

Market your business through exhibiting at an event

Exhibiting at conferences, trades shows and conventions present opportunities beyond the obvious learning, networking and connecting – I'm talking marketing opportunities. Having a presence at events poses a perfect opportunity to market your business both in person and virtually. Here are some simple tips to ensure you're also using the opportunity to market your business.

Pre-event

Invite a client, prospect or target. This is a great way to spend time together learning and sharing ideas, deepening your relationship and getting to know each other on a personal level. A ticket for a client to a relevant conference or event can be a great, targeted, use of marketing spend.

Pre-connect, virtually. Connect on LinkedIn with other exhibitors, speakers or attendees and ensure you're following the event's relevant social media pages. Share content useful to your audience across your social media pages. (Tip: ensure that your social media profile images – whether personal head shot or company logo – are up to date to make it easy for connections to find and recognize you and your brand after meeting).

During the event

Get [hashtag](#) happy. Ensure you're posting on your social media platforms using the event's and speaker's hashtags. This allows you to be part of the virtual conversation live, putting your brand (whether company or personal) on the map with fellow exhibitors, while demonstrating to your followers that you are participating in learning. Speakers and influencers will be using hashtags to monitor the conversation so it's a great way to step forward and join in.

Events and conferences are [content marketing](#) dynamite. Think team or group selfies, a photograph with the presenter, a Q&A with a speaker or a video of a presentation (check first!). Even better, think about using [Facebook Live](#) to interview a relevant contact at the event. Even think about asking speakers whether you can arrange to interview them at a later date. This makes for great content, providing it's useful and relevant to your client or customer base. You can share and repurpose it across your social media, the interviewee can share it across theirs and often the

event organisers have agreed communication channels to share to attendees as well.

Take notes of info of interest or useful to your clients or customers and that could make great blog topics for your content marketing. In our line of work, we are our client's finger on the pulse of marketing trends, insights and best practice and conferences and events are a great way to upskill ourselves for our clients.

After the event

Connect with your new contacts as soon as possible after the event. This might be through LinkedIn (send a personal message to act as a reminder and context for your invitation), via personal email or by adding to your CRM. We find that good old-fashioned pen to paper is often a really nice way to connect with new contacts: who doesn't like receiving a hand-written note? Follow your new contacts on their social media platforms and sign up to receive their emails as well.

Debrief. Take a moment to objectively assess how useful the event was to your marketing efforts - when exhibiting at an event, it's a great added benefit and worth reflection. Make yourself some notes for when next year's booking form lands on your door mat (or in your inbox), and take a moment to make a note of how you noticed other exhibitors, speakers or attendees marketing or promoting themselves - was there anything that you could learn from for next time around?

Thank the organisers. These guys are at the centre of who's who and what's going on, so it pays to make yourself and your brand memorable to these gatekeepers. Event managers are great contacts to nurture and are usually good connectors if you want to be introduced to someone you didn't get to meet.

Events can be a great way of getting your brand in front of participants, speakers, organisers and their connections and can be a powerful element in your marketing mix. All it takes is a bit of planning...

LINKS

- Hashtag: <http://mashable.com/2013/10/08/what-is-hashtag/#JWNHXQHITPqZ>
- Content Marketing: <http://www.piermarketing.com.au/what-we-think-pier-marketing-blog/34-content-marketing-is-it-just-a-buzzword>
- Facebook Live: <https://live.fb.com/about/>