Maximise event marketing performance with IP tracking

EVENT MARKETING IN 2013

Is event marketing outdated in the era of all things digital? Stats from the Marketingsherpa reports that 72% of B2B marketers believe that events still pack a punch and the Outlook report found 41.5% of those surveyed have increased their event budget for 2013. So how do you maximise event performance in the current climate?

Exhibitions and events require significant investment and substantial planning to ensure they are executed to perfection. But businesses shouldn't shy away from them, according to the Event Marketing Institute the top reasons for saying yes to events are:

- GENERATING LEADS AND SALES
- RAISING BRAND AWARENESS
- ENABLING ENGAGEMENT WITH PROSPECTS AND EXISTING CUSTOMERS
- EDUCATING ATTENDEES

> 72% of B2B marketers believe that events still pack a punch

To get the best return from every one of your events you need to put plans in place for pre event, at event and post event activity and integrate it to the rest of your marketing efforts.

PRE-EVENT

Whilst it's extremely important, when planning your event there is more to consider than the position and the design of your stand. Plans are needed for how you'll integrate the event or exhibition with the rest of your marketing activity to achieve the best possible traction from your investment.

Marketo undertake more events and exhibitions than most and put them at the heart of their marketing activity: 'Every business seeks to stand out from their competition, and event marketing can help you do just that... event marketing needs to be an integral part of the demand generation mix. After all, a strategic combination of online and offline marketing is essential to any company's bottom line.'

To integrate fully, consider each aspect of your current channel mix and identify opportunities to include messaging in your existing plans and generate new stand-alone activity promoting the event.

Email: ensure you tell both existing clients and prospects about upcoming events, incorporate messaging in newsletter style emails, add logo's and subtle messaging to signatures so it doesn't distract from the main message and also generate specific stand-alone emails to deploy nearer to the time that tell all your clients and prospects about the upcoming event.

Depending on your sponsorship level and the type of event you may also be able to acquire delegate lists of attendees and contact them prior to the event. You should consider inviting them to your stand, set up specific meetings and provide special offers to ensure they visit you.

Social: no doubt your current social media mix includes a range of activity including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, YouTube and Pinterest. Incorporate information about your upcoming events within this activity by including tweets with your stand details using a hashtag the organisers have set up or if they haven't done this create your own. Then share these tweets across the rest of your social platforms and get the rest of your employees to spread the word too.

News articles: create news articles for your website with details about the event, who should attend and information about your stand. This should include the benefits of visiting your stand like offering demonstrations, free prize draws and any special offers for delegates. Ensure the article links back to the organiser's website which will help your SEO and provide quick access if people want to register for the event.

Speaker sessions: these are a great way to get in front of more delegates, demonstrate your expertise on subject matters around your space and raise your brand awareness. Speaker sessions are also an opportunity to collect more delegate data to engage with post event and direct more traffic back to your stand.

Email Vision put a creative spin on this at the recent TFM&A 2013 event, where they did presentations every hour on their stand to audiences of 20 people at a time. The stand was designed specifically for this purpose with a comfortable seating area and large screens.

Advertising: there will be lots of advertising opportunities available to you as an exhibitor at an event, negotiate hard to include advertising within your stand package to get the best possible value for money and ensure any further advertising you undertake is prominent and measurable in terms of return on investment.

41.5% of those surveyed have increased their event budget in 2013

AT THE EVENT

How are you driving delegates to your stand? How will you make your business stand out against all your competitors and other businesses at the event?

Competitions: competitions are commonplace at events and exhibitions, traditionally business cards are dropped into a box for entry into a prize draw but more and more you need to take this to the next level to stand out.

Social media: social media is a great platform to further promote your presence at an event. Continue to use the event's hashtag in tweets, tweet pictures of your stand and prizes, details of competitions you're running including winner's details and any giveaways you have. Most importantly try to get people engaging with you on social to help spread the word.

Data capture: data capture is critical for events where you're generating leads for your business. Consider how you'll prioritise these leads through the sales funnel and lead nurturing back at the office when deciding how to categorise leads at the event so that they can be actioned quickly afterwards.

Data capture devices are great for quick capture of data and speedy input into a CRM system, but ensure you collect business cards and complete contact forms with notes too so that if worse-case scenario happens and the data from the device is lost, you have a back-up.

Staffing: ensure your staff attending the event are fully briefed and know exactly what is expected of them. This includes everything from the location of the event, travel arrangements and the time they need to be there to delegate demographics, who else is exhibiting, the timetable for any speaker sessions, particularly ones your business are involved with and how the data should be collected and managed.

POST EVENT

Leads should always be followed up from an event in a timely manner, so the lead management process for events and exhibitions is critical for success.

Ensure timelines and targets are put in place prior to the event for loading leads into the CRM, contacting them be it by phone or email and ensure full reporting is in place so that return on investment can be measured from the outset. The longer a lead is untouched, the less interested the prospect becomes, so once again ensure people at each stage are briefed fully and aware of their responsibilities and targets in this process.

And what about all the businesses that you've raised your brand awareness with, but you didn't have the chance to engage with at the event? It's impossible to talk to every business when you consider sheer volume of attendees (UBM's TFM&A and Internet World attract over 10,000 attendees each) and that 50% of delegates register but don't show up.

If delegates can't speak to you on the day, they'll visit your website, whether that's directly or through a link from the organiser's page. All businesses investing in events see an uplift in traffic during and after the event on their website, but with an average of only 2% of B2B website visitors completing a contact form when visiting a company's site, there is a huge pool of opportunity being missed.

Event marketing needs to be an integral part of the demand generation mix

LOST LEADS

You may think if they really wanted your services they would fill out a contact form on your website, send an email or even pick up the phone so it's not important. But what if they don't? They may have planned to do it later and forgotten, or asked someone else to do it, so it's not necessarily because they're not interested.

They could be strong prospects that really like your proposition, but they've then gone on to several of your competitor's websites and had a look around those too. Don't you want to catch them whilst the information is fresh in their mind and you're associated with an event they attended or registered for? Before one of your competitors contact them instead? It's an opportunity to increase the return on investment from the event you invested so much time, effort and budget into by generating more sales leads.

BASIC SOLUTION

There are several companies that offer website tracking software, which identifies the businesses that have been on your website that don't enquire. For the information to be actionable this needs to be much more than an IP address and the best B2B solutions provide contact details of business visitors including: company name, telephone number and website address.

Only 2% of B2B website visitors complete a contact form

THE LEAD FORENSICS SOLUTION

The next generation of IP tracking tools takes this even further, providing in depth information about those visitors increase return on investment from all your marketing activity, including events.

The solution at Lead Forensics has been designed with one aim in mind. B2B lead generation. Not only can it identify basic company details like the company name, telephone number, address and website address, it also identifies the search term the prospect used to get to the website, which page they landed on and which pages they spent time on. Valuable additional information including the businesses turnover and their industry / SIC code allows users to easily identify which of their visitors are most valuable and target these first.

THE BENEFITS TO EVENT MARKETING

As this document outlines, event marketing is expensive and requires extensive planning with so many facets to consider. The Lead Forensics solution helps businesses maximise their return on investment by increasing the volume of actionable sales leads generated and continues to do so long after you've taken down your stand and the event is over.

As the information provided is so detailed, less time is spent researching the businesses visiting your website and more on converting them.

Lead Forensics also helps measure the effectiveness of all activity driving prospects to the website and increase conversion overall and is a vital tool for any business within the B2B space driving prospects to their website.

8 TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL EVENT

1. PLAN

Planning is critical for a successful event, set targets, train staff, review messaging and research exhibitors prior to the event.

2. HIT DISCOUNT DEADLINES

Take advantage of early bird discounts for events and exhibitions by booking your space early. When events are left to the last minute not only are they more difficult to execute effectively, they tend to cost more too.

3. STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

Give the audience a reason to seek you out, every exhibitor there is trying to engage with the audience too. Create a buzz around your stand both before the event using channels like social media and at the event draw visitors to your stand with competitions, giveaways and by launching new products, services or features.

4. STAFFING

Ensure you have the correct number of staff on your stand based on the size of the event, the size of your stand and expected footfall for the event. Whilst tricky to get right, too many staff can be intimidating for prospects and put them off approaching the stand, not enough staff means wasted opportunities.

5. KEEP CONVERSATIONS BRIEF

Keep conversations with prospects to five minutes or less, particularly at busy times when you have other people waiting at your stand. If a conversation is worth continuing schedule a follow up call or meeting, but don't keep people waiting on your stand, they won't wait forever.

6. REMEMBER RELEVANT CONVERSATIONS

At busy events it's easy to forget the details of a conversation, make sure your staff are briefed to log details of all the conversations they have so that the most relevant opportunities can be prioritised for follow up and key details of the conversation can be recalled.

7. FOLLOW UP

The lead management process for events and exhibitions is critical for success. Ensure all leads are followed up in a timely manner by putting timelines and targets in place prior to the event. The longer a lead sits there, the colder it becomes.

8. INCREASE ROI BY IDENTIFYING UNKNOWN WEBSITE VISITORS

Use IP tracking to maximise return on investment from events. Not everyone will come and visit your stand, but if they're interested in your product or service will visit your website. IP tracking allows you to identify the unknown visitors to your website and follow up these sales golden opportunities.

If you'd like any further information from Lead Forensics on how we can help you maximise the performance of your event please call 0207 206 7293

HERE'S WHAT THE EXPERTS HAVE TO SAY:

"It permits you to narrow your targets, be effective in who you're working with and know who your best potential customers are. Ultimately it increases your ROI."

Doug Richard, Dragons Den Investor and Entrepreneur

"Within a week of using Lead Forensics, we've already identified a significant prospect and have a meeting set up: that's gold dust for any marketing agency."

Chris Wilson, Ernest, Chair of ABBA

"Lead Forensics is the holy grail for B2B marketers."

Andrew Nicholson, Sodexo, B2B Marketing's Marketer of the Year