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Case studies

Seven great examples of live events in B2B marketing



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EI Global B2B Media Intelligence



Introduction

Are you trying to attract senior executives to come to your latest event? Well, guess what – so is everyone else. And as companies tighten their budgets, and regulators put the squeeze on corporate hospitality, you need something really special to make your event stand out in a bulging inbox of invitations.

But how do you grab the attention of these time-poor, highly demanding individuals? The following seven case studies – shortlisted in the Best use of live event marketing category at 2016's B2B Marketing Awards – demonstrate what the top B2B organisations have done to pique the interest of their target audiences, from innovative invitations to delivering memorable experiences for delegates.

There'll be ideas for you to take away on how to:

- Break convention
- Deliver sector-specific content
- Create revolutionary experiences that are a first for your industry
- Use innovative storytelling to transform your venue
- Be flexible towards industry changes to be more agile than competitors
- Excite audiences with solutions to challenges they want to win.

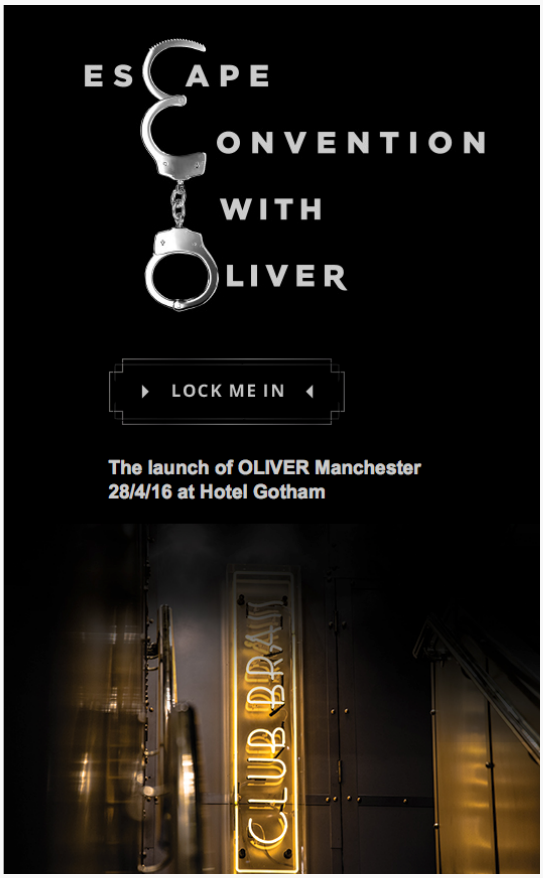
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Cut through the noise with unconventional ideas







C-suite marketers are constantly bombarded with agency requests looking for business. Inhouse agency specialist Oliver cut through the noise by creating the intriguing Escape Convention to launch its Manchester office. The invitations included a pair of handcuffs, urging senior marketers to 'lock in' to the event by registering online. The event challenged attendees to escape from a locked room through communication, collaboration and teamwork with Oliver staff. Oliver used an unconventional activity aligned to its new business model for marketers, which encourages client and agency collaboration to unlock creative potential and deliver better marketing faster and more cost effectively.

By linking the premise of the event to company philosophy in a clever, unconventional way, Oliver gathered senior clients from leading brands in Manchester and North West England, and raised awareness of its presence in the region. Following the success of the event, Oliver was invited to pitch on major accounts, secured 20 follow-up meetings after being in existence in the region for only three months, and received trade press coverage with an estimated value of £124,000.

Use technology to create an experience



If yours is a conservative industry that's not very creative when it comes to event marketing, use a transformational event strategy that focuses on experience.

Key Technology provided an immersive experience using mobile and video innovations at a major industry event, the Pack Expo, to drive awareness of its new food processing technology and position it as 'transformational intelligence'.

The firm achieved an innovative breakthrough in B2B event marketing by taking a massive booth that was visible across the entire show floor and using 360-degree virtual reality (VR) to place customers inside the sorters, so that they could experience the journey of their food as it's processed. It was the first time a B2B food technology company had used VR, and the first time customers and prospects could see the new sorting platform from the inside.

The experience was captured on video and shared on YouTube after the event.

The pre-event teaser campaign's response rates were 300 times higher than the industry average and lead generation was 25% higher than the average at this event. Key Technology generated two-thirds of its projected leads in the first two weeks following the event, and achieved 120% of its target leads within four months.

Break with tradition to deliver the unexpected









To celebrate its 25th anniversary, construction firm Mace gathered 2600 of its UK employees for an evening of networking and entertainment – reflecting on the company's journey and looking to the future.

To build the right venue and experience, Mace broke with company tradition. Instead of talking about the company's challenges and successes in its end-of-year video, a film followed 'The Adventurer' – the name given to Mace's anniversary baton – around the world, and showed employees singing and dancing in front of iconic Mace projects. Following a presentation from the CEO, guests explored 'Mace World', which included a performance by the rock band Razorlight, a casino and a safari scene complete with life-size animal models.

To keep employees engaged in the run up to the event, teaser information was drip-fed via email. The event's performance exceeded the company's targets on all the statements fed back from attendees, with 95% stating the overall quality of the event was good or excellent. However, ROI was more than just numbers, and this was demonstrated by excellent testimonials from those in attendance.

Go industry-specific to capture the c-suite's attention







Cyber security has become a boardroom issue due to high-profile data breaches. The challenge for cyber security services provider SecureData was to provide deeper insights into its solutions and threat detection capabilities to a c-level audience in an engaging way, to drive leads and sales, and maximise brand awareness and credibility. This was especially difficult across different markets that each face subtly different cyber security challenges.

To capture the attention of the c-suite from key sectors, SecureData created a series of industry-specific promotional flyers and shared these on the microsite for its 'Security Focuses' thought leadership event, in segmented emails and on social media, and used the breakout sessions at the event to highlight its expertise in providing specific guidance for each sector.

After the event, the site became a content hub, with videos, guides, infographics and reports, including the Towards Threat Wisdom research it produced with IDC, which an IDC analyst presented at the event. The report provided a hook that secured the presence of high-profile journalists, which was later covered in 17 publications. SecureData followed up with attendees to promote downloadable content and a free cyber consultation.

The event gathered 120 delegates from the cybersecurity industry, more than half of whom were c-suite or other senior decision-makers. More than 3200 unique visitors consumed the microsite content, and traffic to the company's website increased by 37% compared with the previous year. SecureData secured seven new clients, as well as 11 new projects from existing clients.

Transform your venue through innovative storytelling









Law firm Berwin Leighton Paisner (BLP) used innovative storytelling and event production to build relationships with real estate decision-makers, improve the sentiment toward its brand and overcome unfavourable competitive positioning.

The law firm demonstrated the breadth of its real estate capability, including services clients were unfamiliar with, and showed it had more top-ranked real estate lawyers than competitors who were marketing heavily and claiming to be more experienced.

At the educational seminar BLP used a 3D light show to tell a legal story for the first time: the fictional story of Bill Dings and the most ambitious real estate development in London. The educational seminar included BLP real estate lawyers guiding guests on how to deal with the top 10 legal risks.

The venue was initially designed to look like a construction site, and while delegates enjoyed the light show and seminar in a separate room, BLP transformed the venue into an ice bar. This transformation mirrored the story, and the innovative approach to storytelling aligned with BLP's core values of innovation and problem-solving.

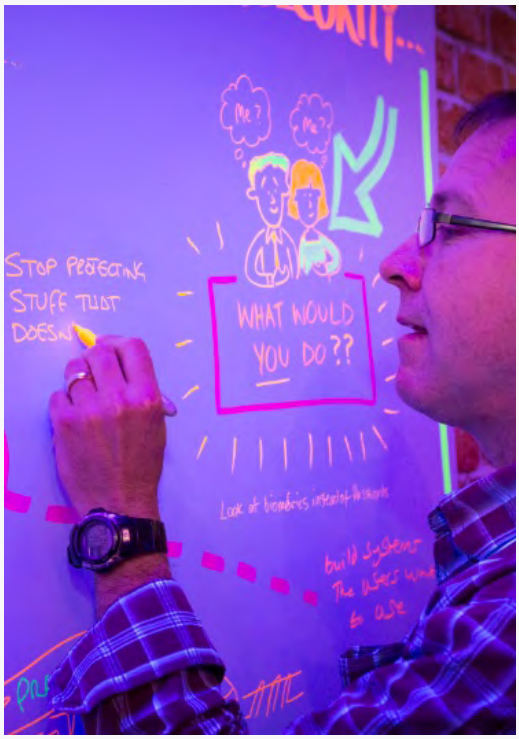
The event gathered 17% more attendees than BLP's target, and had a positive impact on buyer sentiment, with 94% indicating that they were more likely to consider using BLP in the future.

The event differentiated the brand and led to a significant number of new business opportunities within days.

Create a participative environment







A drastic departure from the expected is a huge risk, but can have impressive outcomes if done at the right time. The changing tech landscape and the rise of cyber threats inspired GCHQ's approach to depart from traditional government technology events with its CYBERUK in Practice conference.

GCHQ needed to communicate its new ethos of openness, collaboration and discussion on UK cybersecurity with the technology and tech developer community. The organisation fostered a more relaxed atmosphere than would be typical of a government tech event by switching the dress code from 'smart business attire' to 'smart casual', and making the programme fun and interactive.

So-called 'lightning talks' allowed delegates to give short presentations on a 'spotlight stage', giving them ownership of the agenda. A graphic artist created artwork from delegate insights, attendees pinned their thoughts on an 'ideas and challenges' board, and participated in a session in which they could ask a GCHQ director a question when music stopped playing.

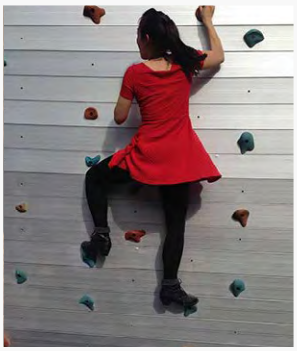
A live Twitter wall captured everything that happened at the event, and its hashtag #CYBERUK became a trending topic. The event received overwhelmingly positive feedback, earning an impressive 98% delegate satisfaction score, as attendees favoured the more participative environment and GCHQ's open, collaborative approach in tackling a rising problem.

Challenge your audience through competition











To overcome strong competition in the market, you need a creative hook. Sophos was challenged by a lack of brand awareness compared with its more well-known rivals, who regularly ran events to incentivise partners to sell their products.

In response, Sophos launched the Discover Sophos Partner Tour, a roadshow of 15 events aimed at channel partners and end users. Each event included training sessions and a 'five peaks challenge,' where attendees participated in five adventurous activities like a revolving climbing wall and a skiing game. The quirky nature of these games and events made partner engagement more effective.

Sophos marketed the event through internal and external communications to channel partners' sales and marketing teams, including emails for partners to send to their customers – the end users. Social media was used to engage the 'challenge' aspect of the events, as sales teams were encouraged to post photos of colleagues completing the five peak challenge, and tweeters won prizes.

Through this campaign, Sophos trained 600 sales people in 15 locations, generated over £1 million in sales and was shortlisted for a CRN Award, achieving exceptional ROI in a challenging, competitive environment with a hard-to-engage audience. It's an excellent example of a company that saw a challenge and used it to its advantage by coming up with an exciting hook.

Step back and take a fresh look



Tony Jarvis
MD and co-founder,
EI Advisory

While things like robotics and AI are merrily disrupting the world before our eyes, in the B2B space at least, people still definitely buy from people.

As long as interpersonal business relationships remain critical, then so too must be getting your events strategy right. This is easier said than done. When the business agenda is applied to any given calendar year, a multi-coloured planning spreadsheet quickly becomes a dizzying array of proprietary events, external conferences, tradeshows, webinars and dinners, with marketers often moving from one to the next at breakneck speed. It's all too easy to then fall into execution-only mode – and that's when the cracks begin to show.

Conversely, by stepping back and taking a fresh look at what is the real need to convene people, and then addressing that need directly with an equal blend of both creativity and diligence, great things can happen.

These shortlisted entries have achieved just that. They all show excellence in really connecting with the audience and they all have applied their idea to their master plan with aplomb. That's what makes the difference and provides inspiration for us all to learn from.

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About B2B Marketing

About the B2B Marketing Awards

Now in its 13th year, the B2B Marketing Awards is the largest and most prestigious event in the B2B marketing calendar.

A celebration of all those who are transforming the landscape and possibilities of B2B marketing, the awards showcase outstanding work, talent and results from our industry.

Any organisation in the world can enter and win – whether agency side or client side, start-up or SME, established brand or international corporation. Over 800 guests and shortlisted companies will come together to share one amazing and inspiring night at the ceremony in London on 23 November.

To find out more go to b2bmarketing.net/awards

About B2B Marketing

Established more than 12 years ago, we are the number one go-to resource for B2B marketers across the globe.

Through our content hub and professional development services – including events, training and networking – B2B Marketing users are empowered with the tools, insight and inspiration they need.

Our promise to you

Things change fast in B2B and staying on top of these changes can be a full-time job. So, we do that job for you.

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- Put your best ever strategies in place
- Lock down the multiple skills, tools and insights you need
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- **Bespoke training** for marketing teams (UK only)
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About EI

EI Advisory offers B2B media intelligence services to global organisations, giving independent analysis and insight to clients, based on primary research and years of expertise in media markets.

EI specialises in financial services, tech and professional services, and works to identify the best opportunities for B2B marketers across events, broad business media, trade press and associations, compiling these into an integrated, year-round marketing campaign. In doing so, EI helps clients achieve their goals, be it thought leadership, brand awareness or lead generation.

In addition to its research and reporting, EI Advisory also offers negotiation services, sponsorship activation and programme management. Ultimately, EI works to help clients execute effective sponsored content campaigns across media channels, providing them with the best opportunities to reach and engage with their audience in a meaningful way.

Call Tony Jarvis on +44 (0)207 291 9142 or email him at tony.jarvis@ei-a.com

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Contact us

B2B Marketing
Clover House
147–149 Farringdon Road
London
EC1R 3HN

Tel: +44 (0)20 7014 4920
info@b2bmarketing.net
b2bmarketing.net