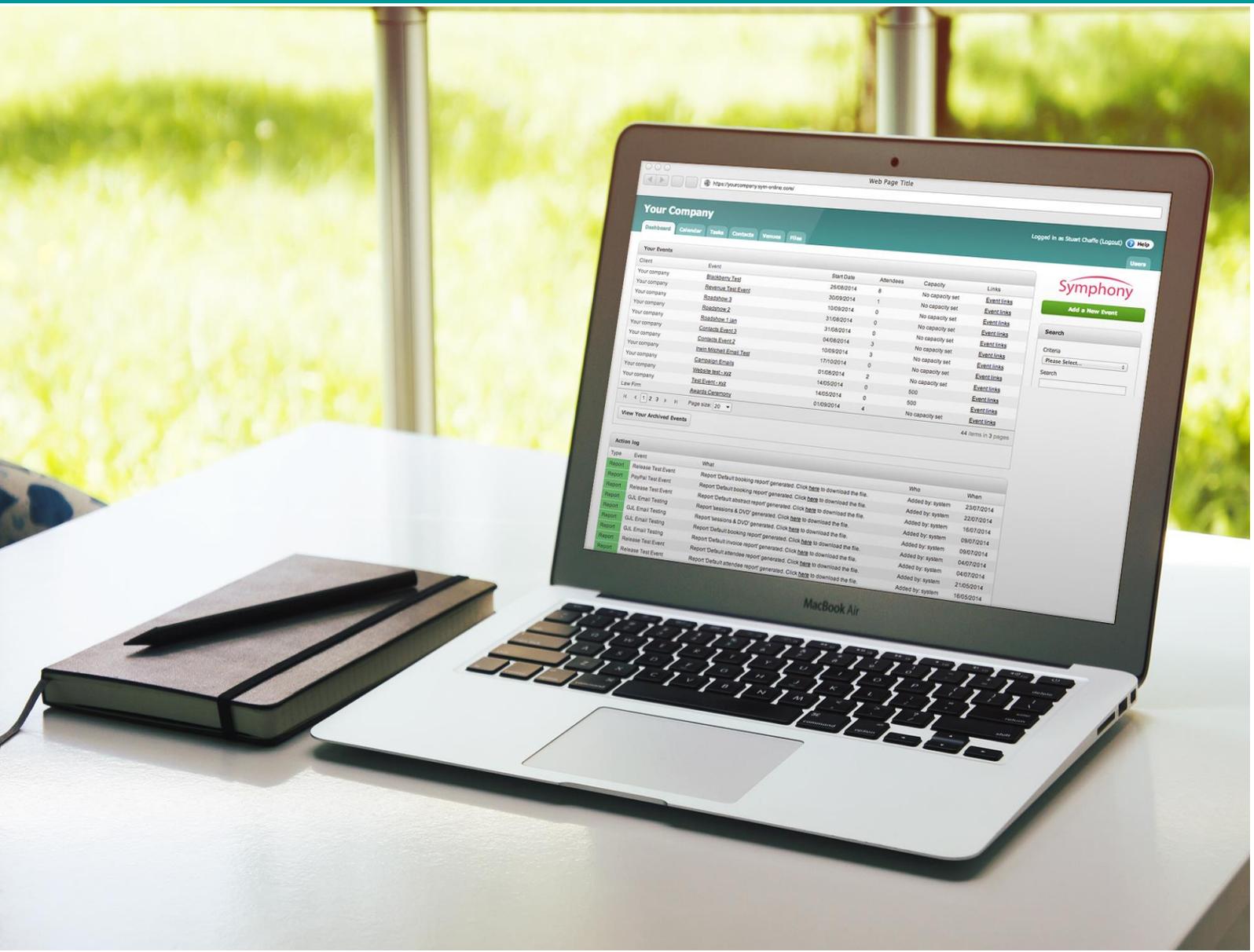


# Symphony Event Management

## How to Increase Attendance at Corporate Events

### Fact Sheet



## How to Increase Attendance at your Corporate Event Fact Sheet

1. Create a Relevant Programme
2. Promoting Your Event
3. Minimising No-Shows

### Creating a Relevant Programme

Successful event organisers dedicate time to researching key industry trends and finding influential and knowledgeable thought leaders to speak on those topics at the event.

#### Reasons for Corporate Events

1. Brand Reputation
2. Thought Leadership
3. Showcase
4. Well Connected
5. Educate
6. Leads
7. Sales

#### 1. Increase brand reputation

Events are a brilliant way for any business to reinforce or create a brand message.

There's a reason why fashion and lifestyle brands are huge proponents of launch parties and similar events that speak to the value of their brand or product.

There is no reason why your business can't use them in the same way. There are many different types of messages:

#### 2. Thought Leadership

If you're a B2B company and want to convey your credentials as thought leaders in your industry, why not host a conference?

Gather experts together (ideally your clients and partners) and invite them to share their insights, intermixed with some of your executives, and you can create a really compelling content programme.

#### 3. Show off your Expertise

Events are also a great way to show people you know what you're doing.

For example, if you work for a more creative industry, like an agency or a design firm, then you probably want to showcase your creativity, and what better way than throwing an event for your guests that will leave them in no doubt as to your credentials by the time they leave.

#### **4. Well Connected**

Other businesses may pride themselves on being well-connected, such as recruiters, estate agents and other sales or service related industries.

If this is your purpose, then of course it makes sense to gather all those big hitters you know into a room together, and then let your prospects mingle as you demonstrate your influence and reach, simply through the guest list.

Dinners, awards and conferences are all great events to help you achieve this objective.

#### **5. Educate**

Often the goal of an event is to educate the audience.

It may be that you have a brand-new disruptive technology or service (like cloud computing a few years ago, or crypto-currencies now), so you need to educate an entire market about the possibilities.

Conferences, exhibitions, breakfast briefings, round tables and panel debates are all great events to host for this type of objective.

It may just be to show them new solutions you are launching and can save them money. Webinars, workshops and training sessions may help here.

#### **6. Generate Leads**

If you're going to run events primarily for lead generation purposes, then it's important to get your sales or business development team involved, so you have a long list of prospects to invite, and a really specific understanding of the types of people who should be there.

#### **7. Make a Sale**

The right people in the right place at the right time. Satisfied customers in the room with prospects.

Like gravitates to like!

## Know your Audience

Before you can research and create your event persona, you need to set some goals for the event; is it a customer appreciation event, a lead generation event, an education, market conditioning or a brand awareness event? Answering these questions will help you identify:

- Who are the right people to invite
- Who are the right people to speak at it
- What is the most valuable content we can create for these people

## Personas

Knowing who your event persona is and what their key challenges are will help you create event content that resonates with them and makes your event really compelling, pushing up registration and attendance.

Who are they, what are their problems, where do they hang out, who do they talk to.

**Event (or buyer) personas.** These are the people who are genuinely interested in attending your event and engaging with your company or service. By inviting people outside of your personas, you are simply wasting money and resources on marketing and event costs because the people at your event will have no interest in buying your products or services,. Not only will it cost you money, but it will also drive down your attendance rate as these people are less likely to show up on the day, even if you do manage to convince them to register.

**Bad Personas = Bad Targeting = No shows!!** Registrations for the sake of registrations does not equal conversions. Tell the story of CCS and their sales people signing people up. North of Scotland for a 2 hour session on a August Friday afternoon in London. You get what you measure / reward for. Less than 25% turned up.

## Event Title

Your event title needs to clearly state what value you will deliver at the event. You will also want it to be as short as possible (but as long as needed), and appealing to the reader. Using the words "How To" in an event title has proven time and time again to increase attendance. The title "Learn about new investment opportunities" (a real title we recently saw), would be much more effective if it were called, "How you can take advantage of new investment opportunities."

A very simple approach for event titling: Make a list of a dozen or so different ways you could title the event. Ask for feedback from colleagues, clients, and potential clients. If you run the event multiple times, test different titles and see if one title generates more attendance than the other.

### **Content**

Content is king when it comes to events, without it you are going to struggle to get the attendance levels that you are really looking for. You simply have to have great ways to make it interesting and relevant, without this, you will not communicate the event well to potential attendees.

Here are a few ways you can present your content:

- Presentation
- Handouts
- Video
- Takeaways

### **Links:**

Web video promotions - \$499 for a 90 second basic video -

<http://www.eventcommercials.com/pricing.html>

Cartoon type videos - free for the basics or from \$90 for 5 videos - <https://www.powtoon.com>

TED talks are considered to be the ultimate – problem is they take so long to put together. Here are a few useful links for you:

- <http://blog.ted.com/10-tips-for-better-slide-decks/>

Alternatives to PowerPoint:

- <http://www.deck.in/>
- <https://www.haikudeck.com/>

## Promote your Event

### List Building

A business meeting shouldn't be viewed as a direct mail effort with 1-3% RSVP rates. Generate specific lists of targeted attendees with conversion rates of 50% or better.

Hubspot found that 43% of event attendees feel that events marketed to them are not relevant to their job or industry.

What's in it for them?

Try to invite individuals of similar rank and experience to the meeting.

Why do we invite them – if it costs £2 to do the invite – another £1 to check them out is a good idea.

Marketing and Business Partners - for example, partner with two other firms pooling resources and mailing lists to increase response and then deliver together. As well as having new names to market to, your event will have a multi-faceted presenter list which can often increase attendance. It becomes less of a sales exercise and more of information sharing.

Pre-qualify event sign-ups using custom questions, so you have a better understanding of who will be attending, and what their interests or challenges are.

### Contact Strategy

Invite people early, and continue reminding them about the event even if they have confirmed attendance. It's important to generate excitement around the event.

Try this approach:

1. Mention the event to guests before sending invites.
2. Send a save the date early in the planning process (paper or electronic).
3. Send a detailed invitation, including agenda highlights (paper or electronic).
4. Forward the detailed invitation again with a personalized note (electronic).
5. Formally call guests and extend a personal invite to the event.

How many times should you market to your prospective audience?

For a monthly event, shoot for 3 to 4 communications. For a one-time event, 6 to 10. And for an annual event, 12 to 18. Seem like a lot? It is. It needs to be. Because the more often you hit your potential attendees with your marketing, the more registrations you'll get.

Each communication can (and should) be a little different. One marketing piece might highlight the keynote speakers, while another focuses on the concurrent sessions. A third might detail some of the other features and benefits of your event or simply a long list of testimonials.

Here are a few contact tactics that you may find useful within your strategy:

- Post
- Email
- Phone
- Social Media

Here are some useful links/tips:

iMail is great for sending personalised mailings with little effort and at lower than GPO costs

Email – opt in best of all. Make it relevant – make it simple to understand – Call to Action link back to a landing page where you can do more.. Include previews of speakers, possible video interviews with the speakers

### **Phone Invitations**

A physical invitation whether printed or electronic is nice, but it shouldn't be viewed as a substitute for a personally extended invitation - use the phone - preferably from the person that is most closely associated with the prospect. Or consider hiring a specialist agency to do this - best if they are briefed and they are phoning on behalf a 'senior' connected person

- [www.armchairgroup.com/event-marketing](http://www.armchairgroup.com/event-marketing)
- [DelegateCentral.com](http://DelegateCentral.com)

### **Social Media**

Don't waste time on the wrong social networks. Research where the people you want hangout – don't assume. LinkedIn, Twitter for conferences and Facebook for lower level people – Pinterest is unlikely to get you senior people in the pharmaceutical industry.

If you do use Social media create striking images to use in social media that will grab attention and direct people to the event website.

### **Invite Message**

Answer the Biggest Question any potential attendee has - "why should I go?" If you want them to give their time and money to attend your event, make it clear what they will gain from doing so. How will attending improve their lives? Instead of listing speakers, vendors or workshops, tell them how your event will increase their knowledge, give them a chance to learn from the best, offer an unmissable opportunity to meet potential colleagues, and anything else that holds true.

Express multiple value propositions in your promotional efforts just one benefit isn't enough for most people to attend your event. You should include in your invitations, emails and marketing materials (including Web site) the valuable take-aways of the event (e.g., what attendees will learn); keynote speakers and/or entertainment; the schedule/agenda; photos and testimonials of past events; people/companies that attended past events; and any other relevant benefits

### **Justification letters**

That talk about the benefits from the meeting and what they will get out of it," "Give the reasons why that person should go." Provide a follow-up paper so attendees can take notes on whether the objectives were met, key contacts and how to apply what was learned back at the home office.

"Budgets are tight, and if you can't justify the expense to the boss, no amount of marketing will help.

Conference directories that you can use to publicise your event if it fits their criteria:

- Conference Hound <http://conferencehound.com/>
- All Conferences <http://allconferences.com/>
- Lanyrd <http://lanyrd.com/>
- This Conference <http://thisconference.com/>
- Conference Alerts <http://conferencealerts.com/>

When submitting to these sites, be sure to include some compelling reasons to attend in the description, along with relevant information like dates, locations, times, and information about the past event.

## Minimising No-Shows

### Get the Right People

Ensure everyone that is invited to the event is valid. Meaning that they will receive some sort of value from your event. There is no point in wasting your time inviting people that would not have any interest in attending your event. Therefore, check who your invites are being sent to.

### Communicate Regularly

After they have registered, communicate regularly with them to remind them of the date and the value they will receive from attending your event. Give them a reason to take a minute, hour or day out of their schedule to attend your event.

A great tip is to use calendar invites. Allowing your attendees to be notified of the event date. Also, calling your attendees the day before the event would act as a good reminder to ensure they are aware of your event.

Pre-event questionnaires are another way to ensure you get the right people attending your event.

Creating a survey can allow you to ask questions to a particular group of people, gaining feedback as to the sort of things they would perceive as value when attending your event.

And finally, follow up after the event. Collecting feedback for you to constantly improve the value they will gain from future event that you create.

# Next steps

Our experienced team are looking forward to discussing your requirements for your next event with you.

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