



# Event Marketing Can Boost Your Business

By Megan Damewood, ABC Marketing and Communications Program Specialist



It's official, the recession is over! But it seems that the dire effects on small business still remain.

So...what's next? How do you begin to repair the damage and boost your business's profitability?

One way to attract new customers and increase sales is through event marketing. Event marketing is the promotion of any event designed to bring your business to the attention of potential customers. It is by far one of the most effective marketing tools.

Event marketing can help you penetrate the marketplace and cut through media noise. Your customers are bombarded daily with millions of messages and advertisements. Hosting or participating in a marketing event can provide your business with exclusive access to your target audience and turn an everyday occurrence, such as a meeting, sporting event, or visit to the mall into a memorable one.

There are several types of event marketing strategies that can help you to accomplish these goals. Some may work better than others for your unique business situation and budget.

## Seminars/workshops

The marketing potential of seminars or workshops will depend on the audience and the amount of planning and preparation required to execute the event. The most important part of any seminar or workshop is the material that will be covered and the presenter. Start with a list of possible subjects that might be of interest to your attendees (the subject matter shouldn't be a sales pitch). Topics should be pertinent to your audience and hold your audience's attention. For example, you could host a series of support seminars about life after cancer, educational workshops on post-mastectomy lymphedema, or even a wig party. Have a wig vendor that you work with bring in a large selection of

wigs and accessories for your customers to try out (much like a Tupperware® or Mary Kay® party). Next, select your target market and start advertising.

## Sponsorships

If putting on your own event seems too overwhelming, consider sponsoring an existing event. Work with another group to get your company's name and product/service listed as a sponsor to begin increasing customer awareness. One of the best ways is to sponsor a local women's event or organization. You could also sponsor a women's sporting event, or little league girls' softball, basketball, or soccer team. This would help to get your company's name out into the community. For an investment in their uniforms, your name and logo will be seen by team members, families and community groups. If your company name is part of the team's name you will also receive free publicity in the newspaper.

## Online events

Online event marketing is any event created for customers to attend online whether it's via a company website, social media site, or blog. This method has great potential for you to attract new customers, build your company brand, and increase revenue. The best part is - online event marketing is the least expensive type of party you can throw! You may consider incorporating product or service explanations or an interactive Q&A session. An event can be hosted on your web site or in partnership with a related media site. Send out a press release announcing the event to your customers and ask your vendors to cross market your event on their sites. Try an online scavenger hunt where customers have to visit several sites (your vendors, affiliates, or support groups) and must find a specific clue listed on each site to continue their search or to solve a puzzle. If attendees visit every site, they are awarded coupons or entered to win a grand prize!

## Piggyback events

Another great low-cost event marketing strategy is to "piggyback" on another existing event. This way, you can connect with larger events that are going on in your community: parades, school carnivals, festivals, holiday events, and business expositions. Somebody else (or a group) pays for setting the event up, but they invite or allow businesses to set up their own booths and displays. Think piggybacking when you want to make your marketing dollar go farther. The in-person, one-on-one contacts you will make there may bring you customers in a way you had never considered.

Overall, event marketing can be a great addition to your business marketing strategy and is sure to be an effective way to increase business awareness and sales. So, while you continue to recuperate from the economic downturn, why not throw a party! ✨