



Guide to Running Events

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Thursday 16th July 2015

Running Successful Events - an Art or a Science?

We have all been there, we have turned up to an event where it is packed and you feel inspired and you are so glad you made the effort and you made some great new contacts. Equally we have all arrived at an event and from the minute it has started we are looking at the clock thinking I have so much more I could be doing right now rather than listening to this person droning on!!!

If you have ever been on the other side and organised an event then you will also know how difficult it is to get people there in the first place, let alone dazzle people with the venue and the content.

However, when events are ran well they can do a lot to raise the profile of your business, position you as an authority in a particular area as well as help build a reputable network of people with similar interests who want to share business knowledge.

So how do you go about achieving this successfully and it not being a flop?

I am going to share with you some lessons learnt and observations in this space that are not immediately obvious.

The best way, I have found, to describe running an event is a bit like baking a cake. The problem is I am not great at baking so bear with me....

A good cake is made up of a number of ingredients that need to be in balance, this is the science and the flavour is the art.

Let's talk about flavour first, this is how attractive the content is to the audience, would you offer a coffee and cream cake to kids or a chocolate cake? Content needs to be content driven, not sales focused, this is a by-product of a good event. The content should be engaging, interactive and you should think first and foremost about the takeaways for your attendees – what will they learn? What should they thinking about when they drive home?

It goes without saying that you should have an engaging presenter that puts the material across well. They should use stories or anecdotes to bring the content alive and they should engage with the room. Great content can fall flat with a bad presenter. So before you put yourself forward test your material or give somebody else an opportunity in your business that may have a hidden talent.

Now, let's talk about the science of populating a well-crafted event. Things to consider with your audience, ignore them at your peril!

Morning or afternoon timings – don't run an 8am breakfast seminar if you are doing a women in business event and the school run is in mid flow. Avoid half terms and holiday periods also.

Venue location – Is it easy to get to? Can people park, walk or get the tram? Out of town and on good road networks is good if you are targeting manufacturing businesses. If you are targeting professional services firms you would more than likely want to be near the city and within walking distance. In addition to this try and make the venue interesting historically. I have seen events ran in car showrooms with a test drive afterwards to a driving range – be creative!

Finally, with all this effort, you need to market it properly to get people there. First of all start at least 8 weeks before. With some great messaging have a defined target list of clients that you want to invite and set-up a registration process to handle these automatically, Eventbrite is great for this. Ensure that you craft a few Eshots with different messages and start sending them out 4-5 weeks before to a decent size population.

Follow up your opens and get on the phone to encourage people to join you on the day. Use social media and post it on your website to publicise, put it in on your email footer, LinkedIn profile and invite prospects in every conversation you have.

Do ring people before the event to check they will be joining you and that they know how to get there (this will prevent drop outs). If they are unavailable due to other commitments then offer a 121 with them at a later date.

On the day – have a sign in form to check attendees, name badges (sigh.... it does help), introduce people, round tables (cabaret is the best format) have feedback forms and ensure that you agree at the end who will follow up with whom by when. You will be amazed how many people just follow up one or two people they spoke to at the end and the others that had to leave early never got a call. These should be turned into further opportunities to understand how you can assist.

As you can see there is a lot to remember and all this of course needs to be captured in a CRM and managed for future reference. So it is of no surprise that clients will often engage with a third party to manage the process so they can focus on the Art of knocking the audience dead on the day.

Measuring results - Normally a minimum audience of 10-15 is acceptable, any more than 25 and it starts to lose the interactivity. From this you normally expect that if the content is relevant to your audience at least a third would like to explore opportunities further. If you add to this profile raising, new connections and visibility the long term returns can be a lot higher.

Reach Communications helps companies to populate and run successful targeted event. If you want a FREE event consultation to understand how you can maximise results get in touch james@reach-communications.co.uk