

BOOST YOUR EVENT WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Your business has a Facebook page, a Twitter account and a LinkedIn presence. Depending on your market, you might also be on Tumblr, Instagram, Pinterest, Google+ or any other social networks. It's a great way to engage with your clients and prospects on a day to day basis and ensures you're kept front of mind.

By adopting social media best practices at events, your business can further stimulate engagement, rally attendees, increase positive brand association, grow your audience and sustain the event buzz long after the event has finished.

The first thing to ensure is that you're communicating with your audience on the right channel. Each network has its own character, which affects the kind of material shared and how likely the audience is to publicly associate with your event.



HOW AND WHEN TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA

Build the buzz

Creating pre-launch content, which gives people a flavour of what they'll experience at the event, is a cost effective way to engage with prospective clients. You can also use social media presence as a great tool to draw people to a public event. Start your promotion early to build anticipation using teasers and releasing event info. Talk about your speakers, team sporting heroes, special guests or VIPs who will be attending.



However much people like the idea of your event, most will leave it until the last possible moment to book their ticket. This can be stressful, particularly if you have to pay venue and catering costs upfront and social media is a great way to connect on a regular basis to ensure you're front of mind. Remember your attendees could delay for a number of reasons, manager approval, family commitments, covering their role during absence to name but a few.

Increase the scope

Utilising social media on the day itself can enhance the attendee experience and ensure your event reaches a much wider, global audience. You can encourage them to post using your event hashtag and then use software that automatically pushes their post to screens at the event, sports match or concert.



Access all areas

Good use of social media during an event enhances the experience for the attendees in the room and can capture the attention of your entire market. A lively Twitter feed displayed on screens in the venue encourages audience participation, but it also gives those who didn't attend a tantalising glimpse of what they're missing out on.

A picture speaks a thousand words

User-generated images and video posted to Instagram or Facebook will capture what it's like to be on the inside, again providing a powerful message to those connected to people posting that they shouldn't miss out next time.

Make it fun

If you want to get people talking about your events, you need to do things that make you stand out.

Consider for example an Event Backdrop for a gala dinner. This is a great way to get everyone posing wearing their formal-best. The backdrop might use an amazing image, brand, message, promote sponsors or charity messages.

For informal events, consider a photo booth, where people could dress up in silly hats, crazy glasses and wigs. As well as encouraging people to have a bit of a fun, it will provide some fabulous photos of the event, which were shared on social media. Image filters seen on Snapchat are becoming increasingly popular too where interesting and fun additions are automatically added to the typical Selfie shot.

Pick a platform and supplier carefully

Social media platforms designed for use at events will help you extend the impact and influence outside the venue walls. Guests capturing and sharing their favourite moments, keynote insights or sporting goal via their social channels, enables your event to engage a worldwide audience.

Encore's social media platform, Event Feed, is a robust system that captures not just in-room and virtual event audiences' (e.g. via webcast) tweets, but also Facebook and Instagram posts through a dedicated hashtag. Posts can be moderated, which means you can be sure you're happy with what's going on screen. It can also cope with large numbers of posts or high resolution files. The other advantage of our system is that it offers a private feed function, which means that only the people in the room can see the posts. This is great for internal events, or events where you need to keep things private.

Create a sticky hashtag

Your hashtag is your key to ensuring that your attendees' posts are also being exposed to all of their social followers and means that posts are searchable. It allows you to organise content and track discussion topics based on those keywords. The four golden rules of an effective event hashtag is to make it unique, memorable, understandable at first glance (e.g. #TravelExpo2017) and lastly keep it short and simple.

Hashtags help event attendees organise their online conversations – about panels, speakers, ideas and opinions. These online conversations have become an important part of the life cycle of an event.



Share content from speakers or VIP guests

If you host an event with speakers, like a conference or fundraiser, you can tweet or post quotes or messages from speakers/VIP guests to encourage sharing. Make sure you tag the post with your event's hashtag and @-mentioning the speaker will help this content spread virally as well - both with event attendees and with anyone connected to them who is watching from home.

Monitor the haters

If you're concerned about the comments people might make, services like Event Feed provide you with options to moderate posts before they're posted to a main event screen, block profanity, block individual @users or to have a completely private feed that only attendees can access.

Post event

With all this user generated content from your engaged attendees, you've got a great opportunity to use this to your advantage. It might be used to show your boss ROI from the event, showing all the excited attendees, or for promotion of the event next year.

The day after an event – when attendees or delegates are feeling pumped up and inspired – is the ideal time to engage with people or even up-sell them to the next conference or another service you provide.

It's also a good time to get feedback from your attendees. You can use social media to promote your online survey or even set up polls to assess opinion.

What's Next

A new use of social media channels is live video, it seems everyone is a roving cameraman these days, the benefit to the event organiser is that these uploads often capture a special moment only witnessed by a few in person but then shared with the greater audience. Platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and Instagram have made it easy to live stream event and now even in virtual reality 360°.

A wrap

For attendees, delegates, prospects, fans and the like, social media offers the chance for more human interaction with your brands, or event message. And for brands it's about building better, deeper relationships. Social media helps to build relationships, and those relationships, build a stronger business by word-of-mouth (or by word-of-post!).



MORE INFO

Speak to your local Encore representative or get in touch by emailing info@encore-anzpac.com or call 1800 209 099 (AU) or +64 9 259 0025 (NZ).