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Driving more value from event marketing

A Bienalto White Paper

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Introduction

Event marketing. It's a part of every astute marketer's strategy, recognised and valued as an important lead-generator and relationship-builder. Whether it's a national workshop series or intimate breakfast sessions for select clients, events are a sure-fire way of building rapport with potential and existing customers; as well as a cost-effective way to train and develop partner communities.

But how much of a headache can event marketing cause? Whether it's tracking registrations, trying to predict attendance rates and worrying that you won't get the numbers, or calculating the cost per registration – the 'operational' aspects of event management can create endless pain for marketers who are better poised to focus on the event itself: that is, the content, speakers, target audience, and the follow-ups.

For marketers currently running events programs, and those considering introducing events into their marketing mix, the most common pain points are:

- Operational issues around registration: managing spreadsheets and email responses
- Prohibitive costs
- Knowing that there must be a more efficient way to manage them.

To get the most value out of events – and not just in terms of lead-generation but also minimising the operational 'headaches' – then event marketing must virtually run itself, leaving marketers to focus on what they do best.

For many organisations, there is too much emphasis on staging the event, rather than following up on the leads generated. If marketers spent less time on running the event, they would have more time to identify leads and put steps in place to nurture those leads. Question is, how do they find the time?

By outsourcing all of the operational aspects of event marketing to experts – from email invites and automated reminders and confirmations, to e-ticketing and online payments, to integration with CRM systems – the pain points and resourcing issues can be eliminated. What may have taken days or weeks for a marketer to organise in-house, can take hours for a specialist outsourced agency to complete.

Extracting more value from events

Events are an integral component of the marketing strategy, working in conjunction with other elements of the marketing mix to generate more leads and sales for the business.

As noted in the introduction, many companies fall over before they reach the “generating more sales” stage of event marketing. By getting too caught up in the process of staging the actual event, they fail to implement a plan with their sales team for post-event follow-up.

But when done the right way, the benefits of event marketing can be felt across the organisation:

- Drive purchasing behaviour
- Achieve deeper engagement, particularly at a time when customer retention is proving more valuable than acquisition
- Generate a more consistent stream of leads
- The opportunity to introduce new product/service lines to customers, or to update your customers about recent developments within the company
- If you have a large, fragmented customer base or partner channel, it's a cost-effective way to stay in touch with them
- Encourage dialogue between customers – building mutual trust within your customer base.

Event marketing is also crucial for building a marketing database from which to shape future marketing campaigns. Through the process of online event registration, the database can be built through a number of strategies, such as:

- Opt-ins: confirming opt-ins for future communications
- Refreshing contact details e.g. pre-populate the forms with all information except job titles (which change frequently), so the customer can update
- Iteratively profile your customers by asking different questions during registration and survey steps.

Common pain points

Many marketers are tearing their hair out in frustration at the complexity of running events, knowing that there is a better way to handle them but not having the time or resources to effect change.

In conversations with event marketers in the field, a common theme is that there is clear room for improvement:

“We need to get our events system integrated with our CRM to get the full view of the client. Right now, we have to go into the system and manually extract data for labels and the like, and we can't see cancellations or replacements at a glance. Moving it all together would be ideal to eliminate all these manual processes.”

“We would like to create specific opt-in areas for email, as opposed to one generic opt-in or opt-out. Some people like to opt-in for one specific event only not a whole series.”

“We want integration in order to achieve more efficiency and lower

costs in terms of administration of events; and we also want better graphics in order to offer more options in the preparation of electronic invitations.”

It is possible to extract more value from event marketing programs by outsourcing or automating the operational aspects of the registration process. If doing it in-house, deep collaboration and cooperation with the IT team is required to design and deploy event landing pages and registration forms, and update the CRM system about registrations, cancellations and attendance.

By outsourcing/automating, the marketing manager can focus on the objectives of the event, and correlating aspects such as: topic, pitch, target attendees, calls to action, identification and the all-important follow-up. It enables the event to reach a level of sophistication – and bring it to its proper conclusion – so as to deliver real value to the company.

Benefits of integration

Companies with the ability to integrate their event marketing solution with their CRM system will derive more value from an event marketing campaign. They should look for an agency that has the technology and capabilities to integrate with existing systems – or consider investing in new systems, which will pay off once the benefits of integration are realised.

The main benefits of deeper integration with CRM systems include:

- Ability to get the most up-to-date information about a contact or their organisation
- Align the registration and post-event survey processes with the broader CRM strategy
- One view of all interactions with a contact
- More targeted marketing programs.

As an example, a marketer might want to reach all customers with a message about a new widget. Half of the customer base attended a launch event for the widget two weeks ago; half didn't. Instead of boring the group that attended with the same information as they heard about at the launch, the marketer can tailor two pieces of communication – which continues the conversation for the first group, and starts the conversation for the second.

A richer database enables more powerful communication – and delivers more tangible results – for the marketer.

Events Manager: outsourced solution

Events Manager is an automated, full-service online events registration solution, which responds to marketers' needs for efficiency, ease of use and integration. Developed using a process-oriented approach, Events Manager applies logical rules for each step of the registration and post-event process.

Speed and convenience – for both the marketer and the customer – are the cornerstones of the solution; along with the ability to synchronise with a CRM system for richer database integration.

Events Manager enables marketers to:

- Launch registration forms within hours, that link to a website or email communications
- Pre-populate registration forms with email invites to speed up the process for customers (e.g. all they have to do is choose a venue and confirm attendance)
- Calculate the cost per registration at any step in the campaign
- Monitor the progress of registrations against a target using graphical interfaces (see figure 1)
- View registration composition by sales territory, customer segments, job roles etc (see figure 2)
- Manage follow-ups, reminders, cancellations and post-event communications
- Synchronise with a CRM system to update contact and response details such as opt-ins, attendance and changes to profile details.

Overview | info@bientalto.com

EVENTS MANAGER bienalto

Seminar Active

Overview > Seminar > All Registrations

Total Registrations: 714

[+ Enter registration](#) [EXPORT](#) | [PRINT BADGES](#)

First Name	Last Name ↓	Company	Title	Type	Session	Status	Registered Date	
John	Crocker	Telstra	Team Leader	Unallocated	Sydney	Registered	19/03/2009 17:23pm	Edit
Tracy	Foster	Defence	Infrastructu...	Unallocated	Sydney	Registered	19/03/2009 17:34pm	Edit
Charles	Magee	ATO	Director IT	Unallocated	Sydney	Registered	19/03/2009 17:30pm	Edit
Janet	Mills	Fujitsu	Technical L...	Unallocated	Sydney	Registered	19/03/2009 17:45pm	Edit
Elizabeth	Norris	Widget Inc.	Project Man...	Unallocated	Sydney	Registered	19/03/2009 17:32pm	Edit
William	O'Brien	CBA	Area Mana...	Unallocated	Sydney	Registered	19/03/2009 17:28pm	Edit
Kevin	Peters	IBM	Sys Admin	Unallocated	Sydney	Registered	19/03/2009 17:20pm	Edit
Christopher	Powell	Freelance	Developer	Unallocated	Sydney	Registered	19/03/2009 17:43pm	Edit
Raymond	Solomon	CSIRO	Technical E...	Unallocated	Sydney	Registered	19/03/2009 17:25pm	Edit
Rick	Webber	National Mu...	Account Ma...	Unallocated	Sydney	Registered	19/03/2009 17:38pm	Edit

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Figure 1. Real-time snapshot of customer registrations against the target.



Figure 2. View of customer segmentation.

Crucially, Events Manager is both repeatable and predictable, generating massive efficiencies and reassurances for marketers. It gives the marketer more visibility into the registration process, triggering alerts if more marketing efforts are required to reach target attendance levels. It is easy to benchmark an event against previous events to give the marketer an idea of how well the current campaign is running.

In conclusion

Events Manager is a cost-effective and easy-to-deploy solution for event marketers that run programs across multiple venues and dates.

By automating the operational aspects through a process-driven approach, Events Manager enables marketers to focus on the event itself – to maximise opportunities for lead-generation and relationship building; or, for partners, effective training and development.

The integration with CRM systems removes the ‘technology burden’ from the marketing team, and supplies rich insights into customer behaviour that marketers can utilise to iteratively improve marketing activities.

About Bialto

Bialto is a specialist marketing consultancy based in Sydney that enables its clients to realise the full potential of online marketing and website performance. Bialto provides web analytics, customer experience and online marketing programs to some of Australia’s leading businesses.

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