

"Nobody does a better job of showing how to use design to build relationships than Roger C. Parker!"

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author, *Guerrilla Marketing*

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Roger C. Parker's

Guerrilla Marketing & Design

Event marketing

There's more to special events than promotions and sales

Event marketing can do more than increase short-term traffic and sales. Properly planned and promoted, special events create long-term results far out of proportion to the events themselves.

What is event marketing?

Event marketing refers to an ongoing program of educational events that demonstrate your firm's expertise and position in your market.

Advantages

Event marketing helps you:

- *Build awareness.* You can enhance your firm's awareness without cutting prices (and profits) with a "sale."
- *Create and reinforce relationships.* Events give you an opportunity to prove your competence to prospects and a reason to recontact past customers, renewing your acquaintance and showing appreciation for their patronage.
- *Arouse excitement.* Event marketing creates anticipation among customers,

prospects, and your sales staff.

- *Establish deadlines* for completing promotional projects, like newsletters, renovations, or a special report.
- *Attract the press.* Educational events are more likely to result in favorable media coverage than price-oriented sales or promotions.

Options

Opportunities are limited only by your imagination. Choose from among:

- *Customer appreciation days.* Invite customers in for a free, non-selling, cup of espresso, a concert, or a harbor cruise combined with an open house.
 - *"Challenges and opportunities" presentations.* Invite customers and prospects to a review of current economic and technological trends, and your analysis of their probable impact.
 - *Demonstrations and workshops* make it easy to introduce new products and services in an editorial, or case study, as opposed to a "sales" environment.
 - *Teleclasses.* Teleclasses offer you an opportunity to promote your expertise and competence to distant prospects.
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Reasonable expectations

The number of people who attend your event is not as important as what happens before, during, and after the event.

Quality of response and follow-up are usually more important than attendance.

Planning and promoting

Begin by asking: "What type of event is most appropriate to the goal I want to accomplish?"

Next, create a deadline planner. Work backwards from the date of your event. Deadline planners help you set up and maintain a realistic promotion schedule that covers all bases.

Your deadline planner should specify each of the tools you're going to use to promote your event, including ads, letters, postcards, e-mail, and your web site—as well as local calendar listings.

Pre-event registration

Invite attendees to call or e-mail you to confirm their intention to attend. Try to obtain all attendees' e-mail addresses.

Send registered attendees an e-mail reminder a few days before the event as well as the morning of the event. You can also review directions and instructions for attendees as well as attach an advance copy of audience handouts.

During the event

Keep track of who attended and give attendees meaningful handouts.

Prepare and collect evaluation sheets that invite comment. These testimonials will reinforce the impact of the event and boost attendance at future events.

Hire a professional photographer to take pictures for you and the media.

At the end of the event, hold a drawing for door prizes—perhaps contributed by your marketing partners or vendors.

After the event

Always say thank you! Send participants a "Thank you for attending" postcard or e-mail the next day.

Post pictures on your web site. Later, send a follow-up mailing summarizing highlights of the event to those who attended and those who should have.

Conclusion

Think in terms of an on-going program rather than a single event. Success and efficiency come from repetition. Each event builds upon its predecessor.

For more information

Call and profit from Roger C. Parker's years of experience when planning your special events. Download his free *Do's and Don'ts Guide for Program Planners* at www.NewEntrepreneur.com.



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