

Why Events are Like Nails on a Chalkboard

You need to drive sales for a product or enhance your brand awareness, no problem, just do a webinar, seminar or conference. It all sounds so easy on paper. However, anyone who has had any level of involvement in designing, marketing or executing any type of educational event knows it is anything but easy. In fact the mere mention of the words “webinar, seminar, or conference” can elicit a reaction like nails on a chalkboard at many companies.

I have attended and managed from A to Z hundreds of webinars, dozens of seminars, and have developed 3 full blow educational conferences from A to Z. I know all too well the pain that events can bring, and want to offer some preventative medicine for event related ailments. The following are actions that cause event pain. You need to avoid them or be prepared to feel their wrath.

1. **The Ill-Conceived Event**- many events are designed without a clear idea of the objectives in having them, the content, the marketing strategy and associated spend, and how to measure the ROI of the event. If you move forward with an event without being clear on all fronts identified above you are exposing your company to event germs which can impact productivity at your company across multiple departments.
2. **Offering up a Weak Speaker**- nothing can derail the success of an event than a terrible speaker. First, some people are good speakers and others are just not up for it. Furthermore, even the best speakers can be derailed by being un-prepared and delivery poorly conceived content. Your company should vet each and every speaker that speaks on any of your events or on educational sessions on other’s events or conferences that have any association with our company name.
3. **Offering up Weak Content**- content is king and salesy and/or content without any depth are illnesses that no event can overcome. If your event or session has poor content the event or session will not be successful.
4. **The Off-Base Marketing Strategy**- many companies use “out of the box” marketing strategies for each and every event. Each event should have a clearly defined target audience with specific messaging and channels designed to engage this specific audience.
5. **Marketing Spend for the Sake of Spending**- each event is unique and just throwing money at an event does not work. I was able to drive an average webinar registration of several hundred senior level professionals for several hundred webinars. It is about the quality of the message and the delivery channel, not the marketing spend. Also, if you are sponsoring someone else’s event this can be a dangerous “money pit” if not done

with clear objectives. You need to put metrics of success around each of your event marketing programs.

6. **Not Knowing Your Audience**- although it is fun to use new and innovative marketing channels and social media to try and engage your target audience, this can lead to wasted resources. Your target audience may just not be quite ready to be engaged the way that you want to engage them. More importantly, when you are designing event content you need to focus on a problem, issues or concern that is important to your target audience and how what you offer will benefit them directly. If not, your event will not resonate and you will not meet the objectives of your event endeavors.
7. **Partnering with the Wrong Company**-there are many providers that will offer to help you deliver webinars and seminars for your company. If they do not know your target audience, are not able to engage them much more effectively than your company, and/or view you as a transaction other than a business partner, then you are not only wasting marketing dollars, but putting your company brand at risk.
8. **Being a Bad Event Partner**- not offering a company and/or consultants the information needed when it is needed so they can help you meet and exceed your expectations. These partners not only have your marketing dollars, but the reputation of your company in their hands. Knowing how to be a good customer is critical to getting the ROI you deserve for marketing dollar investments.

Educational programs done right can offer your company great ROI in driving top line revenue growth. Educational programs gone wrong can damage your company brand and derail productivity across your company.

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