

Topic:
Event
Organisation

Organising Successful Seminars

Seminars can be a highly effective form of marketing. They enable you to give potential customers first hand experience of your products, develop and maintain vital contacts and prove you can address the tricky issues. This of course requires that people bother to show up. The problem goes something like this: everybody knows that seminars can work, so everybody does them, so everyone gets invited to more, and everyone seems twice as busy these days, so it gets harder to fill them.

iCT is produced by Business Advantage, a B2B research, business development and marketing consulting practice operating in the global IT, Digital and Telecommunication sectors.

View your targets as frantically busy individuals. Chris Hill: *"Present things in a very clear way for the customers to actually justify the time out. The days are gone where people would go out on a jolly. It has to be something applicable to them and that they can obviously understand, before they'll even consider attending."*
Craig Wareham: *"It's vital to position the seminar correctly, deliver the clearest possible message about its purpose - and then stick to it."*

Having a clear picture of whom you want to attend enables you to focus on the issues that matter to them. Kathrin Rust: *"In order to attract people, you need to convince them that:*

- *the topic is relevant to them*
- *they will receive information that they won't get anywhere else*
- *they will learn something that will help them solve a problem that is currently "causing them pain"*

Joining Forces

Jan Perry: *"Try to organise events that cover integrated solutions to their needs. Use partnerships with complimentary products - PDM, CRM or ERP for example."*
Craig Wareham: *"Partnership is a great way to reduce costs - and has the added benefit for the attendee that he/she gets to see a more 'real world' representation of products and issues."*

Craig Wareham is Marketing Manager for [Advanced Rendering Technology](#), a leading provider of photorealistic rendering technology to the 3D graphics industry

Chris Hill is Director of [SOLID Applications Ltd.](#) Based near Birmingham, England. The company specialises in the development and support of CAD-based mechanical design and engineering software and hardware solutions.

Kathrin Rust is Marketing Manager of [ON Technology](#), whose advanced solutions enable IT organisations and service providers to deliver business-critical software to a range of remote computing devices

Walter Stachowicz is CEO of CNS Solutions Sp. z o.o., a Solidworks VAR based in Poland.

Jan Perry is ISV Manager (UK) for [Hewlett-Packard](#), a leading global provider of computing and imaging solutions and services.

Think widely about who might help to draw people in. Walter Stachowicz: *"We always work closely with the Technical Universities in Poland. They are very familiar with the industry base in their area, and when a company gets a seminar invite from the local university, they tend to respond more positively."*

The Crowd Pleaser

Concentrate on meeting their needs, but consider adding an extra incentive to convince the waverers. Three out of our five contributors thought high profile speakers were a real draw. Other factors such as themed locations, food and free gifts play a smaller part.

The Details

Location - make it accessible first, then consider novelty/luxury.

Scheduling - Kathrin Rust: *"Make sure you know about other events (eg. competitors) taking place at the same time."*

Timing - if attendees are local to the event, allow them to make the most of their time. Kathrin Rust: *"We've had great success with our two hour breakfast seminars starting at 9.00am as it enabled people to be back at their desks by noon."*

Menu - grilled goat's cheese with.....perhaps you can think for yourselves on this one!

The First Approach

By all means advertise your event in the places where your target audience lurks, but mailing them is still the best way to grab their attention - that means mailing them personally of course, not addressing to 'A. Manager' or a predecessor since deceased. Using an up to date, clean database will vastly improve your chances of facing a sea of expectant faces on the big day.

Strike the right tone in the letter. Walter Stachowicz: *"I see so many invitations that are too dry and technical. People respond to emotional cues, not features and functions. Make it simple for them to respond and give multiple response options."*

The Follow-Up

Seminar invitations get stuck in places that never see the light of day. Kathrin Rust: *"Do a good qualified telemarketing campaign. Prospects should feel confident about the people who call them; telemarketers need to have enough background information to answer questions."*

If your resources stretch to it, telephone those who have responded positively 2/3 days beforehand to check they have all the information they need. The quality of telemarketing can make or break a seminar.

[Click here](#) for more information on how to get a good return on your telemarketing investment.



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The Content

Now all you have to do is prepare to meet people's expectations on the day. Chris Hill: *"When people turn up, they'll want value. Make sure you prepare material that doesn't veer off track, or go down directions that are too far in front of them."*

The 'realness' of the message and who presents it matters. Craig Wareham: *"Use industry case studies on how clients have surmounted a particular issue or problem faced by many of your target market - ideally these should be presented by these clients themselves."*

Conclusion

These may seem obvious points - but there are still seminars taking place that are based around products and services rather than the needs of customers. As the scope for Internet-based solutions and remote business relationships forges on, physical face-to-face contact still works. Chris Hill of SOLID Applications Ltd recently attracted 110 customers to a seminar to discuss Internet collaboration - getting people in the same room can still be the best way to demystify solutions that can span the globe.

Find out how:

- the right people can be attracted in the right numbers to your seminars
[Seminar Fulfilment Services](#)
- to improve the effectiveness of your customer and prospect data
[Database Services](#)
- telemarketing can help you meet your sales and marketing objectives
[Telemarketing Services](#).

To discuss any of your sales and marketing needs in person, call David Eaton on +44 (0)1689 873636.

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