to deal with Adobe," said Strickland. "I went to their website and found a number to call, but that was a pre-sales number, so somebody took my information and only after four full days did I get a call from an Adobe sales person, and they didn't even understand the technical questions I had for them. The experience with Adobe was totally impersonal and left me feeling that if we'd gone with its software, we'd be on our own from there on out."

Wowza Media Systems offered the opposite in terms of experience, according to Strickland. “When I called Wowza, I got someone on the line immediately who understood what we wanted to do and was able to answer every question I had.”

Wowza Media Systems also offered a much different pricing structure than Adobe Systems: The Wowza Media solution for BMSE’s licensing needs would cost \$5,000, whereas the Adobe Flash Media Server would be priced at over \$50,000. “The Adobe solution was prohibitive in terms of cost and scalability,” said Strickland. “The Wowza price is awesome and the degree of difference in price between it and Adobe is astounding. I can’t remember ever seeing that big a difference between competitors for essentially the same product.”

## Making the Decision

BMSE had as its priorities cost-effectiveness, multi-platform support, and ease of deployment. “We need Flash to run on a Mac server because that’s what we’re using,” said Strickland. When testing the Wowza Media Server, Strickland had sample movies up and running on a Mac server as well as a Linux and Windows system within an hour. “That’s something you can’t do with Adobe, run it on a Mac server—there isn’t a Mac version for it,” he said. “And when we tested Adobe on Linux, it took more than a day to even run the test version.”

***Wowza Media Server is a huge benefit to companies looking for a more economical Flash streaming solution. We’re excited to see how far we can take our business with it.***

***—Steve Strickland, founder and CEO,  
Body Mind Spirit Expos***

The test confirmed BMSE’s decision to go with Wowza Media Systems. “The immediate difference that comes to mind, of course, is Wowza’s pricing structure versus Adobe,” said Strickland. “Not just the price itself upon first purchase but also the ability to cost-effectively move to an unlimited user license in terms of bandwidth and users. That made the decision easy in and of itself, but just as important was the ability to run on different platforms as well as its reliability. With Wowza Media Server, there is no difference visible to the user, compared with Adobe. And so far, since deploying it, our stability has been 100 percent.”

Wowza Media Server Pro is a Flash streaming platform that supports a wide range of interactive and multimedia applications, including those that BMSE’s virtual expos require, such as video on demand, live video distribution, video recording and chat. In addition to using Wowza Media Server for its virtual expos, BMSE is also utilizing it for streaming content on its corporate website.

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## Tremendous Benefits and Business Opportunities Realized

### Enabling Business Cost-Effectively

As mentioned earlier, there is no visible difference to end users, compared with Adobe Flash Media Server, and BMSE now has an unlimited license for a fraction of the cost of the Adobe solution. “We couldn’t do a virtual expo without Flash, and Wowza makes it possible to launch it cost-effectively,” said Strickland. “And we estimate we’re saving about 75 to 80 percent on what we would have paid for Adobe.”

While BMSE would’ve been able to produce its virtual events by using Adobe Flash Media Server, its profits would certainly be substantially lower, and the company would have needed to invest in unwanted Windows-based servers because Adobe Flash Media Server would not work on its Mac OS X servers.

### Enriching the Virtual Experience

What makes an expo so interesting to people is its live component. “Wowza Media Server brings this great interactivity to the virtual world,” says Strickland. “We can engage our virtual show visitors with video chat and live video streaming and other interactive components. Wowza is able to handle our load reliably, enabling us to provide a true full-bodied online experience for people.”

There will be two main areas of BMSE’s virtual show: The exhibit hall and the meeting rooms. When you attend a trade show or convention in the real world, you attend sessions to see a speaker presenting to a large audience. This entire experience will translate to the virtual world for BMSE’s online show.

“What’s unique about our show is that not only will you be able to see a speaker session, but you’ll also be able to walk into the exhibit hall and click on a booth to speak with a salesperson—live using Flash within the web page,” said Strickland. “It’s truly interactive, it’s not a static site where you can just download brochures. There are actual people staffing the virtual booth, ready to answer questions.”

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With Wowza Media Server, BMSE is also able to record each of the sessions presented at its virtual event, allowing expo attendees to listen to all of the presentations they want. They are no longer limited by human restraints because they can listen to every session they're interested in after it has taken place.

## Ready for Virtual World Expansion

BMSE plans to greatly expand its business to reach more markets. "One of the most interesting aspects of virtual expos is that there is no limit to how many shows you can have," said Strickland. "With Wowza, we can have 10 shows running simultaneously. We're not limited by license restraints because we bought the unlimited version. The only limit on us would be from our own hardware limitations. Wowza Media Server has eliminated the issue of software holding us back."

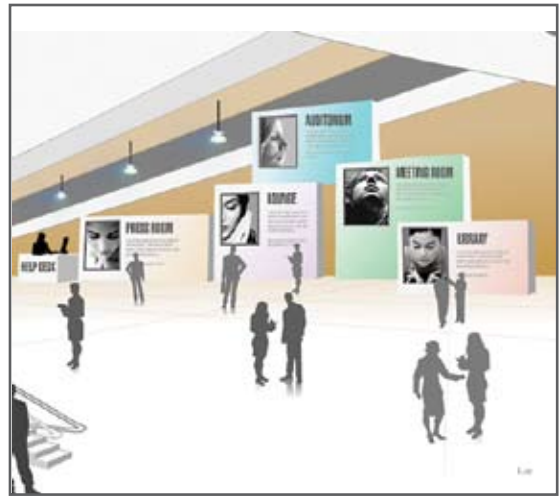
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In the future, Strickland envisions an all-around virtual experience that is almost exactly like an in-person experience.

"Ultimately, in our virtual expos, we'd like the speaker's picture to appear onscreen, as well as a thumbnail of each attendee," said Strickland. "If an attendee has a question, he or she would simply signal the speaker, who would control the flow of questions by allowing one attendee to speak at a time. When the attendee speaks, he or she would also be seen on video, assuming they have a video camera at their end. Wowza Media Server makes this possible. We also hope to add links between attendees that will allow one person to 'nudge' the person next to them so they can discuss a topic offline if they want to, the same way human interaction happens in the real world at an expo. Wowza Media Server opens these opportunities up to us and more."

"Basically, Wowza Media Server is the reason our business can exist," said Strickland. "Our engineers tell us they love it, and it's easier than any other method they've used. Their experience has been with open source Linux solutions, and they say Wowza runs far easier. The bottom line is Wowza Media Server works for us, allows us to be more profitable, scales easily, and gives us the reliability we need to maintain our image. The fact that the staff is so knowledgeable and responsive is yet another credit to Wowza Media Systems. Wowza Media Server is a huge benefit to companies looking for a more economical Flash streaming solution. We're excited to see how far we can take our business with it."



**Fig. 1 | BMSE Virtual Trade Show Portal**



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