

# A Guide to Event Branding

Event branding emphasizes your organization's image. Companies who have developed strong existing brands strive to maintain market positioning, while those lacking brand recognition are tasked with advancing their brand. A branded event is one of the finest ways to impact your target audience and connect with potential customers in a controlled environment focused solely on your products and services. This guide is intended to give you an edge in planning and executing your branded event.

One of the most important decisions you will face when organizing your branded event is naming your event. It is important that your event name convey the objective of your event while distinguishing itself from the competition. It is also important to select a name with the future in mind. A successful event will likely be repeated in years to come and you do not want to have chosen a trendy name this year that is considered corny and outdated down the road.

Once you have selected the perfect name, it's time to develop the theme or concept of your event. Your theme should be compelling, attention grabbing and enthusiastic. Stay away from your company tagline or "business-speak". The more conversational the better. Here are a few excellent examples:

- **Showtime!**
- **Innovate, Integrate, Motivate!**
- **Breaking Barriers**
- **Building for the Future**

A successful branded event needs to make a bold statement visually to create a memorable impression on your attendees. Use inspiring visuals to arouse anticipation for your event through social media, traditional print mediums and digital promotion. Think beyond your corporate logo and visual clichés, these materials will often be discarded or ignored. This is such an important part of a successful event that, if you are having difficulty with your own design, you should strongly consider consulting an event production professional to assist you in creating an immersive experience for your guests. Here are a few typical event items that can be branded to create a strong visual impact:

- **Gobo & Intelligent Lighting**
- **Custom Signage**
- **Bars and Event Lounges**
- **Event Furniture**
- **Check with your event professionals for more ideas.**

All of your guests have invested the time and money to attend your event so they are obviously open to advocating your brand. While it seems a “no brainer”, it is absolutely vital that your attendees are treated with the utmost respect and professional courtesy. It is a good idea to generate guest interaction guide lines and consider incentives for your staff based on the stated goals of your event in an effort to ensure your message is being conveyed as desired. Plan activities that get your guests involved. Ask for their opinions and professional insights. People who participate are much more likely to connect with your brand and promote it as a result.

Promoting your event begins shortly after its conception and continues until well after the last guest heads home. Before the event, strive to create buzz around the industry and build anticipation amongst the potential participants. If possible, develop an event specific website with a blog that allows your featured guests and staff to engage the public. Generate a unique “hashtag” that can be used on Twitter and other social media sites to generate buzz. If it’s within your budget, a mobile app can be a valuable tool for connecting your guests with your brand. Once the event has kicked off your promotion should accelerate. Do not forget that your event is no longer confined to the walls of your venue. Assign staff members to live-blog and tweet during the event and respond to attendees who are doing the same. Large screen displays with live twitter feeds or other social media integration are a great way to encourage social media participation. There are many methods available to allow remote participation for those who are not able to attend the event but who are interested enough to be involved digitally. These individuals will likely carry that involvement to social media and can prove very valuable in delivering your message and enhancing your brand. At the conclusion of your event, continue to recap the highlights and promote continued conversation on social media. This is a great time to begin promoting your next successful branded event.

Remember, your branded event is special so don't sell it short with bland, generic or inconsistent imagery. Focus on your attendees and use the bevy of tools now at your disposal to promote, promote, promote. Good luck!