



amplify your event

How Savvy Marketers Leverage Social Media



the power of social

You know social media has become ubiquitous when you start getting Snapchats from your grandmother. Because just about everyone is using social media in both their personal and business lives — including your event attendees — it's time to rethink your social media strategy for events.

According to a survey conducted by Freeman and the Event Marketing Institute, only 16 percent of event marketers feel they're using social media "very effectively."¹ The set-it-and-forget-it model of pre-scheduling a few tweets per day no longer works because real people want real engagement while they are at a live event.

¹ Event Marketing Institute, *The Viral Impact of Events: Extending & Amplifying Event Reach via Social Media*, 2015

The savviest corporate marketers use the power of social media to amplify their key messages before, during, and after events. So how can you leverage social media to make your live events more engaging, more memorable, and more successful?

Check out these tips from the experts.



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start by setting goals and metrics



Naturally, the best marketers begin by setting goals and metrics early in the event planning process. These goals need to ladder up: to the overall event, to the bigger marketing goals, and, finally, to the organization's business objectives. Senior management expects a lot from marketing these days. They expect hard data that shows how your events impact the bottom line. Fuzzy, feel-good metrics like how many people visited the booth or how many people were having a good time don't cut it anymore.

Once goals are set, top marketers go beyond collecting data, such as site traffic or followers. They track number of badges sold through social media channels, time on page, time on site, exit rate, retweets, @mentions, overall engagement, and follower growth rate.

With these kinds of metrics, marketers not only see who is viewing their content, but how it's getting amplified across social networks through shares and retweets.

Right Channel, Right Time: All social channels are not created equal. Use appropriate channels for communications before, during, and post events — choose the social media channel that aligns with your audience's preferences. And don't forget email!

drive event attendance



The top three ways corporate event marketers use social media before their events:



Source: Event Marketing Institute

Before events, the top marketers are using social media to drive attendance. They start by matching the social media service to the audience. Who are they trying to reach? What social channels do these audiences frequent? Where do they get their information? Who are the influencers in these communities? The best marketers monitor what's going on in social channels to answer these questions. They make use of everything from the many free tools like Hootsuite or Google Alerts to paid media intelligence tools, all of which help you monitor the billions of bits of data out there.

Once they've identified the right channels, marketers build relationships with influencers who can help spread the word about upcoming events by sharing Facebook or LinkedIn posts, retweeting event-related tweets, and sharing links to blog posts promoting the events. These smart marketers also enlist their internal team members to help spread the word across their social communities.

Take a tip from social marketing best practices: Don't limit your social media strategy to Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Instead, constantly monitor the space to uncover emerging channels your audiences are visiting.

Create an easy way for registered attendees to tap into their social networks and invite colleagues to join you at the trade show. One way is to create a custom online show schedule for attendees to share.

Everyone is busier than ever, with less time to read articles or blog posts. So marketers look to channels like Snapchat, Instagram, Pinterest, and Periscope to post images, infographics, and video that supplement longer content.



Pre-Event Planning Best Practices

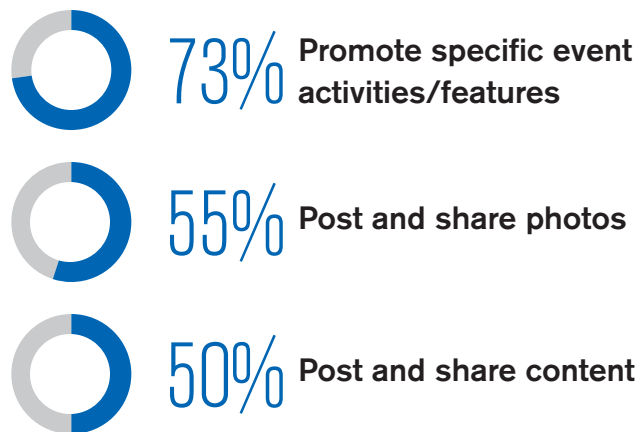
- **Measure Everything:** Companies that track social impact have an average of 7.8 million touches, communications, connections, and/or impressions.² Plan campaigns to drive data, then measure, analyze, and refine programs.
- **Pre-plan Content:** Have content that's almost fully baked. Presenters, exhibitors, and other partners can contribute content around key topics. Repurpose content into different formats for different channels. Immediacy is key when it comes to the intersection of live events and digital content.
- **Make It Easy:** Plan how your messages will play out over your social channels, and make it easy to share them with a single click. Keep headlines short and provocative. Program your social sharing tools so any forwards automatically include hashtags, as well as the brand or organizer handle.

² Event Marketing Institute, *The Viral Impact of Events: Extending & Amplifying Event Reach via Social Media*, 2015

personalize the attendee experience



The three ways top corporate event marketers leverage social media during events:



Source: Event Marketing Institute

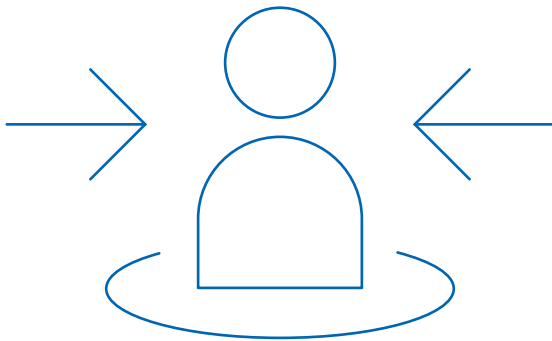
The best event marketers know that to give attendees an extraordinary experience, it needs to feel personal. Making it personal makes it more memorable and more relevant. It makes your attendees feel like the event was created for them and gives them exactly what they want — and then some.

Personalize the event experience by encouraging attendees to drive content and engage speakers by texting questions, comments, and answers to polls. Create poll questions that tie into the topic the presenter is discussing or other relevant points.

Hold contests. Have scavenger hunts. There are so many ways to spice up the experience and get attendees engaged. Get creative and have fun. The more fun it is for you, the more fun it will be for your attendees.

While most marketers will have a social media manager working from the home office distributing prepared content, the top marketers also have team members on-site who engage in real time with attendees, share posts and tweets, and respond to messages. Being able to respond in real time with something truly personalized could be a make-or-break moment for your brand on social media.

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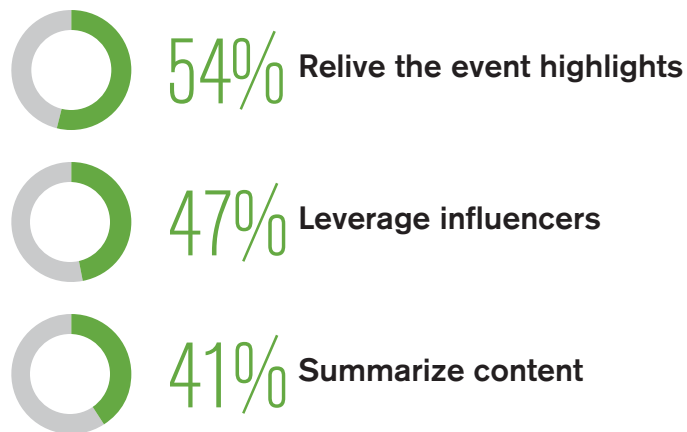
Live Event Best Practices

- **Deliver Value:** Develop social content tailored to the core needs of different audiences. Perhaps they want to be seen as influencers, cool hunters, thought leaders, industry connectors, or decision makers. Whatever “it” is, deliver on this value proposition. Social amplification won’t happen without the right message — whether educational, funny, provocative, or newsworthy.
- **Utilize Technology:** Live and mobile are the perfect combination. In addition, look for effective new second screen technologies to help amplify event content in real time.
- **Broaden Your Community:** Leverage influencers and event participants by bringing them into the fold early. Encourage VIP backstage experiences and guest posts to gain access to these thought leader networks. Crowdfunding is another way to get people to invest and share.

extend messages beyond the experience



The top three ways event marketers extend their reach with social media after an event:



Source: Event Marketing Institute

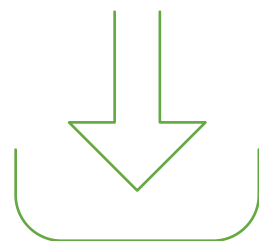
Marketers in the know provide additional content to attendees and non-attendees after an event to extend their reach. This added value can help solidify the messaging for attendees or drive interest in learning more and attending future events.

To amplify your key messages, post videos and photos from sessions or social events. Attendees can relive the emotion and excitement of shared moments, catch educational sessions they may have missed, or share what they found most valuable with their favorite social communities. These videos, photos, and posts can also help those who were unable to attend the event to participate virtually and experience the excitement.

Create event wrap-up posts and use influencers to spread your message across a wider social landscape. Have influencers write their own recaps of the event. An objective third-party perspective will add credibility to the value of your event for a broad audience that didn't attend, but could be potential attendees the next time your event rolls around.

You don't have to create everything yourself. Take a tip from the top marketers and curate video, photos, posts, and tweets from your attendees, speakers, and exhibitors, and share them on targeted social channels.

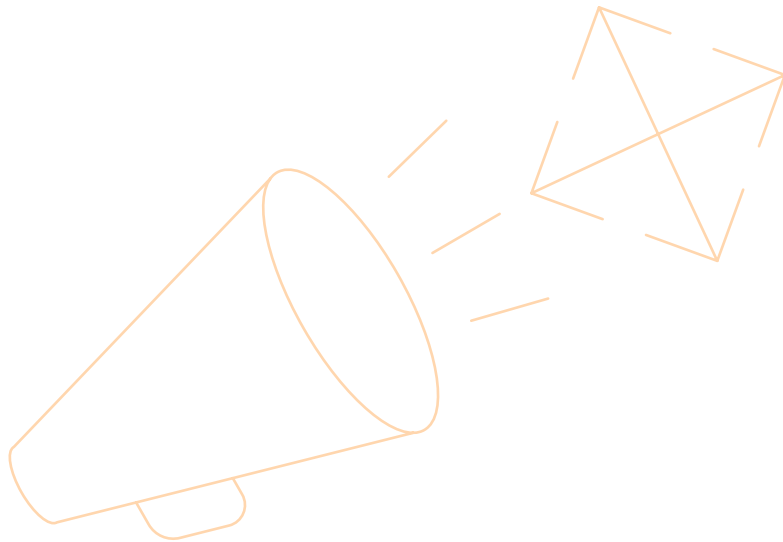
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Post-Event Best Practices

- **Create New Content.** Reference educational sessions, keynote speeches, and attendee experiences to create new blog posts, articles, infographics, and other content that can be shared on social media to create excitement around future events.
- **Use Your Influencers.** Partner with top influencers to have them share their event experience and amplify your message.

extend the reach of event messaging



Social media must work hand in hand with live events to help event marketers personalize the experience for attendees. Social media helps attendees share their experiences, become more intimately involved in the excitement, get more out of educational sessions, connect with others at the event, or extend their experience to friends in their social communities who can't attend. It makes the event more valuable.

Take a tip from the top marketers and leverage social media to help you spread the word and build the excitement before your event happens, provide that memorable experience to your attendees during your event, and then keep the excitement alive long after the event has ended.



magnify your message

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leverage the power of social
at your events, visit us at
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