

# SOCIAL MEDIA for EVENTS



FOLLOW ME!



**FREE  
DOWNLOAD**



The Most Comprehensive Book  
about Social Media & Events

Learn from Unprecedented Industry Research

Improve Your Skills Whether You Are a Beginner or Pro

Be Inspired by Event Industry Case Studies

Get Industry Tips About Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Google+, Instagram and more!



**EVENT MANAGER** *Blog*

# PREFACE

**“We will never use Twitter hashtags in events.”**

The conversation was getting heated in that on-line community in 2008. I was strongly supporting the use of social media at events and criticism was mounting.

Several professionals were vigorously arguing that social media were just a fad. Probably geek events would have used it but not mainstream meetings, conferences, festivals, trade shows. That was the main point coming across.

Fast forward to 2014, 32% of respondents to our survey of more than 1300 qualified event professionals say that they use social media in all their events. Yes, you read that correctly.

Disregard the how's and why's we got to this incredible number, the fact is that social media are here to stay. They have quickly become a strong asset in marketing, selling and supporting events.

The fact that social media are extremely popular does not translate into proper use of the tool. Confusion seems to be a dominant feeling among those who turn to social media for their marketing, customer service, PR, research efforts.

Hence why we embarked in the incredibly tough

job to make sense of these incredible tools, that can surely make your event better if properly addressed.

## WHY THIS BOOK MATTERS

Social media is mostly about content. The growth of social in the past few years has been accompanied by an incredible amount of content about it. While there are surely great books, ebooks, blog posts and reports to read about the subject, it is also easy to find terrible attempts, which sadly represent the majority.

Another widespread problem is that most advice about social media is about B2C environments. The market offers very few valid attempts to make sense of the B2B market, almost non-existent when it gets to the event industry.

Well, that is going to change. This book will give you a full picture of how you can use social media if you work with events. With a twist.

While in fact most books are the result of the writer's intuition, the next chapters are a direct response to what you, dear event professional, want to learn more about.

We asked for the opinion of 1,500 event professionals, we qualified more than 1,300 of them. We learnt how they use social media, what are the pain points and what should be ignored. That became the backbone of our work.

Do not expect some wishy washy, kumbaya or superficial overview of social media for events. We are here to give you the most targeted piece of work written about the subject. Content you can trust and refer to for the next few years, specifically tailored for the event industry.

If I whet your appetite for knowledge, let us show you what's on the menu.

# HOW THIS BOOK IS STRUCTURED

We kept the structure of this book as easy as possible to reflect different stages of social media maturity. Depending on your experience with social media you could skip to the part that matters most to your business or event now.

We strongly recommend starting from Part I as there is incredible value in reviewing the fundamentals, even if briefly.

**Research.** This book starts with the publication of an unprecedented amount of research into the use of social media for events. This section will present the zeitgeist of how social media are currently used in the industry.

Part I of the book is dedicated to establishing sound reasons why you are embarking on a social media project. It gives you advice to get the management on board and to create a strong business case to use social media at your event.

Part II includes the most significant chapters for every social media practitioner. We will cover strategy in great detail, suggesting the correct

approach to avoid blunders and succeed regardless of the size or budget of your event.

Part III is a brief overview of tactics. Tactics are mainly driven by the selection process and your objectives. We will give you some inspiration for pre, during and post show activities you could implement.

Part IV looks at advanced social media topics such as social advertising, stimulating social engagement via event mobile apps, and social media at tradeshow.

Part V is the most visual part of this book with our Social Media Cards, infographic style overviews of the major social networks and how event professionals could use them for different purposes.

Most sections also offer case studies of world renowned and local events, spanning from conferences, to tradeshow, to music festivals.

easily leverage social media  
opportunities at each step  
of your event cycle



From registration to event websites to mobile apps and social meeting tools, etouches event management platform helps planners power social media.

 @etouches

  
love your event software

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

pg. 2	<b>PREFACE</b>
pg. 4	<b>HOW IS THIS BOOK STRUCTURED</b>
pg. 7	<b>RESEARCH</b>
pg. 7	The data
pg. 15	<b>PART I: THE FUNDAMENTALS OF YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PROGRAM</b>
pg. 17	Is Social Media Good For Your Event?
pg. 20	The New Value of Social Media for Events
pg. 23	How To Convince Your Boss: Debunking Social Media Myths
pg. 25	Setting up the Rules: Creating a Social Media Policy
pg. 27	<b>PART II: SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY</b>
pg. 28	The Time and Money Dilemma
pg. 29	A Working Solution: Incremental Innovation
pg. 30	Know Your Objectives
pg. 33	Process Mapping
pg. 35	Create a Content Plan
pg. 37	Case study: <i>Make Content Work for Your Event: ReFRESHing</i>
pg. 39	Hashtag: The Holy Grail of Your Content Plan
pg. 42	Case study: <i>Creating Engagement via Social Media. A Hashtag Story</i>
pg. 47	Social Network Selection
pg. 49	Choosing Your Team & Process - <i>by Cathy Key</i>
pg. 55	Creating a Listening Center: Social Media Monitoring - <i>by Cathy Key</i>
pg. 61	Social Media Measurement and ROI - <i>by Cathy Key</i>
pg. 67	<b>PART III: TACTICS</b>
pg. 68	Before Your Event - <i>by Julius Solaris and Cathy Key</i>
pg. 75	Case Study: A Pre-Event Social Plan: Ocoee Founders' Day Festival
pg. 77	During the Event - <i>by Cathy Key</i>
pg. 81	Case Study: Making Your Event Visible: IMEXlive
pg. 84	After the Event - <i>by Cathy Key</i>
pg. 85	10 Mistakes Events Make on Social Media and How to Fix Them
pg. 89	<b>PART IV: ADVANCED SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT AND SPECIFIC USES</b>
pg. 90	Social Advertising
pg. 95	Social Media for TradeShows - <i>by Tracie Browne</i>
pg. 106	Case study: Making an Impact as an Exhibitor, Meet Mr Holland
pg. 108	Using Event Mobile Apps to Stimulate Social Media Engagement
pg. 111	<b>PART V: SOCIAL MEDIA CARDS</b>
pg. 113	Facebook
pg. 114	Twitter
pg. 115	Youtube
pg. 116	LinkedIn
pg. 117	Google+
pg. 118	Blog
pg. 119	Pinterest
pg. 120	Instagram
pg. 121	Slideshare
pg. 122	Tumblr

# RESEARCH

This research was conducted in August 2014 in the Event Planning and Management Group, an online community of 220,000 event professionals.

We qualified respondents by eliminating academics, students and suppliers. Subsequently we disqualified those planning no events. This was to make sure that only those with direct experience could reply to the survey. Disqualified participants could not reenter as IP addresses were automatically blacklisted for inclusion.

Out of the 1559 respondents, 1335 were qualified event professionals. The largest majority being event/meeting planners, followed by special event planners and independent consultants and event planning agencies.

## THE DATA

One of the most surprising piece of information we obtained from the survey is that 32% of the respondents use social media for **all their events**. This is an incredible figure that reinforces the importance of the topic for the industry.

We decided to combine the report and a more

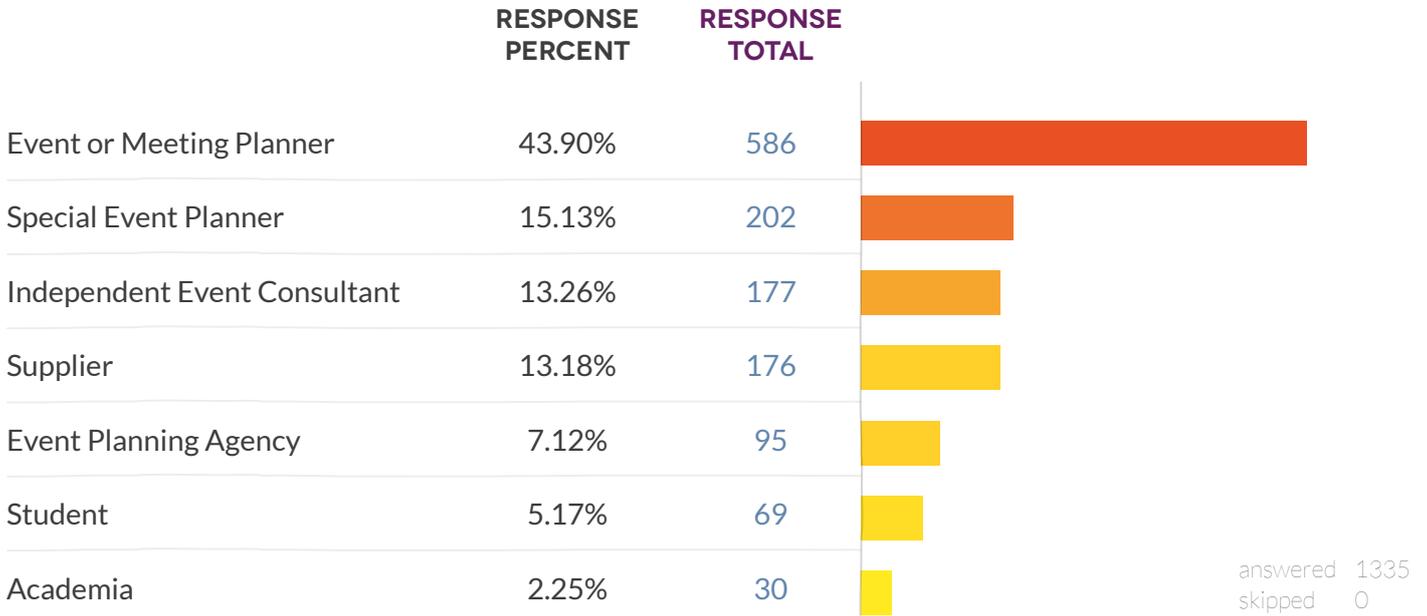
substantial writeup because the need of guidance in the industry is at an all time high. A staggering 52% of respondents pointed out that they need help with figuring out how to use social media effectively. This is one of the biggest challenges in social media.

These two stats signal that while there is growing interest and adoption, confusion is still the dominant feeling. The need for clarity skyrockets if we account that 46% of respondents have someone dedicated to social media. Justifying a resource investment is a pressing business issue and the need for a clearer business case for social media is evident.

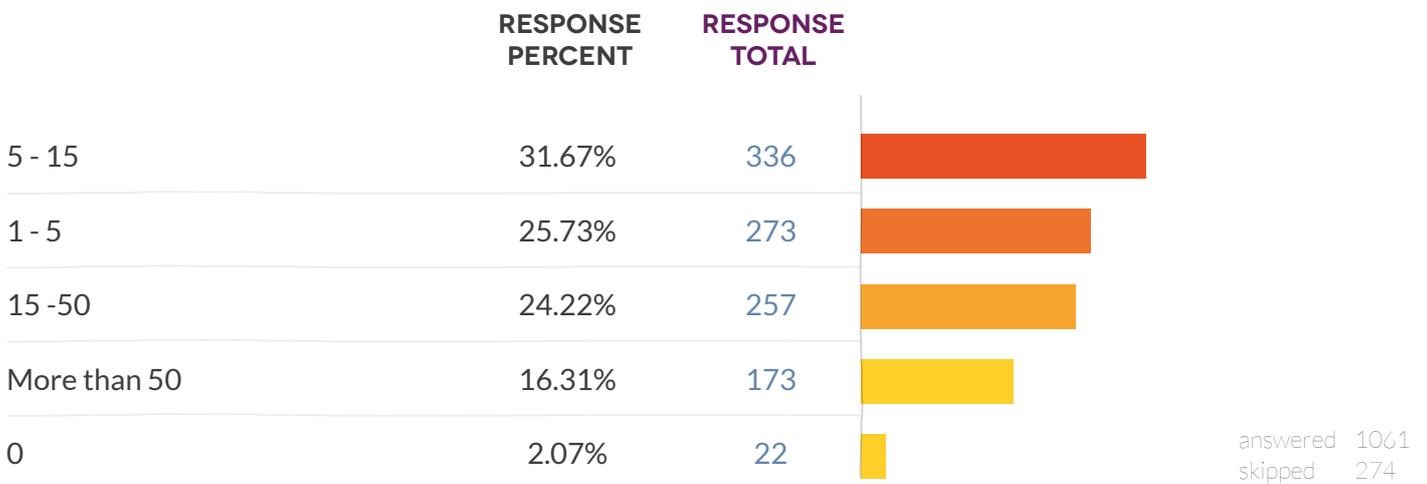
Talking about business, probably the most shocking stat of them all is in regards to measurement. 54% of respondents **do not measure their social media effort**. We believe there is no more time to waste.

Here are the complete results of the research. The book will consistently refer to these numbers and respond to the most pressing issues.

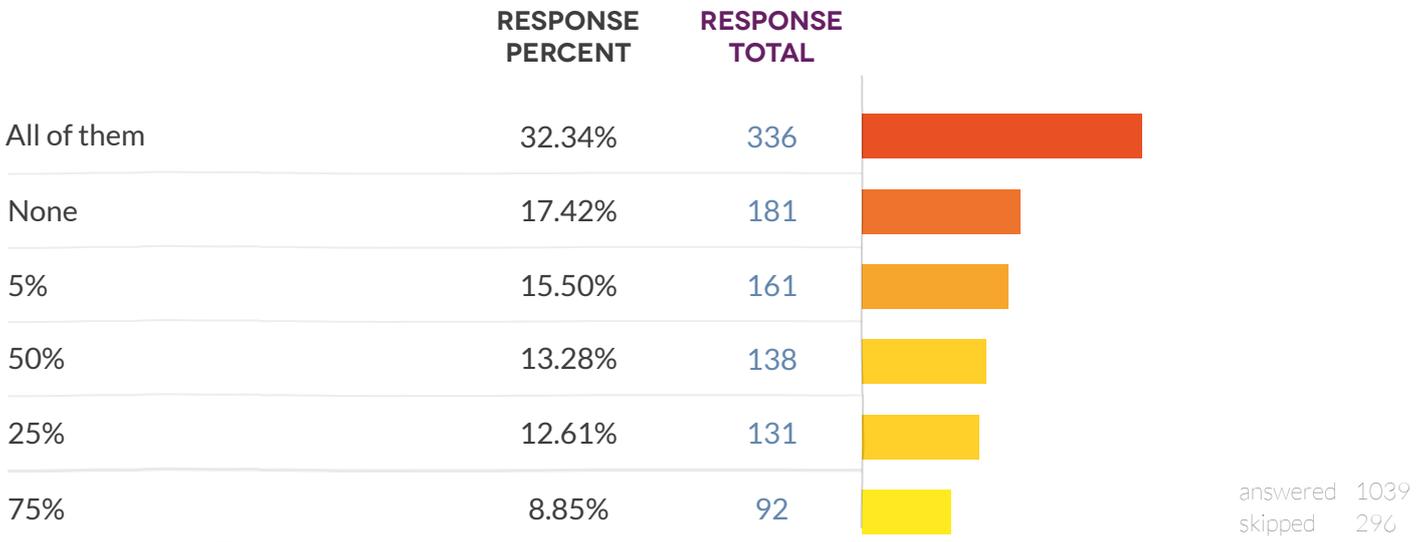
# 1. WHAT TITLE DESCRIBES YOU BEST?



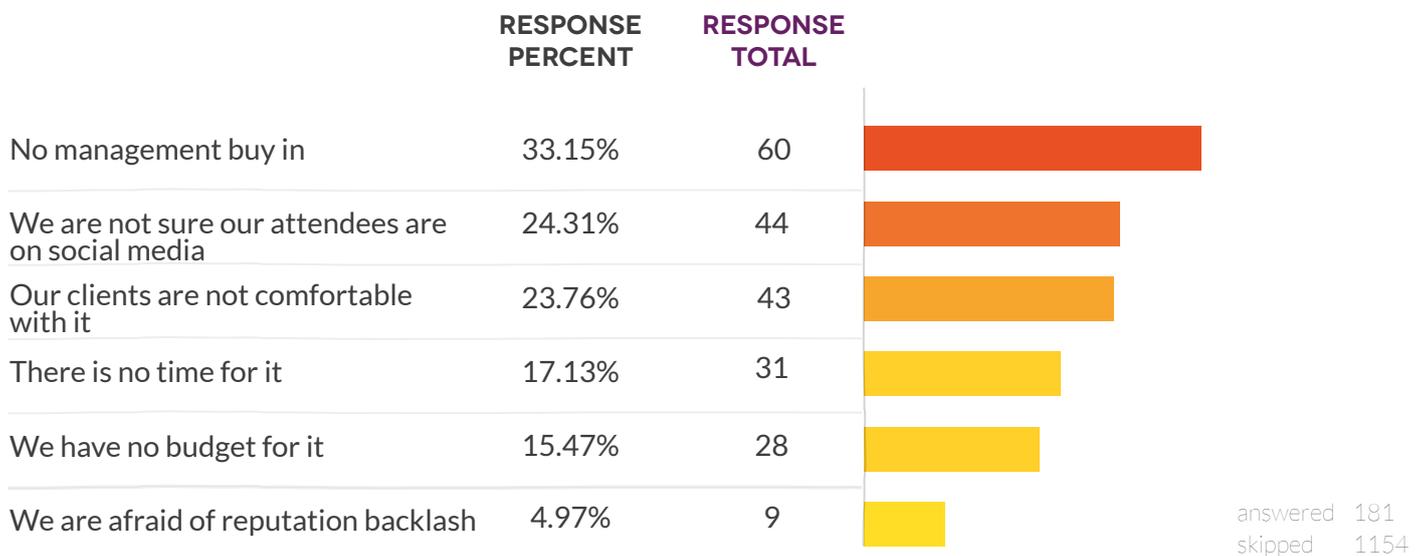
# 2. HOW MANY EVENTS DO YOU ORGANIZE EVERY YEAR?



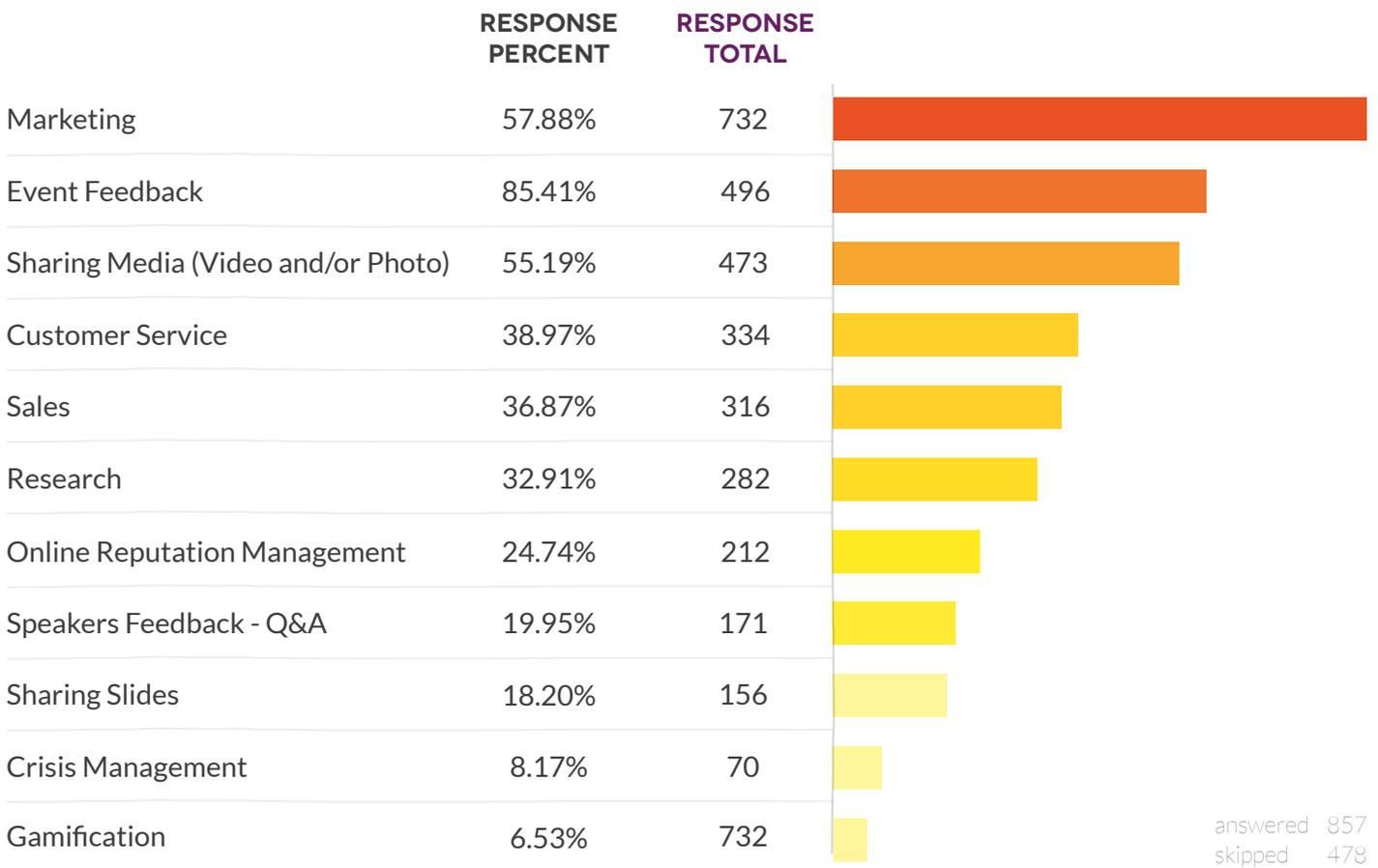
### 3. HOW MANY OF THE EVENTS YOU PLAN USE SOCIAL MEDIA?



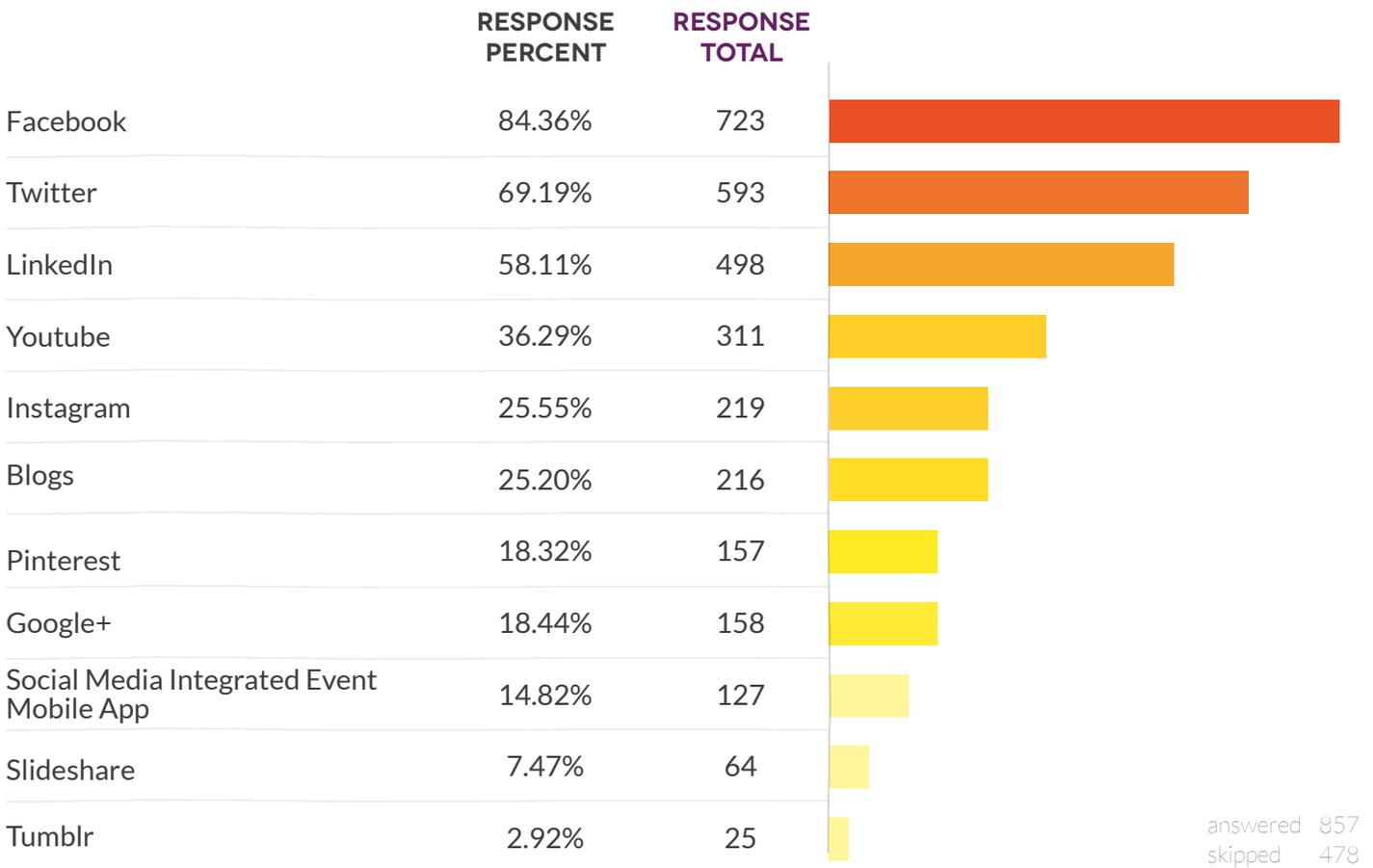
### 4. WHAT IS PREVENTING YOU FROM USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR YOUR EVENT?



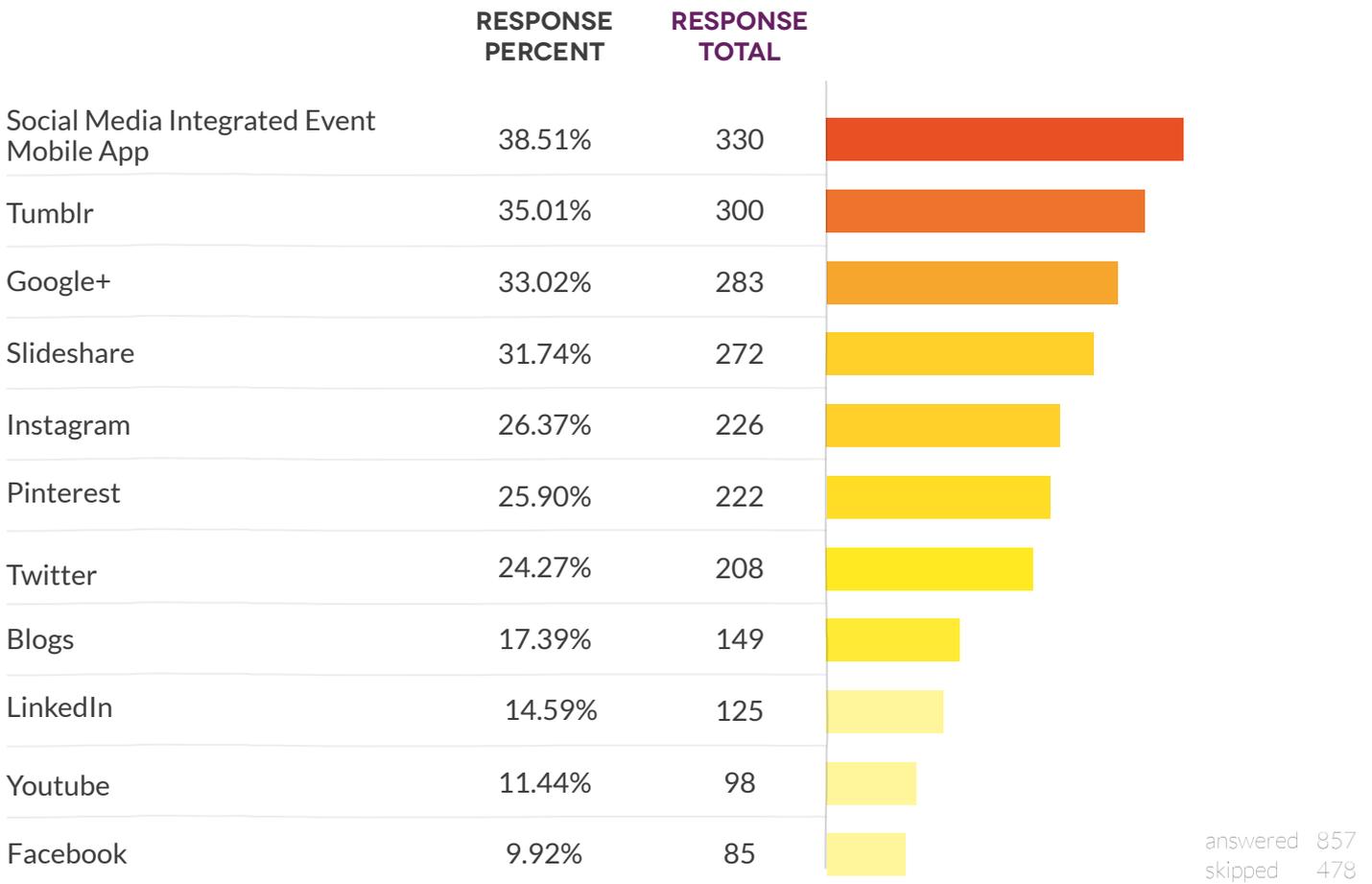
## 5. HOW DO YOU USE SOCIAL MEDIA BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER YOUR EVENT?



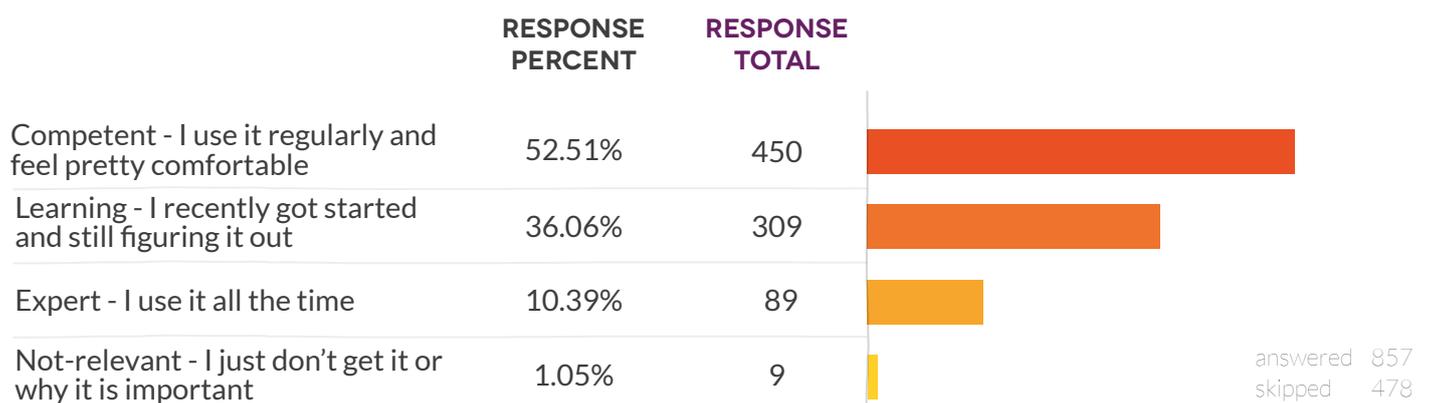
## 6. WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS DO YOU COMMONLY USE?



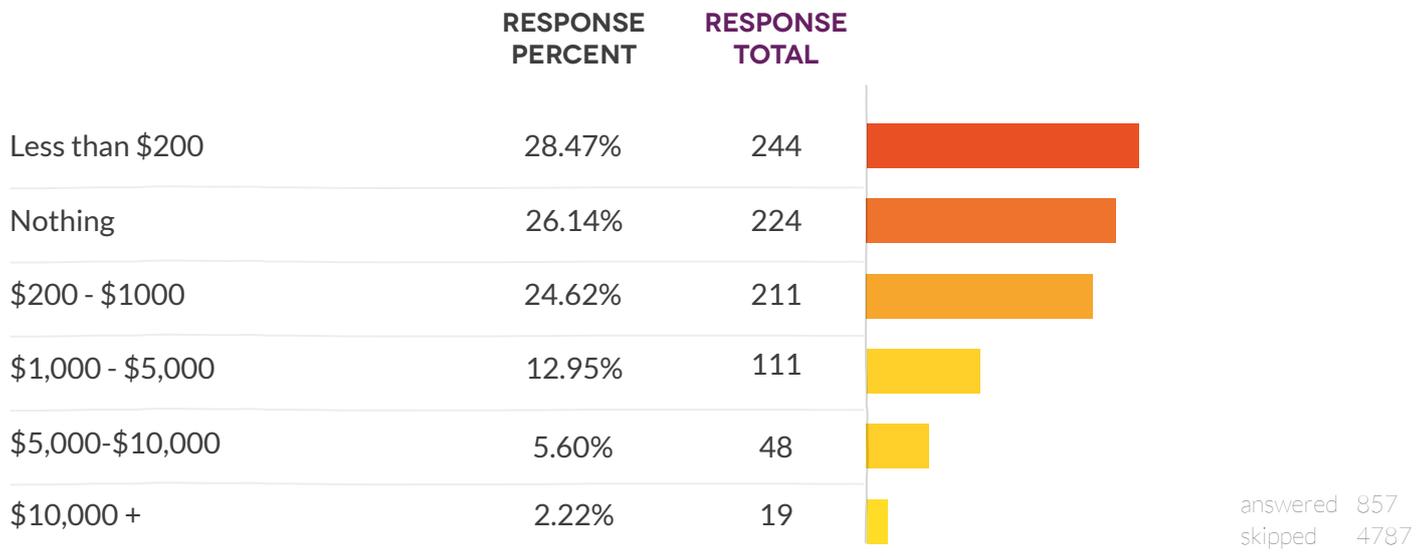
## 7. WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OR YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND?



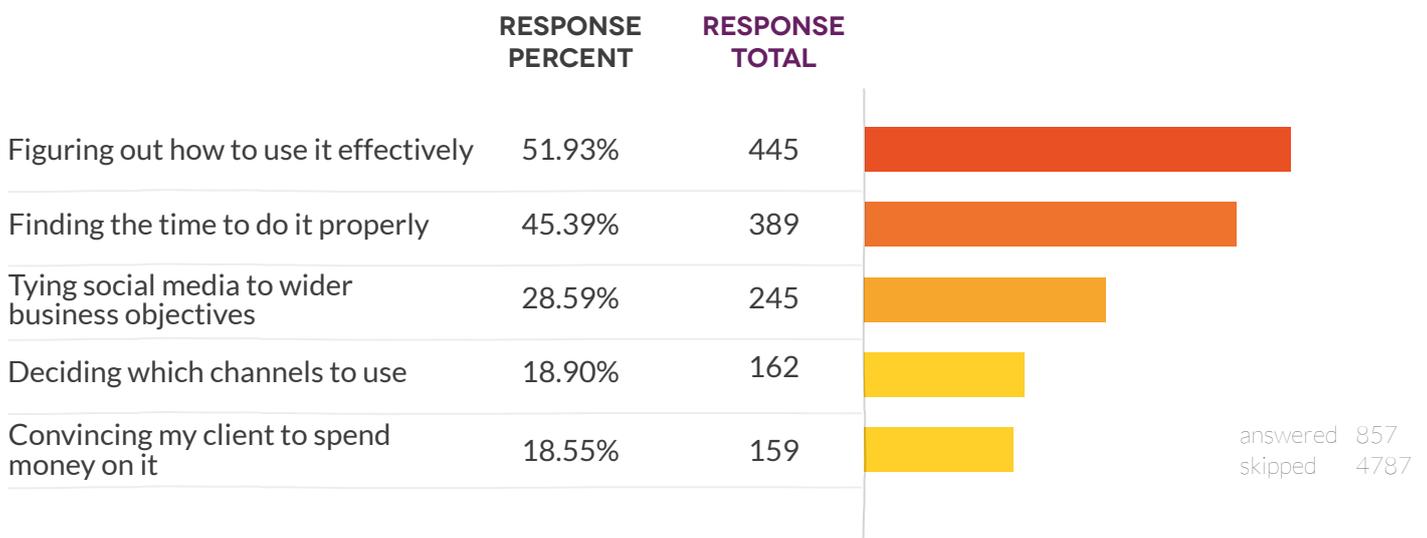
## 8. HOW WOULD YOU RANK YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA KNOWLEDGE?



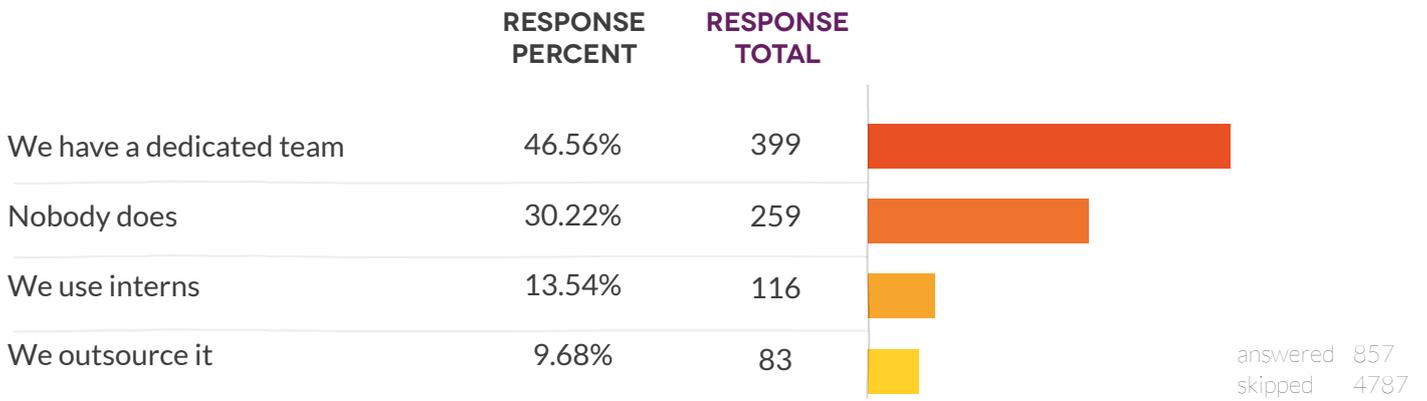
## 9. FOR AN AVERAGE EVENT, HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU SPEND ON SOCIAL MEDIA (INCLUDING SOFTWARE COSTS, SALARIES, MARKETING EXPENSES)



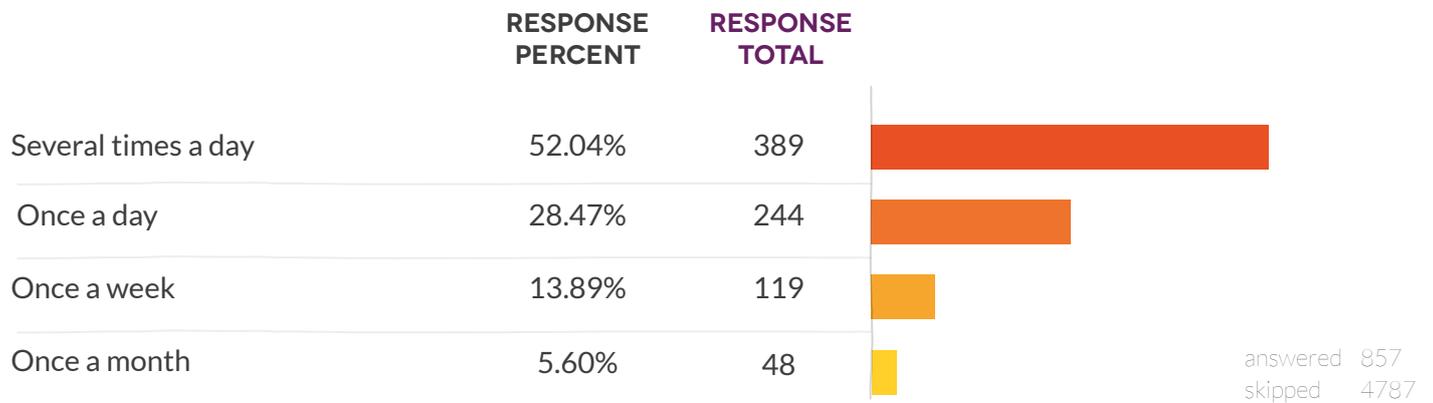
## 10. WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGE?



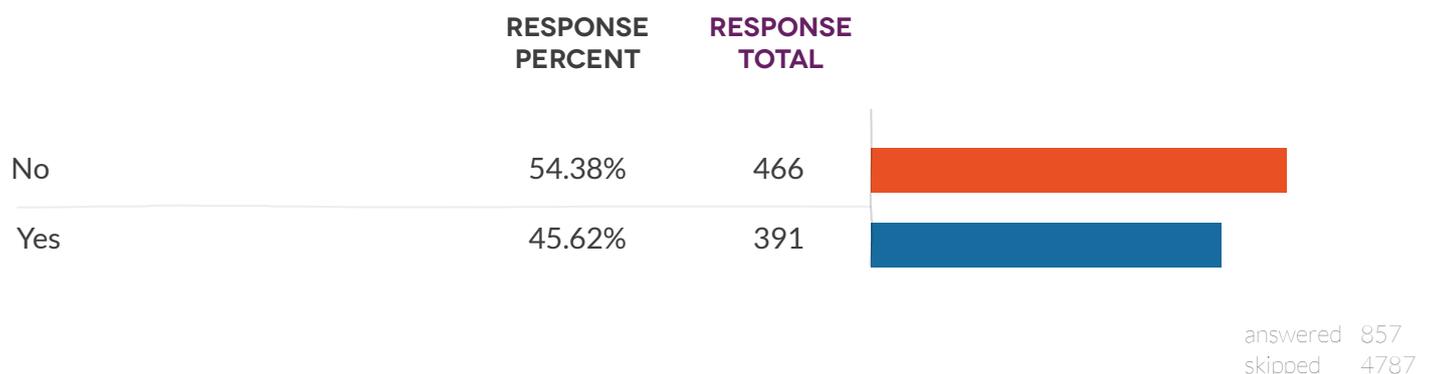
## 11. WHO LEADS SOCIAL MEDIA FOR YOUR EVENT?



## 12. HOW MANY TIMES YOU ENGAGE ON SOCIAL MEDIA?



## 13. DO YOU MEASURE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA EFFORT?



# **PART I**

## **THE FUNDAMENTALS OF YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PROGRAM**

# *We make it simple to beautifully display your #hashtag at your event.*

Engage your attendees and enliven your event with a realtime, fully customizable Tweetwall.

Monitor Twitter, Facebook and Instagram for any number of hashtags, keywords or phrases and display what the world is saying at your event. Use our online builder to create your own Tweetwall or have us create a fully custom Tweetwall for your event.

Learn more about what we can do for your event at [Tweetwall.com](http://Tweetwall.com), and use promo code **smevents** to save **10%** on your first Tweetwall.

SAMSUNG

TOYOTA

 Microsoft



intuit.

We're trusted by the world's greatest companies. Find out why at [Tweetwall.com](http://Tweetwall.com).

 Tweetwall

Learn more about Tweetwall

# PART I: THE FUNDAMENTALS OF YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PROGRAM

The first part of this book is dedicated to establishing a real need for your social media program. Delving into creating a Facebook page may cause more damage than good if the basics are not taken care of.

Is your management on board with your program? Are you aware of the difference between social and traditional media? Have you thought about creating a social media policy with your team?

These are all basic considerations that need to be taken care of before we delve into the strategy and tactics of your program.

## IS SOCIAL MEDIA GOOD FOR YOUR EVENT?

There is an unprecedented rush from all commentators to invite event professionals to jump on the social media bandwagon. While an incred-

AD

Powerful social ticketing in your back pocket.

LEARN MORE AND GET 50% OFF FOR 1 YEAR

Trusted by 28,000 event organizers

techweek: Etsy TEDx Mashable Carlsberg

ible growth in the use of social media at events is undeniable, not all events should be using social media and not with the same intensity.

Different audiences use social media differently and while a large fraction of the world population is using social media at the time of writing this ebook, not all of them are willing to use it during an event.

If you plan music concerts aimed at teenagers you can feel safe betting on a selection of social networks and aligning your marketing communication message across different media, including social media. On the other hand if you plan opera nights for retirees, probably betting all your marketing budget on Instagram is not a wise choice.

Here are the most recurring reasons why event professionals end up with big social media disappointments:

### MAKING WEAK ASSUMPTIONS

*A competitor is using social media, so should we.  
A colleague told me that Pinterest is great.  
I read somewhere that Instagram is the next big thing.*

### INCORRECT NEED

*A Facebook page will make my event successful.  
I will finally sell more tickets by promoting on Twitter.  
We will be perceived as high-tech and edgy by having a Youtube account.*

### LACK OF RESEARCH

*Everybody is on Facebook, we need to have a page.  
Our attendees will surely be on Twitter.  
Let's get everyone to use Pinterest, it's soo cool.*

### LACK OF MEASUREMENT AND CLEAR OBJECTIVES

*Not sure what social media will bring to our event but it will be positive.  
Success means everybody is happy.*

### HIGH HOPES BUT LACK OF SUPPORT

*We don't know who is going to maintain our accounts, but it is important we have set them up.  
We're not sure how we will communicate with it but attendees will love our Photo competition; it will be a big hit.*

If you see yourself in one or more of these scenarios, don't panic, we will fix it. Right now simply note that thinking this way will hurt your event, your attendees and your future business.

Making weak assumptions, not assessing your needs correctly, not measuring results and not supporting your social media decisions usually result in:

### COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

*Our high hopes translated into poor results.  
The feedback was generally negative on social media, they slashed us.  
Nobody submitted photos for our competition, our sponsor was angry.*

### NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOCIAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

*We will never use social media again.  
We better go back to doing things as we used to. No risk there.  
We wasted so much money. We will never budget for this again.*

These kinds of results could put you off social media forever. This is a terrible outcome for a number of reasons. Engaging with social media

can help your event in a number of ways. It can help it sell more tickets, it can boost satisfaction rates, it can cut customer service costs and improve your event reputation.

Not planning for social correctly is a big mistake that can cost you a lot in the long run. **83% of the respondents to our survey made clear that they use social media in at least 5% of their annual events**, with 32% of the total respondents using it on 100% of their events. In the long run we will only see these percentages grow.

If you find yourself growing disillusioned with social media at events, you will soon be left behind. The same goes for being skeptical about the whole social movement. In the past 8 years we've seen several skeptics change their mind and all of a sudden have to catch up with early adopters.

The point is that social media is not a religion you need to convert to. **While several commentators use words such as 'shift', 'revolution', 'disruption', we should believe only in results.** Increase in tickets sold, attendance rates, attendee satisfaction, positive PR. Decrease in customer service costs. These are the only words that should mean something to you. The rest is chit chat.

So how do you make sure that social media is the way to go for your event?

A very wise approach is to start with research. This usually includes:

## BENCHMARKING

Choosing to do social media because our competitors do, is very similar to buying an expensive sports car because our neighbor did. Despite our expensive mortgage repayment and the fact our three children will never fit in the back of it. But

we had to do it, right?

Peer pressure is very negative, but not looking at competition and completely ignoring it may be similarly dangerous. If we are too convinced about what we are doing and that our event will keep captivating attendees forever, we may be exposing ourselves to great risk.

Competitor analysis is different from a me-too strategy. A sound competitor analysis usually entails the following questions:

**ARE OUR COMPETITORS USING SOCIAL MEDIA?**

**IF SO WHY ARE THEY DOING IT?**

**WHAT SOCIAL NETWORKS ARE THEY ENGAGING IN AND WITH WHAT RESULTS?**

**ARE THERE ANY EVIDENT RESULTS OF THEIR ENGAGEMENT?**

**DOES OUR AUDIENCE CARE THAT THEY ARE USING SOCIAL MEDIA?**

These questions will help you to critically assess the current market and level of engagement of similar events. Being very picky with results is also a key strategy.

If a competitor has 23,000 followers on Twitter, it does not mean a lot. You can cheat and get thousands of followers very easily if you know how the 'social media black market' works. On the other hand if you see a strong follow base that engages with the account constantly before, during and after the event, well, you should be concerned that your event is missing out on a potential opportunity.

## RESEARCH SOCIAL NETWORKS AND MEDIA

Choosing which social networks or media to engage in is also a very delicate step that is often overlooked. Your competitor analysis will already signal which social networks could be an opportunity for your event.

Yet you need to understand what works for your audience. That means creating personas of your attendees and matching them to their particular use of social networks. Describe your attendees in detail. Identify the prototype of your perfect attendee. Give them a name, age, occupation. Find out what they like, what they don't like, their aspirations, their career, their social and entertainment needs, where do they hang out and how they communicate with their peers.

Our Social Media Cards will give you terrific insights not necessarily in terms of who uses social networks but how they are used. The **how** is what should drive your research. If you match your identified personas with the use of a specific social network, you have a strong assumption to base your campaign on.

On the other hand if you can't really figure out what your attendees have to do with how social networks are used, then you should not jump into social media with full force. You should research more and the best way to do that is by **asking your audience directly** about the way they use social media. More on this subject later on.

Now that you have one or more clues that there may be a potential opportunity for your event to engage with social media, it is time to gather consensus, a team, a strategy and get down to business!



SignUp4 offers innovative meetings management technology solutions to support your organization's objectives.

- Online Registration
- Profile Management
- Travel Integration
- Mobile Apps
- Spend Management
- On-Site Check-In

[Click Here to Learn More](#)

[www.signup4.com](http://www.signup4.com) | [sales@signup4.com](mailto:sales@signup4.com) | 404-237-8945

## THE NEW VALUE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR EVENTS

There are two main characteristics that make social media a beast of its own.

**ONLINE MARKETING TIES.** Every action, update, post, presentation, picture, video that you upload to social media will have an impact on your online marketing efforts. When a prospective attendee is evaluating whether to purchase a ticket to your event, they will inevitably stumble on what you uploaded on social media.

While there has been wide criticism in the past about the real marketing value of social media, the last 3 years defined a clear change of direction. The moment when things started to change

can be traced back to when Google introduced Google+, its new social network.

Up until then the world of making business online had traditionally been split between social media enthusiasts and online marketers. The diatribe was specifically between SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and social experts. SEO marketers strongly objected to value in social media. Every purchase decision was a mere Google search exercise.

The potential user would search for a product or a service on Google and then buy.

When Google launched Google+, the Mountain View company silently made a statement that social media was now becoming a factor in how their algorithm would rank websites on search. Social was becoming the new SEO factor nobody thought of. Those companies who were social ready gained an incredible competitive advantage.

This was also the time when content moved from being keyword optimized copy to a full fledged marketing and PR strategy.

Our prospective attendee journey towards evaluating their purchase may have started on Google, but then moved to Facebook (to see friends attending), passed from Twitter to check whether a new performer was announced, continued on Youtube to see videos from previous years, landed on the blog where the program was announced and **then** ended on the website where they ultimately purchased a ticket.

The mission of the modern, social event is to be ready at all touchpoints where increasingly social savvy audiences **expect** the event to be present.

This process has a terrific impact on how event websites rank for specific keywords on Google. If

in fact content is social media's currency, using it wisely will have substantial search engine optimization implications. The more you concentrate on creating value via relevant and focused content, the better your event website will perform on Google. More on this later.

**CONVERSATION AND COMMUNITY.** The second major characteristic of social media is the conversational nature of the medium. Event planners who engage with social media know it is not a matter of circulating press releases or broadcasting marketing messages. Every effort that revolves just around that will fail miserably.

Being pushy, spammy, salesy, overconfident and cocky will damage your event brand substantially. Social media is mostly about creating valuable discussions with your audience in a friendly and human manner. Acting otherwise will create an inevitable backlash. Trying to be clever will expose you to the anger of your audience.

Knowing the etiquette of engagement in each social network will prevent you from stepping into the social world with the wrong approach. Our Social Media Cards will help you to understand how to tackle each social network.

Users on social networks expect to engage with brands, they are willing to learn more about them, to interact with them, to express their anger if something is wrong and to compliment them if they were delighted. Being on social media means being good at relationship building. **You are marrying your audience, you are not looking for a one night stand.**

Always ask yourself, how is this update going to add value to my audience? How is it going to make them smile, think, act, learn, discuss, share? While we will cover this extensively in the strategy section, start asking yourself these questions

each time you update your channels.

When you start conversations you make friends. Friends become your community. The miracle of events is to make ad-hoc communities happen.

Sometimes these instant communities degenerate (think of violence during sporting events), but usually they thrive and everyone is sad when the event ends. Social media has introduced the concept of **continuous communities** in events. What was confined to one or two days in the past, can actually materialize even before the event happens and then last for a whole year until the next event. Continuous communities last forever if you know how to nurture them. They are stronger than online communities as they are reinforced by offline interaction. They take the best of both the online and offline world. They have create strong ties and sense of belonging.

Social media messed up the event's timeline and you should love it. Having a continuous community for your event is crucial. When we have to evaluate attending an event we always feel scared of what awaits us. Unknown venue, unknown event planner, unknown attendees. The opportunity is to create ties before the event happens. Whenever you attend socially active events, you will already know who is attending, some of them you've known online for months.

AD

## NEW Webinar Series!

### How To Increase Conference Attendance and Member Engagement while Driving Non-Dues Revenue



#### Join Us and Learn

Put the **WOW!** back into your events

Is your conference registration down? Is sponsor participation and revenue lagging behind? Are only 10-25% of your members engaged and attending your events? In this new state-of-the-art webinar series you will learn how some of today's brightest and most innovative association executives and meeting professionals have created and launched fresh and innovative solutions that generated immediate and long-term gains in attendance, sponsor participation, and member engagement for their associations.

Learn more now and **REGISTER** at [www.prolibraries.com/wow](http://www.prolibraries.com/wow)

#### WOW! Webinar Series

(Webinars on Wednesdays)

Schedule:

##### Attract and Engage Members In Ways You Never Dreamed Before (Content Marketing)

Wednesday, November 19th\*  
12:30pm to 1:15pm EST

##### How to Increase Your Conference Attendance Now... and Next Year Too!

Wednesday, December 3rd\*  
12:30pm to 1:15pm EST

##### Take Your Webinars and Content Marketing Programs to the Next Level

Wednesday, December 10th\*  
12:30pm to 1:15pm EST

\*On-demand after Dec. 17th



# HOW TO CONVINCe YOUR BOSS: DEBUNKING SOCIAL MEDIA MYTHS

There are a number of myths and shallow skepticism when it comes to social media. This is for several reasons:

- **Social media is a relatively new way of doing marketing, sales, PR and customer service.**
- **In the early days, self-proclaimed social media mavens took advantage of the buzz and brought disastrous campaigns to un-discerning clients.**
- **It can be overwhelming. There is a lot going on on social media, you need to learn a new language, deal directly with criticism and negativity, keep track of messages and updates on several platforms.**

While all of the above are valid reasons to think of your social media project as a complex process, it does not justify most of the criticism and skepticism out there. We will address the most recurring criticism, myths and arguments so that you are ready to respond to your boss, even if the boss is yourself.

## SOCIAL MEDIA IS A FAD

This used to be popular in 2008/2009 when Facebook and Twitter were booming. Most bosses were very quick to dismiss social media as the fashion of the moment. Something that in a couple of years was going to be dissolved.

Unless you live on a remote location in Tibet, it is tough to have such an opinion today. If you look around, you will notice your peers, friends, colleagues, parents, children, relatives equally involved in using some form of social media. Whether it is a Facebook profile, a blog, a LinkedIn profile or a presentation on Slideshare, everybody is involved on some level with social media.

As said before this does not translate into an immediate reason why you should engage with social media, but the numbers are unprecedented. What we are witnessing is not comparable to anything we've seen before.

**“52% of our respondents say that they engage with social media for their event ‘several times a day’ - this is an incredible amount of time dedicated to an activity that cannot be quantified as a fad.”**

We could cite an incredible array of stats to support what we are writing. But we can also picture the response of your boss to these stats: “They don't apply to our business.” So ask your boss, are you on social media? Why do you use it? Do your children use social media? What happens if you take social media away from them? Do your colleagues use social media? Why?

All these questions will help to make your case more personal and to move your boss to realizing that this is happening all around us. If that

doesn't work, you can mention some of the stats in our survey, which is specifically aimed at event professionals like you and your boss. You could for example mention that 60% of respondents confirmed that no management buy in is the top reason why events don't use social media, despite a whopping majority of event professionals dedicating resources and time to social media. You could mention that this exposes you to the risk of not exploiting the opportunities you identified in the previous chapter.

Understanding the needs of your market is a virtue of the forward thinking boss and will help them to realize the potential of the opportunity.

## ATTENDEES WILL SAY NEGATIVE THINGS ABOUT US

This is at the same time the easiest and most difficult concern to tackle. It does not take a clinical psychologist to understand that if you are scared about negativity coming your way, you are either not confident in your event or are trying to hide wrongdoings.

This is not a myth. It is a reality. If your event sucks attendees will say it out loud on social media. At the same time, if your event is great attendees will equally say it on social (maybe in smaller numbers, as we don't like to compliment as much as complain). But here is a twist, attendees may be already saying something negative about your event, without you realizing or doing anything about it.

The last bit scares the hell out of most people. While asking your boss to fix all the breakdowns in your event may be unrealistic, it is very desirable to at least address it on social networks.

Acknowledgement and action upon criticism on social networks is quickly becoming a key perfor-

mance indicator of customer oriented businesses and events. The attitude towards negativity should be to investigate further and fix criticism, rather than deny it.

## OUR CUSTOMERS ARE NOT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

While the stats about most social networks make it almost impossible for your prospective customers not to be on social, there is a case to determine whether it is right for your audience. While most are on social, they are not necessarily willing to engage on social to buy an event ticket or research their attendance at a particular conference.

The correct approach to this criticism is to respond with numbers. Analysis of competitors, attendee research and an event registration form that asks for social network handles will give you the data you need. If the numbers are strong enough there will be no case against your proposed program.

Your boss will be forced to say no to numbers and only bad bosses make such blatantly masochistic decisions.

On the other hand, if you don't have the numbers and the opportunity is weak, you are chasing something that may be irrelevant for your audience. Or at least not important enough (yet) to dedicate resources to it.

## SOCIAL MEDIA IS FOR LARGE BRANDS, NOT FOR EVENTS

Clearly the results of our research say otherwise.

“

**93% of our respondents use social media on**

***at least one event in their portfolio. The number of event professionals on the market not using social media for their events is 7% “.***

This is like advocating that faxing a registration form is easier than online registration with instant payment. While some people may prefer it, it does not make it easier, it's actually a nightmare.

While large brands are obviously very engaged with social media, there is a growing literature of case studies supporting the use of social media on B2B and events, regardless of their size. You will find several case studies in this book to present to your boss.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA IS CHEAP**

One of the reasons why bosses actually decide to use social media is the assumption it is cheap. As much as this could seem like a positive feature, it will actually turn out to be a recipe for disaster.

Yes, setting up a Youtube account and posting videos cost nothing. When comparing that to advertising on TV or print 25 years ago, that seems a quite succulent opportunity. The fact is that if you are deciding to use social media, you are making a commitment that is far greater than setting up an account and randomly updating it.

The standard has become quite high. In a content marketing world, you are faced with competition delivering cool campaigns, made of innovative ideas and powerful content. A sleazy approach will be punished by your audience.

Choosing to engage in a social media project means investing time and resources in it. It also means allocating budget to social media advertising in some instances. If your boss is not pre-

pared to invest in it, you should not champion the project. You will end up with a lot of work to do, expected to deliver great results that won't be fully understood by your management.

A correct social media program has a budget dedicated to it, tools to monitor and implement it and a team of champions within the organization to support it.

## **SETTING UP THE RULES: CREATING A SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

Every event should have a social media policy. Your staff should be crystal clear about what is expected of them and the boundaries of their engagement.

A good social media program could easily turn into a depressing disaster, if your staff are not clearly briefed about the rules of using social media in your company. There are also concerns with regards to respecting your employees' rights when it comes to social media.

Some of the questions you should ask yourself are:

### **Who is involved**

Who do I want to be using social media? All or part of my team? Who are those who can use it? Under what circumstances should they be using it?

### **Disclosure**

Should your employees add to their profile that they work for your event? Should they make a note that their words do not represent the employer's views? Is there a difference between personal and business use? Should your employees have separate accounts?

### Key Contacts

Who should your employees contact if they want to engage with social media? Should they seek approval if they want to disclose they work for the event?

### Rules

Should your employees respect certain rules if they say they work for you but use social media on a personal level?

### Fair Competition

Are there ethical concerns your employees should take into consideration? Can they mention competitors? Can they disclose information about sponsors or general stakeholders? Is there a code of conduct they should adhere to?

### Profile Set Up

Do employees business profiles have to meet certain criteria? Do you offer assistance in setting them up? Do you have a standard logo they should use? Should they use corporate photos on their profiles?

### Assistance

What general tips can you give about engaging correctly on social media? Expertise, attention to detail, knowing the language to use, do not take advantage of the community are just some examples.

As you may have noticed, there is a lot to go through. Depending on how you answer the above question, you could end up with a loose or strict policy.

As the Romans said, in medio stat virtus. Meaning that a balance of the two practices is usually a good fit. You should not leave anything uncovered. You should protect your event reputation and brand but also preserve the right of your employees to express their views and in general

not kill creativity and inspiration with too many rules.

It is in fact very common to see accounts of very strict companies that are just dull and uninteresting. There is an intrinsic component of social media that screams for interesting content, creative updates, fun, education and inspiration. Limiting your employees with too many rules may impact the delivery of any of the above.

On the other hand, being laid back or too open, may put you in a delicate position, exposing yourself to criticism and anger, two popular sentiments of social media.

Involving your employees as much as possible in crafting a policy is a great way to avoid friction and to make sure there is some level of agreement on what is and is not expected from them.

It is also a good practice to research what other brands include in their social media policy. The [Social Media Governance portal](#) gives you great examples of social media policies.

# **PART II**

## **SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY**

## PART II: SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

Strategy is the most delicate aspect of your social media program. Yet it makes no sense to overcomplicate things. This is why we decided to sum up our advice in a simple process that can help whether this is the first time you engage with social media or you are a seasoned social media practitioner.

Strategy is the piece of the complicated social puzzle that needs more synthesis and is the easiest to get wrong. While there is a lot of advice on the tools to use and in general on social media tactics, very little has been written on the subject

of social media strategy for events.

So let us guide you through some of the steps you can implement to get strategy right. If you follow this process, implementing your decisions will be much simpler.

### THE TIME AND MONEY DILEMMA

The most frequent objection from event professionals is there is not enough time to do social.

AD

86% OF MARKETERS SAY THAT SOCIAL MEDIA IS IMPORTANT FOR THEIR BUSINESS,

BUT MANY EVENT PLANNERS JUST DON'T HAVE TIME FOR IT.

In Social Media Examiners' 2013 end of year report, we learned that 89% of people found increased exposure to be the number one benefit of social media marketing. What do you think a little extra exposure could do for your event? Perhaps you could increase audience engagement, or attract more exhibitors and sponsors. But, if you're like most event organizers, you need more time to manage social media.

**DON'T YOU WISH YOU HAD  
TIME FOR SOCIAL MEDIA?  
WE CAN HELP. [CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS.](#)**

 **Ungerboeck  
Software**  
INTERNATIONAL

Source: 2013 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING INDUSTRY REPORT, Social Media Examiner

17% of our respondents reinforced that lack of time is an issue indeed.

In some cases it is just a matter of being lazy, but other times it is actually a valid argument. With event planning being one of the most stressful jobs on the market, the last thing you want is another problem to deal with.

While writing this book, we met event managers that really understood the value of social. They 'got it', as we say. Nonetheless they simply could not allocate the resources to actually build and maintain any social media assets. This dilemma is atrocious. There is a great drive to do things, but little time to do them.

If you add that current macroeconomic factors are having an impact on event budgets, it becomes increasingly tough to explore new avenues. Money and budget in fact was mentioned by 15% of our respondents as a barrier to social media adoption.

When human beings feel the risk, they pursue what they've tried in the past.

While not innovating and not investing in social media may seem a safer strategy, you are effectively exposing your event to a far greater risk. Attendees who care will notice the lack of social media. That could negatively affect how they perceive your brand. The long term effect on your event brand would be to look outdated and not up to speed with the current market requirements.

## A WORKING SOLUTION: INCREMENTAL INNOVATION

The objection of scarce resources and time may be valid, nonetheless you can get a lot out of so-

cial media if you dedicate yourself to two imperatives: focus and integration.

“

**Focus on a small project and integrate all your resources to execute it as an integral part of your event planning schedule”.**

This approach is described as incremental innovation. The [Harvard Business Review](#) reports on a study that reaffirms how Wall Street is more prone to support those companies that look at extending the current technology they have rather than disrupting their business with radical innovation.

In the same perspective a wise approach to social media is to map your event's processes that can be extended or that social could add value to. Look at existing forms of marketing, customer service, PR, risk management and ask yourself where you can deliver value by means of social media.

The key is **to make the process incremental, not disruptive**. Large investment in social media that revolutionises the way your event planning and management process work are destined to fail or partially succeed. Radical innovation takes a substantial toll on your resources and budget, it makes the whole process stressful and frustrating for everyone involved and as the ROI of social media is not always immediately visible, it could negatively impact your program.

An incremental approach to innovation, helps you to focus on one small project to begin with that does not disrupt your budget, resources or processes. By confining and measuring the project, you will have enough sample data to know whether to keep investing or change the area of focus.

Incremental innovation is equally a fit for the experienced on beginner social media practition-

er. Whenever new tools are introduced to the market, even the most social savvy professional will adopt an incremental approach to introducing them to the event. Exposing yourself to the risk of rushing into the latest new thing will be detrimental for your program.

So how does incremental innovation look in a social media project context? How does incremental innovation impact your social media strategy?

## KNOW YOUR OBJECTIVES

When we think about social media for events, the first thing that comes to mind is marketing. Marketing was by far the biggest reported use of social media by our survey respondents (85%).

While social media is highly valuable for marketing, it's scope and potential is much greater than that.

Social media can be used to add value to all the main business functions of your event. It can be used to stimulate engagement at the event, improve networking, manage customer service issues, direct attendees to relevant content and gather attendees feedback in real time.

The important thing is to use social media to forward your business and/or event objectives and to set up a monitoring system so you can measure your effectiveness. Your basic steps will be:

1.

**IDENTIFY THE MAIN EVENT OBJECTIVES THAT YOU WANT TO FORWARD WITH YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN.**

AD

## TWO EVENT POWERHOUSES ONE COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION

ABSTRACTS, ATTENDEE MANAGEMENT,  
COMMUNICATIONS, SOCIAL & EVENT APPS  
ACROSS EVERY DEVICE, FOR EVERY PARTICIPANT



[www.eventsforce.com/zerista\\_partnership](http://www.eventsforce.com/zerista_partnership)

Get more information or arrange a live demonstration of this dynamic combined platform.

2.

## **CREATE THE CONTENT, STRATEGIES, TEAM AND PROCESSES THAT SUPPORT YOUR GOALS.**

3.

## **SET UP A SYSTEM FOR RECORDING AND MEASURING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES.**

4.

## **ASSESS YOUR EFFECTIVENESS, INCLUDING WHAT IS WORKING AND WHAT IS NOT WORKING.**

5.

## **REFINE YOUR STRATEGY AND REPEAT THE ABOVE STEPS.**

Here we are going to look at some of the main uses of social media as they tie into your event objectives. We'll be looking at how to monitor, record and assess your social media later in this ebook.

Here are some of the definite objective areas your event can focus on:

### **CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Using social media serves the needs of your customers more quickly and effectively than ever before. Responding to compliments and complaints, answering attendee questions, providing information about the event. 40% of our survey respondents use social media for customer service.

Events with a well managed social media team can quickly and easily deal with problems like cold meeting rooms, lost property and session questions. They can also pro-actively provide valuable information such as delayed flights,

reminders about when the lunch break ends and the location of an alternative washroom.

However, a word of warning. Your social media customer service team need to be alert and responsive. People expect a very fast response to their online questions and if they don't get it then a small problem can turn into a loud online complaint with everyone listening.

### **MARKETING**

The viral nature of social media make it a highly effective tool for connecting customers at all stages of the buying cycle. The focus is to better position the brand of your event into current and prospective attendees minds.

Traditional forms of marketing (print, TV, radio) focus on broadcasting, where information flows in just one direction. Social media marketing is distinct because it offers the opportunity to move beyond broadcasting to engagement. When you can engage your audience you get to leverage their networks and your marketing reach can grow exponentially.

Your audience are on a spectrum from:

1.

### **NOT INTERESTED: WHATEVER YOU POST IS JUST NOISE.**

2.

### **MILD INTEREST: THEY NOTICE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS AND HAVE A THOUGHT THAT THEY MIGHT TAKE A LOOK LATER.**

3.

### **PASSIVE VIEWING: YOUR POSTS SHOW UP AS INTERESTING ENOUGH TO CLICK ON AND READ.**

4.

### **ACTIVE INTEREST: THEY ARE CLICKING ON LINKS, LIKING POSTS, SHARING, RETWEETING.**

5.

### **FULLY ENGAGED: POSTING THEIR OWN CONTENT, UPLOADING PICTURES, ENGAGING IN DISCUSSIONS**

Create a social media strategy that speaks to these different audiences and helps them move up the ladder to full engagement.

#### **ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT**

Traditional PR becomes reputation and brand management in a social media context. Social networks and social media are powerful tools to circulate a message, to change perception and influence the wider stakeholder community.

With a good listening center you can use your social media to monitor all the mentions of your event and respond quickly to negative comments and hot issues. This speed of response is key to addressing issues before they escalate. On the other hand, you can use social media to reinforce and expand positive attitudes and conversations.

The highly agile and responsive nature of social media means it is also ideal for dealing with crisis situations or averting problems before they start.

#### **RESEARCH**

Twitter reports that every day people around the world send out 500 million tweets. That's 6,000 tweets per second! Even larger in scope is Facebook; every day 829 million people check their

Facebook page (<http://www.business2community.com>). The point is, there are a lot of people talking online and that kind of data and information is very valuable if you are able to effectively tap into it.

Social networks and social media are invaluable for researching the content of your event, potential speakers, performers, attendee profiles and so on. This information helps you to develop an appealing program and also provides a business intelligence to inform your sales and marketing.

Setting up a good listening center will also allow you to discover what people are saying about your event, what they like about it and what their needs are.

#### **SALES**

Social media can be powerful catalyst for sales initiatives. The one to one nature of the conversation, the incredible amount of data available and the always on nature of the media, makes it the ideal sales vehicle.

Social media has the ability to reach a large audience. However that reach is only useful if you are providing valuable content and you respect the ethics and culture of different social channels. If you do that, then your audience will build in size and will be more open to direct sales campaigns and promotions.

#### **EVENT ENGAGEMENT**

People don't come to events to sit in their chair and listen. If they wanted to do that they could stay at home and watch TV or surf the web. People come to events to connect, converse and engage. Social is the perfect tool to foster more engagement during events, by means of gamification, live polls and Q&As, live streaming and more.

It's important to understand that many of your

attendees are already on social media and are using it to create and maintain friendships and business relationships. They want to use social media at your event to connect with people they know and to establish new relationships.

## **EVENT FEEDBACK**

58% of our respondents report using social media for feedback. Indeed, social media has revolutionised the feedback collection process of events. Feedback is no longer asked for, it is presented to the event planner on social networks. People are already talking about your event and your business online. You can tap into the conversation to understand both what went wrong and what was effective in your event.

## **PROCESS MAPPING**

Once you are confident with each business area where social media can help, it is time to understand where in your event or event business social media can give its best contribution. This is a procedure we like to call process mapping.

Process mapping consists of laying out all of the core touchpoints, user journeys and contingencies any of the stakeholders involved with your event will be affected by. The procedure involves using a whiteboard, a large sheet of paper or mindmapping software to lay it out.

If you use a template to project manage your event, you could use Work Breakdown Structures or detailed rundown sheets, these are very valid starting points for your process mapping stage.

This is an example of what a process mapping sheet may look like:

<b>PROCESS</b>	<b>HOW CAN SOCIAL MEDIA DELIVER VALUE?</b>	<b>WHAT MEDIA FORMAT SHOULD BE USED?</b>	<b>POTENTIAL SOCIAL MEDIA/ NETWORK MATCH</b>
<b>Attendees obtain badge at registration</b>	By informing them what to do next	real time updates, pictures, small videos	<i>Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Vine</i>
<b>Session ends - break</b>	Updating them on relevant sessions about to start	real time updates, notifications	<i>Twitter, Facebook, Social Media powered Event app</i>
<b>Selling early bird tickets</b>	Offering special discount on selected networks	real time updates, longer write ups with benefits, video from previous year	<i>Twitter, Facebook, Blog (with embedded video), Forum posting, LinkedIn Group posting, Youtube</i>
<b>The venue has changed</b>	Inform attendees as quickly as possible	real time updates, short video	<i>Twitter, Facebook Vine</i>
<b>Highlight performers for the event</b>	By giving detailed information about their previous talks and experience.	blog post with interview, guest post, video, video interview.	<i>Slideshare, Pinterest, Youtube, Blogs, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn</i>
<b>Performers are announced</b>	By delivering as much information as possible on the speaker/performer and the session they will have	Video, write up, real time update	<i>Blog, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube.</i>
<b>Slides need to be distributed to the audience</b>	By making it easy to share without sending emails or let speakers manage this process	slides, write up, video	<i>Slideshare, Blog Post, Youtube</i>

You get the picture of what we are doing here. By thinking through your whole event you can easily identify areas of opportunity to reach economies of scale, avoid repetitive tasks or flood inboxes with unnecessary emails.

For the seasoned event professional it will be fairly easy to immediately recollect the major areas where more help is needed. On the other hand the young planner will discover that mapping all the tasks in the process will be a much clearer visual way to proceed.

[You can read more about best practices of social networks and most popular uses of social networks in the event industry in our Social Media Cards section.](#)

There is no need to be too granular about the process. It is also best to avoid uncertain areas. If the benefit of engaging with social media is not immediate, it means there is little value. Reconciling the process with a benefit should be an 'aha' moment, characterized by an effective and clear tangible outcome for the stakeholder involved.

It is also a good idea to prioritize the areas that need more help or present a better opportunity.

## CREATE A CONTENT PLAN

Content is the buzzword of the moment. What's new about it? Nothing. Smart brands have always realized the power of content, whether they are writing a brochure, they are receiving a complaint over the phone or creating a website.

If you've followed social media since the early days, you would know by now that all social networks revolve around content, whether it is pictures, videos, audio or words. It's the meaningfulness of such content that will make or break your social media program. How you add value through content is the key to success online.

Your content plan will be the result of your process mapping exercise, competitor benchmarking, research, listening and your framework for measurement and ROI. While designing it you should answer the following questions:

### WHAT?

What will you include in the content plan that will help to achieve your wider business objectives and specifically take advantage of untapped opportunities identified in your process mapping?

You should be very specific with the content you expect your team to create or find. This gathering stage will in fact involve identifying those sources of content that can help you to deliver value to your audience. In fact having a content plan does not mean always creating new content.

Think about:

- Existing internal content that you can repurpose in new formats.
- Existing internal content that you can

share on new channels.

- External content to be found on online magazines, social networks and media (refer to Cards/Research section) and can be the basis for new content creation.
- External content that can be curated and shared via social channels.

## DIFFERENT FORMS OF CONTENT INCLUDE:

**STATUS UPDATE**  
**BLOG POST**  
**INFOGRAPHIC**  
**WEBINAR**  
**VIDEO**  
**IMAGE GALLERY**  
**PRESENTATION**  
**WHITE PAPER/EBOOK**  
**FAQS**  
**YOUR WEBSITE PAGES**  
**CASE STUDIES**  
**CLIENT TESTIMONIALS**  
**QUOTES**  
**CHECK-INS**

## WHY?

Why are you choosing to write about a specific topic? Why are you picking that news? Why are you resharing an update?

The why of your selection should be very clear to you and your team. It is very common to see completely out of touch or irrelevant updates being broadcast these days. To help you master content creation and selection correctly here is a handy checklist:

### Does the content help us achieving our objective?

### Does the content deliver value to our audience?

### Is the content relevant to the context and channel we are using?

### Is the content helping our event or is it helping our competitors?

### Is the content educating, converting, influencing, serving or positively entertaining our audience?

### Is the content shareable? Will our audience recommend it to their peers?

It is very difficult to find universal values to give an indication as to why some content is more valuable, however this is a good starting point to define why you are choosing to go live with the content you selected.

If you are not sure about one of these items, it is probably better to choose another approach or piece of content.

## TO WHOM?

Who is the content addressed to? Do you clearly have in mind who your audience is?

The research phase of your social media program identified personas. It is a wise practice in marketing but also in PR and customer service to be confident with your audience personas. As previously suggested, choose two or three personas you should be talking to whenever you select, write, curate and publish content.

They should have name, age, occupation, income. This way finding and publishing content will be much easier. Will a teenager love a complex

white paper? Probably not. Will a 56 year old head of marketing be amused by a cat video on Youtube or Facebook? Yes (everybody likes cat videos), but not for the right reasons.

## HOW?

Defining audience personas, will help you to set a clear tone and manner for your communications over social networks and influence content selected.

You should create specific guidelines in terms of how your team should communicate with your audience. Your brand values need to be reflected in all the communication over social media. Now that you have identified the most relevant content avenues that will help you to achieve your objectives, it is time to select the channel you will use to engage with your audience.

### CASE STUDY

#### MAKE CONTENT WORK FOR YOUR EVENT: REFRESHING SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE



#### NAME COMPANY/EVENT

The FRESH Conference

#### AGENCY

Stefania Conti-Vecchi EVENTagist -

<http://www.eventagist.com>

#### A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

FRESH is a two-day conference that refreshes conferences, meetings and events and increases their effectiveness. By introducing and demonstrating the latest tools and knowledge they provide meeting planners, meeting designers, meeting producers and meeting owners with applicable improvement. All presentations, room layouts, the venue, the staging, the processes, the food, everything is new or innovative or at least interesting enough to investigate.

#### OBJECTIVES

The objectives were to find a way to recruit participants, speakers and sponsors through social media, to create a community and a buzz around the event, to keep followers updated and to give the chance to interact with the event and the audience in real time.

#### THE AUDIENCE

The FRESH Conference Community is a gathering of influential speakers, the most innovative companies connected to the meeting industry and meeting and event professionals.

#### THE UNFOLDING OF THE PROJECT

The social media strategy was focused on driving visits to the website and social media channels sharing valuable content in order to create buzz around it. Having a short guide on how to use the most important social media channels for the conferences was the most natural step to be useful and to connect the audience with the event.

The aim of the guide was to give meaningful information to the event community on how to use social media to interact with the event and with other members, to share information horizontally, but also for the conference to collect feedback and research attendee need.

After a brief research on what can be considered a valuable piece of content for meeting profes-

sionals it was decided to give examples and tips on how to set up their own conference social media strategy.

The guide includes all the information to join the

FRESH tribe and to share knowledge and experience before, during and after the Fresh Conference. It inspires the attendee to apply the same social media model to the meetings they plan and design.

## BEFORE THE EVENT

*Before the event FRESH published several campaigns, on social media and with an email campaign tool, sharing the link to the guide.*

*There were blog posts and guest contributions to other event professional websites. A banner with the link to the guide was placed in the sidebar of the event blog and in all the newsletters sent out before the event.*

*ReFRESHing Social Media drummed up a great interest and was shared and reshared several times reaching more than 1,000 views on Slideshare in less than 10 days.*

## DURING THE EVENT

*The Guide was available as a feature of the event app.*

*During the FRESH conference, the guide was continuously suggested as a tool to be used during the event and both onsite and online participants referred to the guide to have an overview of the channels to update. That helped attendees to share their photos and videos and to collect the material shared by the organizers and the other attendees.*

## AFTER THE EVENT

*After the event a case study was created with all the results of the campaign which helped to keep the community alive and give further visibility to the event itself.*

## MAJOR OBSTACLES

As a meeting organizer, it can be difficult to secure the time and budget needed to set up a strategic plan for communication on social media. The biggest obstacle was related to the integration of all the different platforms used for registration, managing documents, videos, and the social media.

Another issue was to select and manage only the most effective channels to communicate with the audience pre, during and post event.

Using tools that help optimize the time and effort

needed to manage all the channels helped to overcome both obstacles.

## THE RESULTS

The ReFRESHing social media guide became a case study and it has been presented in several meeting architecture courses and in some webinars and sessions dedicated to social media for meetings and events.

It has now almost 4,000 views on slideshare and it is constantly helping the organizers to collect followers and new members of the community.

The document contributed to raise the level of new participants by 78%

## HASHTAG: THE HOLY GRAIL OF YOUR CONTENT PLAN

#Hashtags mean events on social networks. They mean a lot of things but one of the most adopted uses of hashtags is for events.

They were suggested and at the same time invented by Chris Messina (co-founder of the BarCamp movement). There was a quest at the time to create groups on Twitter. It seemed like 100s of followers were too much to keep track of. Despite the initial idea of using it for groups, a new concept was born: identifying events.

Up until then, there was no way to quickly state what you were talking about on Twitter. If you, say, were attending an event called Conference234 and wanted to make a comment, in 2007 you'd tweet:

*"I am at Conference234, and I am enjoying the speech by @tojulius"*

after hashtags were introduced, you could easily write:

*"Nice talk by @tojulius #conf234"*

There is incredible value in this change. First, the tweet is shorter which is incredibly important on Twitter where you have only 140 characters per update. Finding ways to shorten tweets has created standalone companies (see URL shorteners). Second, when Twitter later decided to make hashtags clickable, they instantly became a promotional tool for events. In the above tweet, a third party could click on #conf234 and learn more about the conference and who is attending.

Therefore we have this amazing invention and the Interwebs embrace it, but not all that glitters is gold. Hashtags are 7 years old and they grew up not without controversy. To date they are the most hated and praised innovation of social networks.

They are sometimes used by young and old teenagers to vehicle nonsensical trends or memes. They are also powerful weapons such as in 2011 when the hashtag #Egypt was instrumental in creating awareness about the Arab Spring revolution.

Hashtags are becoming a universal tool to bring all your event content and conversation together. They are the unique identifier you can use to ensure maximum cross channel compatibility. They help to ensure consistency across different media and collect information once the event is over.

As event professionals we have an advantage. Our product is a hashtag by definition. Hash-

AD

# TAME THE TWEET

Introducing Concerto, from QuickMobile



Get a grip on your event's Twitter activity and share via social walls, web sites and in your event's mobile app.

Contact us today



tags have become a way to define an event in the making, a dynamic action. They are not great for static products or services. Having a hashtag strategy is an integral part of your content plan and a major concern in your social media engagement.

Why? Well, looking at the information above it appears quite obvious. If you pick a hashtag and you define a wise use of it, then it will pretty much spread the word about your event across most of the Web. At the time of writing Hashtags are used in Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, Tumblr, Vine, Pinterest and Youtube among others.

There will be no other action, text or element so universally accepted online than your hashtag. While in fact some social networks may decide to make a link clickable or not, hashtags will indeed be clickable almost everywhere.

No wonder nowadays some event professionals pick a hashtag as the actual name of the event, rather than its social alias.

## 10 REASONS TO HAVE A HASHTAG STRATEGY AT YOUR EVENT

### 1. CONSISTENCY

Having a hashtag and communicating it clearly makes sure that your attendees can consistently interact at different social touchpoints. Your hashtag is the universal currency that makes social exchange possible, the Rosetta Stone of interaction.

### 2. EMPOWERMENT

Having a clear and concise hashtag strategy enables your attendees to know exactly how to interact with you.

Not knowing how to interact with the event strongly limits the desire for expression during the event that we all experience as attendees.

### 3. AWARENESS

Communicating your hashtag to the audience changes perceptions. It shows you are recognizing the attendees' need to express themselves socially at your event.

They will perceive you as 'up to standard', ready to cater for their social needs.

### 4. ANALYSIS

Your hashtag is the most precious tool to collect all the conversation around your event. Any public update with your hashtag will be easy to curate, whether you are using a live wall aggregating all the conversation at the event or social media monitoring software.

### 5. ENGAGEMENT

Several tools that stimulate discussion and live interaction at events such as Audience Response Systems and Mobile Apps need hashtags as means of public interaction.

You can vote using hashtags, you can ask questions using hashtags.

### 6. CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Your hashtag is the perfect vehicle to quickly spread the news about potential crisis that may arise. Your hashtag is a communication channel with an audience waiting to read the latest updates or looking at media generated.

### 7. DISTRIBUTION

The hashtag is also the official backchannel of your event. It is your virtual chatroom where you can make announcements, stimulate discussion, inform about your program, promote aspects of the event.

### 8. FEEDBACK

A hashtag is the social vehicle to funnel and collect feedback. It will be very difficult to find complaints and compliments about your event if you don't have a hashtag in place.

### 9. COMMUNITY

Having a hashtag in place ensures that the life cycle of your event stretches substantially. Attendees will be able to discuss the event before it actually starts, they will feel connection to the community much earlier. By the time they get to the event, they will experience a feeling of confidence with the event and other attendees. That creates the feeling of continuous communities which events need.

### 10. NETWORKING

The event hashtag is the prime medium of networking. Attendees can relate to each other by checking the hashtag on their social network of choice. It will immediately answer the question 'who is attending?' which sometimes cannot be answered for privacy concerns. Attendees using the hashtag make a statement that they want to be overt about their attendance and connect with the event or fellow attendees.

## CASE STUDY

### CREATING ENGAGEMENT VIA SOCIAL MEDIA. A HASHTAG STORY



#### NAME COMPANY/EVENT

Joyce Dogniez, CMM | Internet Society Chapter Leader Regional Workshop Series across all continents

#### AGENCY

Ruud Janssen TNOC | The New Objective Collective

[http://www.tnoc.ch/TNOC\\_The\\_New\\_Objective\\_Collective/TNOC\\_Welcome.html](http://www.tnoc.ch/TNOC_The_New_Objective_Collective/TNOC_Welcome.html)

#### A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Amplifying the vocal chords of the internet through social media. A bespoke design for a series of Internet Society Chapter Leadership workshops in multiple languages taking place one on every continent after an initial “proof of concept” in Europe and Africa. The Internet Society workshops aim to build capacity, discuss chapter management related issues, share ideas, knowledge, content and experiences in person and online.

#### OBJECTIVES

To connect volunteer Internet Society Chapter Leaders across the globe in a series of regional

workshops. Social media, rich content are used to create an augmented layer of activity online around the outcomes of the workshops as they travel from continent to continent connecting the chapter leaders through its digital footprint. For every continent 25-30 leaders were engaged in the workshop with 6 workshops per year connecting the dots between them.

#### THE AUDIENCE

The Internet Society (ISOC) engages in a wide spectrum of Internet issues, including policy, governance, technology, and development. ISOC establish and promote principles that are intended to persuade governments to make decisions that are right for their citizens and each nation’s future. Everything ISOC does is based on ensuring that a healthy, sustainable Internet is available to everyone – today and for the next billion users.

Participants are members, volunteer leaders and enthusiasts supporting the mission of the Internet Society. They have been invited to meet; discuss their activities and to exchange ideas to progress their projects and ideas to make the Internet for Everyone. They are joined by a number of key staff members of the Internet Society. The sessions are participant led, peer input driven and designed to engage in as much conversation on topics as possible, the session are designed as fish bowls with structured group conversations around pre-defined topics. The end of the workshop is designed to activate the individual actions in a Solution Room format.

#### THE UNFOLDING OF THE PROJECT

The initial choices by the team putting together the workshops, the global reach, varieties of bandwidth availability and personal preferences of the users guide ultimately how the project started. At first the lack of a proprietary system lead the team to use Google+, Google Moderator, Google Hangouts and Google communities. Twitter was a natural signpost to use with the hashtag

becoming the beacon to connect the communications. Getting contributions from everyone was stimulated by handing around a DSLR camera to all participants encouraging them to take pictures. These were uploaded with geotags and hashtags multiple times during the workshop and shared in social channels through Storify and

blog posts in realtime. The dependency on the Google tools was later adjusted to reflect more diversity. Google Moderator was replaced with Tricider to collect input for the fishbowl sessions and allow participants to vote and contribute topics of their interest.

## BEFORE THE EVENT

*Before the event all participants are connected on a single platform for Internet Society Leaders. The moderated discussions online and live offer the opportunity for the participants to connect prior to the workshop to allow for pre-workshop networking, exchange of ideas and knowledge and create a dynamic environment prior to the face-to-face meeting.*

*Topics to be discussed during the meeting emerge from these pre-discussion as well as requests for information about ISOC (to identify if any information will need to be presented or discussed onsite e.g. grant programs, strategic plan, etc).*

## DURING THE EVENT

*By alternating traditional and new media all user preferences can be serviced. Post-its are added to a good old fashioned world map after swapping with a colleague onsite their place of origin. This is later digitized in a bespoke Google Maps online. Old media includes note taking on paper table covers with thick pens which can then subsequently be captured in a photo or video to be shared on social channels online.*

*A traditional self addressed postcard at the end of the closing Solution Room session enabled the organizer to capture the action points and the participants to consolidate their actions.*

*The hashtag is the glue to connect the participants onsite and their peers in their chapters.*

*A DSLR camera was passed around to capture everyone's unique perspectives of the day and all debriefings were recorded on video recaps of 3 minutes maximum each.*

*This rich content is produced with a very short delay time to be posted online almost instantly. The value of the rich content whilst onsite is a key asset for participants to consult, retweet, re-post and share in their own social channels online.*

*Additionally a recap video is produced as a trailer and bumper of the workshop day featuring the participants. The magic is in the "instant" factor of capturing and disseminating the rich content using the hashtag. The workings of it are contagious and everyone joins in on their own preferred channels.*

## AFTER THE EVENT

*From the participant perspective each piece of User Generated Content was activated online as an active memory of what occurred whilst onsite. Participants from an upcoming workshop in another region could review what was produced by colleagues with a similar challenge in a different geographic space. Video testimonials, video trailers and photos plus casual video is published in a consolidated story and on social media channels as a documentary of what took place.*

*Six weeks post event all participants receive a postcard (self addressed) with the remainder of the actions that came out of the Solution Room. Many participants spontaneously contribute their action to the hashtag of the workshops and encourage subsequent workshop participants with their likes, retweets and support of the ongoing efforts across all regions.*

*An alumni group will be set up to foster the connections made and to extend the 'life of the event' through social media.*

*Because of the use of the hashtag participants of previous workshops relive their workshop and retweet and share the content. This really allowed the content and emotion to spread much beyond the actual participants of the face to face workshop.*

*ISOC staff plan the next business year and develops tools for its volunteers based on the feedback and input collected via the hashtag through the various media.*

## MAJOR OBSTACLES

Obstacles included getting the group activated and contributing to the discussion before the event. There was also hesitation of some participants to contribute due to unfamiliarity with a social media type or even hesitation due to potential censorship or identification of sender and repercussions of governments unable to deal with the free voice to make the internet for everyone.

## THE RESULTS

Community and capacity building online, offline and then again online using social media and on the proprietary online community delivers many

rich human connections. Many participants spontaneously contribute their action to the hashtag of the workshops and encourage subsequent workshop participants with their likes, retweets and support of the ongoing efforts across all regions. The engagement with the role of volunteer leader with the Internet Society is anchored in the experience and re-enforced when volunteer leaders from different regions connect online and share the excitement of meeting in a similar format in another part of the world.

The results of every workshop are compiled in one rich media blog post. That blog post contains the nectar of each regional workshop. By stacking the social media conversations from one

event and stringing them onto the next one, the content can be built upon in subsequent workshops in other regions.

For an example of this from the Internet Society Chapter Leader Workshop in Dakar, Senegal, Africa see the blog post summary compiling user generated content as well as rich media from multiple angles, which was shared and embedded on multiple platforms.

# 5 QUALITIES OF THE PERFECT HASHTAG

## ORIGINAL

Make sure no one else is using the same hashtag. Research all social networks you will select for current uses of your ideal hashtag.

## SHORT

Some social networks limit the number of characters available. Picking a short hashtag guarantees saving precious real estates where needed.

## UNDERSTANDABLE

Your hashtag should be easy to understand. It needs to have cues to the name or content of your event. Acronyms are welcome but it needs to be somewhat evident.

## SCALABLE

You need to be able to scale your hashtag for future versions of your event. Attaching the year as a suffix is widely adopted strategy as in #event14 #event15, reinforcing the need of a short hashtag.

## SPREAD

Your hashtag needs to be clearly communicated in all your offline (banners, signage, brochures, nametags) and online (website, online banners, online ads) communication. It needs the prominence it deserves. It needs to be present in your FAQs and in general at all customer touchpoints. It should be present in every social media update you produce.

## SOCIAL NETWORK SELECTION

This is one of the most delicate phases of your social media strategy. It is a stage where most event professionals fail. The most recurring mistake is to skip it altogether.

We are constantly bombarded by consumer brands on social networks. As a result when tackling social media from a business perspective we tend to think we should act like them. The equation is very simple: large consumer brands are everywhere on social media = we should be as well. By doing so we completely disregard any research stage and just jump into creating accounts on pretty much every social network on the market.

The result is usually a graveyard of abandoned Facebook Pages, Twitter profiles, Youtube Channels, Blogs, etc. If you jump on all social networks at once, without first assessing your resources, mapping your processes, researching and benchmarking competition, a social media graveyard is around the corner.

Needless to say, your customers won't like it. The event brand is going to be negatively affected. So how should you approach social network selection?

We already discussed the incremental innovation approach. This is a step of the process where this way of looking at technology is especially needed. An incremental innovation approach to social media strategy, would entail starting your program with one social network that can really deliver on your mapped process.

You should dedicate your effort to fully grasp the biggest opportunity on paper and give 100% to it.

## 6 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF AND YOUR TEAM WHEN SELECTING A SOCIAL NETWORK

*What is the social network that my competitors are using most successfully?*

*What is the most recurring social network in our process map?*

*What social network are we able to support as a team?*

*What social network out of the top three in the process map is the most popular in our team?*

*How often should we update the top three social networks?*

*Which social networks are complementary to our main social network?*

By asking these questions we can quickly come up with a list of two or three contenders.

“

***The top contender is the social network that helps us to take advantage of most of the identified opportunities. It is the one we are sure we can support as a team and in general the one our team is more inclined to”.***

The social network we select is the best possible medium to deliver our value proposition to attendees.

While we strongly suggest to start your program by investing in one social network, we realize it is not always possible. It may be that your benchmarking process requires a stronger investment. It may be that you count on a strong team and have enough resources to tackle more at once. Whenever your circumstances force you to pick more than one social network, the best approach is to choose complementary media.

Complementary social media help in different ways to grasp the same identified opportunity. Going back to our process mapping exercise, we could quickly conclude that Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and a Blog are the most recurring social networks by whom we could add greater value to our attendees.

They are very complementary as you can optimize the content required to be on all of them. See this example:

- **Write a blog post to announce your speaker lineup. Add pictures of the speaker and previous sessions.**
- **Take an excerpt of the article and the featured photo and post them to Facebook.**
- **Take the title, link and picture and post them to Twitter.**

- **Post the picture on Instagram.**

As you can see these 4 social networks play really well together and help you to reach economies of scale in creating content, one of the most demanding activity of your social media program.

Try to understand how you can optimize content creation and roll out by selecting those social networks that work well together.

Once you've selected your social network, go back to the Social Media Cards which will be a great starting point to understand the lingo, best uses and practices of the top social networks.

Knowing what the current zeitgeist is will give you an indication of what works best for your event. In this perspective, [the results of our survey will tell you what social media event professionals value the most nowadays and what they are keen to learn more about.](#)

## CHOOSING YOUR TEAM & PROCESS

by Cathy Key

Choosing your social media team is not a trivial task. Social media communications are fast-paced and public. Every conversation happens in full view of your audience, which means you need to build a team that you can rely on to speak in a way that is consistent with your event and your brand. You need people who can think on their feet, respond to emergencies with ease and calm. You need people you can trust to be the voice of your event.

There are many people who claim to be social media experts. However, social media is in its infancy and the truth is that it can be hard to find people who really know what they are doing, can speak fluently to your audience and that you can afford.

“

***55 of the respondents to our survey are spending \$200 or less on social media for their events, including software costs, staff time and marketing expenses. The vast majority, 80%, are spending \$1,000 or less. In other words, with a few exceptions, planners are not dedicating much of their event budget to social media resourcing”.***

While 47% of our respondents do have a dedicated social media team for the most part they are working on a shoestring budget. This leads one to wonder who is actually doing the social media if they are being paid so little.

In many cases social media is handed over to a social-savvy staff member or volunteer who may have little or no real training in developing and executing a social media plan. Social media is bolted onto the event, rather than been treated as an integral part of the event’s communication,

marketing, sales and customer service plan.

Social media currently has the status of websites 10 years ago, where we would farm out our most precious marketing tool to a geeky nephew because he was keen and cheap. Your social media is the voice of your event and integral to your business and it needs to be treated with respect.

While many events do not have the budget to hire an agency to do their social media, you can still make sure that you have a strong team, with clear processes and a plan.

Whether your team is made up of consultants, staff members, volunteers or a mix of all three you need to make sure you reward them. It’s not good enough to ask a staff member to add social media to their already existing workload because “they like using Twitter”. Social media is hard work and the value it adds to your event and business should be recognized.

Your team will need to be smart, friendly, consistent, creative and reliable. So, make sure you reward them for a job well done. If you can’t pay them extra, then consider alternative ways to compensate them for their time and contribution such as a free pass to the event, a private gathering with one of your presenters or commissions on sales.

## SOCIAL MEDIA ROLES

Social media impacts many different aspects of your event, from sales and marketing through to customer service and crisis management. It involves many different social media channels and covers variety of tasks from creating content, to answering questions and responding to issues.

Given the scale and scope of social media it is

unlikely that one person will be sufficient to fill all your social media needs, even for a relatively small event. Your social media staffing requirements will also be different before, during and after the event. Before the event you may not need any full-time social media staff. During the event you may need to ramp up your team and create a full-time social media crew.

Let's look at some of the roles and accountabilities your team needs to include:

**TEAM LEADER:** The team leader is focused on the big picture and is the person on the team who is concerned about strategy. How do your social media activities fulfil on the overall objectives, who is doing what and where are you being effective? The team leader is someone with a broad knowledge of social media, who can understand all the moving parts separately as well as how they interrelate. They report back to management and link social media activities to the overall event and business goals.

**CONTENT CREATORS:** You will almost certainly need a team of people who are accountable for creating content. This team will include writers, editors, graphic designers, videographers and photographers. Their job is to create and find sticky content, develop content ideas and themes and work to convey the message of what the event is all about. Content creators are creative and have great communication skills.

**ENGAGERS:** These are the people who are doing the talking. They are posting the content that is being created, writing comments, tweeting, sharing, talking and responding to questions. These people are probably already on social networks and understand the culture of engagement. If not, they are people who are highly knowledgeable about your organization and already have a relationship with the audience, e.g. customer

service representatives. You will likely have many engagers who work with different platforms (e.g. Twitter versus LinkedIn) and accountabilities (e.g. customer service versus sales).

**COORDINATORS:** Coordinators listen to and watch everything. They are plugged right into your listening center so that they can triage questions and enquiries, coordinating all the incoming communications so that the right information gets to the right team members, quickly. Coordinators understand how social media fits into the big picture, they are highly organized project managers who are calm and can be trusted to get things completed.

**ANALYSTS:** These are the people who are tracking everything. The analysts are the technically minded people who love numbers, tracking and statistics. They know the difference between social media metrics and ROI and are able to tell at a glance if you are reaching your goals.

There is not necessarily a one-to-one relationship between roles and people. One person may take on several of these accountabilities (e.g. a team leader may also be a coordinator and analyst). On the other hand, there are some roles (e.g. content creation and engagement) that demand a team of people. What is important is that you make sure that all these roles are covered.

## FINDING YOUR TEAM

Your social media does not happen in a silo, it impacts everything. When organizing your social media strategy and creating your team you need to include the sales and marketing department, PR, graphic design, the web site developers, customer service, audio-visual, the exhibitor manager, your sponsorship division, signage, speak-

er-relations and on and on.

There is no social media “person”. Everyone is social media. Everyone is impacted by it, influences it and needs to be educated as to how social media affects their accountabilities and how to use the tools responsibly.

Do you need people who are proficient in the social media channels? Yes, you do. But, proficiency with the tools of social media is only part of the picture. Social media is a tool, it’s a means to an end not the end itself.

Focus on what you want to achieve with your social media and look for the people with those skills. For example if you are using social media for customer service, look for someone who’s already on your regular customer service team. The truth is it is easier to teach a highly skilled customer service agent how to use social media than it is to train a social media expert customer service.

Your social media team can be pulled from many different departments and accountabilities. It may include a mix of paid consultants, staff members, committee members and volunteers. When creating your team focus on the activity or function they need to perform first and foremost.

Within your team there will be some people (the minority) who play a strategic role and others that have tactical roles. Your team leader plays the primary strategic role and will be overseeing the project and reporting back to the management. Whoever takes on this role must deeply understand event planning. If you are using social media for marketing it is essential you find someone who has experience promoting and selling events.

In an ideal world your team lead will be someone

who has a good working knowledge of a wide variety of different social media platforms. They will have strong project management skills, a professional presence on social media and will have excellent communication skills. They will know how to build lasting relationships online, have a good track record managing online communities and will already have significant social influence.

Let’s face it, right now there are not a lot of people around who have a resume that fits the team leader role. If you have staff then it may be time to start investing in someone on your team and building their skills. Pick someone who is strong on event planning and project management, has good communication skills and an already existing interest in social media and cultivate them. Hire a social media expert to work with them and train them.

Content creators and engagers are usually easier to find. These people fill a tactical role. They are the ones who will be doing the work to create the content and get the information out online. You already have content creators. These are the people who are writing marketing copy, creating your brand, building graphics, taking photographs and shooting videos.

Look for subject matter experts, those people who are just passionate about their field or area. These people may know nothing about LinkedIn but could talk for 3 hours straight on their subject. These people are a great source of content.

Creating content for social media is different to other mediums. What works in a newsletter does not work for a tweet. Your content creators will need to adapt their content for the social world, so make sure they are being managed by someone who knows how to create viral content and understands the difference between broadcasting and engagement.

Your engagers will be the people who are already social. Look to see which people on your staff or in your community are already posting, blogging, tweeting and connecting online. They know the world and can use the content that you create to reach a bigger audience. Engagers will often have specialities. Just because someone is expert on Facebook doesn't mean they understand the nuances of LinkedIn.

You have a wealth of human resources already in your community. They may not be social media professionals (yet) but they are experts in their area. These people are just as valuable as the social media superstars because they know their stuff. Create a team that is a balance of social media experts and subject matter experts so they can learn from one another.

## EXPANDING YOUR TEAM

Once you have created your "internal" team, that is the core group of people who will be running and managing your social media, you can think about expanding your team.

The bigger your social media team, the greater your reach and influence. You can add almost unlimited content creators and engagers to your team to expand your sphere of influence. The key is to find the people who are already highly engaged on social media and who are invested in your event.

To expand your social media team look first to the people who already have a vested interest in your success. These will be your speakers, performers, exhibitors, sponsors, vendors and others who have already committed to participate in your event in some way. Many of these groups are already highly active on social media and given the opportunity will join your team.

We are not talking here about people randomly sharing your event. Rather, the point is to engage a wider group of people to talk about your event in a coordinated and focused way.

Mostly this category of people will be helping you with engagement and promotion. This means you need to provide them with communication materials that will allow them to share your message in a way that is consistent with your brand.

Specify someone on your internal social media team to be the liaison with your champions and influencers. They will be accountable for creating a partnership with your champions and keeping them on track with their social media outreach.

Create a communications kit, with ready made content (tweets, posts, graphics) that you can send out to your team of influencers each week.

During your event you can also expand your team by inviting local bloggers and social media experts to come to the event. If you aim for the 'rising stars' rather than the big names, they will likely join your team in exchange for recognition and a free ticket.

## MANAGING YOUR PROCESS

So far we have seen that there is no such thing as a social media "person". Social media touches every facet of your event which means that there will be a lot of people impacted by and influencing your social media plan.

If your social media is being used primarily for sales and marketing then at the very minimum the following people and accountabilities will be affected: marketing, PR, website, graphics, sales

team, IT and online registration.

If you are an association then your membership team will probably want to have input into your social media outreach. If you are a corporation your customer service and product sales team will likely want to be involved.

Your IT people will probably get involved at some point. They will have suggestions and ideas about integration, measurement and workflow. Then management (or your client) also need to be included and reported to.

If you expand your team beyond the core, you will have a whole posse of fans and advocates talking about your event. That's a whole lot of people talking all at once and the potential for mistakes and miscommunication is huge!

You have to deal with who will be accountable to whom and for what. Do your customer support people report to the customer support manager or the social media team lead? Does your graphics guy work on the new poster that your marketing manager asked for, or the Facebook banner that your social media team want?

You need a reporting, monitoring and support structure that is clear about the chain of command and flexible enough to deal with issues on the fly.

It is smart to keep the chain of command along the lines of work areas. In other words, customer support reports to customer support first and the graphics guy takes his orders from the Marketing Manager. Make sure your social media team lead works closely with the team leads from the other departments so that your social media requirements don't get lost in the mix.

## SOCIAL MEDIA ONSITE

The social media activity during your event can be frenetic. This is the time when your team will be biggest and under the most pressure. You can't wait until the wave of online noise hits to decide how to handle the volume of conversation. You need a plan.

Create a plan for how you will deal with your social media during your event. Here are some things to consider:

### **What content will you be gathering?**

### **Who will be posting content and what process will you use to prioritize tasks?**

### **Who will be listening to the online conversation and delegating tasks to the response team?**

### **What is the process for handling a crisis or difficult customer service issue?**

### **How will you manage the information flow from the social media team to other members of the event team?**

### **What do you do if a TV station starts interacting with you online? Who needs to be informed?**

You need to think through as many scenarios as possible in advance of the event, create a process and train your team.

Training is critical. The likelihood is that your team will include many volunteers or people who are not being directly paid for their time. These people need to be clear about their role, which platforms they are working with and who they are accountable to. Create a cheat-sheet they can use for quick reference with FAQs as well as

the hashtags you are using and the social media handles of the top influencers, speakers and performers.

Life will be a lot easier if your social media team are gathered together in one space. Create a social media hub at your event with computers, work stations, your monitoring and listening software and your analytics.

In addition to your social media team, it helps to have a network of people available to answer questions and support the team as questions come in. These people are not necessarily social. They may be involved with the program, customer support, registration or travel and transportation. For example, you may have someone from the local tourism office you can reach out to.

Finally, remember that social media is organic and alive. Even with your best plans mistakes will happen. Make sure you have a coordinator onsite who is grounded and calm and has enough authority to make decisions in a snap.

# CREATING A LISTENING CENTER: SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING

by Cathy Key

Social media monitoring, or social media listening, is the process of discovering and evaluating what is being said about your event and your brand online. It's a way for your social media team to quickly and effectively find out what is being said about you online and report back to other team members. Whether you are running a high-tech command center or are using free software, social media monitoring is a critical tool for finding out:

- **Who is talking about your event and what they are saying**
- **Where your audience is and what they are interested in**
- **The hot topics and trends**
- **The current thought leaders and influencers**

If you are using social media for customer service and/or crisis management a listening center also allows you to:

- **Address complaints and issues quickly**
- **Manage crisis situations**
- **Avert problems before they happen**

You need to have your finger on the pulse of the conversations that are happening online so that you can both track your progress and respond appropriately.

The problem is that the internet is vast and it churns out massive amount of unstructured

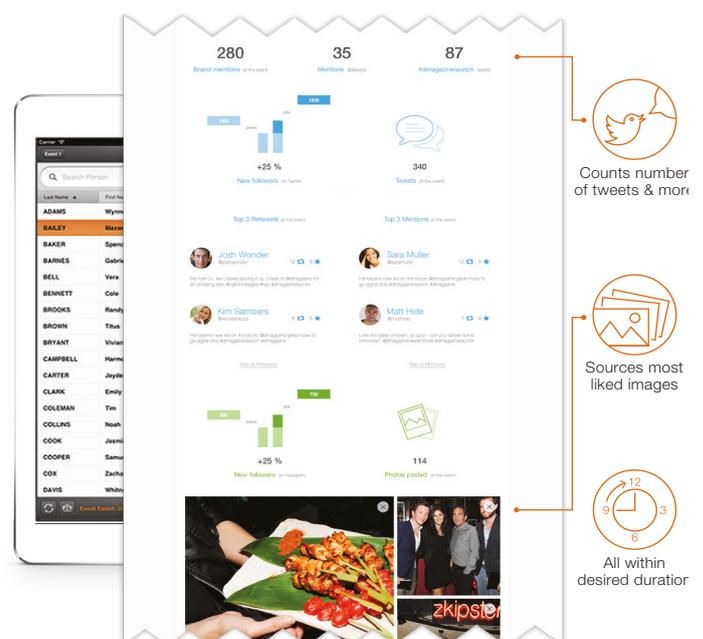
information. Data is being created constantly on social networks, discussion boards, websites, news sites, blogs and smaller social media platforms. Every minute 571 new websites are created, 247 WordPress blogs are posted, 100,000 tweets are broadcast and over 684,000 new Facebook posts are created (from the IACP Center for Social Media). You need a way of cutting through this noise to find just the information that is relevant to you.

Given the scale of the internet it's almost impossible to keep track of it all but a well-structured listening center will allow you to tap into the

AD

## Connect with your Guests

A Guest List App  Social Media Event Analytics



TAKE A LOOK >

zkipster

great majority of the online conversation.

Listening centers can show you live streams of incoming tweets, world maps showing the hot spots where people are talking, graphs and charts of your weekly Facebook Likes and endless other displays of the incoming data. The magic is the ability to see at a glance everything that is happening in real time.

Another role of the listening center is to connect your team. With a central hub that is collecting and collating everything that is happening, you can make sure that your customer service, sales, marketing and PR people are all on the same page.

## LISTENING CENTER BASICS

A listening center works like this:

1. **CAPTURE ALL THE MENTIONS OF YOUR EVENT THAT HAPPEN ONLINE**
2. **DIVIDE THIS INFORMATION INTO CATEGORIES (E.G. MARKETING, CUSTOMER SERVICE)**
3. **SEPARATE THE GOOD STUFF FROM THE BAD (THE POSITIVE FROM THE NEGATIVE MENTIONS)**
4. **DETERMINE WHICH ITEMS REQUIRE ACTION AND ALLOCATE THEM TO THE APPROPRIATE PERSON**
5. **SUMMARIZE THE DATA SO YOU CAN SEE TRENDS AND CHANGES OVER TIME**

The keys to an effective listening center are deciding:

1. **WHAT SPECIFIC INFORMATION (KEYWORDS, TOPICS, NAMES) ARE YOU LISTENING FOR?**
2. **WHICH SERVICES AND PLATFORMS ARE YOU MOST INTERESTED IN (E.G. FACEBOOK, TWITTER, LINKEDIN, GOOGLE+, BLOGS, LOCAL NEWS SITES, DIRECTORIES)?**
3. **WHAT SOFTWARE YOU WILL USE TO DO THE LISTENING?**
4. **HOW YOU WILL RESPOND TO ALL THE INCOMING INFORMATION?**

We will address each of these items below.

## WHAT ARE YOU LISTENING FOR?

What you are listening for will be determined by your overall social media strategy. Is the main purpose research, sales and marketing, reputation management or customer service? Each of these different thrusts calls for different types of listening, analysis and response.

Note, that the function of your listening center may change over time. In the early days it may be primarily for research. As the event draws close the main focus may be sales and marketing. During the event it may be engagement and customer service. Make sure that as your needs change your listening center evolves with you.

Here are the kinds of questions you can address

with your listening center and what you need to do to get answers:

### 1. WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING ABOUT US?

Decide on one main hashtag for your event and broadcast the hashtag widely with your community so that everyone is using the same tag. You can then set up a listening service for that hashtag. This will capture a large amount of the online conversation that is directly about you. As your event evolves you may add other hashtags for specific topics or themes.

Not everyone will use your hashtag. So, you also need to create searches for any use of your event name, event acronym or association acronym.

Broadening your net, you may also be interested in finding out what people are saying about your presenters or performers. If so, create a search for their names, handles and/or hashtags.

### 2. WHAT ARE PEOPLE IN MY INDUSTRY TALKING ABOUT?

To find out what people are talking about may take some detective work on your part. A good approach is to discover the keywords and hashtags they are using and set up listening posts for those phrases.

There are various research tools available to find out what keywords people are using in your industry. These vary in price and complexity however to get started you can use free services, such as the Google Adwords Keyword Tool. Type in a keyword and you can find out not only how popular it is, but discover other related keywords.

Similarly you need to find out what are the most

popular hashtags. There are free online services that you can use to search for hashtags, find out which are most used and similar or related hashtags.

Create a list of keywords and hashtags that you will be tracking. Unless you have a large team and/or you are using expensive data mining software you need to be discerning about which search terms are your priorities. If the hashtags you are tracking are very popular then there will be so much conversation happening that it will be difficult to sort it all out. For example, a broad hashtag like #business may get 6,000 tweets in an hour and will generate so much traffic that it may be hard to track the conversation or pull out the really interesting information. On the other hand, an under-used hashtag like #newbusiness will not give you enough relevant data.

You need to find 'Goldilocks' hashtags which generate enough information to be interesting and not too much to overload. To do this focus in on niches or topics. For example, if your area is business, you might create a listening for #smallbiz which gets a more manageable 600 tweets an hour. Finding your focus hashtags is part art and part science and you should explore and test until you find the right ones.

Once you have your set of hashtags and keywords you can set up streams for each term in your listening center. To make life easy, choose listening software that allows you to set up multiple streams and use boolean strings to group searches (i.e. search for this AND that).

### 3. WHO IS DOING THE TALKING?

Use social monitoring to find out who is talking about you, their demographics and location.

Your social listening center will also tell you who the most influential people in your community are. Within any community there are usually a handful of people who are very active online and are well respected and listened to. These people are social media experts, which means that they are present and consistent - it also means they are very easy to identify. They will have lots of followers, they post great content and get retweeted, favorited and shared often.

These influencers are likely to be the kind of people you would like to participate in your event, perhaps as a speaker or performer. Including a few influencers in your lineup can make a big difference to your social media marketing.

#### 4. WHAT DO MY CUSTOMERS NEED?

You can use your social media monitoring to keep track of your customers and issues they are dealing with. If this is one of your goals, then you need to monitor your customer support forums as well as all your social media channels.

Keep in mind that the great majority of people will not come directly to you with their complaints - however that does not mean they are not talking about you online. Broaden your search beyond your own pages and forums to ferret out potential customer issues.

#### 5. WHERE ARE THEY TALKING?

You can use your listening center to discover the hot locations where people are talking about you.

If your event is restricted to a geographic region, then you can geolocate your research and search results seeing only content published within your region.

#### 6. IS MY SOCIAL MEDIA WORKING?

Your listening center is also critical for evaluating

if your social media efforts are effective. This ties in with measurement and ROI which we will talk about later.

## WHICH PLATFORMS TO LISTEN TO

In an ideal world you would be listening out for every mention of your event online. However, without extensive data mining capacities this is next to impossible. This means it is important to prioritize which platforms are most important for you to keep track of.

An obvious starting point is to create listening services that are linked to all the social media platforms you yourself are using. If you are using primarily LinkedIn and Twitter then make sure you are listening into the conversations in those arenas. Beyond that, you will need to make choices as to how closely you want to listen to other social media platforms and the web in general.

Subscribing to a news aggregation site like Stori-fy or Paper.li can provide a simple, easy way to eavesdrop on the worldwide web and a broad range of social media channels. This is a rather ad hoc approach and will not give you thorough information or rigorous data. However, it is a simple way of keeping tabs on where you are being talked about and can bring to light mentions that you might otherwise have missed.

## CHOOSING YOUR LISTENING SOFTWARE

Now you have decided what information you are monitoring and the platforms you are most interested in, your next step is to decide how you are

going to listen. There is a wide range of software available, from free tools through to expensive software suites that include data analysis and predictions.

The kind of tools you choose will depend on the scale of your event. For the 2012 Super Bowl, the game organizers created a high-tech mission control center, featuring 150 square feet of networked computers, wall-mounted screens and sophisticated analytical software. For 2 weeks their 50-strong social media team was onsite monitoring over 64 millions social media mentions, most of which were responded to within an impressive 3 minutes. The organizers reported a tremendous benefits, equivalent to \$3.2 million in positive press (for more details see <http://blog.hootsuite.com/fortune-command-center/>). The project was such a success that they have repeated it every year since.

These large scale command centers use sophisticated software for data-mining, analysis and tracking. Their advantage is that they provide the ability for someone to see at a glance all the data that is coming in and aggregate and quantify the information in way that would otherwise take hours. For a large event you need this kind of quick, real-time information.

For smaller events with less data and limited budget, the good news is that most of the information you need is available using off-the-shelf and inexpensive software. However, you may need to use more than one tool to get all the information you need. Facebook and Twitter platforms provide inbuilt analysis tools while others may require the use of external services. Look for the tools that are going to provide you with the most reliable information.

The point is to match your software to the scale of your event, the type of data you are collecting

and the social media platforms you want to track.

## PR AND REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Social media opens up many new opportunities for your public relations. However, this is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, social media allows your brand message to reach more people more easily than ever before and to respond in real-time to audience feedback. The downside is that with social media you have far less control about what is being said about you and by whom which means that bad press can amplify and spread virally. Your listening center is critical for managing your PR and reputation.

Social media will impact your brand and your event whether you like it or not so you might as well embrace the opportunity. Besides, the benefits of using social media to get your message out to a broad audience are just too good to ignore. Social media broadens the scope and reach of your brand allowing you to touch many different people relatively cheaply and easily.

Once your message hits the social media channels it will start to spread around the internet through blogs, links back to your content, search engines and news aggregators. This accelerates your impact and provides highly valuable and cost-effective PR.

As your message gets out it will start to generate feedback. People will be talking about your event. This is an opportunity to engage a wider audience but you can only do this effectively if you are monitoring the conversation and have a response strategy.

Social media is clearly a great vehicle for PR, but what do you do if you are faced with bad press? While disparaging commentary has always been

an issue, the potential for negative whispers to snowball into media catastrophe are much greater with social media.

A proactive approach to PR and reputation management requires you to use your listening center to monitor negative or inaccurate comments about your event or brand. The sooner you respond to attacks or complaints the better. However, don't just go charging in, get as many facts as you can about the issue before you respond.

To discover what people are saying you can use online tools that will show you the words that are currently being used in connection with your event (search for "social media word clouds" to find a variety of tools that do this).

Good reputation management requires a timely, fact-based and professional response that is in alignment with your brand. Use the same social media channels as the complaint or issue originated from. In your response it is best not to be either defensive or aggressive and don't take the issue personally. Stick to the facts and be gracious with people.

Whatever your response, make sure you are telling the truth. Don't try to cover up a mistake, people will see right through it and the issue will only get worse. Your audience will actually respect you more for your honesty.

## LISTENING CENTER RESPONSE STRATEGY

Gathering information is the easy part. What matters is what you do with that information. This is where social information can transform into social intelligence.

Earlier we looked at how to choose your social

media team and identified both strategic and tactical roles. We saw that you need to have a team leader who is primarily concerned with whether your social media is fulfilling on your business and event objectives.

The team leader will be closely monitoring your listening center to assess whether your social media tactics are fulfilling your strategic objectives. They need to be able to add fuel to the tactics that are working and know when to pull the plug on what is not working.

At the tactical level you need a thorough plan and well trained social media team who are able to take appropriate actions on the fly as your social media data streams in. Imagine it is the first day of your event and there are hundreds of new particles of content streaming through every hour. You are going to need to figure out in advance how to handle this flow of information.

Establish a triage process for responding to incoming information. You may have a different person (or people) who are managing the task of sorting through the incoming information and delegating it out to responders. Response teams are likely to be organized by their accountability, for example, customer service, engagement, local interest, programming questions. See our earlier chapter on 'Choosing your Social Media Team: Social Media Onsite' for more on how to manage your team and processes at your event.

It would be hard to overstate the importance of your listening center. It brings your whole team together and creates a feedback loop between your strategy and tactics. A well designed listening center will become the hub for your social media and will differentiate your communications as dynamic and responsive.

Your listening center is also the source for many

of the metrics; the measurements you will be using to assess the effectiveness of your campaign, which we will get into our next chapter on Social Media Measurement and ROI.

## SOCIAL MEDIA MEASUREMENT AND ROI

by Cathy Key

A good social media plan is an investment in your event, it takes time, money and constant attention from your social media team. While it is easy to get lost in the details, it is important to have systems in place that allow you to step back and look at the bigger picture. How does your social media program impact your event's marketing, operations, PR, customer service, stakeholders and management?

If you run an event planning agency or host several events a year, you may also consider how social media is influencing your business at large. These are very important questions with potentially disruptive answers if not taken care of.

30% of our respondents suggested that tying social media to their wider business and event objectives is the biggest social challenge they are facing when using social media. While you may have the sense that an active and engaged Facebook Page is a good outcome, how do you measure the actual results and evaluate the effectiveness of your social media in relation to business and event objectives?

There are two main challenges that many event professionals face:

- **There is no system in place**
- **The wrong metrics are being tracked**

### NO MEASUREMENT IN PLACE

One of the most surprising results of our survey was that almost 55% of our respondents do not measure social media. It quite shocked us. There is an old saying in marketing that if you can't measure it, it doesn't exist. And this is particularly true when it gets to social media.

By not measuring your effort you are degrading one of the strongest tools to promote, sell and improve your event to a box to tick on your event planning checklist. Effectively you are putting choosing a center-piece for your guests' tables on the same level as running a Twitter account.

While your gut feeling may tell you that you are doing well and that attendees love your social engagement, your boss is not going to appreciate your enthusiasm. Your boss, client or committee need to see numbers, otherwise they have no way of knowing if you are being effective and whether your social media campaign is actually improving the bottom line.

You and your team also depend on measurement to improve your effectiveness. In social media as with everything, whatever you measure improves. As soon as you start measuring you get your hands on the levers and dials of what works and what doesn't.

Recognizing the need of having a measurement system in place is the first step to making sense of social media and reconciling it with your wider business.

### YOU MEASURE THE WRONG METRICS

There are lots of things that you could be measuring to track your social media success. A common mistake is to only keep track of what we call

intrinsic analytics, e.g. Facebook likes, retweets, Instagram likes and so forth. We call these intrinsic analytics because they are metrics that only make sense within the social context.

Your boss, client or CFO may have no idea what a retweet or Facebook like is, let alone its relevance to the business objectives! For them social media is mysterious. You need social media metrics that link to your overall event objectives, using a language and measurement system that everyone can understand.

The focus needs to be on linking your social media with metrics that indicate the value to the business. What we call extrinsic analytics, for example:

- **Ticket sales**
- **Attendance rates**
- **Qualified leads**
- **Website conversion rates**
- **Return on investment**
- **Customer satisfaction rates**

Reconciling these items to social media metrics is the strongest favour you can do to your business. It gives you an infallible weapon to be confident about your social media program.

## CREATING A MEASUREMENT STRATEGY

Key performance indicators (KPI) are measurements that indicate the effectiveness of your social media campaign. What you choose as your KPI will depend on what your goals are. There is a vast amount of measurable information, so you want to focus on the things that are actually

relevant to your goals, for example:

- **Increase registrations**
- **Generate brand awareness**
- **Improve engagement at the event**
- **Increase engagement with the exhibitors**
- **More efficient customer service**

If the point of your social media strategy is to generate brand awareness then one of the things you will need to measure is how many people actually saw your posts. If you are measuring customer service, then you could measure how many enquiries you handled and how quickly or how much money was saved handling customer queries online versus offline.

One of the most popular uses of social media is for sales and marketing: 86% of our survey respondents said they used social media for marketing. We will use sales and marketing as our main example for most of the rest of this section on measurement and ROI as it has the most relevance.

In the event world, what sales and marketing boils down to is ticket sales. You may have an objective for your social media to increase ticket sales and ideally you will have an actual target in mind. For example, you may have a goal such as “Sell 500 early bird tickets.” In this case your key performance indicators will be along the lines of:

- **Number of early bird tickets sold**
- **Number of click-throughs to the website**
- **Number of click-throughs to the registration page**

- **Number of positive mentions of the event before the early bird deadline**
- **Number of discount coupons redeemed**

Clearly the number of early bird tickets sold measures the overall effectiveness of the social media campaign. The other metrics provide valuable information as to whether the social media is capturing people's attention and bringing them to the website and ultimately the registration page.

Notice that most of the sales action happens on the website (not social media). This means that you need to have really good website analytics and the ability to track conversions on your website. You need to know who is coming to the website, how they are finding it, how many get to the registration page and how many complete the registration. Make sure you set your website analytics to track goals and conversions so you can keep close tabs on all this information.

The various members of your team will have a different relationship to the goal "Sell 500 early bird tickets" and will have a different view of the key performance indicators.

Your boss or client wants to know:

- **Did we meet our target?**
- **How much did it cost to do that?**
- **Did we achieve a positive return on investment?**

For this category of people they really don't care about your social media stats, or how many people saw your Twitter feed. They want to know the impact on the bottom line. We'll get into this further in our section on ROI.

Your marketing team needs to know:

- **Was our social media program effective?**
- **What parts of the campaign worked?**
- **Where do we need to make adjustments?**
- **How did social media fit in with our overall marketing strategy?**

The marketing team is interested in both ticket sales and the story behind the ticket sales. Most importantly: how did we get the result we got?

The marketing team understands that social media is just one string in their bow. They need to figure out which of their marketing efforts had the biggest impact on sales and how social media fits into the broader picture. They need to know about website traffic, click-throughs and conversion rates. We are going to dig into this a little deeper in our next section.

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE SALES FUNNEL

We can get so excited about the opportunity of social media that we forget that it is one part of a larger sales and marketing strategy that includes your website, pay per click advertising, offline advertising, direct marketing, phone calls, e-mail marketing, newspapers, television and more. People may hear about your event from a dozen different places before they register.

It will help your measurement and ROI tracking greatly if you stop thinking of social media in a vacuum and start tracking it in the same way you track the rest of your marketing efforts.

Social media impacts all levels of the sales funnel playing a vital role in:

- **creating new leads**
- **maintaining interest**
- **closing the sale**
- **engaging and selling to existing customers**

Social media is very effective at grabbing attention, getting new leads and filling the funnel. It is also great for keeping people in the funnel by constantly engaging and keeping your event in people's minds. As long as you keep putting out valuable content then people will keep connecting to your event.

Social media is also excellent for selling to your already existing audience, for example last year's attendees, as it provides a softly-softly approach to continuous customer engagement.

At some point there is a "trigger" event that pushes someone off the fence from thinking about registering to registering. That trigger may be on social media, but it's just as likely to come from somewhere else (e.g. an email or phone call). In fact, many marketers have found that while social media is good for lead generation, email marketing is far more effective at converting that lead into a sale.

This can make it tricky to measure the real impact of your social media for bringing in revenue. How do you make sure your social media gets recognized for its role in filling the funnel when a customer may ultimately register from an email?

Given that social media is part of a bigger marketing picture, you need to measure it all. The business value of all your social media efforts actually happens on the website when people register, so good website analytics are critical.

A secondary signal of a positive action is when

they sign up for an email list that ultimately leads to a registration. This means you need a Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) that can track and measure every customer interaction.

One way to closely track the source of your website visitors is to use custom URLs. If you use different URLs for every social media push, you will be able to track exactly where your website traffic is coming from. Google provides website analytics tools and custom URL builders that are free to use.

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Let's talk about the really hot issue: return on investment (ROI). When it comes right down to it, this is the metric that most people (and for sure your boss or client) really care about. Fundamentally we want to know whether all that time spent tweeting, commenting and posting was really worth it.

It is important to note that return on investment refers solely to the impact on the bottom line. In other words financial outcomes. Did your social media campaign reduce your costs, improve revenue, or both?

You may have other goals for your social media (e.g. increasing brand awareness or reducing customer complaints) and those are totally valid and have their own metrics. But when we get to ROI we are talking strictly about financial impact.

A positive ROI involves either saving money or increasing revenue. For example, reduction in customer service costs, an increase in ticket sales or an increase in sponsorship are financial outcomes that positively impact ROI.

Social media ROI must be measured in the same way that we measure ROI in all other areas of our event: in currency. If it doesn't have a dollar value, it is not a measurement of ROI. To re-iterate, the numbers of tweets, fans, favorites, retweets or Instagram uploads are not ROI metrics. Neither is website traffic, conversion rates or the number of people who sign up for a mailing list. This information is valuable to the marketing team, but it doesn't tell you anything about return on investment.

The following are relevant to ROI:

- Sales revenue
- Social media costs
- Cost per impression
- Cost per mention
- Cost per lead
- Cost per acquisition

How you measure your ROI will change depending on your objectives. If your objective is brand awareness you would measure 'cost per impression' and 'cost per mention'. If your objective is customer service then you would measure the cost per customer service enquiry.

Notice that none of these metrics are special to social media. They are numbers that anyone in business is able to understand and can easily be compared to other components of your business strategy.

Most of your costs are fairly easy to measure. It is simple to measure how much you are spending on your social media marketing by looking at agency fees or staff time. You can then use this along with your social media metrics to figure out

the cost per impression, mention and lead.

With social media, gains can be harder to measure accurately than costs, especially in the domain of marketing. While you can make the case that the 500 new ticket sales you made had something to do with the 3,000 new followers you got on Twitter it's hard to actually prove the actual revenue generated came from social media.

“

***What you can do is look for correlations between your social media outreach and your key performance indicators and then investigate those correlations more closely to prove or disprove relationships”.***

It is important to be monitoring your numbers constantly so that you can create a map of your event marketing activities and see where correlations are happening. This needs to start early in your event life-cycle so you can establish a baseline to compare all your measurements to.

You need to be monitoring all your marketing efforts, not just social media, and plotting them out on a timeline so you can see which marketing actions are connected to peaks in website activity and ticket sales. To prove that social media is at the source of these peaks you need to track conversions closely.

One way of tracking your conversions is by using custom URLs in each marketing campaign and using a customer relationship management system to monitor each step in the sales journey.

You can also set up Google Analytics to do more than simply report on the volume of website traffic. Google Analytics allows you to set up goals which provide you feedback on how many of your website visitors make it to your target page (e.g.

the registration page). It also provides Assisted Conversions reports which tells you not just the source of your conversions but all the different touchpoints that a customer interacted with before purchasing, including social.

This makes it much easier to determine the piece of content that originally caught the person's interest and it's role in the attendee's journey to registration.

Being held accountable can be scary prospect. While you might have a gut feeling that social media is a good thing because it causes so much conversation and connection, when it comes right down to it we can't be certain that those warm and fuzzy feelings are converting to savings and revenue.

The numbers tell the truth about whether your social media is working or not.

If this is your first time measuring then a negative ROI is actually predictable because you have never before taken the time to really look at the data and optimize. You will be spending time and money on things that aren't working and that haven't been fine tuned yet. This is why measurement is important, because only once you start measuring can you improve.

**PART III**

**TACTICS**

# PART III: TACTICS

Social media provides an extraordinary opportunity to impact your audience at all stages of the event life-cycle. In the best case your social media will be active year round, with this year's social media wins creating the conversation and audience for next year's event.

Here we look at how you can use social media effectively at all stages of the cycle including:

- **Before your event** (*research, marketing and customer service*)
- **During your event** (*engagement, customer service and crisis management*)
- **After the event** (*marketing, engagement and feedback*)

## BEFORE YOUR EVENT

by Julius Solaris and Cathy Key

### 1) Social Media for Engagement

One of the biggest introductions social media brought to the way we experience events is the concept of continuous communities, which we touched on at the beginning of this book.

The strongest tactic you can implement is to

allow these communities to gather before the event starts. Engaging with the hashtag on the major social networks is the first step. That will help to take advantage of existing relationships and connections. The power of the hashtag is to bring people together.

You can then take the process a step further and foster networking by creating standalone platforms where your audience can:

- connect with fellow attendees
- discuss topics
- schedule meetings at the event
- check long bios for other attendees
- see other social networking handles
- get recommendations of who they should meet

There is a plethora of tools to achieve all of the above, including event mobile apps, surely the most resonating with modern audiences. The imperative is to make sure existing social networking profiles can be used to log in in ad-hoc platforms. What you want to avoid is getting attendees to create a new profile which is decontextualized from their social networking activities.



# Apps Built for Engagement

Get a private social network for your next event



Photos &  
Messages



Attendee  
Profiles



Event  
Guide



Social Ads &  
Monetization

Get Started >



Join hundreds of organizations using Attendify to boost attendee participation



AstraZeneca 

Bloomberg

Google

PHILIPS

 1-866-944-8678

 info@attendify.com

 www.attendify.com

Standalone communities generate a feeling of exclusivity and privacy which can be important to some attendees. While in fact the most extroverted attendees will use Twitter or Instagram, the more introverted will either selectively share on Facebook and Google+ or prefer a private one-to-one communication.

The type of event you work with will also define the choice in this sense with large, entertainment led environments being more open and educational, networking and business oriented events requiring level of privacy together with overt forms of interaction.

## 2) Social Media for Research

Social media gives you the ability to access and listen to what people are talking about and are interested in. Given just how much social media is happening, over 99% of it is pure noise. The trick is for you to zoom in and listen to the 1% of conversations that are relevant to you.

There are highly sophisticated tools available that allow you to spotlight just those parts of the conversation that are useful. You can use these tools to filter out all the conversations that are happening about your subject area and answer these questions:

- **Who is talking about your event topic?**
- **What are they talking about?**
- **Who are the social media leaders that everyone listens to?**
- **What hashtags are being used?**

Using this research you can then:

- **Target your event to this specific audience**

- **Pick the topics you want to focus on for your event**
- **Invite influential people to speak and participate**
- **Focus your social media strategy**

If you already have an established audience and a deep history on social media, then this type of research might not be important to you. However, if your event is relatively new or you are looking to reach out to new audiences or if you are new to social media then spending time tapping into the conversation will be highly valuable.

You can also use social media for more active research to find out what your audience wants and will be willing to pay for. This is particularly effective if you already have an established audience or you know which online groups to tap into.

You can use questions and surveys to find out what people are interested in and what they want. Post your survey to the appropriate LinkedIn or Facebook group and tweet it out to your followers.

Ask your social media audience to suggest and vote on speakers, topics - even the venue. Not only does this put your finger on the pulse of what people really want, but it gets your audience engaged with you and your event.

Another great way of doing research and engaging your community is to start a discussion on a topic you are considering featuring at the conference. The number of comments you get is great litmus test of the real interest in this topic.

The research component becomes crucial when selecting performers for your event. Social media will give you substantial content to understand

the fit with your audience. Performers are increasingly more active on social networks for the same reasons you are reading this book. This will give you an indication of how they collaborate with the event. Do they support it? Do they help promote it? Do they encourage interaction? Do they share post event materials?

### 3) Social Media for Marketing

Marketing on social media is a dish best served with subtlety. Nobody wants your event taking up their valuable bandwidth unless they are getting something back. The key word here is service. As long as you share content that provides value to your audience people will engage. If you talk about yourself all the time or just sell your event then they will tune you out.

People will likely be coming to your event for one of these reasons: (1) To learn and expand their knowledge; (2) To establish their own expertise in an area; (3) To network and connect. Your job is to make sure your social media hits these hot buttons.

The following types of content are most likely to provide value for your audience:

- **Content about the performers, speakers and exhibitors**
- **Conversations on hot or controversial topics**
- **Opportunities to engage in discussions**
- **Information about the venue or location**
- **Contests, special offers and perks**

### HIGHLIGHT YOUR PERFORMERS AND EXHIBITORS

Your performers are your most valuable resource as they hit all the hot buttons at once. People want to learn from and connect with your subject matter experts. Ways to highlight your performers are:

- **Post videos or share teasers of their presentation online.**
- **Feature blog posts by performers or exhibitors on your website and then push them out through your social media channels. You can ask your performer to write a guest post highlighting the topic they will be presenting on. If they don't have time to do that they may let you republish content from their website.**
- **Create a repository of blog posts from your speakers by hooking into their RSS feeds.**
- **Create a photo-album or board on Facebook, Instagram or Pinterest of the vendors, or a line-up of your speakers.**
- **Share and like the social media content posted by your performers, speakers, exhibitors, venues, sponsors and vendors on an ongoing basis.**
- **Create social media conversations and invite your performers to jump in.**
- **Use the list function in Twitter to create lists of your performers and exhibitors and then promote your lists. This will entice people to follow your list.**
- **Interview speakers and exhibitors and create short video posts.**

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE VENUE OR LOCATION

While the venue or location for most people will not be the primary reason for attending an event, it certainly doesn't hurt to highlight your location, especially if it has some unique or attractive qualities.

You can post pictures of your location on your Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter.

## SPECIAL OFFERS, CONTEST AND GIVEAWAYS

Most events have incentives built into their ticketing structure, such as early bird rates and discount coupons. Before your event, your social media efforts should crescendo around your registration deadlines. Use your social media to make a big deal out of your early bird discount, as well as any other special rates you might have.

You can provide discount codes to your performers and ask them to share them with their audience. This gives a special acknowledgement to the performer and allows them to reward their fans and followers.

There are some software tools available that allow you to offer perks and discounts as rewards for sharing. For example, you might offer a discounted registration fee for someone who tweets about you 5 times, or likes your Facebook page.

Social media contests, games and giveaways are another way of creating buzz about your event. The more interactive the contest is, the better. For example, asking people to submit a 2 minute video or a photo on a particular topic creates more engagement with your event than a request to like your Facebook page. As people engage

they become invested in your success and when that happens they are more likely to register.

Competitions are a great way to engage on social. But you need to be careful. You should run away from the 'let's do a competition' approach, if there is no clear plan in place.

We all remember the 'send us a picture' era, when virtually every brand wanted you to send them a picture while doing the most absurd things. It's ok as long as your audience uses pictures as means of communication and if the competition rewards them in a meaningful way. It is not okay if nobody cares about sending pictures to you. It's very bad when nobody answers to the call.

A simple but effective prize is a ticket to your event. This is a valuable reward and creates desire in everyone who enters the contest.

## YOUR WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

It is important to keep in mind that the whole point of your social media marketing is to have more people register for your event. The only way that people are going to register is if they end up on your website and follow the links to registration.

For this reason it is vital that your social media efforts point people back to your website and that your website has a conversion system in place. This may seem like basic common sense, but sometimes we get so excited about Facebook likes and followers that we forget that if they are not coming back to the website then no sales are actually happening.

If your website is rich with content, then your social media can play on this by directing people

to different parts of the site, for example:

- **The registration page**
- **Performer biographies**
- **Blog posts**
- **Venue information**

You want to post new content to your website often and then use your social media channels to point to the website.

For example, you could create a short video trailer with highlights from last year's event. Obviously Youtube is a great place to post this video. However, you could also create a blog entry on your website that features the video and use your social media channels to point to that blog entry. That way you are directing your audience to your website and keeping your event as the main focus.

Think of your website as your home base. The only place where you have full control over the content. Putting all your eggs on Facebook, Twitter or other external social networks exposes you to the risk of giving away the control of your content to someone else. If they decide to change the layout or their terms, your social media wealth has suddenly gone.

## MARKETING AND ENGAGEMENT

The more you take an interest in your community of attendees, performers, exhibitors and sponsors the more they will reciprocate. These are some engagement basics that will transform your social media from a broadcast platform to a dynamic conversation.

- **Monitor your channels regularly and make sure you engage with everyone who takes the time to comment, retweet, favourite or share your content. If anyone takes the time to write a blog post about your event then make a big deal of sharing it.**
- **Add social media sharing buttons to your website to make it easy for people share your content.**
- **Add your social media channels and hashtag to your website to make it easy for people to follow you and talk about you.**
- **Ask everyone for their twitter handle. Follow them. Follow your attendees when they register.**

## EVENT PAGES AND GROUPS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Creating an event page or group on your social media sites is a great way to rapidly expand your audience.

If you are selling tickets for your event from your website, then creating a Facebook event page may seem like doubling up your work and effort. While it's true that a Facebook event page does add extra administration for you, the fact is that if your audience is already on Facebook then it can be incredibly effective in getting the word out.

Once you have a Facebook event page set up then all your speakers and exhibitors can easily jump on board and within minutes invite their entire network. If every one of your speakers invites their entire network, you have exponentially increased your outreach. Plus, there is nothing quite like the buzz of seeing dozens of people jump on board your event and saying they are going.

Facebook is not for everyone, but is an incredible resource if your community are already using it. For more business-related conferences and shows LinkedIn may be the more appropriate platform - however the same principle applies. You can also achieve the same on Google+. You want to use the tools that your audience is already using so that it is easy for them to promote your event.

Group pages have benefits beyond event invitations. You can use groups for announcements, to start discussions, answer questions and stimulate networking.

## 4) Social Media for Customer Service

Social media provides a fast and easy way to connect with your customers, answer questions and respond to feedback. Of course, social is a very public arena so you need to make sure that your customer support team is on its toes and ready to respond quickly to requests, feedback and complaints.

You can train your audience to use social media to post questions and look out for updates. For example, if your website, online registration, event app or any other technology stop working then you need a way of letting people know right away and social media is great for this as it is completely separate from your other technology systems.

You can also use social media to answer questions about registration, the program, what to bring etc. It's likely that other people will have the same questions.

## CASE STUDY

### A PRE-EVENT SOCIAL PLAN: OCOEE FOUNDERS' DAY FESTIVAL



#### NAME COMPANY/EVENT

21st Annual Ocoee Founders' Day Festival

#### AGENCY

Michelle Bergstein, Event Industry Marketing by  
Beatcreative - <http://beatcreativemarketing.com>

*Note:* This case study only focuses on pre-event tactics. At the time of writing, the event has not taken place.

#### A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The 21st Annual Founders' Day Festival for the City of Ocoee, a small town in West Orlando, Florida wanted to integrate new event technology and social media into their festival to build more awareness and increase buzz around the festival, as well as it's headlining country singer performers Kellie Pickler and Chris Young.

#### OBJECTIVES

The initial objective was to increase the visibility of the festival and conduct more ongoing outreach on social media, primarily on their Facebook page. In addition the organizers wanted to grow their other social networks including Instagram and Twitter. They wanted to incorpo-

rate new event technology and drive it through social media to give sponsors more of a return on investment while delivering a more streamlined experience for the attendees so they were better informed. The excitement further built in efforts to gain more intelligent data and insights from their attendees. The city had no previous database of their attendees or any feedback.

#### THE AUDIENCE

The audience was made of a mixed group, making up of an older demographic of middle class males and females ranging from 35-55. The event organizers did recognize a growing demographic of 18-30 year olds attending the event in the past few years so they wanted to engage this audience and believed social media would be the best platform to reach them.

#### THE UNFOLDING OF THE PROJECT

The unfolding of the project was quite interesting. In consideration of the event being 21-years-old, there is a lot of grassroots methodology behind it.

The focus was on finding new avenues of sponsorship via new technology including a main sponsor for the event app. This included selling push notifications at very affordable prices with the end game of their message being pushed to every single attendee that downloads the app, which has a possibility of up to 10,000+ people.

## BEFORE THE EVENT

*From the very beginning, there were highly detailed social media calendars each month with very methodical content topics which included trivia, fun facts about the performers, interesting facts about the city itself, and tons of call to actions on how users can engage with the event on social media. Additionally, they created lots of visual content, an event hashtag and worked closely with their social media management tool, scheduling various posts that were used in their daily social media efforts. There was time allocated daily to immediately respond to all social media inquiries and questions and engaging on the social networks by retweeting the artists and various people and businesses that were involved and mentioned the event.*

*A lot of preplanning was dedicated to creating various on-site event signage to promote the hashtag and encourage attendees to take photos. The signage also encouraged people to download the app with QR codes for iPhone and Android devices.*

*A full on-site social media team will be present to take photos throughout the event and immediately upload them through the social media dashboard and platform to the social media wall.*

*An experienced videographer and photographer will be onsite to capture each day of the event, as well as new technology footage by a camera drone to get overhead shots and capture the entire capacity of the event. This will also fuel excitement and help with future marketing efforts to successfully sell the event to gain even more sponsorship dollars and exhibitors through event technology data and analytics.*

## MAJOR OBSTACLES

Major obstacles included communication when dealing with the city government, which was overcome by daily communication. Having a previous relationship and working on other city related projects helped the communication throughout the project. Additional challenges included integrating the social media live at the event as well as simulcasting live coverage to the VIP event center area. It was a challenge to find affordable solutions to display social media walls adjacent to the main stage.

Educating sponsors on the marketing value of new technology was also challenging as some businesses were wary of new technology being

introduced with the results initially unproven which made it harder to sell. However in addition to social media efforts and all the buzz that was built around the festival, the event organizers are witnessing the value in social media efforts.

## THE RESULTS

The event collected about \$10,000 worth of sponsorships with their new media technology. Facebook was the primary social vehicle, with over 1,000 likes in a three-month period of actively updating the social network and creating engaging and highly visual posts. This was done successfully organically with no Facebook paid advertising.

# DURING THE EVENT

by Cathy Key

## 1) Social Media for Engagement

The moment your event begins your social media swings into a whole new gear. Now you have a captive audience who are at your event, ready to engage and get related. Social media for engagement touches on a number of key areas:

### 1. NETWORKING AND CONNECTION

Social media is the ultimate ice-breaker. Many of your attendees will already have long established relationships on social media but have never met in person. Other people will use social media as a gentle knock on the door to see if someone is interested in connecting.

### 2. MARKETING TO THE WORLD

Social media allows you to broadcast your event to the world live, as it happens. A social-savvy audience will naturally find themselves talking online and creating a buzz about your event. There is no better way to market next year's event than to broadcast social media out to the people who didn't make it this year.

### 3. ATTENDEE SATISFACTION

The more engaged your attendees are with your event, the more they talk about it and the more they ultimately get out of the experience. You can use social media for gamification, Q&A's and a way of polling the audience on hot topics.

### 4. VALUE FOR SPONSORS AND EXHIBITORS

Social media is also a great way of connecting your attendees to the sponsors and exhibitors.

## SOCIAL MEDIA WALLS, DISPLAYS AND THE ROLE OF THE EVENT APP

Imagine you have engaged your event community and they are starting to tweet, post, retweet, comment, upload pictures and generally make a noise about your event. Now, you want to make sure that you are feeding all this excitement back into your event by creating a visual display of all the social media activity.

To do this you are going to need two things:

**1. A hub that brings together all the social media threads about your event no matter what platform they were created on. This will be a software service designed to pull all this information together.**

**2. A display system to push out all this information to your event community.**

Social displays provide a large-scale display of what's hot, who's talking and what they are talking about. Seeing their name in lights will motivate your attendees to talk more on social media and brings the social media buzz to the meeting floor.

Your social media display can be projected onto the big screen before and between sessions. This can encourage people to get active on their social media accounts during the downtime while they wait for the session to begin. Another popular spot to create a display wall is the lobby or registration area.

Some events create a social lounge, an area that not only shows the current social media activity but creates an inviting environment for sitting down, savouring a cup of coffee and having a quick social media check-in. It is a good idea to have someone moderating the conversation and what updates get published. This will avoid trolling, out of touch posts while keeping the conversation relevant.

# Engage your attendees with a realtime, fully customizable Tweetwall.

Use promo code **smevents** to save  
**10%** on your first Tweetwall.

[Learn more about Tweetwall](#)

## We make it simple to beautifully display your #hashtag at your event.

Monitor Twitter, Facebook and Instagram for any hashtag, keyword or phrase and display what the world is saying at your event. Use our online builder to create and display your own Tweetwall in minutes or have us create a custom Tweetwall for your event.

We're trusted by some of the world's greatest companies. Find out why at [Tweetwall.com](https://www.tweetwall.com).

LinkedIn

hulu

ORACLE®

DocuSign

SendGrid

 Tweetwall

Event apps are another direct access to the online conversation. Many event apps provide social media portals that provide a window into all of the social media activity that is happening at any given time.

If you don't provide these kinds of social media windows then many of the event attendees will be oblivious to all that juicy conversation that is happening online. By broadcasting the conversation you will recruit new social media champions and expand your reach.

## EXHIBITOR ENGAGEMENT

Social media can be used as a catalyst for engagement with your exhibitors. It's a great cure for a dead trade show floor, addressing dull or quiet times.

- Use social media to create contests or treasure hunts where attendees look for clues hidden at exhibitor booths or need to visit a certain number of booths to win.
- Post messages that highlight the exhibitors, demonstrations and special offers.
- Interview exhibitors and post short videos online.
- Encourage exhibitors to make social media posts using an incentive to entice attendees to their booth.
- Ask exhibitors to upload photos of their booths.

## LET'S GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

Inside of any community of people there will

be a few social media super heroes. These are the people for whom social media is a second language. These super heroes have likely been tweeting about your event already and you want to leverage their energy and passion early on in the game.

Organize a tweet-up early in your event so that your attendees get to meet the community of people they have been tweeting with for months before.

Let's recap some of the ways you can make it really easy for your attendees to share while they are at your event:

1. Put your event hashtag everywhere: on the welcome slides of presentations, on your signage, handouts, brochures and your mobile app.
2. Create hashtags for sub-topics in your event.
3. Ask speakers to add their Twitter handle and other social media links to their slides, and include their social media links on your website, brochure and mobile app.
4. Create a social media wall, using monitors or video boards, to create a vivid display of all the social media mentions. This way your social media champions literally get to see their name in lights.
5. Interview your attendees and post their videos online right away.
6. Gamify your social media by setting challenges and rewards. For example, the first person to tweet, the first person to be retweeted, the person with the most retweets on a given day. Mostly your social media super-heroes want to be recognized, so make a big display or leader-board showing who has the most outreach. You can

offer a special prize to the person who does the most tweets, for example a personal coaching session with a keynote speaker.

**7.** Make sure your social media team is constantly engaging with your attendees. If someone takes the time to post a comment, you should be ready to comment back or like their comment right away.

**8.** Provide recaps of the keynote sessions, images and video content to your attendees and encourage your social media champions to live blog using this content.

## CASE STUDY

### MAKING YOUR EVENT VISIBLE: IMEXLIVE



#### NAME COMPANY/EVENT

IMEX 2014 - <http://www.imexamerica.com/im-exlive>

#### AGENCY

Miguel Neves - Senior Online Community Manager

#### A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

IMEXlive is a social hub for social media, video and content from the show with the mission of giving the audience who could not be present at IMEX a feel of the buzz and create the fear of missing out.

#### OBJECTIVES

The concept of IMEXlive came about as a way to connect the industry community of #eventprofs online with the attendees of IMEX. The goal was to enhance show participation via social media and online content. The event wanted to give anyone in the industry that is not familiar with IMEX a real glimpse of what the show is about. The “buzz” of the show floor is very hard to capture with photos or text, so the social media team felt this was a great way to have attendees helping them to capture what IMEX is all about

through social media. Finally they wanted to make those who are familiar with the show but who could not attend for any reason a strong reminder of why they should make sure IMEX is part of their future plans.

#### THE AUDIENCE

A range of reasonably tech savvy meetings, events and incentive travel professionals. Those who are active on social media can benefit the most from active participation, but the platform works well as a static viewing station.

#### THE UNFOLDING OF THE PROJECT

IMEX social media team started developing IMEXlive for IMEX 2013 and initially created a custom platform with their partners How-Can-I-Be-Social. At the time there were not many options for social hubs for social media in the market and with the same objectives in mind they had a good idea of what they wanted. The event focussed on keeping the experience simple and similar to things like Facebook that most people are familiar with. Focus was also on making it inclusive for all so that those who are not on any social networks could still access. Video played a big part in the initial version to give a home to the various pieces of content being produced at the show.

The results were good and version 2.0 was changed for IMEX America 2013. This was a vastly redeveloped version with many Facebook like features and filters for content. This was more timeline focussed and getting closer to a Facebook news feed. Again this was a success, but the choice was made to return to a simpler interface and focus on video content as well as the user generated content from Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

The current edition is the 3.0 version and takes the features that worked best previously and creates a simple experience. They have since moved

away from a custom platform with some coding on the page done by the IMEX team. This enabled greater freedom behind the scenes as this platform was built from the ground up for this type of event.

IMEXlive is an excellent opportunity to make the most of IMEX. The event has so many social media savvy people on the show floor that help tell the story of the show and show their point of view. At every second the event is learning new things from attendees and IMEXlive enables this

to be shared. This type of platform has now developed from when the process started and many other events have developed their own versions of IMEXlive.

IMEXlive requires a team of three people managing the social networks and then selecting content for IMEXlive. This was together with the @IMEXSocialTeam, a team of four people who walked the show floor and interacted with exhibitors and attendees producing live visual content on Twitter and Facebook.

### BEFORE THE EVENT

*Designing the platform and creating a content strategy for the show gave a focal point. In the weeks prior to the show IMEXlive was announced and plans were put in place to showcase it during the show. A lot of work was put into creating a plan to capture content and engage throughout a busy three day show.*

### DURING THE EVENT

*The main objective during the show was monitoring, engaging and showcasing IMEX via IMEXlive. There were systems in place to capture the buzz but also highlight what attendees were saying in order to give the online audience a good idea of what IMEX is and what they were missing.*

### AFTER THE EVENT

*IMEXlive was used as a content hub after the show and linked to via regular social media channels. The “buzz” had been captured so after the event it was a great point of reference for the team and many of the media and bloggers who covered IMEX.*

### MAJOR OBSTACLES

Co-ordinating the different components of the project was certainly a challenge, but one that all team members enjoyed and succeeded at. During the show they realised that the audience was mainly online and away from the show, more than what had been anticipated. This meant that they shifted their curation and calls to action to tell the story of the show rather than interact with attendees.

### THE RESULTS

1,300 online viewers across three days, excellent media coverage and an online outlet for the amazing knowledge and people who make IMEX possible. The social media participation and video viewing levels were also at an all-time high which can be correlated to IMEXlive.

### VISUAL CONTENT

They say a picture speaks a thousand words, and the images from your event pack a big punch.

Before, during and after your event your visual content can be used both for marketing and engaging your audience.

**Video content:** Post video content from your sessions during and after the event. Post your video content in multi-places (YouTube, Twitter and your website) for maximum impact. If you have the video editing resources, you can post a video round-up each day of highlights and interviews. Note that engagement and promo videos are best kept to under 3 minutes each while longer videos can be used to republish session content.

**Images:** Post pictures and organize them into albums (e.g. opening night, the trade show floor, networking). Facebook, Instagram, Flickr and Pinterest all offer highly social ways of playing with your images.

**Attendees images:** With a couple of taps on your cell phone, most people are able to quickly and easily snap a picture and have it up on the internet within minutes. Encourage attendees to take pictures and upload them to your pages. You could even award a prize, for example for the best selfie of the night.

**Livestreaming:** This is a great way of engaging in a wider audience. Using social media you can pull people into the livestream and then use social media chats to provide networking for the remote participants.

**Slide presentations:** Use a slide-sharing service to distribute presentations. Some of these provide a social component where people can comment on or like presentations. These slideshows are also really easy to embed on your blog or website.

**Create a Magazine:** Use archiving services like

Storify or Paper.li to aggregate all of the days content into one easy to read magazine. This is a very quick and easy way of repurposing all of the content and social media that is being broadcast.

## 2) During the Event: Customer Service

Monitor your social media channels continuously during the event. You need to be right on it when an attendee needs something (“e.g. I can’t download the mobile app, I’ve lost my notepad, What time does X session start?”).

If a customer service issue escalates into a complaint, then you need to deal with that swiftly and take the conversation offline as soon as possible (see crisis management below).

Use your social media channels to post agenda changes, room changes, the time people are due back from breaks, important messages for attendees, transportation schedules and so forth.

## 3) During the Event: Crisis Management

Even the most organized events have to deal with unexpected problems. Your keynote speaker is stuck in a snowstorm and won’t arrive in time; Your highly promoted mobile app just tanked; Your speaker would not shut up and went 30 minutes overtime into the lunch break. You forgot to order a vegetarian option for your sit-down dinner.

Mistakes happen and now with social media those mistakes are more visible than ever before. It only takes one unhappy attendee to start ranting on Twitter and you’ve got a potential problem.

Most attendees are sensitive to the fact that issues can arise, especially at large events. They don't expect you to be perfect. How you respond to these issues will actually build respect and reputation. A quick, effective response builds trust.

What is important is for you to build a crisis management and communication plan ahead of time and to have this embedded into your social media planning.

If you are dealing with a major problem that affects everyone (e.g. your Keynote Speaker is delayed and will have to be replaced) then be pro-active in getting this information to your audience. Rumours and gossip travel fast and you want to be the first one to mention this online as well as the actions you are taking to resolve the problem.

When a customer complaint shows up online, you address the issue swiftly and publicly. Post a reply to the person and address their concerns in a way that is caring, friendly and professional. Let them know that you take their issue seriously and what you are going to do about it.

A fast and public response is reassuring not just for the person with the complaint, but also for all the other people who have seen it. It builds trust and will usually prevent escalation. However, move the conversation offline as soon as possible. Ask them to meet you at the registration desk, phone them or email. Resolve the details of the issue with them in private.

## AFTER THE EVENT

by Cathy Key

### 1) Keeping the Conversation Alive

So your event is over, it was a huge success and you are exhausted. Time for a rest, right? Well, as much as your rest is well deserved, the few weeks after your event are the prime time for marketing for next year and making sure your attendees got great value from their time.

There are lots of ways of keeping the post-event conversation alive online. Now that you have all this fabulous content and resources from the meeting, there are lots of things you can do that won't actually take up a lot of time. Possibilities include:

- **Ask your presenters to lead online discussions and Q&A sessions on their topic.**
- **Post transcripts, summaries, videos and recaps of the hot sessions.**
- **Ask people what actions they have taken after the event and what they are finding more valuable now.**
- **Mix and match all your existing content into social media and blog posts.**
- **Invite people to post event photographs to your Facebook page, Flickr group, Instagram page, Pinterest or other photo-sharing site.**

### 2) Event Feedback

You can also use social media for feedback on the event. This is almost a mirror-image of the research phase of your event and social media plan.

You can watch the social media channels to find out organically what people are sharing, which topics they enjoyed and what suggestions they have for the future.

You can also audit all the social media shares,

likes, tweets, retweets and comments from before, during and after your event to find out:

- Which performers and topics generated the most interest.
- Which sessions were not popular.
- What kind of customer service issues were people dealing with.
- How quickly your social media team responded.
- What kinds of social media attracted the biggest response (e.g. Twitter versus Facebook, a video versus a picture-board).
- Which performers and attendees were most active online (and make a special effort to thank them!).

What's great about auditing your social media like this is that it is real data. There is no post-event rose-tinted speculation about what happened. You can actually find out for real what people were saying, what they liked and where you fell short and use this feedback to inform next year's event plan. You can also take some of the guesswork out of next year's social media strategy as you will have real data to fall back on.

Remember too that social media silence is a communication. If people are not talking about you (or a speaker or a topic) then that is also useful information.

A more active approach to your post-event feedback is to ask your attendees directly what they thought. You can pose questions in an ad hoc way, or do a more formal survey. Surveys provide excellent data and they also add that level of satisfaction to the customer that they have been asked, heard and that their feedback is valued.

## 10 MISTAKES EVENTS MAKE ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND HOW TO FIX THEM

If you've been involved in social from early days, you will have made a lot of mistakes. Language and etiquette have been mostly co-created by users in recent years. It was impossible not to get it wrong.

If you are a newcomer, you will make mistakes. No way around that. Let's look at some mistakes that can negatively affect your social media program.

### 1. NOT HAVING SOMEONE DEDICATED TO SOCIAL MEDIA

This is the origin of all the following mistakes. Having someone on your team that 'gets it' will avoid social media blunders and upset attendees, sponsors and your stakeholder community. They will be able to respond quickly to crisis and measure the impact of social media. We often see event professionals asking whether times are mature enough to have specialised job roles in regards to social media at events? Should we have someone exclusively dedicated to this?

Our answer is that times are not mature, they are rotten. Event Manager Blog first discussed the concept of the [Event Cool-ordinator in 2010](#). If you don't have such role in your medium to large event, conference, trade show or meeting, you need to act.

**How to Fix it:** Would you be cheap with your venue? Would you be cheap with your catering? If the answer is yes, you can be cheap with finding someone who can help.

If on the other hand you care for your guests and their experience, you need to get someone skilled for the job. Sometimes this person can be someone within your existing team who loves social, knows your event and wants to grow their job differently.

## 2. BEGGING

Please do this, please do that.

As we reinforced earlier, each social media, marketing or event design process should start with the question 'what value am I adding to the end user?'. Begging does not usually add any value whatsoever.

The proliferation of begging is mostly due to a report that was published a couple of years ago that said that 'Please RT' tweets were somewhat effective. If you allow us the metaphor, children begging and nagging to have the latest toy are often times effective but not for the right reasons.

Terrible examples include directly mentioning (i.e. starting a tweet with @username or wild tagging on Facebook, Pinterest, Google+, etc) someone asking to attend your event, to share the love about your trade show or conference and to spread the word.

Your event brand is going to suffer.

**How to Fix It:** When you are asking for specific actions, make sure there is always something in it for your audience. Asking should be a very rare occasion and smartly managed and it should never be perceived as begging.

## 3. NOT ADDRESSING MENTIONS

There are no excuses for this behaviour. Leaving direct mentions unanswered is a big problem. It can escalate to negativity pretty quickly.

Picture this in real life.

Someone is coming to your event information desk, they ask a question and you ignore them altogether. Outrageous. Customers in traditional marketing environments expect an answer on social within 1 hour. It is legitimate to hypothesize that this figure could go down for events. Events are very time sensitive and not addressing mentions almost in real time will almost inevitably have a negative impact on the requester.

**How to Fix it:** The fix here is not so difficult. At least in theory. Just respond! Of course not having someone dedicated to social or a social media monitoring tool to get mention alerts may be the reason why you are having the issue to begin with.

Make sure your social media strategy includes a plan to deal with compliments and complaints.

## 4. ONLY ADDRESSING POSITIVE COMMENTS

There is another way to call this mistake, denial. There is heaps of research showing how negative comments actually come from those who care the most about your event.

Very subtly some brands engage only with those who speak greatly of them. This is detrimental as it makes negative feelings grow exponentially.

One of the biggest scare for brands embarking on social is 'What if they will talk bad about us?'. There is no workaround. You have to fix what is not working with your event, social networks and

media will just amplify the visible negative bits.

**How To Fix It:** Have a social media triage in place, put up FAQs with answers to common problems and always reply, fast.

## 5. ASKING FOR ACTIONS ON DIFFERENT SOCIAL NETWORKS

It has become very common these days to ask users on Instagram to share on Twitter, Facebook fans to share on Instagram, LinkedIn connections to like our Facebook page. This process is rotten.

The reason why this happens is usually the result of not having a strategy that focuses your efforts on selected social networks and clear measurement in place. When you are all over the place, you will beg for meaningless actions without respecting the boundaries of where you are.

Each social network has its rules, etiquette and users. You have to respect them. Chasing likes, shares, friends and followers all over the place impacts on your audience perception.

**How to Fix It:** Why are you so obsessed with getting likes? What drives you so mental that you have to let go of all your inhibitions and wildly reach out to social networking users?

The objective of every social media program is to provide value to prospective and existing attendees. 100 happy customers that come back to your event are worth much more than 1 million likes from unengaged 'friends'.

Concentrate on how you can provide value on social and make sure your measurement goes beyond likes and RTs.

## 6. BULK INVITES

This mistake refers to the very common practice of selecting all your contacts and sending invites on Facebook or Google+. The latter being particularly intrusive as Google directly adds events to someone's calendar and opting out is very painful.

Unless you are 17 years old and trying to get everyone to come to your backyard party, such behaviour is not professional. If you market events as a job you are effectively exposing yourself to anger and projecting a negative image of your event.

**How To Fix It:** One of the reasons why we embark in such behaviour is the need to get more people to RSVP, to sell more tickets. Consider how your marketing efforts are translating into the conversation.

Do not be tempted by broadcast. You should be able to sell without selling, to show affection and consideration on a personal basis.

## 7. THE AUTO DIRECT MESSAGE

An auto direct message is defined as an automated message you receive immediately after you follow someone on Twitter, that can also happen on Facebook. Auto direct messages usually are filled with useless information, they are impersonal and they show you are not actually interested in who followed you.

This is a plague in the event industry where auto DMs are the norm.

Auto DMs are just great at displaying a lazy approach to social media, going against the very nature of social marketing and engagement. Probably comparable to those who distribute business cards as flyers at networking events.

**How To Fix It:** Try to learn more about who just followed you. Give it a week to read what they are up to and then engage if you have a valid reason to and by means of public mentions. A Retweet or a Like speaks a thousand words.

This may seem like a time consuming exercise, but social media is time consuming. Yes you can optimize but there is no workaround or shortcut. Relationships are never born overnight.

## 8. COMMON DASHBOARDS FOR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTS

Some of the worst disasters originated from this oversight. Very popular the example of a Microsoft employee [tweeting from the company account](#) about a heated politics panel.

This is not a matter of being skilled at social. You can be greatly experienced at managing social dashboards, but If you deal with hundreds of updates every day – very often full of anger and insults – it is normal to get it wrong sometimes.

These blunders are very tough to recover from. The drama resulting from these mistakes will also have a strong impact on your team.

**How To Fix It:** If you have a social media policy in place for your event, you should clearly ask those in your team to categorically not sync their personal accounts with the event social dashboard.

## 9. LANGUAGE MESS UP

There is beauty in using services such as social media dashboards to stream your updates to all social networks at once. The negative side is that

they make you lazy.

Updates with @usernames on LinkedIn or non-existing usernames on Facebook make no sense. Same goes with hashtags which LinkedIn does not recognise and Facebook just lately introduced.

You have to master the language of your chosen social network. This is usually the result of a ‘let’s be everywhere’ approach that little has to do with social engagement.

**How To Fix It:** Carefully pick the social networks you engage in. Learn the language they use. Make sure to use dashboards only if the language is the same.

## 10. LOST ACCOUNTS

One of the simplest mistakes to make with events is abandoning the accounts for the year and resuming them a couple of months before the event.

No question our attendees demand year long engagement. Large events are becoming content hubs and the live event is just the apex of the year long continuous community.

Don’t act like that friend who shows up only when they need money.

**How to Fix It:** Create a year long content strategy, identify content hubs that your audience may like and curate it for your audience.

## **PART IV**

# **ADVANCED SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT AND SPECIFIC USES**

# PART IV: ADVANCED SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT AND SPECIFIC USES

This section deals with advanced uses of social media in the event industry. It is aimed at those who are approaching social media as a core function of their event. It gives an overview of some tools and tactics you can use to get more speed and focus on social media as an integral business operation.

## SOCIAL ADVERTISING

Social advertising is one of the most underutilised yet powerful tools event professionals have to increase their social media effectiveness, traction and speed. Whether this is your first attempt at social media or you are working with a new event brand, social advertising is the perfect tool to gain quick competitive advantage and traction.

If in fact you followed all the previous steps and are clear with why you are on social media, **the first dilemma you will face when approaching social networks and tactical implementation will be how to gain audience and traction.** This is also one of the feelings that moved several social media newbies to start looking obsessively at their network reach as a metric of their success.

Gaining followers, likes, connections, friends is

an easy process. Gaining prospective attendees, stakeholders, sponsors, media contacts and in general a relevant audience is not as easy.

The main difference here is quality. Just head to Google and search for 'buy Twitter followers' or 'buy Facebook likes'. You can get for example 10,000 followers on Twitter for \$20 dollars. That's easy right? The problem is that you will inevitably end up with an audience that could not care less about what you do, your event and your purpose on social media - assuming your purchased followers are human beings and not bots. You are just showing off a wrecked attempt to have some social proof and exposing yourself to being banned if busted.

Social advertising is the alternative to this nasty process. Social advertising means engaging with ad products designed directly from the social network you are working with. This ensures maximum effectiveness, enhanced targeting and relevance of the audience reached.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU USE SOCIAL ADVERTISING?

Everyone working with social media should

explore the potential of advertising, but there are some specific case scenarios that are best fit for social advertising:

- **NEW EVENT.** When you are launching a brand new event, you will be faced with depressing starting numbers. Having 12 followers on Instagram, even if very engaged, it is hardly going to deliver substantial traction to your Marketing, PR or Engagement activities. In this scenario, looking at social advertising could deliver the additional reach to make your brand known to relevant audiences. It can also create relevant social proof to make those approaching your brand on social safe. This is especially important in the ticket purchase decision making process.
- **LIMITED RESOURCES.** If you can't count on a team that can constantly update your channels, you have to optimize what you have. Social advertising gives you the tools to put your message in front of more eyeballs without constantly thinking about new ways to deploy the message or having to update the channels in the hope more users are reached.
- **LIMITED TIME.** If your event is imminent and you are thinking about using social media for one of the objectives/uses we highlighted, social advertising can give you the speed you need to increase the reach of your message or increase the network of your account.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE ENGAGING IN A SOCIAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

There are some general rules that make social advertising a unique tool to promote, sell and deploy your event. If you have ever approached Google's Adwords and in general pay-per-click advertising, you may be tempted to think it works

in the same fashion.

There are specific pointers you should keep in mind when approaching social advertising:

- **KNOW THE TONE AND MANNER.** As soon as you start creating your ads, you will immediately feel compelled to start talking marketese. Buy Now, Click Here, Like Us, Follow Us. These are some of the immediate calls to action that will pop to mind. Social advertising is best served when you keep the same tone and manner you are having on social networks. Switching from a socially engaging attitude to a salesy one will do nothing but harm to your social program. Think of social advertising as a tool to increase the visibility of the content you already identified. Do not alter your content just because you are writing ads. Some social ad products give you the chance to promote updates you've already made instead of creating new ones. These tend to be the most successful forms of promotion.
- **KNOW YOUR TARGET.** Social advertising is more human friendly than any other form of advertising. While in fact on traditional PPC platforms you will focus on keywords, on social ads platforms you will focus on interests, job roles and people. This is incredibly helpful as you are not chasing random words but actual people and what they say they are interested in. The more you are able to narrow down the target, the better the results.
- **KNOW YOUR METRICS.** Social ad platforms offer new metrics compared to their traditional counterparts. Engagement being the most prominent one; each social network has its way of measuring it. While social media detractors say that engagement is not measurable, you can present them with a detailed report of what you achieved. If you reconcile that with tradi-

tional website analytics, you got yourself a bulletproof ROI measurement center. **Know Your Clicks.** While clicks on traditional PPC is straightforward this is not the case in social ads. Google Adwords forces you to add just one link. Some social networks allow you to use as many links, hashtags and media as you wish. Sometimes cost per click is calculated in any click the user performs on the ad. Therefore if your audience clicks on a hashtag you are effectively paying for a click that won't deliver much. Focus on giving limited opportunities to click so that you can contain costs and drive users to click where you want.

- **KNOW YOUR COSTS.** Advertising on social networks is generically more expensive than traditional pay per click. While in fact you can chase relevant keywords for low budgets on Google Adwords, this is not always going to be the case on social networks. On the other hand, platforms such as Youtube offer a much less expensive way to chase highly paid keywords you can't afford on Google. Youtube is the second largest search engine in the world, which makes it quite an effective strategic choice.
- **KNOW YOUR COMPETITORS.** Targeting your competitors is a common practice in PPC. Doing that on social media gives you incredible opportunities to leverage on all the social media engagement they have carried. You will effectively target their curated audience which gives you a chance to access the most relevant audience of all, your competitors'.
- **KNOW WHAT WORKS.** ABT, Always Be Testing or A/B Testing. Try different versions of your copy and update. Try with or without media, with or without hashtags. You should be very skeptical of universal stats on advertising. You should find out what works for you, not for others. Testing dif-

ferent approaches will give you that feedback. Also test different social networks to see what works for you.

- **KNOW YOUR ORGANIC Opportunities.** One of the major differences between traditional and social advertising are organic results. If someone retweets a sponsored tweet, you will pay for the action. If someone else not reached by the ad will retweet as a result of the retweet you paid for, you will not pay for it. Therefore there are 'viral', free opportunities to be exploited that a good update will deliver.

### THE TOP 3: FACEBOOK, TWITTER, LINKEDIN.

We will keep the advice on this section to the top three social ad platforms and specifically in terms of what you can do for events. If you decide to engage in one of these platforms, you will need further research in terms of finding out how to create ads, how to set budget and general optimization tips. Most of the advice can usually be found within the platform itself. Most of the above social networks do a great job in this.

#### FACEBOOK

Facebook is the perfect tool if you work with concerts, festivals, conventions, consumer exhibitions, fairs. There are three main uses that we suggest when dealing with Facebook Ads:

- **BOOSTED POST.** This is a great way to promote a specific post you created for your Facebook Page. Promoting native updates is one of the most successful ways of advertising, regardless of the social network. Promoting your posts exposes them to a wider audience. You can decide whether to promote the post to people who like your page and their friends or to an audi-

ence you target manually.

The positive effects are strong when you have a targeted following on your page and a potential effect is not only to get more likes per post but also to increase the total likes of your Facebook page. Be selective in your boosting strategy and do not promote everything you post. Facebook will tell you if a post is performing well or better than your average so that you can quickly allocate budget to expose it to more eyeballs.

Also make sure there is some finalism in promoting a post. Some form of action should be required. Think how you can stimulate discussion, clicks or likes but make sure your ad asks for some form of interaction. It will be much easier to then justify your expenditure and reconcile with wider analytics.

When targeting your audience one of your strongest weapons is the ability to create an audience. You can do so by importing your existing mailing list or database, via means of Mailchimp integration or Excel upload. It will be very easy to reach your existing audience if you are looking at who they are on Facebook, so that they can renew for next year.

- **EVENTS IN PAGES/EVENT RESPONSES.**

More than 400 million people use events on Facebook to mark their attendance network or discover the next one to attend. Facebook recognized this incredible opportunity and gave the chance to event professionals with a Facebook Page to clearly display Events as a tab on their Page and to promote them with a dedicated advertising product.

Promoting the Event via advertising, will give more context to your ad, showing who is attending, the date, location and a convenient add to calendar option. This will immediately boost the effectiveness of your ad, offering very diverse options to interact with it.

Additionally you will be able to get more

insights such as the number of people who've seen a link to the event on Facebook, the number of people who've viewed the event, the number of joins, saves and maybes the event has received. That's a great deal of information you can use to better optimize your targeting and strategy.

- **FACEBOOK REMARKETING.** Another advantage of Custom Audiences, which we previously discussed in the ability to upload your mailing list and target them on Facebook, is remarketing. Remarketing gives you the opportunity to add a pixel to your event website and then track the users with customized ads when they access Facebook. Let's look at two examples.

*Example 1.* You place the pixel on your ticket and registration page. Effectively you may be targeting those who are looking at purchasing tickets but still undecided. You could then create specific ads on Facebook with a 10% discount to get them to register.

*Example 2.* You could place the pixel in a specific session or performance page. You can then target the user who visited on Facebook by directly mentioning that session and by reinforcing the value of the content discussed.

These two examples show you the things you can do with retargeting the existing audience of your website and giving it another go at convince them to purchase a ticket or share the event with their peers.

## LINKEDIN

LinkedIn can be very powerful if you work with corporate events, exhibitions, high end conferences, association meetings, trade shows and B2B events.

There are two main formats that are worth considering when approaching LinkedIn for social

advertising:

- **Promoted Update**

- **Traditional Ad**

Setting up these ads is very straightforward and there is no need to delve into the details of how to do it. LinkedIn guides you extremely well in creating your first ad.

The most powerful tool you have when approaching LinkedIn (all social advertising platforms but LinkedIn specifically) is targeting. LinkedIn allows you to target very specific job roles in very targeted geographical areas. If you market conferences with very high price points, you can easily target very high end job profiles or even better their personal assistants! This goes even further with the ability to target specific companies.

While you can target specific companies and job profiles on other social networks, there is no doubt though that LinkedIn users are there to do business. That frames perfectly the relevancy of your marketing efforts. If you mean business, LinkedIn is the place to be with relevant ads.

Once again there is some literature that suggests a better performance of Updates instead of Ads. The approach should be again ABT (Always Be Testing or A/B Testing). Test the heck out of the platform. You can try 15 ad variations so make sure you use different images and copy as well as different formats.

LinkedIn tends to be a bit more expensive than other social platforms so handle with care.

## TWITTER

Twitter features an exceptional advertising plat-

form for event professionals. There is no particular type of event that better suits Twitter. It is a matter of understanding whether your potential audience is on Twitter and tweets about the topic of your conference.

Once again you will be able to target, by geographic location and interests but the key here are hashtags, @usernames and custom audiences.

There are two main products you should focus on:

- **PROMOTED ACCOUNTS.** This product is perfect if you are starting out with advertising on Twitter or with Twitter in general. Twitter will expose your profile to relevant followers and you will pay for each follower acquired. This is a great way to quickly expand your audience in a relevant manner.

Relevancy will depend on your ability to target your audience. Hashtags and @usernames are a great help to identify your potential audience.

You will be able to add your custom audience of existing clients or visitors to your website. Usually promoting to this audience decreases substantially the cost of acquisition and results in better engagement rates.

- **PROMOTED TWEETS.** This is a powerful tool to make sure your tweets reach more people. The key here is to make sure that your tweets are as focused as possible and you do not lose click opportunities. The best strategy if you are starting out is to target similar events and influential usernames in your market as well as existing clients you may have uploaded in custom audiences.

A major misconception about Promoted Tweets is that you mainly use them for

marketing or sales purposes. Promoted tweets can be used very successfully to broadcast valuable information you want to engage your attendees with or in contingencies to quickly guide and inform your audience.

Promoted Tweets are never best used to directly sell or convert. It is always wise to link to valuable content or to provide value with the actual click. Saying that, Twitter allows you to use 'Cards' in promoted tweets. With Twitter Cards you can display personalised calls to action in an expanded tweet. These are specifically made for lead generation, website or app promotion. Lead generation cards allow you to collect Twitter emails of those who respond from within the platform. This is particularly important if part of your content strategy involves downloadable reports, ebooks or whitepapers. The App Cards are also relevant if you have an event mobile app for your event and are trying to foster adoption.

Social Media Advertising can strongly help your event to better perform on social networks. It could give it depth, speed and traction. While it may look like yet another form of advertising, it is really an amplifier of your social strategy.

If your social strategy is weak, there is no way social advertising will help. On the other hand if you nailed the basics, social ads will get you quickly up to speed. Always be conscious of budget and be analytical with measuring results. Having clear objectives when approaching social ads is paramount to ensure success.

## SOCIAL MEDIA FOR TRADESHOWS

by Tracie Browne

By now you should have a good understanding

that social media is a communication tool and how you can use it to build a community. You understand the importance of creating plans and policies for how you use social media. In this chapter we're going to focus on how trade show exhibitors can use social media marketing in their exhibition programs.

Social media is a valuable tool for marketing. That doesn't mean you should use social media as a broadcast tool to get your message out. Social media marketing can and should be conversational.

When social media is used right, it's a way to communicate with a community. Communication is a two-way conversation whereas broadcasting is more like advertising.

Much of what you see being contributed on social media platforms by exhibitors is broadcasting, not communication. What you see are broadcast messages such as, "stop by booth #1450 to win an iPad" or "hope to see you at XYZ show, stop by our booth to see our new products." That's not a conversation. If it is, it's an extremely dull conversation.

Instead of trying to broadcast your message to millions, focus your conversation on attracting the people who are in a position to buy your products and services. How do you go about doing that? You do it with pre-show planning, listening to what people are saying during the show, and keeping the conversation alive after the show.

### PRE-SHOW

Pre-show planning is crucial to an exhibitor's success. In this section we'll take a look at three different social media components to include in your overall pre-show exhibition planning. First

we will demonstrate how to incorporate social media into your exhibition goals and objectives. Then we will outline how to find enthusiastic team members to accomplish those goals and objectives based on the skills of those working in your booth. Finally, we will give you tips on how to make sure attendees put you on their must see list of exhibitors.

## PLAN AND STRATEGIZE

Every exhibitor knows, no matter how well you plan, things can and often will go awry. However, how well you plan means the difference between everything falling apart with no hope of recovery, and recovering from a mishap quickly. The last thing you want to be doing in the middle of the show is trying to fill holes in a flimsy strategy.

Before you get carried away building the best social media contest ever thought of, you must first set goals and objectives for the show. That is what's going to keep you on track and ensure you are using social media in an effective way, and not just a new, fun, cool way. We've covered setting goals and objectives in detail in Part II: Social Media Strategy, but here we will look at it through the lens of the exhibitor.

Let's say your overall goal for the show is to launch a new product and generate new leads at the show. Your specific objectives are to demonstrate your product to 500 individuals and collect 200 "A" leads. Once you've determined that, you can strategize how you might use social media to help you accomplish those objectives.

Perhaps you set up a demonstration where booth visitors can test drive your new software. Part of that setup includes a way for test drivers to share their experience with their colleagues and friends via social media. If those friends and colleagues are at the show, it might encourage them

to stop by your booth. If they are not at the show, it might spark their interest enough to go to your website to sign up for their own demo.

Now that you have a strategy you can start thinking about tactics. How many demo stations will you need? Which social media platforms will you include for sharing. How will you track what is being shared? Who is responsible for responding to inquiries or comments being made as a result of those shares?

With careful planning like this, you are less likely to see a very important ball dropped.

## CREATING AN ENTHUSIASTIC EXHIBITION SOCIAL MEDIA TEAM

One key to a successful social media strategy in your exhibition marketing is getting lots of people to help you. I've seen too many great ideas abandoned because the exhibition manager was simply overwhelmed trying to do it all on his or her own.

Once you have your strategy and tactics laid out, start looking for help from the folks assigned to work the show. The secret to getting people excited about helping is to tap into what interests them. Instead of randomly assigning someone to take photos of customers doing hands-on demos of your new product, find out if someone on your booth is a photography buff.

Take a quick survey of your booth staff to find out what interests them. If one of your booth assistants has a following of 5000 people on Instagram, she's probably the one you want to assign the job of taking photos. Another might be an aspiring writer and would be more than happy to do some live micro-blogging for you at the event.

Just be sure you don't stifle their creativity too much, turning their assignment into a tedious task instead of a creative release. If Instagram woman wants to put filters on all her pictures, why not let her? It's better than coming back to the office with only a couple photos because you got too busy fixing the lead retrieval system.

## GET NOTICED BEFORE THE SHOW STARTS

Exhibition marketers used to have to wait until just a few weeks before the show to start reaching out to attendees with a direct mail campaign. With social media, you can start generating awareness and excitement as soon as the show is announced. With more and more buyers coming to shows with a plan of who they want to see, starting to build buzz early increases your chances of getting on a potential buyer's must see list. It can also get your message out to potential buyers who cannot attend the show for whatever reason.

To generate awareness with those potential buyers you have to get their attention first, and you're not going to get their attention by shouting at them. You will get their attention by sharing valuable information that will make their event experience better.

Keep in mind the reasons why people go to trade shows when you are deciding what to share. Attendees are there to network, to see new products and services, and to be exposed to new information and ideas. Before you post something, ask yourself, "will this information satisfy one of those three needs?"

Share information about registering for the show and early bird discounts with your community. Point out speakers and sessions you think your

customers and prospects would find valuable (not just those you are presenting). Share tips on area hotels and make restaurant recommendations.

Once you've established your company as one that is part of a conversation and one that is looking out for attendees coming to the show, then they will be ready to listen to what your company is doing.

## DURING THE SHOW

Now that you've done your pre-show homework and you have a plan, team and marketing strategy in place, let's take a look at how to maintain that momentum once the show is underway. This section will focus on making sure the right people are coming to your booth and expanding your reach to qualified prospects who may not be at the show. We'll also cover how you can use social media as a market research and lead generation tool by simply listening in on attendee conversations.

## DRIVING TRAFFIC FOR QUALIFIED LEADS

Talking about your giveaways is a great way to draw people to your booth who want your giveaway. It is not, however, a good tactic to draw qualified leads to your booth. To attract qualified leads to your booth, share activities taking place in your booth and the information you are giving out that only qualified leads would be interested in.

The more specific you are with the information you share, the more qualified your booth visitors will be. Let's say your company sells a product that secures cloud-computing services. Letting people know you will be giving away a study on security issues in the cloud and how to solve

them might not sound as exciting as an iPad, but it will be of interest to your target audience. If that study was written specifically for CIOs then come right out and say that in your message.

Instead of simply telling people to stop by your booth so see new products and services, tell them to stop by for a hands-on demonstration where developers and engineers will be on hand to answer their questions. Wait, your developers and engineers will not be at the show? No problem, you can simply use social media platforms meant to connect people real-time, to provide a two-way conversation between booth visitors and your staff back in the office.

### **EXPAND YOUR AUDIENCE BEYOND THE SHOW**

One of the greatest things social media has done for trade shows and expos is open up the event to a much wider audience. Show organizers who've embraced social media, have created two audiences for their events. Those who are attending the show in person, and those who are attending the show virtually.

If you keep that virtual audience in mind when you create your social media strategy, you'll be extending your audience as well. You don't even have to do anything completely different, just change your messaging a bit when sharing.

In addition to inviting CIOs to your booth to get a copy of your study, let the virtual audience who are following along on the show's social media platforms know how to access that same study via your website. If you're doing in-booth presentations, you might want to include the virtual audience by live streaming some of those presentations. They wouldn't even have to miss out on the Q&A portion of the presentation if you encourage them to ask their questions via social media.

Here's where that earlier planning and strategizing comes in. Because you've thought something like this all the way through, you know you'll need someone in the booth during these presentations to monitor the social media channel you are using for Q&A, and direct those questions to the presenter. Plus, you've got Frank from customer service as your smartphone cameraman, and he's happy because he's a weekend documentary director.

### **THE SWEET SERENDIPITY OF EAVESDROPPING**

Listening to what attendees are saying on social media is just as important to the trade show exhibitor as it is to the organizer. Listening tools and topics were covered extensively in Part II: Social Media Strategy. Here we will focus on how the exhibitor can take advantage of listening.

Trade shows provide exhibitors with valuable market research opportunities. Conversations taking place in your booth are just the tip of the iceberg. Some of the best conversations take place in line for coffee during the break or at the bar after the show floor closes, but you have to be present to hear those conversations.

There are similar conversations taking place on the show's social media platforms, and they're very easy to eavesdrop on. The best conversations start with "I wish..." or "What I really need..." or "I hate when..."

Imagine an attendee posts that their phone needs a charge but they forgot their charger back in their room. An exhibitor who's paying attention could quickly reach out to that attendee and find out what kind of phone they have. Does anyone in the booth have that kind of charger with him or her? If so, invite that attendee over to your booth to get a quick boost of power.

Even if that attendee is not in the market for your product or service, they may know someone who is. Use the five minutes they are tethered to your booth to find out who they want to meet at the show and what products they are looking for and then help them achieve their goals. You'll have made a positive impression, and they will remember your company and they may even recommend you to a colleague.

It's also not unusual for attendees and members of the media to post to social media exactly what products and services they are looking for. Most exhibitors are too busy with their booth to notice these inquiries. But because you have someone assigned to this task you can respond immediately and invite them over to your booth to talk to key executives or arrange a meeting with one of the sales reps.

If listening is the only aspect of social media you engage in at the show, you'll be way ahead of your competition. While they are broadcasting the fact attendees can win a free iPad, you'll be drawing qualified leads into your booth.

## POST-SHOW

The benefits of social media don't end when the show is over. Now is the time you want to measure what you've done and find out which tactics worked and which tactics fell short of your goals. You also want to keep the social media conversations going to make your job easier when the next show rolls around. First let's take a look at what to do with all the valuable information you've collected.

### REPURPOSE SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

One of the biggest problems exhibition managers vtface is getting enough budget to implement the

type of program that would make them most successful. One of the best ways to get the budget you need is to become indispensable to other departments in your company.

While you're doing your listening, you want to archive relevant conversations that would be of use to another department in your company. What information should you be collecting? You want to track any mentions of your company. That information can be used in your post-show brand reach reports if that is something that you report on. You'll want to track any mentions of your customers' companies and what your customers were talking about. These conversations will give you an idea of what is important to them. Also, track mentions of your competition and what your competition was talking about. These conversations could be a treasure trove of competitive information.

You're also going to want to capture any industry news being discussed online during the show, including hot topics and innovations being touted. This is where those "I wish..." and "I hate..." conversations come in. Those conversations are going to give you a sense of what is important in your industry.

Lastly, take note of who is doing all this talking and sharing. Do they have a loyal audience? These people could be untapped industry thought and opinion leaders that your company might wish to align themselves with.

### METRICS AND MEASUREMENT

Metrics and measurement are the parts that everyone avoids. They start talking about things like return on relationships and return on engagement and even return on fun. The fact is, you can measure your return on investment. It's not always easy, but it can be done.

The purpose of marketing is to drive sales...period. Sales should be your end goal, and that's why you want to focus on the quality of booth visitors rather than the quantity of booth visitors. Once you start talking about quality of leads you will earn the respect of your executive team.

It's important to measure your social media efforts against your goals and objectives so you know what worked and what didn't. Don't be afraid of failures. Everyone tries things that don't end up working the way they hoped they would. What's important is knowing what worked, what failed, and what you need to fix next time.

Before you can start measuring return on investment, you're going to need to know how much it typically costs to make a sale in your company. You're also going to need to know the dollar value your company places on meetings with prospects and leads. For companies with a long sales cycle, you can estimate Return on Investment (ROI) based on your company's established averages of leads to sales. Where do you get these numbers?

The best place to look first is your company's sales manager. He or she should have dollar values assigned to leads and meetings as well as lead to sales averages. Every marketer should schedule a meeting with your company CFO. Explain that you are trying to measure your trade show efforts and need help figuring out the values. That will be music to your CFO's ears, and he or she will be more than willing to help you, or will assign someone to help. It goes without saying that it will also gain you an ally during budgeting season. CFOs prefer to give money to those who can measure how it is spent.

There are some results gained from social media efforts that do not appear to be so cut and dry. How do you value all those tweets you collected

while you were listening to what attendees were asking for? What value do you place on a tweet that was passed on to R&D and resulted in a new feature or upgrade? That's as simple as figuring out what you would have spent on a focus group. Collecting enough information through social media could eliminate the need to engage a focus group and, as a result, you may have saved the company \$20,000.

Your financial reports don't have to be all spreadsheets and numbers. It's okay to include a few stories. If you have specific anecdotes that would convey the success of your social media efforts or show you understand the failures, include those in your reporting.

### KEEPING THE COMMUNITY ALIVE

If all that work you put into your efforts to attract an audience on social media exhausts you, the last thing you want to do is drop the ball after the show is over. If you do that, you're going to have to start from scratch again next year.

One of the biggest things social media can do for you if you do it right is build trust with your community. You don't build trust by showing up a month or two before the show and then disappearing as soon as the show is over. You have to stick with it.

It takes time to build an audience on social media. In the beginning, it's natural to focus on the numbers. It's not the right thing to do, but let's be honest, we all have done it. But don't get so hung up on measuring what is called vanity metrics. Those are your likes, shares, followers, etc. Lately, one of the biggest things missing in social media is the conversation. Brands completely missed the boat and now use social media as another advertising platform and, as a result, people have tuned them out.

That's good news for you because their mistakes

make it easy for you to stand out. All you need to do is continue participating on social media as a community member, not an advertiser. Stop building numbers for vanity sake and use social media to get to know members of your community. It's a great way to build relationships with customers, potential customers, and members of the media, association leaders and key opinion leaders.

When you do this, and the show rolls around again next year, instead of trying to capture a stranger's attention, you'll find yourself inviting old friends into your booth. They will show up, and they will bring their friends and colleagues along with them as well.

## CONCLUSION

Social media is only a tool. What is important to your exhibition program success is designing a solid strategy. Then, and only then, can you choose the tools that are right for the strategy. That is why there was no mention here of specific tools.

Some might say, "Just give me ways to use social media. I don't have time to worry about goals and strategies. I just want a solution." To them we say, "sorry, there is no magic bullet, and there never will be." You cannot build a good exhibition program around tools. If you do that, you will be starting from scratch every year.

Beware of copying what other exhibitors are doing. Just because something worked for another exhibitor, and it may have been wildly successful, doesn't mean it will work in your program. It's good to get out there and see what others are doing, but don't just copy them. Think about how and whether or not you can adapt those ideas to your unique strategy.

Finally, don't forget that social media is social. Don't just broadcast your message. Create and cultivate relationships by sharing valuable information. Introduce members of your community to one another. Help people build their networks. Always be thinking, will this help my audience or will it only help me? If the answer is only you, then re-write that post.

# KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

## TECHNOLOGY

Will you have an Internet connection in your booth?

**Hardwired** - Robust connection that can handle just about anything you do requiring Internet connection.

**Dedicated Wireless** - It won't be fast enough to live stream from your booth, but it will handle the basics.

**Free Wireless** - Notoriously unreliable. Do not plan on depending on the free WIFI network as part of your social media strategy.

**Devices and Charging** - Make sure you have at least one or two back-up devices and extra power cords because at least one or the other will walk away.

**Charging Stations** - Does your strategy include attendees using their mobile device to participate in a booth activity? Then bring extra chargers for the most popular devices and a spare power strip. You don't want a good quality lead to get away because their battery was drained.

## LOCAL EXPERTISE

Tap into your employees inside knowledge of the trade show host city and create an arsenal of helpful advice ready to share such as...

List of favorite restaurants (include budget and information such as gluten free, vegan, kosher, etc.)

List of activities for attendees arriving early or staying later

Tips for closest/best spots for coffee near convention center

Tips for where to buy things you forgot to pack (toothbrush, umbrella, extra shirt due to coffee

stain, etc.)

Best way to get from the airport to hotel/convention center (include average travel time and cost)

Favorite hotel amenities

Map of scenic/safe five-mile runs from head-quarter hotel

## BOOTH STAFF HIDDEN TALENTS

Survey your booth staff for any of the following talents and add your ideas to it.

**Photography Buff** - This person can be assigned to take photos of customers, events and interesting things in the exhibition hall and around the show.

**Writer/Blogger** - Assign these people to sit in on sessions your customers or potential customers might find of value and create a summary to share on your newsletter or blog.

**World Traveller** - This person might want to put together a destination guide you could share on social media. They might also have great packing tips they could share as well.

**Tech Geek** - If you are using technology something will go wrong. IT probably won't be at the show so you'll want to know who on your staff is a techno wizard so you can call on them in an emergency.

**Power Networker** - Tap into this person to help you introduce attendees to people they most want to meet.

**The Scientist** - Some people are just fascinated by discovering new things. Set these people loose on the show floor with your photography buff to talk about what's new and hot amongst the other exhibitors.

# DO'S AND DON'TS OF PHOTOGRAPHY

## PHOTOGRAPHY

- Do ask for permission to post a photo.
- Do show the photo to them for approval.
- Do have printed cards directing people to where they can view the photos.
- Do post somewhere people have the ability to share with friends.
- Do put a watermark on the photos with your company logo.
- Don't use a photo in a marketing piece unless you have a signed model release.
- Don't post unflattering photos - when in doubt delete it.
- Don't forget to check the background; is it something you would want to stand in front of?
- Don't take a shot with bright light behind the subject.
- Never take photos from below your subject's face...that is never a flattering angle.

## VIDEO

- Do use a good quality external microphone.
- People will forgive poor video quality, but no one can tolerate bad audio.
- Do use your smartphone camera. Better to get that awesome testimonial than miss it because your professional crew was not available.
- Do have proper lighting. You never want your subject to look washed out or gloomy.
- Do have a simple neutral backdrop...bonus points for branded backdrop.
- Do have a mirror handy for quick touchups.
- Don't forget to check the background. Is your competitor's logo hovering nearby?
- Don't hit record if there is music playing in the background. You will need to license it if you want to use that recording.
- Don't delete a video just because the image is poor. You can always use the audio or transcribe the content.

## SAMPLE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES CALCULATIONS

When you are reporting, you need to show whether or not you achieved what you set out to accomplish. You need to document which parts of your plan succeeded and which failed

and why. This table shows you an example of goals and objectives calculations using our example under Plans and Strategies earlier in this chapter.

GOAL	ESTIMATED VALUE	ACTUAL	TOTAL VALUE
500 product demos	\$500,000	400*	\$400,000
200 qualified A leads	\$400,000	220	\$440,000
125 shares after demo experience	\$12,500	250 (shares)*	\$25,000
<b>Twitter</b>		172 (shares)	
<b>Facebook</b>		64 (shares)	
<b>SMS (text)</b>		1 (share)	
<b>Email</b>		13 (shares)	
Unexpected results		Five new ideas for product features based on audience tweets	\$10,000
		Half-page ad in the show daily about our product demos and use of social media	\$6,000
<b>SHOW TOTAL</b>	\$912,500		\$881,000

\* We found that the amount of people who, after taking a demo, wanted to share the information with their friends was twice what we anticipated. Because the sharing feature was on the kiosks that contained the product demos, 250 of the demos took significantly longer. We attribute this factor to our drop in actual demos performed. The kiosks were simply in use. While the \$25,000 value obtained through social sharing is significant, it does not make up for the value loss of \$100,000 in demos. For our next show, we will adjust accordingly and either add more demo stations or separate the demo from the sharing.

# SAMPLE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES CALCULATIONS

## COST CALCULATIONS

You need to know how you spent your money and just where you spent that money to determine whether or not your efforts were worth it. If you were able to program those kiosks for social media sharing for a cost of \$5,000,

you're ahead of the game with a total value of \$25,000. If those kiosks had cost \$10,000, it would have been a gamble at an estimated value of \$12,500.

\*from chart above

<b>125 shares after demo experience</b>	<b>\$12,500</b>	<b>250 (shares)*</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
Twitter		172 (shares)	
Facebook		64 (shares)	
SMS (text)		1 (share)	
Email		13 (shares)	

<b>COST BREAKDOWN</b>	<b>ESTIMATED VALUE</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>
Kiosks	\$15,000	\$15,000
<b>Programming to include social media sharing</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>
Etc.	\$X	\$X
Total Booth costs including, rental, labor, Internet, hotel, travel, etc.	\$400,000	\$395,000
Pre-show e-mails	\$10,000	\$10,000
Direct Mail	\$60,000	\$60,000
Social Media	\$5,000	\$5,000
Total Marketing	\$75,000	\$75,000
Customer Appreciation Party	\$25,000	\$25,000
Sales Reps Dinners		
Customer entertainment	\$5,000	\$3,950
	\$30,000	\$28,950
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>\$505,000</b>	<b>\$498,950</b>

\*Tables taken from The Social Trade Show - Leveraging Social Media and Virtual Events to Connect With Your Customers

## CASE STUDY

### MAKING AN IMPACT AS AN EXHIBITOR, MEET MR HOLLAND



**NBTC**  
Netherlands Board of  
Tourism & Conventions

#### NAME COMPANY/EVENT

Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions (NBTC)

#### AGENCY

Noortje Tuerlings

#### A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

In order to distinguish Holland as a meetings and events destination, NBTC created a campaign that represents Holland and the Dutch DNA. They created a personality who is literally the face of Holland, a flesh and blood brand ambassador; Mr Holland! Mr Holland is a living symbol of everything the country stands for. He is the personal host who makes Holland tangible and likeable. Mr Holland introduces the international meeting planners to Holland as a potential meetings destination. He acquaints them with the country's USPs in a personal and original manner.

The Meet Mr Holland campaign is a cross-media campaign with a different theme every year. After the initial introduction of Mr Holland to the target audience in 2012, they continued in 2013 by presenting what Holland has to offer as a meeting events destination. Mr Holland used the Dutch Masterpieces to connect Holland's well-

known icons from the past with today's USPs.

During EIBTM 2013 Mr Holland was the ultimate Holland host. In his orange suit, he was a very welcome guest at the show. Also his presence on Social Media didn't go unnoticed. Before, during and after the show Mr Holland was very active on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

#### OBJECTIVES

- To increase the awareness for Holland as a meeting destination
- To increase stand traffic at EIBTM 2013
- To increase their online community (15% on Facebook, +5% on Twitter and +10% on LinkedIn)

#### THE AUDIENCE

The collective term 'international meeting planners' was used to identify and describe decision makers (planning, organising, recommending or making financial decisions) of corporate meetings, incentives and other international corporate events outside their home country.

International meeting planners are executives within companies involved with meetings, conferences and incentive travel programs. Alternatively, they may be working for an agency/intermediary such as: event organisation companies, incentive travel agencies, venue finding and live marketing agencies which plan business events outside their own country.

The most valuable countries and regions of origin, for international meeting planners with potential for business with the Netherlands, are North America, United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, France and Scandinavia.

#### THE UNFOLDING OF THE PROJECT

At EIBTM 2013 Mr Holland organised a Face-

book competition. They invited people at the show floor to create a Masterpiece with Mr Holland. All pictures with Mr Holland and show attendees holding a frame were uploaded on Mr Holland's Facebook page. The Mr Holland photo that received the highest number of Facebook likes won a trip to Holland to discover the ulti-

mate Dutch masterpiece, The Night Watch painting by Rembrandt. To stimulate the contest Mr Holland was very active on Twitter (#EIBTM13) and even visible on the mirrors in the restrooms, and appealed to delegates to come to the Holland stand and enter the Facebook photo competition. Guaranteed attention three times per day!

### BEFORE THE EVENT

*Before EIBTM Mr Holland started on Twitter by using the #EIBTM13 to let people know that he was going to attend EIBTM and stimulate traffic to the Holland stand. Furthermore all visitors to EIBTM with interest in Western Europe received a direct email to tell them about Holland, but also giving them the opportunity to win a trip to Holland by entering the Facebook Competition during the show.*

### DURING THE EVENT

*During the show Mr Holland used #EIBTM13 to invite people to the booth and enter the Facebook Competition. Furthermore they branded all the restrooms at EIBTM 2013. Mr Holland was visible on every mirror in all of the restrooms at the show inviting people to the booth with the following message: "Wow! You will look great on a painting! Please visit the Holland stand (H10) to create our Masterpiece together"*

### AFTER THE EVENT

*All the visitors of the Holland stand at EIBTM received a personal invitation to connect with Mr Holland on LinkedIn.*

### MAJOR OBSTACLES

During shows like EIBTM the internet connection in the exhibition hall is very unstable. This makes it a challenge to upload pictures, interact and post real time messages. During the EIBTM they had to find a location outside the exhibition hall where the internet was stable in order to make the Facebook competition work.

- Increase of 9% in the number of Twitter Followers
- Increase of 13% in the number of LinkedIn connections
- Holland won the EIBTM Award 2013 for Best Stand Personnel.

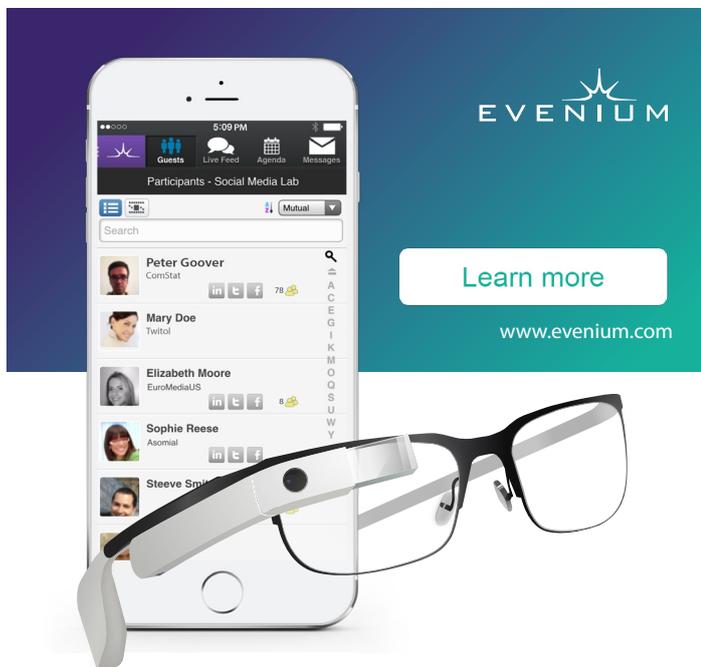
### THE RESULTS

- 169 meetings planners entered the Facebook competition and resulted in 1678 engaged users
- Increase of 23% in the number of Facebook Fans

## USING EVENT MOBILE APPS TO STIMULATE SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Event apps are becoming part of most conferences, tradeshows, festivals and medium to large sized events. Event professionals are extremely interested in learning more about event mobile apps. Our own guide, the Event App Bible, has been downloaded more than 20,000 times in its new version.

38% of our respondents wanted to learn more about using *Event Mobile Apps* to stimulate social media interaction at events. In fact few realize that while the most popular use of apps may be for agenda checking purposes or to view the profile of a performer, there is little doubt that apps are incredible social media weapons you can deploy to stimulate social media interaction.



### ConnexMe

Engage your audience  
Help them meet the right people

You can tactically achieve a lot by using event apps and social media. The areas that will be majorly impacted will be:

- user generated content
- media collection
- live interaction
- shareability
- remote audience involvement

Here are 7 ways event apps can be used to stimulate social media interaction at events:

### 1. STIMULATE USER GENERATED CONTENT BY EMBEDDING SOCIAL NETWORKS

Event mobile apps are the perfect environment to host social networking and social media action. In fact your mobile app should give the opportunity to attendees to log in with their username and password and then directly update their social networks from within the app.

Not leaving the app to update social networks carries several benefits. For starters, the app usage will skyrocket if attendees do not have to multitask between apps. Having the hashtag conversation visible in the app and being able to participate in it will be an immediate incentive to create more content.

As one of your objectives could be to stimulate user generated content, having an app strategy to entice your attendees to contribute, write and upload more. It could give them the stimuli they need to use their personal handles to join the conversation.

### 2. HOST LIVE Q&A ON SOCIAL

## NETWORKS

Lots of apps offer the capability to manage Q&A and live polls. What about if you could sync these incredibly powerful engagement tools to get attendees to answer or ask questions via social media.

It is becoming common to see live polling and Q&A features that use social networks to stimulate discussion. If in fact your speaker is asking a question on stage, you could get attendees to answer via the hashtag on Twitter. That would help you to achieve two important objectives:

you will increase the amount of user generated content with the hashtag.

you could involve remote audiences not attending the event.

Both results are quite appetible as they could ex-

pand the reach of your initiative and increase the organic conversation around your hashtag.

Quite powerful!

## 3. LIKE, SHARE, TWEET SESSIONS AND PERFORMERS

Checking the agenda may be one of the primary reasons why both event professionals and attendees choose to use event mobile apps. Adding a social perspective to how we look at the agenda makes perfect sense.

Allowing your attendees to share and like sessions once again extends the reach of your intrinsic event activities to remote audiences and also gives you an incredibly powerful feedback machine to reveal the sessions and performers that struck a chord with your audience.

This is invaluable promotional leverage and feedback that is easy to implement and powerful at the same time.

## 4. CONNECT WITH PERFORMERS

One of the top reasons why we attend events is to see performers. Event mobile apps give us a chance to experience our heroes from up close. It is very wise to get your speakers involved with your event mobile app and to sync their social network profiles on it.

This way attendees could start networking directly with speakers and increase the engagement levels of the event. Allowing attendees to connect with speakers through the app may result in more #hashtag conversation and thus user generated content.

AD

CORE-APPS  
EVENT TECHNOLOGY  
TO THE CORE

Mobile Apps  
Beacon Solutions  
Event Management Software  
Wayfinding

EXPERIENCE THE BEST  
IN EVENT TECHNOLOGY TODAY.  
Call 443.424.CORE (2673)  
core-apps.com

Modern performers should always be available to connect with your audience. Read more here.

## 5. CONNECT WITH OTHER ATTENDEES NETWORKING

Attendee to attendee networking or horizontal networking is another top reason why we attend events. Making sure to ask attendees to sync their social networking profiles is crucial to ensure they connect with each other with more context.

Having Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram profiles helps attendees to have more information about who they want to connect with. That instantly creates a whole layer of context that will boost engagement with other attendees and the event,

Signing in with a social network is one great incentive to achieve social networking integration, but more about this later.

## 6. LIVE CHECK-IN

Check-ins are becoming a quite influential social currency item. Encouraging check in via apps at different sub-events and areas of your venue has several potential positive impacts on your event. Checking in at sessions or in specific areas of your event will have a terrific impact on several event dynamics.

There is a component of social proof that moves other attendees to a session when several colleagues have checked in. There is also a promotional component in checking in to a specific session.

Attendees will be able to let their network know about their session preference and promote the

sub-event by sharing it on the synced accounts.

## 7. EASY SIGN IN FOR APP ADOPTION

Signing in with social networks has become one of the strongest adoption tactics for event mobile apps. You've put a lot of effort in curating and creating a perfect social profile, there is no need to create a new one. Apps that allow social sign up, should be preferred to those who don't.

The benefits are immediate. From updating statuses and uploading media directly from the app to enhanced social networking capabilities. Inviting your guests to sign up to the app via social networking handle will invite them to quickly check out the app, while at the same time open up the realm of social media integration.

### Opt for the Best Performing Mobile and Social Networking Solutions in the Events Industry\*

90%+ of the users surveyed found the app easy to use

More than 70% reported rise in efficiency

50% average adoption by attendees

[Learn more](#)

\*Based on the analysis of usage data and multiple surveys served by a2z between Sep 30, 2013-Oct 1, 2014

Our show's mobile app just keeps getting better and better, and we continuously receive unsolicited positive comments from attendees and exhibitors.

**Connie Mikels**  
Director of Expositions, NADA

**a2zInc** | (443) 393-2443 | (410) 740-9201  
sales@a2zinc.net | www.a2zinc.net

**PART V**

**SOCIAL MEDIA CARDS**

# PART V: SOCIAL MEDIA CARDS

Approaching a social network for the first time can be overwhelming. There is a lot of information to digest, a new language, new ways of sharing, re-sharing and networking. One of the great things about the Internet and social media is that they are self-explanatory. There is a lot of writing about the tools themselves and it is super easy to find the best use of Pinterest or Facebook or Twitter.

Such abundance of content can be overwhelming. We have decided to cut through the noise and present you with short overviews of each social network, that we like to call Social Media Cards. These are infographic style documents with the most relevant information for each major social network you should consider.

Our Cards will give you an overview of:

- **THE TYPE OR PURPOSE OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK.** What is it for and how it is used.
- **THE ANATOMY OF THE PERFECT UPDATE.** Each social network or media has its own language and update style. This reference will give you an indication of how to make sure your updates are optimized for success.
- **STATS.** These are stats from our own survey that will help you to understand the zeitgeist of social media for events and how much is a social network used in events.
- **ETIQUETTE.** This is a short overview of the dos and don'ts of each social network to make sure you start with the right step.
- **USE OF SOCIAL NETWORK.** How can you use a social network for your event? This section will give you practical ideas to use a social network for events.

# FACEBOOK

## PURPOSE OF THE PLATFORM

Facebook is a great platform to engage and keep up to date with current and potential attendees in an informal way. Great to share visual, video and text content.

## ANATOMY OF THE PERFECT UPDATE/POST

It includes a **LINK**.

Short meaningful text. You should aim for **40** characters<sup>1</sup> - **80** reports 2x the engagement<sup>2</sup>.

Keep an **INFORMAL** tone. Picture a water cooler chat.

Don't use more than one or two **#HASHTAGS**.

Add **VISUAL CONTENT** or use links that include **A PICTURE**<sup>3</sup>

Check for optimal display of the link on **FBDEBUGGER**.

It's not during **BUSINESS HOURS**<sup>4</sup>.

## STATS

Most Commonly used at Events.



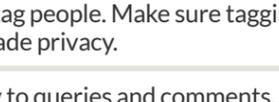
Event Professionals use it.

Most Event Planners feel confident at using it,



of Event Planners are interested to know more about it.

One share on Facebook equals



value in ticket sales<sup>5</sup>.

## ETIQUETTE

1. Keep text short, use different media for long text.
2. Do not overtag people. Make sure tagging is appropriate and does not invade privacy.
3. Always reply to queries and comments.
4. Do not promote yourself during events affecting the public opinion such as deaths and tragedies.
5. Do not post more than once or twice a day. Use Boost Post to reach more people.
6. Do not send mass invites to Facebook Events.
7. Network with other pages but do not spam them.
8. Keep personal and business accounts and content separated.

## TYPES OF EVENT IT IS GOOD FOR

Meetings

Networking Events

Product Launches

Concerts

Conferences

Personal Events

Trade Shows

Festivals

Exhibitions

## USES OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

Great platform to provide all the information needed like: venue access, how to download the event app, keynote sessions, highlights of the day.

A natural platform for complaints. As the penetration is incredibly large, most audiences will turn to Facebook to complain.

A platform to consider to manage customer service before during and after your event.

### MARKETING

A natural platform to promote your event. Post the event on Facebook Events.

Synch it with your registration platform.

The ideal platform for competitions, giveaways and early bird selling. Your aficionados will be looking for a deal or a discount.

Post content, videos and pictures from your event to move followers to attend.

Incentivize friends and colleagues referrals.

Selectively target your messages to different audiences who have RSVPd for your event.

### PR/ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Address crisis quickly and give alternatives and solutions.

Respond to criticism and address negative perceptions of your event.

Manage your tone of voice to communicate your event brand in a more informal way.

### RESEARCH

Great platform to get insight into what your audience demographics and interests.

Research interests of your contacts.

Research performers, their reach and engagement with the audience.

Use Facebook Ads to research potential marketing reach according to interests and geography.

### SALES

Use gamification (contests, quiz, games) to stimulate sales.

Link updates, when appropriate to the register page of your website.

Use giveaways, discounts and early birds to reward your followers.

### EVENT ENGAGEMENT

Update the page with the most significant moment of the event.

Use visual content as much as possible to stimulate engagement (video interviews, pictures, infographics).

Keep monitoring the hashtag for questions or interaction during sessions.

Suggest check-in to gain better data about who is attending.

Stimulate competitions during the event to foster user generated content.

### EVENT FEEDBACK

Check your Page or Event for comments, compliments and complaints.

Give a tangible measurement to your performance.

Review check-in data and get insights about your attendee profiles.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.brandchannel.com/images/papers/530\\_buddy\\_media\\_wp\\_facebook\\_retail\\_0911.pdf](http://www.brandchannel.com/images/papers/530_buddy_media_wp_facebook_retail_0911.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://bufferblog-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/The-Nuts-and-Bolts-of-a-Perfect-Facebook-Post-1.jpg>

<sup>3</sup> <https://blog.bufferapp.com/anatomy-of-a-perfect-facebook-post>

<sup>4</sup> <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/data-perfect-facebook-post-infographic>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.eventmanagerblog.com/roi/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://topdogsocialmedia.com/facebook-etiquette/>

# TWITTER

## PURPOSE OF THE PLATFORM

The most natural social network for events, give its real time nature. Communicate with attendees and keep up to date with sector trends, target interests and influencers.

Your event is your hashtag.

## ANATOMY OF THE PERFECT UPDATE/POST

### 90 TO 100 CHARACTERS

to allow manual Retweets and

Quotes with comments.

**LINKS** should be moved more towards the middle of the update, but only if it makes sense.

Tweets with images get **18%** more clicks, **89%** more Favorites and **150%** more Retweets.<sup>7</sup>

Post at different timezones but **DONOT OVERPOST** or overretweet.

Always use only your hashtag.

Use up to one more to **AVOID NOISE**.

Don't start the update with **@USERNAME**

unless you want only people following

both of you to see it.

## STATS



## ETIQUETTE

1. Do not send Auto Direct Messages.
2. Add a brief description (including hashtags if relevant) to your profile and a good resolution picture.
3. Don't ask/beg for follow or retweets unless for crisis situations.
4. Use hashtags carefully, don't spam popular hashtags with your message.
5. Don't hijack others tweets to promote your event.
6. Use Twitter Cards and Ads to promote.

## TYPES OF EVENT IT IS GOOD FOR

Seminars

Award Cerimonies

Product Launches

Conventions

Conferences

Sport Events

Trade Shows

Festivals

Exhibitions

## USES OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

Provide updates on what is going on at the event and relevant news pre and post event.

High frequency of tweets and comments, have someone dedicated to manage those on the day of the event.

Manage your hashtag, look for complaints, compliments, questions, comments.

Reply quickly, brings conversations offline or via email and avoid fights.

### MARKETING

Use your hashtag in all updates.

Involve your performers to support the event.

Announce new performers and discuss the schedule.

Promote all aspects of your event with an emphasis on content.

Use Ads to directly promote sign up and registration.

Retweets attendees who signed up and share they are attending.

Flash sales and giveaways are ok if not too aggressive.

Attend Twitter chats (marked by #marketingprofs #asnchat) to raise the profile of your account and event.

### PR/ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Manage all the news of your event.

Announce PR worthy moments of your event.

Engage with influencers at your event and manage VIPs.

### RESEARCH

Get valuable insights into what potential attendees are interested about.

Search for speakers or performers in general and how they engage with their audience.

### SALES

Use Twitter Ads to funnel all direct sales activities. Lead generation, giveaways, discounts, early birds.

Run contests to encourage sharing and spreading the word and reward those who participate.

### EVENT ENGAGEMENT

The perfect environment to stimulate discussion, share content, ask questions, interact with sessions, vote in live polls.

Give recognition to the community, host a Tweetup or help promote spontaneous ones.

Stimulate user generated content by communicating your hashtag clearly and inviting to tweet.

Retweet others' highlights from the sessions and include remote audiences to participate.

Possibility that your event will start 'trending' if there is a high volume of tweets

### EVENT FEEDBACK

Collect all your hashtag conversation and analyse the overall and specific sentiment of updates.

Search for pain points of the event by qualitatively looking at the most recurring issues.

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/twitter-images-study\\_b51722](http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/twitter-images-study_b51722)

# YOUTUBE

## PURPOSE OF THE PLATFORM

The platform to support all video content related to the event, including ads and speakers or session presentations. Helps to generate website traffic and event engagement.

## ANATOMY OF THE PERFECT UPDATE/POST

The **SUCCESS** depends on your call to action, how strong it is in the video, description and annotation.

No longer than **3MIN** if for promotion

The ideal session video length is **18MINUTES**.<sup>8</sup>

Optimize the tile for relevant **KEYWORDS**.

Tags, description and transcript should be **CORRECTLY OPTIMIZED** and benchmarked against competition.

Choose **CATCHY SCREENSHOT** that respects Youtube guidelines

Use annotations smartly to link to next videos or **STIMULATE ENGAGEMENT**

Create a video **SPECIFICALLY FOR ADS** if planning to use them?

**ENABLE VIDEO EMBEDDING**

to maximise engagement and exposure

## STATS



## ETIQUETTE

1. Respect copyright and Youtube strict guidelines.
2. Funny and engaging is great if it fits with your brand.
3. Do not over use annotations.
4. Aim for the best image and sound quality.
5. Don't try to be viral or funny if your event brand is not.
6. Do not necessarily jump into memes if they do not depict your brand.

## TYPES OF EVENT IT IS GOOD FOR

**Seminars**

**Award Cerimonies**

**Product Launches**

**Conventions**

**Conferences**

**Personal Events**

**Trade Shows**

**Festivals**

**Exhibitions**

## USES OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

Manage the comments and reviews received.

Present the venue and different aspects of your event.

### MARKETING

Always create specific videos meant for Ads if you intend to use them.

Use content of your event to promote it such as sessions teasers or interviews with performers.

Always link to your website in the video as it can be embedded, this is better achieved with in-video ads.

Company videos, commercials, and product demos must have a unique angle or hook and used in conjunction with other social media channels in order to be effective.

### PR/ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

In the event of a crisis a video explanation will help although not as stand alone but as a support to other communications to the target affected.

Interview high profile influencers involved with the event as well as members of your team.

### RESEARCH

Research performers experience. Check for previous appearances and performance style.

### SALES

Use Youtube Ads and strong call to actions to stimulate ticket sales.

### EVENT ENGAGEMENT

Post Videos of the event highlights and the sessions.

Great to broadcast interviews and Event highlights summaries.

Can be used to livestream the event with Youtube Live.

### EVENT FEEDBACK

Analyse comments on the videos.

Look for engagement levels with the session content to measure performance.

<sup>7</sup> <https://blog.bufferapp.com/the-ideal-length-of-everything-online-according-to-science>

<sup>8</sup> <http://yincmarketing.com/2014/11/how-to-create-the-perfect-youtube-video-marketing-video-strategy/>

# LINKEDIN

## PURPOSE OF THE PLATFORM

Mostly aimed at professional conferences, exhibitions, as-  
sociation meetings. A place to find content and connections  
about your event.

## ANATOMY OF THE PERFECT UPDATE/POST

**NON EXPLICITLY**

promotional content.

**FORMAL TONE**, as if talking

to a colleague or co-worker.

Use link **GENERATOR**

and choose the **PICTURE** of the link carefully.

**BE CONCISE**

## STATS



of Event Planners use LinkedIn on their events.



are interested to find out more about this Social Media platform.

## ETIQUETTE

1. Don't spam your network inboxes.
2. Create a Group or a Company profile for Your Event.
3. Read the rules of the groups you intend to participate in.
4. Share relevant industry news and event updates.
5. Don't post commercial, non professional content.
6. Don't automate the same updates.
7. Do join groups to be up to date with trends and audience biases. Participate in groups by sharing meaningful discussions NOT promotional material.
8. Do make wise comments on group discussions, posts and articles within your sector and network.
9. Don't always try to convert or sell.

## TYPES OF EVENT IT IS GOOD FOR

Seminars

Award Cerimonies

Product Launches

Exhibitions

Conferences

Networking Events

Trade Shows

Meetings

Association meetings

## USES OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

Answer to comments on relevant discussions.

If you use Groups, always inform your audience about the event vitals.

Post links to the event programme, venue, performers. Focus is on  
information.

### MARKETING

Engage with relevant groups. Bring value to the conversation.

Some groups have events opportunities where you can post your event.

Use LinkedIn Pulse as a platform to release content about your event.

Use LinkedIn Ads to Promote your updates or your site.

### PR/ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Ideal platform to release traditional PR messages.

Groups are a natural environment to make announcements and  
release event news.

### RESEARCH

Great platform to research for speakers and Influencers.

Use Groups to research relevant industry discussions, inspiration for  
panels and event content.

### SALES

Make your network aware of the event. Soft sale is best , highlight  
the key reasons why someone should attend, who is the event for  
and a link to the website.

Use Groups for discounts and early bird specials.

Consider sending In-mails to potential attendees if there s a very  
close match.

### EVENT ENGAGEMENT

Post a 'sum up' article on Groups or Pulse , or a link to it, with the  
highlights of the event.

Ask attendees to connect their LinkedIn profile on your app or regis-  
tration system to allow better networking during the event.

### EVENT FEEDBACK

Great platform to distribute the event feedback survey and to get  
influencers insights.

# GOOGLE+

## PURPOSE OF THE PLATFORM

Worth to be explored for the direct correlation with SEO as it is a Google product. Offers custom event functionality with Google+ Events and Hangouts for online events.

## ANATOMY OF THE PERFECT UPDATE/POST

It includes a

**LINK.**

Around

**210 CHARACTERS.**

**HEADLINE**

with relevant keywords, catchy, useful.

Headline should be

**UNDER 60**

characters.<sup>10</sup>

Pay attention to the **FIRST SENTENCE**

as it is the one that will show up in the short version of the post.

Use **BOLD AND ITALICS**

to catch attention.

Prefer **PICTURES WITH LINKS**

over link sharing.

Ideal post length is

**442 CHARACTERS.**<sup>11</sup>

**PLUS+** people or brands relevant to the post.

Shared with **'PUBLIC'**

for maximum exposure.

## STATS



**18,44%**

of Event Planners use it.



**33,02%**

are interested to know more about this channel.

## ETIQUETTE

1. Don't post text only updates, offer a mix of media.
2. Use a more settled tone than in other Social Media.
3. Use +(name) to mention those involved on the post and the event.
4. Create adequate circles (i.e. sponsors, attendees, colleagues) to optimise engagement and community building.
5. Do not send direct updates to your followers as it is perceived as spam.
6. Do not auto add/invite all followers to your Event.
7. Use hashtags as you would on Twitter, search for the hashtag first on Google+ to see the one that best suits you.
8. Be consistent, post at least once a day from Monday to Friday.

## TYPES OF EVENT IT IS GOOD FOR

**Seminars**

**Award Cerimonies**

**Product launches**

**Meetings**

**Conferences**

**Networking Events**

**Association Meetings**

**Exhibitions**

## USES OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

Answer all comments received via this channel always starting with + and the user you are talking to.

Give a Community the opportunity ask general questions and answer FAQs about your event.

### MARKETING

Use Google+ Events to let followers know about the event and share it with their peers.

Use Google Hangouts to host pre-event chats with performers discussing their sessions.

Segment your audience in circles and send targeted messages.

Engage with with Google+ Communities to promote your event by means of content sharing and valuable discussion.

Ideal tool to amplify your current content strategy.

Start a Community and support it with valuable content but also offer promotions.

### PR/ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

It is a great platform to share press communications that affect the audience and the brand.

Identify, add to circles and get on the radar of influencers by using Google+ Ripples.<sup>12</sup>

### RESEARCH

Great to identify influencers and get highly engaged audience insights.

### SALES

Share selective updates to circles to move different segments along the funnel.

### EVENT ENGAGEMENT

Use Google Hangouts and Events on Air to broadcast your event live.

Selectively send attendees messages about the event.

Engage remote audiences with selective updates with links to presentations online and livestream.

### EVENT FEEDBACK

Analyse your event #hashtag posts and comments to get feedback.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.copyblogger.com/art-of-google-plus/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://blog.bufferapp.com/the-ideal-length-of-everything-online-according-to-science>

<sup>12</sup> <https://support.google.com/plus/answer/1713320?hl=en>

# BLOG

## PURPOSE OF THE PLATFORM

Your Blog is your event content homebase. The natural place to share all the news and content you are generating and promoting. Blogs should be preferred to any other social media because they are highly controllable and can be hosted on your domain.

## ANATOMY OF THE PERFECT UPDATE/POST

### WRITE CATCHY HEADLINES.

You will lose 38% of your audience on the headline<sup>13</sup>.

### Consider your KEYWORDS

in the title, body, and metas of your blog post.

### Break the post down into PARAGRAPHS

and **SUBHEADINGS**, to help the reader to skim through content.

### Choose a CATCHY IMAGE

and feature it on your homepage.

When the link is shared this image will be posted on Facebook, LinkedIn, G+ etc.

### Make it either brief (under 500 words)

or long **1,000/1,500** words.

### Set your posting pace

(can be once a week, a day)

but most importantly **STICK TO IT.**

### Finish up with a QUESTION OR REFLECTION

for the audience/readers.

## STATS



**25%**

of Event Planners create blog posts for their events.



**17%**

would like to learn more about it.

## ETIQUETTE

1. Respect Copyright for text and visual content.
2. Always respond to comments.
3. Use appropriate vocabulary, NO TYPOS! Triple check before pressing publish.
4. Do not overfill the post with keywords.
5. Offer the opportunity to comment on and share the article.
6. Always cite your sources, never plagiarize.
7. Provide a link to register to the event landing page when appropriate and in context with the post.

## TYPES OF EVENT IT IS GOOD FOR

Seminars

Award Cerimonies

Product launches

Festivals

Conferences

Trade Shows

Association Meetings

Exhibitions

## USES OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

Moderate comments on the blog and address them accordingly if comments are related to event information, rather than the topic of the post.

Post FAQs, directions to the venue, guides for first timers, try to anticipate customer needs.

### MARKETING

Your blog is an essential part of your content marketing strategy. Use the strong SEO power blogs have to deliver targeted content that get searched for on Google.

92% of companies that post regularly acquired a customer by their blog.<sup>14</sup>

Feature every possible news item about your event: Venue, Speakers, How to Guides, Tips for Attending, Tips to Get a Discount.

Engage with with Google+ Communities to promote your event by means of content sharing and valuable discussion.

Use multimedia capabilities of blog platforms to be visual and reduce attendance anxiety.

### PR/ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

A blog is like a magazine, like a news section where you can post all press releases and keep your audience updated.

It is a great platform to demonstrate thought leadership in the area and to influence your target to spend some time engaging with your brand (reading your articles).

Spread the word and increase awareness by reposting the article on other relevant social media platforms.

Use the blog posts key points/essence to write press releases to do some publicity around the event.

Get valuable insights into what most interests the public (articles most read, shared and commented) and harness these by highlighting them in future communications.

### RESEARCH

Great to get insights in audience engagement and interests by reviewing content that performed best.

### SALES

Selectively write content for different audiences in the sale funnel to convert them into sales.

### EVENT ENGAGEMENT

Use Live Blogging for content and media rich updates on your blog.

Post summary and recaps with generated media and results.

### EVENT FEEDBACK

Check for any comments left after the event on recap posts.

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/technology/2013/06/how\\_people\\_read\\_online\\_why\\_you\\_won\\_t\\_finish\\_this\\_article.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/technology/2013/06/how_people_read_online_why_you_won_t_finish_this_article.html)

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.hubspot.com/marketing-statisticsfinish\\_this\\_article.html](http://www.hubspot.com/marketing-statisticsfinish_this_article.html)

# PINTEREST

## PURPOSE OF THE PLATFORM

Social bookmarking site to amplify exposure and traffic by posting visual posts with the correspondent links. Great to inspire and get inspired for venue, merchandising, branding materials and decor.

## ANATOMY OF THE PERFECT UPDATE/POST

Decent **QUALITY** Picture.

Descriptive comments and **HASHTAGS**.

**BRIEF TITLE** and Brief description.

**LINK** related to the image, title and description

## STATS

Pinterest is used in



of Events.



of Event Planners are interested to learn more.

## ETIQUETTE

1. Don't infringe Copyrights.
2. Pick your images and videos carefully.
3. Place a meaningful and coherent link, what it shows in the picture and the description is what your audience is interested to land on, not on a spammy or 404 page.
4. Follow boards to keep on top of trends.
5. Choose the correct boards to place your pins i.e. don't place a Social Media Infographic on a Baking board.
6. Don't pin only your content, include other sources.
7. Don't overuse hashtags.

## TYPES OF EVENT IT IS GOOD FOR

Product launches

Trade shows

Festivals

Award Ceremonies

## USES OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

Post a Map of the Venue on How to get there.

Post a picture of the programme.

Post pictures of the speakers with links to their profile.

### MARKETING

Create a board for the event and place a picture with a link to all the relevant information at the event like, Speakers (link to bio and session), Programme (link to agenda), Venue (How to get there), local things to do and see - remember to use the event's hashtag on the description.

Use it for competitions and to stimulate user generated content. After the event you can post all relevant pictures to press releases, news and media produced about the event.

Use it to amplify your content marketing and to promote unique and valuable pieces of content.

Use keywords smartly to be searched.

### PR/ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Collect all the announcement of the event and news.

### RESEARCH

Great to find inspiration for catering, decoration and venues.

Good way to look for performers sessions and profiles.

### SALES

Make sure your event is pinned with a cool and engaging image and a clear CTA and description, for it to be found by those interested (remember to use hashtags).

The link here is key, keep an eye on the analytics to measure and optimise conversion once in the website.

Use it as well to promote merchandising or any event related products, with the correct link.

### EVENT ENGAGEMENT

Post relevant information to the event, like How to get there, venue, programme, sponsors, etc. so all attendees can refer to 'Your Event Board' to find all they need.

After the event post event highlights pictures, videos and presentation.

### EVENT FEEDBACK

Review which links reported most traffic to the site and audience behaviour when landing on the site through this media.

# INSTAGRAM

## PURPOSE OF THE PLATFORM

Media sharing site to share cool and professional looking pictures of the event (pre, on the day and post event) and 15 second videos with the corresponding hashtag and comment. Visual content generated by everyone involved in the event.

## ANATOMY OF THE PERFECT UPDATE/POST

Share **UNIQUE AND ENGAGING** pictures

If text is needed, use only **ONE THIRD** of the picture.

Use filters or dedicated editing apps to **EMBED PICTURES**.

Use hashtags to increase engagement **5 IS THE MAGIC NUMBER**.<sup>15</sup>

Keep picture **DESCRIPTION**, if needed, to a minimum.

Ask **QUESTIONS** to invite people to comment.

**GEOTAG** pictures to increase searchability.

## STATS



## ETIQUETTE

1. Selfies are quickly becoming overused. Use with caution.
2. Post behind the scenes content.
3. Respect Copyrights.
4. Don't overuse hashtags and research the best ones for your audience and content.
5. Encourage audiences to participate, especially during the event.
6. @ mention people involved.
7. Moderate comments.

## TYPES OF EVENT IT IS GOOD FOR

Concerts

Award Cerimonies

Product Launches

Festivals

Conferences

Trade Shows

Exhibitions

## USES OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

Monitor stream for potential compliments and complaints.

### MARKETING

Reduce attendance anxiety by posting pictures and videos of speakers, venue and backstage.

It will make attendees comfortable with purchasing a ticket.

Keep all pictures aligned with your brand and consistent with the rest of the marketing content.

### PR/ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Choose a brand style and image and stick to it, show your brand personality in images.

Be creative on the visuals for higher impact and retention.

### RESEARCH

Get a flare for the style and things your target audience like.

Search for venues and other events which have taken place at specific venues.

### SALES

Display merchandise and direct sale opportunities.

Use it for contest and special discounts.

### EVENT ENGAGEMENT

This is a great platform to show pictures and user generated content at events.

Use live to display all the pictures shared from the event.

Collect all the most relevant pictures and display them in your recap posts.

### EVENT FEEDBACK

See which visual content got the most engagement 'likes' to identify what your audience enjoyed the most. Check the feed for your event hashtag to find out what the highlights have been.

<sup>15</sup> <http://minimaxir.com/2014/03/hashtag-tag/>

# SLIDESHARE

## PURPOSE OF THE PLATFORM

Media sharing site to search for good speakers, session inspiration, share slides with the audience during/after the event and to share relevant eBooks. Great lead generation tool.

## ANATOMY OF THE PERFECT UPDATE/POST

Try to **ADAPT** speakers slides to Slideshare format (less words, more visual).

Optimize title, description and tags for **SEO**.

**CALL TO ACTION** or link at the beginning of the description.

Add it to the **RIGHT CATEGORY**, so it appears on the relevant searches.

Add **CALL TO ACTIONS** during and at the end of presentations.

Add the **HASHTAG** of the event.

## STATS



of Event Planners use it although 18% say that they use social media to share slides.

Just

**7%**



would like to learn more about it.

**32%**

## ETIQUETTE

1. Don't push purely promotional and salesy content.
2. Spend time on the title, make sure it contains the right keywords and that is designed with the audience in mind.
3. Longer content presentations tend to perform better, although remember quality before quantity.
4. Remember to pay attention to the resolution of the visuals of the presentation.
5. Do not fill the slides with too many call to actions and links.

## TYPES OF EVENT IT IS GOOD FOR

Seminars

Association meetings

Product launches

Meetings

Conferences

Exhibitions

## USES OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

Share presentations with attendees.

Share a presentation with tips and FAQs about your event.

### MARKETING

SlideShare is a great platform to promote your content and speakers.

Ask speakers to get involved and post presentations for your event or do it yourself.

### PR/ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Help build thought leadership for your brand and event, the focus here is in the content that will be delivered/has been delivered at the event.

### RESEARCH

The place to find great speakers and insights into topics covered at previous events.

Also great to benchmark content created at competing events.

### SALES

Great way to display your sponsor offering.

Use a lead generation tool to capture targeted leads.

### EVENT ENGAGEMENT

Share the presentations on SlideShare and encourage attendees to refer to those if they liked the content delivered.

### EVENT FEEDBACK

Check the number of shares, views and comments on the event slides to find out most popular topics and speakers.

# TUMBLR

## PURPOSE OF THE PLATFORM

Blogging platform to post visual, video, audio and text content and share with your audience, all in one stream and from different sources (other social media, email, browser, camera). Useful as the Event Blog and as an alternative to other Blogging platforms like Wordpress.

## ANATOMY OF THE PERFECT UPDATE/POST

Establish your **NICHE AUDIENCE.**

Less content intensive, more **PICTURE** oriented.

Choose a nice **THEME**, align it with your brand and start posting your content, always with the right Hashtags.

**REBLOG, LIKE, FOLLOW AND COMMENT** on other Tumblr accounts often.

**LINK BACK** to your website.

## STATS



use Tumblr at their events.

Less than

**3%**



are interested to know more about this new channel.

## ETIQUETTE

1. Respect copyright.
2. Tone of voice is funny and irreverent.
3. Post regularly but with the mantra "quality rather than quantity".
4. Manage comments, likes and shares regularly (especially on the day of the event).

## TYPES OF EVENT IT IS GOOD FOR

Seminars

Award Cerimonies

Meefings

Festivals

Conferences

Trade Shows

Exhibitions

## USES OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

Post relevant event related information in the format you use for this channel.

Moderate comments related to event information addressing them to the right sections within the event website.

### MARKETING

Tumblr is a great place to create funny and engaging quick posts with different media: It substitutes a blog for your content marketing.

It is a more direct form of communication.

It has a community component that helps networking and increasing views.

### SALES

Special promotions, contests to get tickets, quality content to engage current and potential attendees.

### EVENT ENGAGEMENT

Post live updates during the event, always align with your Tumblr page style.

Acknowledge your audience and highlight engaging content.

### EVENT FEEDBACK

Feedback on audience engagement at different stages and on different topics and updates. Also a great platform to distribute the event feedback forms.

## MAIN PARTNER



## SUPPORTING PARTNERS



# ABOUT THE AUTHORS



## JULIUS SOLARIS

Julius is the editor of EventManagerBlog.com. Started in 2007, EventManagerBlog.com is a popular blog worldwide for event professionals, covering topics such as event planning, social media and events, event technology, event trends.

Julius is the author of The Event App Bible, The Good Event Registration Guide and the Event App bible v2, three ebooks showing the results of unprecedented research efforts about event mobile apps and event registration and ticketing providers. More than 30,000 readers have downloaded the ebooks in few months.

In 2008, Julius started the Event Planning and Event Management LinkedIn Group. A few years later, with more than 220,000 members a team of 12 moderators, it has become the de-facto largest gathering of event professionals online.

Julius is a speaker for the event industry. Events he spoke at include Event Solutions 2014, Confex 2014, EIBTM 2013, Event Technology Conference, IMEX Las Vegas, Dubai ISES talks, Tech Fest 2013, Cvent's Corporate Meeting Summit 2013, Event Tech Circus Amsterdam, event 13, SMAU 2013, MPI Belgium Conference, EIBTM Barcelona, IMEX Frankfurt, Social Media Week Milan 2012, SMAU 2012 and he's been returning guest lecturer for Dublin City University's Business School.

Before becoming a 100% dedicated blogger and speaker, he worked as Social Media Consultant for FTSE250 companies in the UK. His last campaign won Econsultancy's The Digitals for Best Multi-channel Marketing Campaign.

## CONTRIBUTORS

### CATHY KEY

They say it takes 10,000 hours to become a master at something. Dr Cathy Key has done well over 10,000 hours in the event technology industry, working side-by-side with meeting planners and building her own successful conference software.

Cathy is now an independent consultant and writer for Event Manager Blog. Her popular articles cover everything from event marketing and the psychology of events to social media tactics. Her business, Melting Point Media, focuses on helping businesses and event planners with their strategic planning and communications. Follow her on twitter @drCathyKey.

### TRACI BROWNE

Traci, owner of Red Cedar Marketing & Events, spent the last 15 years in the trade show industry.

Part of that time was spent producing her own expos and conferences. Now her time is spent teaching exhibitors how to get more from their trade show marketing dollars and helping trade show and conference producers structure their shows to make their sponsors, exhibitors and attendees happier.

Traci is the author of “The Social Trade Show - Leveraging Social Media and Virtual Events to Connect With Your Customers.”

# CREDITS

This guide could have not been possible without the help of an incredible team of people.

I would like to thank:



**Carmen Boscolo** - for making the whole project happen.



**Raquel Roura** - for project managing everything, and everyone



**Beatrice Tagliaferri** - for designing the cover, social media cards and ebook layout.



**Cathy Key** - of [meltingpointmedia.com](http://meltingpointmedia.com) for the invaluable writing and editing contribution.



**Traci Browne** - of [RedCedar Marketing & Events](http://RedCedarMarketing.com) for sharing her amazing Tradeshow and Social Media knowledge.



**Anne Thornley-Brown** - of [Executive Oasis](http://ExecutiveOasis.com), for coordinating the research on the Social Media Cards.



**Dahlia El Gazzar** - of [The Meeting Pool](http://TheMeetingPool.com) for providing valuable insights into the ebook



**Becki Cross** - of [Events Northern](http://EventsNorthern.com), for proofreading and validating the content of the ebook

All those who participated in our questionnaires including the LinkedIn group and those who submitted a case study.

Our Sponsors - for making the report happen.

# DISCLAIMER

This report is based on a research carried out between July and August 2014.

While we tried to represent social media service providers to the best of our abilities we strongly suggest you visit their websites or contact them directly for a more accurate representation of the services offered. We expressly disclaim any liability by reason of inaccurate source materials.

If you are a provider and would like to communicate misrepresentation of your features or report inaccurate data in this report, you can do so by emailing julius at eventmanagerblog dot com.

We cannot guarantee immediate amendments or state when an updated version of the report will be disclosed.

While this report has been sponsored by those companies featured in the ebook as Advertisers, the analysis is completely unbiased.

If you wish to sponsor our future publications, or receive sponsorship opportunity notifications, get in touch with “carmen at eventmanagerblog dot com”

*Release Date: 19 November 2014*



# SHOWthemes

YOUR EVENT DOES NOT HAVE TO SUCK  
**BUILD YOUR WEBSITE NOW**

FROM  
**79\$**

SHOWthemes

## WordPress Theme Event Professional

If you need an event website look no further. Our Premium Event WordPress Themes give you the all in one solution. Awesome events around the world use our Event WordPress Themes.

SEE OUR THEMES

### OUR WORDPRESS EVENT

We offer solutions for all kinds of events. Multiple events, Complex Schedules, Speakers Management.

ALL THEMES MULTIPLE EVENTS SINGLE EVENT

