

MARKETING

Marketing Strategy

- Develop key message points to incorporate into your overall marketing strategy.
- Identify target audiences and the key objectives of each audience that will be fulfilled by attending your meeting.
 - Perform research in the form of questionnaires, electronic surveys, focus groups, informal polling, or other methods to define the demographics of each audience and the major generational groupings within the audience groups.
- Segment audiences by the criteria and results of your surveys and information gathering.
- Interact with potential attendees through by asking readers to take action in response to your marketing communications; for instance, allow them to post ideas online, ask for a response to an email message, or engage them in a creative video or audio message via a Web-based invitation.
 - Contact potential attendees at least 10 times to be remembered and readily identified.
- Integrate all messages you send, ensuring that your marketing message is consistent and that your meeting's brand identity remains constant.
 - Incorporate a theme and logo specific to the meeting in all communications.
- Differentiate your event from the competition by clearly focusing your message and by knowing your competitors and the messages they are sending.
 - Make sure your event delivers on the promise of the marketing message and that all messages are truthful.
 - Consider partnering with other similar organizations, offering their members discounted registration, to increase attendance at your meeting.

Marketing Plan and Budget

- Draft a marketing plan that integrates all activities for achieving your event's marketing goals.
 - Identify specific tactics and types of marketing vehicles.
 - Create a work plan and timeline including every strategic activity matched with the tactic, deadline for starting and finishing, and the staff responsible for the action.
 - Tie measurable goals or benchmarks to the marketing efforts.
 - Keep accurate records of the marketing plans and results to direct your marketing for future events.
- Utilize a number of different tools to create an integrated marketing campaign.
 - Understand your group's demographics to determine which tools are necessary, such as audio, Braille, large print, and translated materials.
 - Save money by customizing materials available from CVBs and hotels.
 - Ensure that materials targeted to different market segments have the same message and look.
 - Reinforce the brand identity of your organization and event with each marketing message or material.
- Develop a marketing budget by prioritizing the tools to use based on cost and potential ROI.
 - Review the budget for marketing and promotion of previous meetings.
 - Keep in mind estimated costs for each marketing tool you intend to use.



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- Consider the amount spent by other organizations marketing similar meetings.
- Review budgets of meetings and timing of similar conferences that compete directly with your event.
- Create a budget line item for each tool you intend to use as part of your overall marketing strategy.
- Obtain estimates for each item from prior records or by soliciting vendor bids.

Direct Mail

- Include a combination of traditional mail, broadcast fax and broadcast email to reach your audience.**
 - Make sure every mailing includes pertinent event details.
 - Design each piece to grab attention, describe the event's benefits, convey all critical content clearly and concisely, and include a call to action.
 - Create content for each piece that provides necessary details, convinces readers of the value of the meeting, and elicits a response.
 - Edit copy for accuracy and correctness and ask multiple people to review it for input.
 - Learn as much as possible about the terminology and techniques involved in printing marketing materials, which is a major budget item.

Publicity and Press Relations

- Gain publicity by marketing your meeting to the appropriate media or press (including trade journals, general news media, trade association and other Web sites).**
 - Identify newsworthy angles on your program.
 - Write press releases describing the newsworthy stories and distribute to the appropriate people within the media.
 - Consider utilizing a public relations agency to ensure that your message is distributed through the most appropriate media to reach your target audiences.
 - Prepare speakers to be informative and to the point before holding a press conference.
 - Invite media representatives to attend the event with free registration, offer them access to all components of the program, and provide a press room on site.

Meeting and Convention Web Sites

- Integrate your meeting Web site with all other marketing materials, including prominent placement of logo, theme and tag line.
- Include compelling reasons for potential participants to visit the site and to revisit often.
- Display the program and agenda prominently on the site with links to speaker information, search tools, attendee surveys, and video and graphics presentations from past meetings.
- Work closely with Web developer to ensure that the site reinforces the meeting's brand identity, conveys a message consistent with other marketing materials, performs as expected, and is easy to find.

E-Marketing

- Build your email list carefully by seeking out list vendors who have developed detailed data.
- Segment your database in order to reach the right group with the appropriate message.
- Include opt-out information in all emails.

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Blogs

- Consider launching a blog for your meeting to allow your group to share news, links and ideas.

Sponsorships

- Identify the demand for sponsorship and fundraising.
- Utilize a committee, rather than just one staff person, in marketing sponsorships.
- Maintain relationships with former and current sponsors and keep in mind that sponsorship is a partnership.

Measuring Your Success

- Establish benchmarks to guide marketing decisions for future meetings.
- Calculate the real benefit-cost ration of your online meeting marketing efforts versus your direct mail and other traditional marketing vehicles.
- Select five to 10 organizations with meetings roughly similar to your own.
- Track the meeting marketing of your selected organizations over the next year and establish criteria to evaluate their approaches compared with your own.