

MAKING INDUSTRY EVENTS WORK FOR YOU

Better Business Builder



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This Better Business Builder has been developed by Better Business Outcomes utilising both internal and external resources, the sources of which are referenced in the sources sections throughout this document.

The purpose of this Better Business Builder is to provide sufficient awareness of Industry Events for you to decide if they should make up part of your organisation's marketing strategy. It also includes extracts and references to additional resources to aid in making the most of opportunities afforded by Industry Events.

Information provided is current as at April 2012.

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Are Industry Events Relevant to Your Marketing Strategy?

Before you decide to launch straight into participating at Industry Events (at any level, be that as an attendee/delegate, exhibitor, speaker, sponsor or advertiser) you need to be sure your objectives are aligned with your business' overall marketing strategy. Ask yourself the following questions:

Attendance At Industry Events:

- What are your objectives for visiting an exhibition or being a delegate at a conference? How will it help your business and meet your marketing objectives? Will you meet your target audience? Will there be opportunities for effective networking?

Exhibiting At Industry Events:

- The bottom line is, will the event be attended by your target audience? Is there another (cheaper) way to reach them that may be just as effective or even more so?

Speaking At Industry Events:

- What are your goals? Will your target audience be listening? Will it raise your credibility and positioning in your targeted market?

Sponsoring Industry Events:

- Will the sponsorship help you meet (or build relationships with) the people who give (or refer) you work? Will sponsorship build goodwill within the eyes of your target market?

What Are Industry Events?

For our purposes Industry Events are conferences, conventions, trade shows/fairs, expos and field days.

Wikipedia defines a trade show as “an exhibition organised so that companies in a specific industry can showcase and demonstrate their latest products and services, study activities of competitors and examine recent market trends and opportunities.” FarmFest and AgQuip are examples of trade shows held in our region.

In contrast, conferences provide an opportunity for business people and the general public alike to learn more about topics of interest through relevant speakers, workshops, whitepaper presentations as well as meeting vendors of similar or related services. In many cases, companies and community groups send delegates to conferences. The Surat Basin Coal & Energy Conference and the Energy Summit are examples.

Sources

- www.wikipedia.com

Objectives of Participating In Industry Events

It is important to have clear objectives before participating in an Industry Event at any level. Costs can be significant and you want to be sure you will achieve a positive return on your investment.

Objectives of Attending

As a visitor to an event, whether it is a trade show or a conference, there is a wealth of opportunities to meet suppliers, attend demonstrations, compare features and prices, meet exhibitors and ask detailed questions.

Presentations by key industry figures, workshops, seminars and panel discussions are informative and attract key players making them a mecca for networking opportunities. Everyone is there to talk business and industry, therefore you can openly promote your business and make valuable contacts.

Objectives of Exhibiting

Costs of exhibiting at an event (particularly a tradeshow) can be significant so it is important to have very clear and valuable objectives before committing to the investment.

These objectives can include:

- Make sales
- Maintain an image and continuing contact with customers
- Initiate contact with new customers
- Introduce a new product or service
- Demonstrate equipment
- Offer an opportunity for customers to bring their technical problems and obtain solutions

Other objectives may include:

- Check out your competition more closely
- Get press or publicity
- Identify and recruit possible partners
- Identify and recruit new employees
- Show that you support your industry
- Conduct market research (eg. surveys, feedback from visitors)

Firstly, you need to ask yourself:

1. What is the real reason for exhibiting at this event?
 - Don't exhibit just out of habit - make sure your decision each year is based on results.
 - Don't exhibit just because your competitors do - they may not get results either.
 - Don't exhibit just because it's fun or full of interesting stuff - there are cheaper forms of entertainment.
2. What result do you wish to achieve by exhibiting at this event?
3. What are your specific, measurable goals for exhibiting at this event?

Ken MacKenzie in his book 'The Trade Show Edge' suggests you then determine:

1. What shows will you enter?
2. How much space do you need?
3. What do you want to say?
4. Whom do you want to reach?
5. What do you want to accomplish?
6. What kind of an exhibit design do you need to achieve your objectives?
7. How do you tell your story?
8. How much will this cost?

Objectives of Speaking

Speaking at conferences or public forums is a great way to get business because the audience of potential clients gains an increased appreciation of your credibility and expertise in the specific subject on which you're speaking. Presentations on industry trends or "how-to" subjects often make a large impact on the audience. Speaking is a strong marketing, PR and business development tool because:

1. Attendees learn about you and your business expertise firsthand. They also have the opportunity to interact with you before or after your presentation.
2. It offers a huge opportunity for increased exposure:
 - Attendees at conferences are usually the movers and shakers in that specific industry, therefore exposure to this group can be very beneficial for business.
 - There are usually press in attendance, therefore offering another avenue for exposure.
 - Increased visibility for a specific part of your business in an industry sector can be great for your business, likewise exposure on a more broad base can be very beneficial.
3. You and your business gains free "advertising" by having your name published in the various promotional materials for the event that are distributed to a wide audience by the event organisers.

Being a keynote speaker or on a panel at a conference is a great way to establish yourself and your business as a thought leader in your industry.

Maybe you've written a whitepaper or book and your goal is to share your learnings with others in your industry?

Objectives of Sponsoring

Firstly, what is sponsorship?

Sponsorship is the financial or in-kind support of an event for the primary purpose of achieving specific business goals.

A large number of events these days need sponsorship support to offer more exciting programs and to help cover rising costs.

Sponsorship allows companies to reach specifically targeted niche markets. It differs from advertising. Advertising pays to have a product/service presented to the public. Sponsorship pays the entire cost, or contributes towards the cost of an event. Usually, the sponsor requests that their marketing collateral be

prominently displayed and their contribution publicly acknowledged in return for their sponsorship. The promotion of their brand, product or service, is the direct benefit returned to the sponsor.

Sponsorship offers the possibility of achieving several goals at once. According to Schmader and Jackson in their book, "Special Events: Inside and Out," there are many ways in which a company can benefit from sponsorship. The six most popular are:

1. Enhancing image/shaping consumer attitudes. Often companies are looking for ways to improve how they are perceived by their target audience. Sponsoring events that appeal to their market are likely to shape buying attitudes and help generate a positive reaction

2. Driving sales. Sponsorship geared to driving sales can be an extremely potent promotional tool. This objective allows sponsors to showcase their product attributes. Food and beverage companies often use sponsorship to encourage samplings and sales. Event attendees are usually eager to sample something new and may well buy on the spur of the moment from a purely emotional standpoint.

3. Creating positive publicity/heightening visibility. Every sponsor is seeking wide exposure in both electronic and print media. Positive publicity helps create heightened visibility of their products/services. Various media covering the event may automatically include sponsors names and/or photos. In addition, the kind of media coverage a sponsor may get is often unaffordable if the company were to think of purchasing it, and if it were available. To maximize this objective, it is important for sponsors to have a comprehensive media campaign to supplement the regular media coverage promoted by the event organisers.

4. Differentiating themselves from competitors. The mere act of sponsoring an event, especially an exclusive sponsorship, is a significant way to differentiate yourself from your competitors. Your business has the opportunity to stand head and shoulders above the competition. This is particularly helpful if you want to combat a competitor with a larger ad budget. Sponsorship allows smaller companies to compete with industry giants. Target audiences often perceive sponsorship in a positive way. They see you as making a greater effort to support the event.

5. Helping with a good "Corporate Citizen" role. To be seen supporting the community and contributing to its economic development is extremely powerful and creates enormous goodwill.

6. Enhancing business, consumer and VIP relations. Sponsorship that offers hospitality opportunities is always very attractive to businesses. Perks may include exclusive networking settings such as VIP dinners or golf tournaments etc. - all great opportunities to meet key customers and solidify business relationships.

Sources

- www.trade-show-advisor.com
- www.TheMarketingUpdate.com
- www.onehourmarketing.com
- www.conventions.net
- www.houseconsulting.com.au
- www.marketingpros.com
- "The Trade Show Edge" (Ken MacKenzie)
- "Special Events: Inside and Out" (Steven Wood Schmader and Robert Jackson)

Which Industry Events Should You Choose?

Choosing the industry event to attend, exhibit at, speak at or sponsor depends largely on your objectives.

Also, find out what your industry leaders are doing - where are they attending, exhibiting, speaking and/or sponsoring?

As An Attendee

Know what skills and information you want to acquire and choose an event that will allow you to reach your objectives.

Before you register, ask yourself:

- How does attending this particular event help me to meet my objectives for this year?
- Are there other events that won't cost as much and will give me the same benefit?

As An Exhibitor

Ultimately, it is about your audience ie. who are you trying to reach?

Event organisers have information on attendance figures and visitor/delegate profiles that they can provide to you. As an aside, don't be fooled by large attendance numbers - you want quality, not necessarily quantity.

Organisers can provide information on the types of businesses that are exhibiting, those that have confirmed and those that are repeats from last year's event. This is key information in determining whether the event is a suitable match for the objectives you're seeking to achieve.

As A Speaker

If you are considering speaking at an event, organisers can provide a list of speakers confirmed (and still to be confirmed) and what they are speaking on. They can provide details on speakers and topics covered in previous years.

In deciding the Industry Events at which to attempt to get speaking engagements, here are some points to consider:

1. **Decide which specific area of your business you should be targeting for increased visibility.** This could be a well established area of your business in which you're speaking from position of strength - maybe you're already the "go-to" business in this area? It could be a new area just getting off the ground and you're seeking exposure for it.
2. **Speak to the right audience.** Identify Industry Events with speaking engagements whose audience represent the customers and industries your business wants to reach.
3. **Decide on the geographic area to target.** This may be local, regional, national or even international.

Proposed speakers from SME's should be the owner or CEO and you must be committed to taking up a speaking role. It will take time out of your business but if it succeeds in achieving your objectives, then it will be well worth it.

As A Sponsor

Before you agree to sponsor an event, it is important to review the opportunity to ensure it is a wise investment of your marketing budget and will deliver on your overall marketing objectives.

1. Decide whether there is an image compatibility with your business.
 - Does the event have the image you want to establish or have in the market?
 - Who are the co-sponsors and do you want to be aligned with them?
2. Know the audience and determine if they are potential customers.
3. Understand what media coverage the organiser is planning and what additional opportunities exist.
4. Understand the terms and conditions of an exclusive sponsorship offer.
5. Determine how best you will be able to showcase your products/services.
6. Ask about cross-promotional opportunities.
7. Explore possibilities for long-term sponsorship opportunities. Sponsorship has a cumulative effect - the longer you sponsor the better known you become for being a key part of the event.
8. Consider how easy the sponsorship is to administer:
 - Does the event organiser have dedicated staff to manage your needs?
 - Does the event organiser have a good track record - are they credible?
9. Find out exactly what you can expect for your sponsorship dollars.
10. Explore in-kind sponsorship opportunities and what support you could expect.

Sources

- www.conventions.net
- www.marketingprofs.com

How to Make The Most of Industry Events

If You're Attending An Industry Event

Do:

1. Plan ahead and set objectives - make the most of your time. Conferences are typically packed with sessions, workshops, receptions, panels, keynote speakers, dinners, happy hours and so on. Pre-planning is a necessity if you want to get the most out of your time.
2. Pre-register for sessions if possible - not only is it usually cheaper, you will also get email alerts of event news, offers and benefits, previews in advance and invitations to networking events and other promotions.
3. Give yourself enough time to achieve your objectives.
4. Take full advantage of the educational opportunities - look at what the organisers, exhibitors and presenters are offering you. Learn something new! Utilise someone's best practices and infuse them into your own business.
5. Be open to ideas - look and listen. There may be concepts and ideas you have either never considered or dismissed without due consideration. Conferences are meccas for the pioneers, innovators and rock stars of your field. Take a few extra minutes at a book-signing or after the workshop to bounce an idea off someone. Get different perspectives on an idea by holding an informal focus group with colleagues during breakfast or a coffee break.
6. And afterwards always follow-up. Email, call, tweet or write a letter. Use the business cards you collected to remind people who you are, where you met and how you two can work together.

Most importantly, have fun! Relax and enjoy the change of pace.

And here are some "Do Not's"

- Do not expect to 'do' an event in one day (except if it is a one day event, obviously). You will run into people you didn't expect to see/meet, and likewise you may miss the person you really wanted to see if you only attend for a single day. Maybe a couple of hours over two days is a good compromise if you cannot attend for the duration.
- Do not miss sessions - you can guarantee the one you miss will be the one everyone is talking about.
- Do not (at an expo) just focus on the businesses you came to see. There will be smaller businesses and start-ups who are enthusiastic and driven to win your business and keep it.
- Do not book too many meetings. If you schedule yourself out, you will likely run late for everything and those chance meetings that often hold great opportunities will not occur. You need to be flexible.
- Do not be afraid of being cornered by an exhibitor. Instead, make eye contact, smile and remember a quick conversation could result in an invaluable find or at least a feel good exchange of conversation
- Do not waste the information you took away with you. Use it, share it with colleagues or other contacts.

If You're Exhibiting At An Industry Event

Some of the tips below are offered by Jane Applegate for exhibiting at an Industry Event:

1. Do your research to select the best event for your business development. Talk to colleagues who have attended the same event before you make final plans.
2. Read the promotional brochures as soon as they arrive. Take advantage of early-bird discounts on space, travel and hotel accommodations. Try to book a stand in a busy aisle near a corporate stand that will attract lots of traffic.
3. When you receive the exhibitor's kit, read it carefully. You may have to deal with two or more companies; one producing the conference and another responsible for renting equipment, phone lines and electrical power.
4. Create a realistic budget. Consider travel expenses: ground transportation, accommodation, meals, giveaways and the cost of being out of the office for a few days.
5. You can often send promotional mailing to pre-registered visitors. Contact relevant magazines well before the event to ensure your business is featured in pre-show editorial coverage.
6. Create a press kit or a press release and make sure it gets into the press room or distributed at the press conferences. Ask the show's press reps to arrange introductions to the reporters covering the show. Try to set up interviews in advance with local radio and newspaper reporters.
7. Set up a schedule that lets you work in the stand part of the day. You also need time to walk the floor to make contacts.
8. Bring a clever giveaway.
9. Bring a supply of chocolate or mints to serve as magnets to passersby.
10. Have a half dozen "nice gifts" under the table in the event a current customer stops by. Give them the gift, thank them for their business, say how nice it was to see them at the show, invite them to send other attendees by your stand.
11. Bring your friendliest employees. You want high-energy, happy people in your stand.
12. Ensure your employees know what is expected of them when they're working on the stand. Be clear with your expectations.

If you have invested in an exhibition stand and are disappointed in the results it is important to reflect on where you may have gone wrong. Fiona Humberstone, author of "Exhibit!: The SME's guide to using Exhibitions to Grow your Business" reveals the following 12 common mistakes exhibitors make.

1. **You are at the wrong event.** It's easy just to sign up to an event because your competitors are there or you think it's a great opportunity.
2. **You didn't show your visitors how you could help them.** The vast majority of visitors haven't come to the event to see your business. They may not even know who you are or what you do which means that there is absolutely no point in throwing up a generic poster or pop-up stand. You need to refine your offering and make it relevant to the visitors at this specific event.
3. **You didn't capture enough leads.** There are many reasons to exhibit and the main one is usually to capture leads and build your database. Do the selling later.
4. **You didn't follow up the lead.** Failure to follow up leads is crazy. Your competitors will be busy contacting all the event visitors and potential clients - and visitors likely will go for the easy option ie. the business that kept in touch.
5. **Your stand looked uninspiring.** You cannot underestimate the importance of making sure your stand looks fabulous. Your stand is your business window for the day. It's how your potential clients will judge you. If your stand looks like you've penny-pinched and thrown it together at the last minute, what does that say about how you're going to handle your customers?
6. **Your marketing literature let you down.** Your marketing literature is a key factor in visitors remembering you.
7. **You didn't have a clear objective for the event.** As a small business owner you need to make sure every piece of marketing you do generates a positive return on your investment, and exhibiting is no different. Go in with a clear goal.
8. **You didn't look welcoming or friendly.** How many events have you been to where staff on stands are huddled together chatting? Or eating? Or on the phone? As a visitor, stands can be intimidating. Do we dare cross that threshold? Are the staff going to bully me into buying something I don't want? If you want to encourage people onto your stand, don't do anything that will put them off.
9. **You didn't have enough take-away literature.** If you can't talk to everyone, it's vital you have enough literature so you can maximise the exposure you get on the day,
10. **You didn't promote your attendance at the event.** When an event doesn't quite go to plan it's all too easy to blame the organisers. They didn't promote the event well enough or ask the right people or put on an enticing enough seminar programme. And this may be true to a certain extent. But as an exhibitor, speaker or sponsor you need to get involved with marketing the event too. You need to let people know that you're going to be there, because for some visitors, your attendance alone will be a big pull.
11. **You weren't persistent enough in your follow up.** Following up on every single lead after an event is hard work but you've got to do it if you want to maximise on the opportunity. It will pay off.
12. **You didn't follow up for long enough.** With most companies, the average buying cycle is more than a couple of days, which means that sending out one email and a letter after the event just isn't going to cut it when it comes to winning business from your new contacts. Plan to keep in touch for more than a year and you'll get a much, much more profitable outcome from your new contacts.

If You're Speaking At An Industry Event

There is a wealth of experts giving all sorts of advice on how to ensure you make the most of speaking engagement at an Industry Event, some of which are provided in the "Tips From The Experts" section at the back of this Better Business Builder.

Key points include:

- **Content must fit the audience**
- **Never, never, never do a sales pitch.**
- **Always tell a story**
- **Make your presentation actionable**
- **Do it with passion**

Other not-so-obvious ways of ensuring you make the most impact include:

- **Send specific information to the audience in advance.** This 'warms' them to your topic and gets them ready for your presentation. This could take the form of some pages from a report or an article on your website.
- **Market the fact you're speaking.** Add the information to your website, newsletters, let your audience know you'll be there and if you intend blogging etc. about the event, tell them!
- **Pick the time of day that suits your type of presentation.** This may be difficult but if you're doing a lot of talking, then you want to try to get a morning slot (ie. before 11am) when the audience's brains are active and ready to take on information. If you get the slot straight after lunch, then your presentation will need to be "hands-on", requiring minimal talking from you and mostly promoting discussion and action among the audience.
- **Ensure your audience knows you in advance.** Make sure delegates/attendees know who you are, your relevant achievements, your company's achievements etc. Most audiences will do their research on you and your company well in advance if you point them in the right direction.

Being Chosen To Speak At An Industry Event

Before you worry about your presentation, you first need to be chosen to speak.

If there is a specific topic, make sure that you go for speaking engagements where you're passionate about the topic and you know the topic well. If you're not extremely knowledgeable on the specific topic, it will definitely show through during your presentation – and that could affect the likelihood of you getting asked back to give future presentations on topics that you **do** know well.

The Search Marketing Expo blog at <http://searchmarketingexpo.com/blog> has some tips on how NOT to get chosen to be a speaker/panelist. In summary:

- Ignore the speaker guidelines
- Ignore the audience and focus on yourself
- Assume your reputation will put you ahead of others seeking a spot

If You're Sponsoring/Advertising At An Industry Event

In its simplest form, you can advertise in exhibition guides, sponsor free hand-outs or bags or advertise in places where delegates and attendees congregate (from taxi stands to cafes).

Here are some specific tips:

1. Make sure the sponsorship package fits your needs. Event organisers want happy sponsors so be sure to get what you need.
2. Know the costs.
3. Do your part to make the event a success - invite your contacts.
4. Make sure your brand is everywhere - on the event website, in the promotional emails, in all literature at the event and in all the follow up communications.
5. Produce branded giveaways that are different and fun.
6. Develop some sort of activity that creates buzz around the event and gets people talking about your participation in particular.
7. Ask the organisers to have a "photo-taking" area - and have brand highly visible in this area. When people show or publish their photos from the event, your brand will appear.
8. Post photos and video on your business website, blogs and other social media platforms.
9. Follow up, follow up, follow up!

Sources

- www.marketingdonut.co.uk
- "Exhibit! The SME's guide to using Exhibitions to Grow your Business" (Fiona Humberstone)
- www.psychotactics.com

Developing A Plan for Industry Events

What Are Your Goals?

Before you even start looking for events, you need to set your goals. To help you do this, there are three questions you need to ask yourself:

1. Why are you considering the event?

To:

- Sell products?
Measures include:
 - (i) Gross sales before and after the event
 - (ii) Change in length of sale cycle
 - (iii) Change in traffic to website or store
- Extend your relationship with existing customers or bring in new customers?
Measures include:
 - (i) Increase in brand engagement
 - (ii) Increase in awareness
 - (iii) Increase in preference
 - (iv) Increase in exposure of your business, brand or product/service
 - (v) Increase in knowledge of your business and/or product/service among a specific audience.
- Introduce a new product/service?
 - (i) Measures include:
 - (ii) Increase in market share
 - (iii) Increase in market penetration
 - (iv) Number of qualified leads for new product/services
 - (v) Ratio of new to existing customers
 - (vi) Ration of new to repeat visitors to your website
 - (vii) Increase in depth/breadth of customer base
- Position your company within the market?
- Create/improve/build upon your company image?
- Generate qualified leads for new sales?
- Counter a competitor's claim?

2. **Who is your target audience?**

You'll need to answer questions like:

- Who is most likely to attend the event?
- What are the demographics - physical and cultural?
- What problems do they have?
- What do they need?

3. **What is the message you want to convey?**

- Are you trying to:
 - Communicate the benefits of a product/service?
 - Explain facts, research or concepts?
 - Teach or show them something new?
 - Prove your knowledge and expertise?
- What three (3) things do you want your target audience to know above all else?
- What message would appeal to your target audience?

What Are Your Specific Metrics?

You need specific, *measurable* goals if you want your participation to be successful (ie. you want to realise your objective).

If you've recorded your results from past events, setting goals for an upcoming event will be much easier. If you haven't got this historical data to work from, talk to the event organisers. They might have a sense of some reasonable targets - and can use past audience data to help.

If you are exhibiting, you can also talk with other exhibitors who target similar people to find out what kind of results they've achieved.

In the absence of any of this input, you've got to start somewhere. Your first goal-setting exercise might not be accurate, but if you take the trouble to capture your learning, you'll have better data for next event.

Katie Delahaye Paine in her book "Measure What Matters" devotes a chapter to Measuring The Impact of Events, Sponsorships and Speaking Engagements. She says "if your objective is awareness, a criterion might be the percentage increase of unaided awareness of brand or product. If your objective is to sell product, your criterion might be the incremental sales or traffic to local dealers after a particular PR or promotional program took place.

Consider using metrics that best reflect the health of your business or that best represent customer characteristics that most affect your business, including:

- Percent of attendees more likely to purchase.
- Percent of attendees remembering the brand.
- Number of qualified sales leads generated. Note: You should have some grading system to classify leads captured. <http://www.afida.org> suggests the following classification system:

- A - Large order, ready to buy
 - B - Small order, ready to buy OR Large order, longer time frame
 - C - Small order, longer time frame
 - D - Send literature or add name to database
 - E - 'Other', e.g. press, salesmen.
- Conversion rate of attendees. Total potential sales (number of attendees x conversion rate x average sale).
 - For press events:
 - Number of key editors and analysts attending.
 - Percent of attendees writing on or quoted on a particular issue.
 - Total exposure of key messages in resulting press.
 - Number of tweets or retweets of speeches or presentations.
 - Percent conversion from a specific event website to a corporate site.

To a certain extent, your choice of criteria is dependent on the type of event you are evaluating.”

How Will You Measure The Results?

Ways to measure whether your participation at an event changed your audience's perception include

- Conducting a post event survey
- Closely tracking website traffic before, during, and after an event to determine if there are any significant changes as a result of the event.
- If you are a Social Media user, then you can follow the real-time comments on Twitter and other social networking sites to see how people perceive your brand or the event.

Katie Delahaye Paine in her book “Measure What Matters” mentions the following tools, depending on the type of event:

Counting Tools

- A clicker. Sometimes the easiest thing to do is to just stand in the stand and count bodies. Use a regular clicker and count the average number of people in the stand at the top of the hour. Repeat at random times throughout the day to get an average.
- Categorisation. It helps to categorise event attendees by the degree to which they are engaged. Are they just looking at your signage, or are they actually entering the stand and having a conversation? What percentage of attendees become leads?

Survey Tools

- Post-show electronic surveys (SurveyMonkey or Benchpoint) because they will test what people ultimately remember about their experience not just their on-site reactions.

Sales Tracking Tools

- You need to be able to enter leads and track them through your standard sales process, be it a simple contact manager like the one in Outlook, or some form of CRM system like Zoho, Salesforce or Act.

Web Analytic Tools

- Whether you're an ecommerce business or just drive people to your website for more information, you need to determine whether your activities at the event are helping engage your potential customers. Google Analytics works just fine. You will want to know where the traffic goes once people are done on the event page. Do they leave your site completely, or do they go elsewhere on your site for information?

Content Analysis Tools

- If you want to track what people say about your participation at an event, both before and afterward, you will want to scan social as well as traditional media. If you use Twitter and you have an event hashtag on Twitter, you should be able to easily track conversations there. You can set up Google Alerts but make sure you begin tracking the buzz as soon as you put your marketing materials out there.
- Separate out your self-manufactured buzz (tweets, Facebook page, blogs etc.) from the content that other people have put out there. Note the medium, the data, the author, and, if possible, the source. Was it from a speaker, an attendee, or a competitor?
- You'll want to analyze all the content for the following elements:
 - ✓ Product/service mentions. Did the products/services you featured at the event appear in the conversations? Did they show up more prominently or visibly than the competition?
 - ✓ Messaging/positioning. Do the conversations position you in the marketplace the way you want to be positioned?
 - ✓ Key messages. Do they appear at all? If so, are they fully communicated, or only partially, or inaccurately repeated? Were attendees so engaged that they amplified your messages?
 - ✓ Quotes. Were you followed? Retweeted? Are your followers amplifying your key messages?
 - ✓ Visibility and prominence. Were you covered in headlines in the media or were you a minor mention? Did photos appear?

What Action Will You Take?

Now you have clear objectives, know what your specific goals and relevant metrics are, and have decided how to measure them, you will need to develop a clear action plan for moving forward.

Ensure you assign responsibility and due dates to each task to be sure you are on time and on budget.

Sources

- www.money.howstuffworks.com (LeeAnn Obringer)
- www.afida.org
- "Measure What Matters" (Katie Delahaye Paine)

The Return on Investment (ROI) of Industry Events

“If you plunk down the money necessary to rent space, ship a stand and literature, pay the travel & entertainment costs and then stand by a fish bowl waiting for business cards to drop in - you might as well put your money in the shredder. ” www.dawnwesterberg.com

When You Exhibit

- Get some figures on the average profit margin on a sale and the total cost to attend the event.
- Determine how many people attended your stand and conduct a post-show survey and ask:
 - If they intend to purchase
 - When they intend to purchase
 - How much they intend to spendBe clear you are measuring *intentions* not actual purchases.
- Here is a worked example from Katie Delahaye Paine:

If 50% of respondents indicate that they intend to purchase and you know that 1,000 people visited your stand, that means that 500 people intend to purchase something from your business. If, on average, the respondents indicate that they each plan to spend 1,000 on your products or services at some point in the next six months, then you can project approximately \$500,000 in sales from the event.

Now, to calculate the actual return you need to multiply that \$500,000 by your average profit margin on a sale (revenue minus cost of goods sold). So if your profit margin is 50 percent, you can then assume that the actual revenue from the event will be \$250,000. Now take the event's expenses including the stand, staff time, travel etc and subtract them from that \$250,000 and you will have the net ROI for the event.

Speaking/Sponsorship

If your objective is exposure, then you need to take into account more qualitative data.

- Do attendees remember your presentation?
- Did attendees find your presentation valuable?
- Did they know you were a sponsor?
- Did they remember your brand and the benefits or positioning you wanted to convey?
- Did they leave more likely to recommend you or use your services?

Answers to these questions are likely to come from a post-event survey of attendees. Post presentation feedback forms are often a valuable way to assess the audiences response. Other sources like coverage (TV and print) and social media (facebook, blogs) etc. can be measured using other means.

Sources

- www.dawnwesterberg.com
- “Measure What Matters” (Katie Delahaye Paine)
- www.sponsormap.com

More Tips From The Experts

In addition to the information contained in previous sections, following are more tips we discovered on reading popular blogs. We have included them below as they offer some great insights into making Industry Events a success for your business.

Attending An Industry Event

- Marianne Cellucci gives the following tips to ensure you benefit from your attendance at an Industry Event:
- Review presentation topics beforehand to ensure you make the best session selection for your business.
- Bring a schedule of your preferred sessions to avoid missing them.
- Make contact beforehand with potential vendors or clients and arrange to meet them for dinner or coffee.
- Don't forget business cards to hand out to contacts. Take 3 times as many as you think you'll need.
- Take a notepad and pen so you can quickly jot down information and key points.
- Stay for the whole conference. If you skip out early, the presentation you miss will be the one everyone raves about afterwards.
- Network with your peers. Get out and socialize with a highly targeted audience of industry professionals. You have unique knowledge and unique interests and are in a room with like-minded people. Take advantage of the opportunity to tap into the brain power of industry experts and ask questions and share ideas.
- If a reporter or producer approaches you, give them a good quote for their story.
- Seek out people blogging about the conference. They are usually knowledgeable industry insiders and analysts. Ask them what they think of the event this year. Ask them what speakers / programs look best. Get their blog information, and link to it or post on their blog. Make a new friend!
- If money is tight, it may be appropriate to contact the organisers and volunteer to help in exchange for free admission.

Speaking At An Event or on a Panel

Danny Sullivan (@DannySullivan) offers the following tips:

"I suppose the key question is what does the speaker consider successful? The speaker may have a different view than the audience.

If your goal in speaking is pitch your company as much as possible, that might be deemed a success by you but probably not the audience. They didn't come to learn about your company. They didn't come to hire you. They came to learn.

To me, your success as a speaker happens because more than anything else, you do it out of a desire to teach, to share knowledge and to help others. If you've started from that standpoint, you're far along the path to success.

Speakers often speak, of course, because they want to get something more than just satisfaction of sharing out of the talks they give. I think wise speakers understand that when they're not pitching, when they're educating, they're demonstrating that they have great skills that others could use.

You're not "giving away" away anything other than the fact you're a smart person that someone might want to hire. People come to learn, but they may also learn that they'd rather have someone else work for them. The best pitch is no pitch at all.

Beyond not pitching, your success comes from your ability to show, rather than tell, as much as possible. People like specific examples, exact information on how something happened, a process they can see rather than generic bullet points they can read. Takeways may sound cliché, but that's what people want.

Not all panels are tactical, of course, so the ability to see or share a big picture view of coming changes, something different or unique, is also welcomed."

Michael Gray (@Graywolf) says:

"As a presenter you need to accomplish three goals:

- ✓ *enrich,*
- ✓ *educate, and*
- ✓ *entertain.*

Give people data or information that has value and that they can use. Distill it down to core concepts and make it actionable, make it something they put on their to do list right away, and start once they get back to the office.

Keep it short and interesting, if you really know your subject you should be able to think on the fly and play off things the other speakers or the audience has said. A little humor is goes a long way, especially if you can find a way to make it viral by saying or showing something that is applicable, but completely unexpected."

Lee Odden (@LeeOdden) says:

- ***"Empathize with the audience** – Make sure your content is relevant for the audience you're presenting to.*
- ***Under promise and over deliver** – Unassuming yet confident presentations, real examples and actionable advice.*
- ***Promote your session, before, during (well, not actually DURING) and after** – Teasers, Twitter etc.*
- ***Give & Get Recognition** - Thank those that supported you and schedule interviews before and after session.*

You might even write a wrap-up blog post acknowledging those who engaged during the presentation or what the best questions were. Be gracious and attentive with questions after you present and also respectful of the following panel by taking things out in the hall if necessary."

Sources

- www.netatlantic.com (Marianne Cellucci)
- www.searchenginejournal.com/tips-on-being-an-effective-conference-speaker-by-the-experts

Other Useful Resources

The sites and links listed below are current as at April 2012.

www.trade-show-advisor.com

Anything and everything you could ever need to know about exhibiting at a trade-show is on this website. It is a wealth of information including:

- Planning Timelines
- Planning Your Marketing Strategy
- Attracting Visitors
- Publicity & Speaker Sponsorship
- Social Media Strategies
- Booth Staff Tips
- Sales & Follow-Up

www.eeaa.com.au or www.gotapassion.com.au

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