



UNIT-3

Advertising and Marketing

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Design an advertising and marketing plan that includes a comprehensive use of media, take-aways, and/or swag bags

Unit 3

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Getting the Word Out

Small Events

Depending on the size of your event, you might need to do very little communicating with people. Smaller workplace based events are often managed with e-mail, using meeting requests sent through a calendar program like Outlook.

Mandatory Events

If you are arranging a mandatory event, make sure that the invitations specify why it is mandatory and have it endorsed by a workplace leader (such as a manager, director, vice president, or CEO) or your human resources department. If you are perceived as a planner ordering people to attend, it's very likely that some people won't show up, and that's no good.

Even for mandatory events, which you might assume people will add to their calendar, it is worth your efforts to send out a couple of reminders about the event. Be sure to emphasize the benefits of attending, who the speaker is, or what the event is all about. If you are arranging a meeting, it can be helpful to send a copy of the agenda to everyone 24-48 hours before the event gets underway. (24 hours is fine if participants have no preparation to do. They will need more time if there is reading, research, or tasks to be completed before the start time.)

Large Events

Larger events generally require more contact with potential delegates. Touch number one is when they receive your first e-mail, brochure, or perhaps a phone call. As registrations start to arrive, you can arrange for your registration team to process them while you or the marketing team arrange for additional touches.

You don't need to harass your potential delegates, but you want to let them know what is happening. Use different approaches to reach people, since some will read your e-mails, some will connect to you through a website, and others will read a glossy brochure that is addressed to them. Essentially, you want to touch your clients as many times as it takes to make a decision, without scaring them off. (Remember that if there is a fee for your event, they may have to get approval to spend the money.)

If you are planning a large social type of gathering (such as a long service anniversary or retirement) that delegates attend for no charge, you can sometimes get away with as few as three touches. For other events, such as a conference where delegates pay a fee and attendance is not mandatory, you may need eight to twelve touches.

Essentially you want to communicate as often as you can afford and in the best way possible. If you can, ask other people in the same business what they have done to reach as many delegates as possible. Make sure that your marketing plan communicates with people frequently, at appropriate times, and without becoming annoying (which will turn potential delegates away). Detail it with your event planning worksheet.

Take-Away Planning

We're including take-aways (also referred to as "swag") in the marketing section because the goodies that someone finds in their take-away bag really are an extension of your marketing and the brand associated with your event.

When you start planning what is going into swag bags, think about it carefully. The goal is not for people to take the bag home and throw it away, although this is what frequently happens. Sometimes event coordinators are so keen to get whatever they can in the bag, they accept donations of everything that is offered. In a practical sense, this is reasonable: we always have tight budgets, and so when we ask the boss for a donation and he offers a package of golf tees, we graciously say thank you. However, if the event that you are arranging is for 300 administrative assistants and only 5% of them golf, you might be missing the mark. They may give the golf tees away, so they won't be wasted, but they may also be shaking their heads about you and wondering why you didn't find something that they would like.

People attending your events want to be the center of attention. Whether they pay to attend your event or not, they want to be acknowledged. Usually, however, the center of attention is the keynote speaker, one special guest, or sometimes the event planner.

A typical swag bag might include a copy of the keynote speaker's most recent book or a postcard advertising the book. Then there is a postcard advertising the hotel where the event is being held. Another postcard advertises a sponsor and a bookmark lists all the partners of the event. A thick binder of materials accompanies the bag. This requires that people juggle a bag, a binder, and a cup of coffee, all within the confines of the conference room table.

We want to challenge you to consider your take-aways and the conference binder in the same sense that a designer would. Is a bag of recyclable paper sending them the message that you want for your conference? How many delegates will get that bag home and throw out or recycle the contents? What other things could you do?

In an age where people often carry their laptops or tablets, maybe there is a better way to set up your event. For a conference, what about an electronic approach that leverages network access?

- Attendees register for the event and receive login information.
- They get to their seats, which each have power and network jacks.
- They log into a portal site where they can access the usual binder notes in electronic format.

