

4 Tips to Engage Attendees Early and Often with Today's Technology Tools

by Gina Schreck, CSP

Engaging attendees is always one of the top goals when producing an event. It's just not enough to get people in the door. Today's attendees are tech-savvy and want higher value content, delivered in fresh, relevant and fun ways. The great news is there are many power tools available to you and your attendees for greater engagement. The key is to get your entire team, including the speakers, to jump in and help get the engagement started! Here are 4 tips that can turn your next event into a social learning extravaganza.

BEFORE THE EVENT

VIDEO MESSAGES: Using today's pocket video cameras like the FLIP, creating short messages (2-3 minutes each) are easier than ever. Your team can provide information such as travel tips, apps that will be used, Twitter tags and social sites to get people connecting early. Ask each of the speakers to send you a short welcome video introducing the attendees to their topics. It's a great way to create buzz. We are a video-consuming society and instead of sending text heavy messages to your groups that typically get ignored, create a series of videos that can be sent out and then archived on your Facebook page, website, Blog and more.

DURING THE EVENT

CHECK-IN FOR PRIZES AND AWARDS: Using geo-based mobile tools like Foursquare, Gowalla, or Scvngr, you can get your attendees checking in for fabulous prizes. Who will be today's "Mayor of Ballroom B"? Ask your speakers and vendors if they can contribute and get involved by giving away prizes, or creating check-in spots around the event center. Tips, trivia and learning facts can also be embedded into each location for attendees to find.

UBER-COOL CODES: QR Codes are one of today's hottest mobile trends. These odd blotches were designed for inventory management but once our smart phones entered the picture, the codes suddenly took on a new purpose. When scanned attendees will be taken to content on a website or social site for more information. You can plant these codes around your event location and create a fun learning scavenger hunt. One of my favorite scanner apps on Android is Barcode Scanner and for iPhone, check out QR APP or NeoReader (I recommend using one of the FREE apps as they work just as good as the others and there are many to try). To create your own codes for FREE, you can simply Google "QR Code Generator" or go to one of my favorites, <http://zxing.appspot.com/generator>

Ask your speakers to create a special content page for the event and place their QR code in the room they are speaking in as well as on handouts. Attendees will have fun scanning them for more information (always put the complete URL underneath for those who are not using a smartphone)

Scan this code for more information on QR codes: (QR CODE IMAGE HERE)



AFTER THE EVENT

VIRTUAL EVENTS: Host a Q&A webinar to allow attendees to share what they have implemented or get their implementation questions answered by the speakers, a week or two after they return to their regular schedule. You can line up a different speaker each month to continue the engagement.

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