

Top 7 Trends For Your Event Success



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1. Facebook For Business

Facebook has undoubtedly become one of the biggest trends to be incorporated into business marketing and communications plans. With more than 500 million active users, Google has declared that facebook is the only competitor that they fear! It has become apparent the demographic of facebook users are no longer just uni students that are engaging in its practices merely for social reasons. Instead facebook has become an effective marketing opportunity for corporate brands with certain benefits for the events industry including increased brand awareness, increased press coverage, **increased event attendance rates** and even increased sales.

Exhibitor Media Group invited nearly 8,000 marketing professionals to participate in a Social Media in Marketing Survey and discovered the following statistics;

- Two-thirds of companies surveyed have used social media for marketing
- 90% claim that it holds “moderate” or even “limitless” potential

So why is this? Because social media sites like facebook provide you with the opportunity to present your business to an ever growing audience, engage in real time conversations, and reach your targeted audience by filtering through age, sex, location and industry. Facebook makes it easy to post information and links and direct traffic back to your main website. The introduction of the ‘like button’ has created a network of internet communication unlike nothing before...and best of all...IT’S FREE!

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font, set against a dark blue rectangular background.

With more than one million developers and entrepreneurs from more than 180 countries using facebook, it is unquestionable that corporate brands and marketing executives are definitely on the facebook bandwagon. Therefore in order to maintain your competitive edge, TFG recommend that you too create a facebook presence for your business (if you haven't already done so.)

A great way to get started is to check out this [video](#) from Crowd Conversion. It’s an entertaining and content rich video that is guaranteed to get you excited about your facebook page and what it can do for your lead generation.

If you would like to see some examples of successful facebook business pages to inspire you, then check out the pages below;

1. [PIZZA HUT](#)
2. [PRINGLES](#)
3. [COCA COLA](#)
4. [STARBUCKS](#)
5. [iTUNES](#)

2. Mobile Apps

Smart phones (iPhone, Blackberry) have become platforms for the meetings and events industry. Wireless broadband and advanced web browsers mean that delegates can now access multitudes of information at their fingertips.

Web developers have created **numerous applications dedicated to the events industry** with the following capabilities;

- [Display real time schedules and maps](#)
- [Browse through speakers bio's](#)
- [Download digital coupons/brochures/notes](#)
- [View online agenda's](#)
- [Integrate with social media platforms](#)
- [Exchange contact details](#)
- [Navigate yourself through an exhibition hall](#)
- [Liaise directly with hotel concierge via your phone](#)
- [Poll the audience or send questions to the speaker](#)

So why else should you embrace mobile applications?

- It eliminates paper! More and more clients are listing sustainability as an important component of their events. By integrating the use of mobile applications, you are keeping the event green.
- It has massive sponsorship opportunities – sponsors will appreciate the large exposure.
- Improved customer experience – It's interactive and in real time! Mobile apps create convenience without having to shuffle through papers and conference booklets.

What we are seeing is a significant force that could potentially change the entire events industry. Be sure to check out the links above and see how you can incorporate mobile applications into your next event!



3. Green Events

It is a known fact that the events industry is often criticised for its tendency to create waste. Therefore it is inevitable that the issue of sustainability is becoming more than just a trend for our industry, but rather a necessity. So what information do event planners need to know before making the commitment to 'Go Green'? Read on to find out:

1. Many shades of Green

First of all, you need to understand that there are many shades of 'green'. i.e. people have different expectations of what exactly classifies as 'green'. While one client may be satisfied using recycled paper, another may demand an entire stage set built of sustainable material. Ensure that you do your research and understand what ethics and values are important to your client or key stakeholders, and ensure you are able to meet their needs.

2. People are not mind readers

If you make the decision to go green, you need to make it known! Be sure to include this fact in your event marketing. Show your stakeholders what you are doing to be more greener and how being more sustainable is of value for them! But make sure you follow it through. According to The Drum, 81% of consumers place more importance on what companies actually do rather than what they say.

3. Prices of premium green products are decreasing

A major obstacle for most companies in the past has been the extra cost associated with these green products. Well good news is, there are already some green products cheaper than the alternatives – such as branded paper products.

4. Be aware of the benefits

There are various benefits associated with going green. Some of these include;

- Reduced environmental impact
- Cost savings
- Competitive advantage / promotional benefits
- Stakeholder satisfaction

Bottom line – going green has economic, cost saving, environmental and social benefits.

5. Process makes perfect!

When going green it is important you establish commitment. Develop realistic guidelines / objectives (eg. all of our events for this year will use recycled conference bags) and communicate these promises to your staff and stakeholders.

It seems that green is the new black. By going green, you are not only ensuring the longevity of our planet, but also that of our profession.



4. Cost Effective Solutions

One of the challenges working in the events industry, is the expectation to produce a quality event that goes beyond your clients expectations.

An even bigger challenge, is trying to create that vision and 'wow' factor for a client with these same high expectations...but a small budget.

So what do you do? Besides go into panic mode and scream how!?! Take the time to think logically about cheaper alternatives – that could possibly create a similar result!

Here a few ideas that TFG have used – and have worked!

1. Use student volunteers – never under estimate the skills of students that are passionate towards their areas of study. For example performing arts high schools are great for recruiting entertainment – whether it be dancers, singers, bands, or roving actors. They are at those schools for a reason – they have talent...that along with their passion, dedication and professional training, means that you won't be disappointed. Eg. McDonald College – they are the performing arts stars of tomorrow, so why not recruit them for a small fee...five years time you may be paying \$20,000 for the same performance!



2. Use food for theming – regardless of your budget people still need to eat – so why not combine this with your theming to minimise cost! You can create simple yet stunning centrepieces with fruit, have a colour theme such as only orange desserts at a Halloween party, or serve only seafood at an under the sea themed dinner! Eg. Summer of Love Dockside party used succulent, refreshing berries in tall glasses which reflected summer, but also created a beautiful display.



3. Use lighting – strategically positioned lighting can add a professional touch to any event – simply adding coloured lighting can totally reinvent a space and create a dramatic 'wow' factor. Simple effects can make a significant impact! Ever heard of the saying 'smoke and mirrors'?



These are just a few ideas of how you can create a grade A event with a grade C budget, but if you really think about it – the possibilities are endless. The bottom line is, if you are a truly professional event manager you can deliver an amazing effect for any budget!

5. Videos + Viral Marketing

Long gone are the days of reading one page biographies and hoping that a session will meet your expectations. Now your audience can see, hear and experience your speaker with the simple click of a button, in a much more engaging and interactive way than ever before.

So what are the other added bonuses of communicating to your potential delegates in this format? Here are 4 good reasons;

1. By experiencing a speaker first hand (even if it is only a short 30 sec video), delegates will be much more inclined to register and attend your event. It will ensure that there is the right fit between your speaker and the audience, and is a great tool for helping delegates select which sessions they would like to attend.

2. Keeping up with the latest technology implies that your event will also have this same forward thinking. It adds a fresh perspective to the traditional format.

3. Social media/viral marketing enables delegates to post and 'like' your speaker video. This powerful use of the internet means that any social media action spreads to your delegates friends, and then their friends friends, and on and on it goes. You can post the videos to websites, blogs, newsletters, emails...allowing you the ability to expand your potential audience by multitudes! This can help create a HUGE buzz pre-event.

4. Use this buzz as a draw card for sponsors and major partners. Help build a community which can be carried though to the event and even continue post event as well. People want to be a part of what everyone else is talking about – and if this is somehow linked to your event then you have some great marketing and PR opportunities!

Here is an example of a great [speaker video](#) from our friends at Oventions.



6. Live Feeds / Twitter Hash

Twitter and other social media platforms are undeniably changing the nature of presentations. Real-time communications are now shared between the speaker, the audience, and others that aren't even in the room – with the added comfort of being able to sit passively in the audience! Twitter makes it easy to engage, there is a risk of humiliation however what people are finding, is that what often results is an honest, productive and content rich conference or presentation.

Here are some examples of how to incorporate tweet-mania into your next conference or presentation;

1. Set-up a hashtag on twitter and hook it up as a live feed via a big screen/s (ensuring that both you and the audience have clear visibility). Begin your presentation with a slide listing your name, title of your presentation, your twitter username and the event hashtag. Announce to your delegates that tweeting throughout the presentation is encouraged!

2. Twitter feed – to get them started, ask the audience to introduce themselves via the twitter feed. This will enable delegates to get an understanding of who is around them and the general demographic (a great way to do this is by starting with a poll – ask delegates questions and help break the ice, or ask them to tweet three words that describe how they are feeling, or what they would like to hear about in this presentation – the possibilities are endless!)

3. Encourage your audience to ask questions and make comments throughout your presentation! Make your time together as productive as possible and give them the content and answers they want to hear! Don't underestimate the intelligence of your audience – they might have some useful points and insights!

4. Invite other specialists to tweet throughout your presentation for that added credibility – delegates will appreciate the extra expertise and professional opinions! (Also invite delegates that could not physically be in the room to participate)

5. Make a pdf of the twitterstream – ensure your audience that everything is recorded and that you will respond to any questions/tweets you missed after the presentation. It's also a great way to capture leads and for the audience to receive everyone's combined notes/thoughts/questions from the presentation!

It appears that twitter can enable an audience to engage with the content and possibly focus more at conferences!



7. Interactive Technology

iPad

With a revolutionary, 9.7 inch touch screen, and amazing apps, the iPad does things no tablet PC, notebook, or e-reader can do. So how can the events industry benefit from this technology? Here are a few ideas:

1. Proposals and presentations – with a ten hour battery life, you don't need to worry about setting up power or fiddling with internet connections.

2. Exhibition stands / displaying products – the iPad produces exceptional quality images. The touch screen makes it easy for scanning through various images like an interactive brochure.

3. Showing client stings/ opening videos – the video interface is just like the iPhone's video interface, with options for bookmarking, fast-forwarding, rewinding, etc. Oh, and it plays video in HD.

4. During committee meetings – If something needs to be researched, you can easily pull out your iPad and access the internet immediately during your meeting.

5. Site inspection – Google Maps runs on the iPad just as it does on the iPhone, but of course larger and clearer. This could be a handy tool at your next site inspection!



Touch Screen Technology – Microsoft Surface

Microsoft Surface - a surface that recognises physical objects from a paintbrush to a mobile phone and allows hands-on, direct control of content such as photos, music and maps. Surface can be found in clubs, restaurants and hotels. Click [here](#) to head to their website and watch the demo videos.



iShadow

Levy Lighting in the US launched iShadow – a type of interactive lighting projection. Click [here](#) to watch a video showcasing this amazing technology:



Web based software

The web allows event managers to exchange multitudes of information with delegates, suppliers and clients in an accurate and efficient manner. Whether it be the incorporation of web-based event registration software or teleconference hosting websites, the amount of rich applications means that there is software for basically every component of event management. Click [here](#) to see a list of over 1400 categorised web-based meeting technologies.

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If you need assistance with your event planning, [TFG](#) are here to provide solutions. Whether that be through providing overall project management or recommending the necessary tool for you to implement to ensure successful events.

We help your event work smarter for you!

If you require any assistance with the planning of your event, please feel free to contact [The Forum Group](#) on the details above.